



# CULTURE & DISABILITY:

## POLICIES & PRACTICES IN ASIA & EUROPE

**Jordi Baltà Portoles**

## Culture and Disability: Policies and Practices in Asia and Europe

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# Chapter 1:

## Introduction

### 1.1.



**Many initiatives in legislation, policy, programmes and projects have been adopted across Asia and Europe, addressing a variety of types of disability and intervening in a wide range of areas. This remains a diverse and unequal landscape, but an increasingly rich one, with an emerging wealth of relevant practices**

**Over the past few decades, the increasing expansion of facilities, programmes and events in the arts and culture in many countries has been accompanied by an increasing attention to the needs, challenges and opportunities of specific social groups. Public policies and programmes have often involved schemes aimed at enabling access and participation in cultural life for children and young people, ethnic or linguistic minorities and other groups, including people with disabilities, on the understanding that these groups may face particular difficulties in accessing culture.**

Measures in the field of culture and disability at local and national level have been adopted in the broader context of the international recognition of the rights of people with disabilities. At the global level, the adoption of the 2006 [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#), Article 30 of which focuses on participation in cultural life, should be noted in particular.<sup>1</sup>

As this report will prove, many initiatives in legislation, policy, programmes and projects have been adopted across Asia and Europe, addressing a variety of types of disability and intervening in a wide range of areas. This remains a diverse and unequal landscape,

but an increasingly rich one, with an emerging wealth of relevant practices.

This report has been produced between September and October 2016, in the context of preparations for the [16th Informal ASEM Seminar on Human Rights \(Beijing, China, 8-10 November 2016\)](#), which will focus on the theme Persons with Disabilities and Human Rights.

The report was commissioned by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), with the aim of identifying trends and examples as regards culture and disability in the 51 countries that are part of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM).<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2.

# Scope and methodology

**This report focuses on existing legislation, policies, programmes and projects in the field of culture and disability in the countries that make up ASEM. In this context, a definition of culture comprising the arts and tangible and intangible heritage as well as other issues typically addressed by cultural policies across the region has been adopted. The definition of disability is determined by existing international standards, as described in section 2.1 below. All art forms and cultural fields, as well as all types of disabilities, have been taken into account when compiling and analysing the information. A particular aim of the report is to show the diverse range of areas in which measures can be adopted, so as to provide inspiration to stakeholders across Asia and Europe and beyond.<sup>3</sup>**



**A particular aim of the report is to show the diverse range of areas in which measures can be adopted, so as to provide inspiration to stakeholders across Asia and Europe and beyond**

Given the time and resources available, and the ever-increasing number of experiences in this field, the report does not aim to present a comprehensive mapping of all existing initiatives, nor to compare approaches across countries or determine 'best practice'. The focus generally lies on stated aims and activities of existing legislation, policies and programmes, with information about their actual results and effectiveness presented only where this was easily accessible. Insofar as possible, particular emphasis has been placed on those initiatives which may hold a deeper potential for structural change in the lives of people with disabilities and in organisations supporting them, or those with a demonstrative, illustrative nature which could inspire others to adopt similar measures.

Research has addressed both public policies and measures, adopted at regional, national or sub-national level either by departments in charge of cultural policy or other relevant bodies (e.g. ministries or bodies addressing disability), and initiatives emerging within civil society, including those designed and implemented by NGOs, informal groups, foundations and other private or non-profit actors which are active in the field of arts and disability. Of course, examples of collaboration between public, private and non-profit actors have also been collected. All these actors have an important role to play in contributing to making everyone's right to take part in cultural life effective.

The preparation of the report has primarily involved desk research, including an analysis of international legal standards; international, regional, national and local policy documents; project descriptions; research reports; websites and other relevant resources, as described in footnotes and in the accompanying bibliography. E-mail correspondence has also provided evidence of relevant projects and initiatives.<sup>4</sup>

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 of the report presents the background and key notions relevant to policies in the field of culture and disability, including international legal standards and definitions, global and regional strategies, rationales underpinning legislation and policy in this field and other relevant concepts. Chapter 3 addresses successively examples in legislation, policy, programmes and projects found across the ASEM region, thus presenting a very broad and diverse spectrum of measures focusing on universal access to culture, active participation in creative activities, training and capacity-building, networks, international cooperation and research, among others. Finally, Chapter 4 presents a set of conclusions and recommendations emerging from the report, aimed at public authorities and other relevant stakeholders among the partners of ASEM.

## Chapter 2:

# Policies on Arts and Disability: Background and Key Concepts

## 2.1.

The [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#), adopted on 13 December 2006 and which came into force on 3 May 2008, indicates in Article 1 that persons with disabilities “include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.<sup>5</sup> The CRPD does not establish new rights nor does it attempt to provide a definition of what ‘disability’ is. Instead it lays down the minimum standards that are required to ‘promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity’.<sup>6</sup> The terms ‘persons with disabilities’ and ‘people with disabilities’, which have progressively replaced in formal usage a range of related terms used in the past (including ‘disabled persons’ and others), will be used interchangeably throughout this report.

The aforementioned definition’s reference to ‘...impairments *which in interaction* with various barriers may hinder ... full and effective participation in society...’ points to the contemporary understanding of disability as resulting from a variety of factors. It is also an acknowledgement that disability is an evolving concept. As the CRPD notes in its preamble “disability results from the interaction between

persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation ...”.<sup>7</sup> The traditional approach that tended to see disability as a personal condition to be ‘cured’ (the so-called ‘medical model’) has progressively been replaced by a more *relational* approach, the so-called ‘social model’, which

**As highlighted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its World Report on Disability (2011), disability is ‘complex, dynamic, multidimensional and contested’**

‘holds that it is society which disables people with impairments by the way in which it is organised and by the conventions and priorities it displays. For example, many buildings are inaccessible to people with impaired mobility, but this results from specific conventions and traditions in building design and is not a consequence of mobility impairment per se. The social model emphasises that barriers to the full participation of people with disabilities are located in the way society is organised, and it challenges society to address and dismantle these barriers.’<sup>8</sup>

## Defining disability

By highlighting the significance of societal barriers to the full enjoyment of human rights by persons with disabilities, the 2006 Convention marks a definite shift from the previous ‘welfare’ approach to a ‘rights’ based approach – people with disabilities are not ‘minority interest groups’ or ‘welfare beneficiaries’ but are ‘holders’ of rights.<sup>ii</sup> It identifies which policy gaps need addressing and which areas require reinforcement in protecting rights.<sup>iii</sup>

Indeed, as highlighted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) in its [World Report on Disability \(2011\)](#), disability is ‘complex, dynamic, multidimensional and contested’.<sup>9</sup> Yet WHO suggests that rather than seeing the medical model and the social model as dichotomous, ‘disability should be viewed neither as purely medical nor as purely social... A balanced approach is needed, giving appropriate weight to the different aspects of disability.’ In this respect, and in line with the aforementioned definition in the 2006 UN Convention, the World Report on Disability suggests the use of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), which ‘understands functioning and disability as a dynamic interaction between health conditions and contextual factors, both personal and environmental... Disability is the umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, referring to the negative aspects of the interaction between an individual (with a health

condition) and that individual's contextual factors (environmental and personal factors).' Stressing that disability is not exclusively an individual feature but is related to the social environment serves to highlight the importance of societal action, and particularly of policies, in addressing the factors which contribute to the experience of disability.

## Stressing that disability is not exclusively an individual feature but is related to the social environment serves to highlight the importance of societal action, and particularly of policies

Understanding that disability is 'an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions' also involves recognising the diverse range of forms of disability, as well as the diverse ways in which these are experienced by people with disabilities: 'Each has his or her personal preferences and responses to disability... Also while disability correlates with disadvantage, not all people with disability are equally disadvantaged.'<sup>12</sup> Approaches to disability should be able to recognise this diversity and policies in this area should take into account the different ways in which disability is experienced. In this respect, whilst it is common to distinguish different types of disability (e.g. sensory, physical, mental,

intellectual), WHO has argued that experiences and needs may be different, even for people with the same impairment.<sup>13</sup>

The complex, dynamic notion of disability also means that it may vary as a result of a number of factors or conditions, including age, exposure to environmental risks, socio-economic status, and culture.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the official acknowledgement of disability and of the conditions that generate it can lead to the adoption of measures to tackle it, as much as existing prejudice and negative attitudes in society may become a major hindrance for people with disabilities. As again indicated in the *World Report on Disability*, '[negative] attitudes are a major obstacle to the education of disabled children... In some cultures people with disabilities are seen as a form of divine punishment or as carriers of bad fortune.'<sup>15</sup>

## 2.2.



### The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities contributed to moving from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach for people with disabilities

# Disability and culture in international law

## UN Convention in The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities

Both Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) provide the right of **participate in the cultural life of the community to all persons**. As noted above, the **2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** is the foremost document on disability in international law, the purpose of which is 'to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.'<sup>16</sup> This purpose builds on the recognition that human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated and everyone is entitled to them, as highlighted in the Preamble of the Convention. In doing so, the Convention contributed to moving from a welfare-based to a rights-based approach for people with disabilities, and to strengthening the notion of 'mainstreaming', which requires all relevant policy areas and stakeholders, including culture, to integrate disability as a relevant dimension in their work.<sup>17</sup>

Of particular interest in the field of culture is Article 30, which refers to the participation of people with disabilities in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport. Article 30 establishes the following set of commitments for States Parties to the 2006 Convention:

- Recognition of the right of persons with disabilities to **take part in cultural life on an equal basis with others;**
- Adoption of appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:
  - Enjoy **access to cultural materials** in accessible formats;-
  - Enjoy **access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities**, in accessible formats;
- Adoption of appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity **to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential**, not only for their benefit, but also for the enrichment of society;
- Adoption of steps, in accordance with international law, to ensure that laws **protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier** to access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials;

- Recognition and support, on an equal basis with others, of the specific cultural and linguistic identity of persons with disabilities, including **sign languages and deaf culture**.<sup>18</sup>

The set of items outlined above point to the need both to guarantee equal access to cultural life for persons with disabilities and to enable them to fully, actively participate in cultural life. Other commitments enshrined elsewhere in the Convention, including those related to access to leisure, education and tourism, should also inform policies and measures adopted in the cultural field.

As of October 2016, 168 Parties have ratified the Convention, including all ASEM countries (except Ireland), as well as the European Union.

## Article 30 of the 2006 Convention points to the need both to guarantee equal access to cultural life for persons with disabilities and to enable them to fully, actively participate in cultural life

### Marrakesh Treaty on Access to Published Works for People with Visual Impairments

Further to the implications of the 2006 UN Convention, some

other documents in international law address the field of disability and culture. Among them is the [Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired or Otherwise Print Disabled](#).<sup>19</sup> Adopted by Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2013, the Marrakesh Treaty is in line with the 2006 UN Convention's call to ensure that laws protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier to access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials. Indeed, the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights indicated, in her 2014 report, that 'copyright law can impede the adaptation of works into formats functional for people with disabilities when copyright holders fail to publish works in accessible formats, such as Braille, or allow others to do so.'<sup>20</sup>

As shall be seen later, many countries have adopted copyright exceptions and limitations allowing not-for-profit organisations to produce and distribute accessible works to persons with disabilities, but other countries have so far failed to do so – this being precisely the purpose of the Marrakesh Treaty, which applies to printed works.<sup>21</sup> The Treaty also aims to facilitate the international transfer of accessible, specially adapted books, such as Braille or large print. In her 2014 report the UN Special Rapporteur called States to ratify the Treaty and ensure the inclusion of adequate exceptions in their copyright laws.

The Marrakesh Treaty came into force on 30 September 2016, following its ratification by 20 Member States. However, it should be noted that, at the time, only 5 ASEM partners had ratified it – namely, Australia, India, Korea, Mongolia and Singapore.<sup>22</sup>

## When the Marrakesh Treaty came into force in September 2016, only 5 ASEM partners had ratified it

### UNESCO Culture Conventions

On the other hand, while the major UNESCO Conventions in the field of culture do not explicitly refer to people with disabilities, explicit or implicit implications can be found in its subsequent development. Among the Operational Guidelines accompanying the 2005 [Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#) is a reference to the need to integrate culture into development policies at all levels, in order to 'foster universal access, participation in and enjoyment of creation and production of cultural expressions, especially for disadvantaged groups'.<sup>23</sup> Some UNESCO Member States have presented examples of policies and measures contributing to enhancing access to culture by people with disabilities when reporting on their implementation of the Convention. Some of these examples have been used in the preparation of this report.

Similarly, references to people with disabilities have also been integrated in the Operational Directives complementing the 2003 [Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage](#). As in the previous case, these references are included with regard to sustainable development. State Parties are called to ensure that safeguarding plans and programmes are fully inclusive of all sectors and strata of society, including persons

## The Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights has warned of the particular prejudice that may be suffered by people with disabilities when wishing to perform or display their artistic work

with disabilities among others; to recognise cultural practices, expressions and knowledge that are broadly inclusive of all sectors of society, again including people with disabilities; and to respect the intangible cultural heritage of several disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities, in order to contribute to lasting peace.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, some references can be found in the context of the implementation of the 1972 [World Heritage Convention](#), again in texts addressing sustainable development. A policy document adopted in 2005 calls State Parties to ensure that the conservation and management of World Heritage properties is based on the recognition of cultural diversity, inclusion and equity – which in practice requires improving the ability, opportunities and dignity of all and to promote equity, reduce social and economic inequalities and reduce exclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability and ethnicity, among others.<sup>25</sup>

### Other mechanisms

One final important aspect should be noted as regards the references to culture and disability in international law. The aforementioned [UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights](#) has in recent years contributed to enhancing the understanding of the meaning and practical implications of cultural rights. The first holder of this post, Farida Shaheed, referred to people with disabilities in some of her reports. In one of her earlier contributions, she identified the cultural rights of persons with disabilities as one of her priorities, further indicating that she would address this issue on the basis of Article 30 of the UN 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and in full collaboration with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.<sup>24</sup> It is worth noting that some ASEM members, such as Malta, have referred to this statement as well as to the UN 2006 Convention when including the cultural participation of people with disabilities in their own policy documents.<sup>25</sup> More specifically, when addressing the right to freedom of artistic expression, the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights has warned of the particular prejudice that may be suffered by people with disabilities when wishing to perform or display their artistic work.<sup>26</sup>



## 2.3.

# Global and regional strategies on disability and culture



In addition to international law, some international policies and strategies have also addressed people with disabilities, and occasionally their access to and participation in culture, in recent years. The most significant references are presented hereafter.

Adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015, *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* establishes a set of global goals (the 'Sustainable Development Goals', SDGs) which will guide global development strategies over 15 years. Whereas its predecessor, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000, were aimed at countries in the 'Global South', the new 2030 Agenda and its SDGs are meant to inform all countries in the world, on the understanding that sustainable development is a challenge everywhere. In addition, whilst the MDGs did not refer explicitly to persons with disabilities, several references can be found in the SDGs – including as regards equal access to education and training, achieving decent work for everyone, promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of everyone and guaranteeing access to safe, affordable and inclusive transport systems and green and public spaces.<sup>29</sup> While no direct relation is established between disability and culture (cultural aspects playing a minor role within the SDGs), some of the aforementioned aspects (e.g. those referring to education, employment or access to public space) may inform cultural policies

and measures which address these aspects as well.

At regional level, a few additional references can be noted:

- At a conference held in Incheon, Korea, in 2012, ministers and governmental representatives from Asia and the Pacific, convened by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), agreed to launch the **Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2013-2022)**, which replaces the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2003-2012). The Incheon Strategy to "Make the Right Real" for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific was also adopted on the occasion.<sup>30</sup> Limited reference is made of cultural aspects. These initiatives have informed some countries in Asia and the Pacific, such as Cambodia, when drafting their own national strategies on disability.<sup>31</sup>
- Also underway is the **ASEAN Decade of Persons with Disabilities (2011-2020)**, proclaimed by the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Bali, Indonesia, in 2011.<sup>32</sup>
- As shall be seen later (section 3.1), some recommendations, action plans and other initiatives have been adopted by other regional bodies, including the European Union and the Council of Europe.

## 2.4.

# Policies on culture and disability: challenges, objectives and rationales

As the references presented above have shown, the international community has paid an increasing attention to the rights of persons with disabilities in recent decades, with the UN 2006 Convention marking a particularly significant turning point, which has led to an increasing number of strategies and policies at national and local level. While, as the next sections will prove, several policies and programmes on culture and disability have also been adopted in this context, earlier references can also be found – indeed, grassroots work and public policies in the field of culture and disability have existed in many ASEM countries for several decades.



Several studies have been conducted to identify the obstacles hindering cultural participation of people with disabilities

### Key challenges and obstacles

The attention paid to this area and the resulting adoption of policies and measures results from the acknowledgment of the specific obstacles and challenges experienced by people with disabilities, coupled with the recognition of their equal rights to access and participate in cultural life and the understanding that specific forms of expression can be developed by those experiencing disability. Several studies have been conducted to identify the obstacles hindering cultural participation of people with disabilities.<sup>33</sup> Even though these analyses have mainly been carried out at national level, the challenges identified can generally be seen to apply to other societies as well. The main factors that have been found to hinder access and participation in culture among people with disabilities are as follows:

- **Physical barriers**, including lack of public transport to attend cultural activities, limited accessibility of cultural facilities (e.g. as per parking availability, wheelchair access, appropriate seating, accessibility of contents to people with a visual or hearing impairment, etc.).
- **Economic barriers**, which may be particularly significant in the case of people with disabilities claiming social benefits.
- **Social barriers**, including the perception of being treated 'like a second class citizen' by being made to use separate entrances to buildings, as well as other psychological difficulties and fears related to 'being different' and engaging in activities which might be seen as not suitable by some.

- **Information / awareness barriers**, including the fact that existing information about cultural activities does not always provide details about accessibility for people with disabilities, as well as the failure to disseminate information in accessible formats.

Whereas many of the policies and measures adopted by governments and other organisations which will be outlined in the next chapter have arguably contributed to addressing some of these obstacles, important challenges remain. A recent evaluation report published by the Council of Europe identified a set of remaining challenges to enable full participation of people with disabilities in cultural life:

- Insufficient or no accessibility to museums, theatres, objects of culture, tourist sites, places and activities of cultural value, to related information and transport, etc.
- Strict intellectual property rights resulting in hindrances to the production of accessible formats of artistic and cultural goods (films, books, etc.).
- Lack of participation in mainstream cultural, sports, tourism and leisure activities, as well as inadequate conditions of specific cultural, artistic, intellectual, sports and similar activities.
- Financial burden on persons using personal assistants.<sup>34</sup>

## Relevant policy objectives

The barriers and challenges outlined above should be borne in mind when conceiving policies and programmes in the field of culture and disability. Likewise, further to the principles and objectives established in international law standards, recommendations valid

in all policy fields also exist. The 2011 World Report on Disability identified the following set of policy recommendations, which are relevant at all levels:<sup>35</sup>

1. **Enable access to all mainstream policies, systems and services**, e.g. cultural facilities and programmes.
2. **Invest in specific programmes and services for people with disabilities**, e.g. specific programmes on culture and disability.
3. **Adopt a national disability strategy and plan of action**
4. **Involve people with disabilities**, namely, make sure that people with disabilities are listened to and actively engaged – either individually or through representative organisations – when policies and programmes addressing them are involved.
5. **Improve human resource capacity**, e.g. train staff in different public services that will interact with people with disabilities, such as museum or library staff.
6. **Provide adequate funding and improve affordability**, i.e. provide sufficient resources to enable people with disabilities to access public services at affordable prices.
7. **Increase public awareness and understanding of disability**
8. **Improve disability data collection**, e.g. ensure that surveys include disability as a variable and allow for appropriate data on people with disabilities to be collected, and that this is in line with international standards.
9. **Strengthen and support research on disability**

The general recommendations presented above have been taken

into account when examining the range of policies and programmes adopted by ASEM members in the field of culture and disability (see chapter 3 of this report).

## it should increasingly be expected that mainstream discourses in cultural policy and their translation into specific programmes are inclusive of everyone

### Arguments and rationales

While the analysis presented above has addressed a range of challenges and objectives that are specific to people with disabilities, it should be noted that policies and programmes on culture and disability often operate in the broader context of cultural policies and programmes and, as such, are informed by discourses and rationales that may be valid in other areas of cultural policy as well (e.g. culture and health, culture and social inclusion, cultural diversity, etc.). This may be seen to be in line with the recognition of the universal rights of people with disabilities, as well as the aforementioned objective of enabling access for people with disabilities to mainstream policies, systems and services – indeed, it should increasingly be expected that mainstream discourses in cultural policy and their translation into specific programmes are inclusive of everyone.

## Effective empowerment and social inclusion of people with disabilities require their being actively involved in relevant decision-making as well as their active role in cultural life, e.g. as creators or performers

In this respect, a set of rationales may be seen to inform, to varying degree and intensity, the discourses in the field of culture and disability, as described hereafter:<sup>36</sup>

- The **legal perspective**, which refers to international, regional or national legal documents as the basis for the adoption of policies and measures in the field of cultural disability. It is worth noting that legal approaches in this field can be based either on positive liberties (e.g. the right to take part in cultural life, the right to develop and utilise one's creative, artistic and intellectual potential) or on non-discrimination principles (e.g. ensuring that intellectual property law does not discriminate against people with disabilities), but should ideally take into account both these perspectives. Indeed, as in other areas of human rights, including cultural rights, policies in the area of culture and disability should respect, protect and fulfil the rights of people with disabilities, and adopt a diverse range of measures accordingly.<sup>37</sup>
- The **social perspective**, including the recognition that

access to and participation in cultural life can contribute to desirable social objectives, including individual health and wellbeing, individual and collective empowerment, social cohesion, and the strengthening of social capital and civic skills. Extensive literature has been devoted in recent decades to the social significance of impacts of participation in the arts and other cultural activities, as well as to the more specific health benefits of cultural participation.<sup>38</sup> Although each artform or discipline may hold different potential impacts, there is evidence to suggest that most forms of cultural participation, insofar as they involve active engagement and are conducted willingly and in full awareness, hold the potential to bring about positive social results.<sup>39</sup> While it could be argued that a social perspective in policies addressing culture and disability also exists in traditional welfare-based approaches, it should be increasingly understood that effective empowerment and social inclusion of people with disabilities require their being actively involved in relevant decision-making as well as their active role in cultural life, e.g. as creators or performers of their own messages, on equal conditions with others. Finally, it should be noted that measures fostering accessibility for people with disabilities (e.g. large print, ramps) will often be beneficial for other people who would not identify as such (e.g. elderly people, parents with prams, etc.) – therefore, a range of often less explicit social benefits can derive from measures adopted in this field.

- The **cultural perspective**, which recognises that specific aesthetics, symbols and narratives can emerge when people with disabilities are able to fully develop their cultural and creative capacities – and that this contributes to enriching

cultural life. Several authors have argued that cultural expressions created by people with disabilities, or which reflect experiences of disability, contribute to challenging existing canons and hierarchies, and thus to broaden mainstream perspectives on artistic quality. In a recent interview, British choreographer Janice Parker considers:

## Specific aesthetics, symbols and narratives can emerge when people with disabilities are able to fully develop their cultural and creative capacities

“We have to ask the question, “Who can dance and what can dance be?” We have a sense of a hierarchy of a normative form at the top, which has two arms and two legs! And it's very dominant at the moment, in our culture. How can we turn that round, not to put something at the bottom of the hierarchy, but to make a spectrum? There's all different vocabularies in there and dance needs them all. Disabled people have that capacity to create extraordinary movement that has a whole other spectrum and vocabulary in there.”<sup>40</sup>

The recognition that cultural expressions developed by people with disabilities can be unique and valuable (“create extraordinary movement that has a whole other spectrum and vocabulary in there”) can be related to the ‘disability arts’ movement, which developed in several countries since the

## A deep political message often runs through projects actively involving people with disabilities

1970s. Disability arts has been defined as 'a specific genre of work that explores and communicates lived experiences of disability',<sup>41</sup> In this respect, disability arts, like any other form of art, 'is seriously intentioned creative work... made with some sort of aesthetic purpose. It is not a hobby to keep the cripples' hands busy. And it is not therapy.'<sup>42</sup> The recognition of cultural expressions inspired by the experience of disability can be linked with the recognition of the diversity of cultural expressions as an objective in cultural policy and to the understanding that cultural ecosystems should be dynamic, open to challenging expressions and innovation. Indeed, in recent years policies addressing culture and disability have in some countries been integrated in broader approaches to cultural diversity, understanding that access for people with disabilities and the recognition of the value of cultural expressions inspired by disability were consistent with similar approaches towards recognising and valuing ethnic, class-based or gender diversity, among others. In this respect, it could also be argued that a deep political message often runs through projects actively involving people with disabilities. The EU-funded project [Un-Label – New Grounds for Inclusive Performing Arts](#), which brings together partners in four European countries, has indicated that, by contributing to the development of performing arts productions involving artists with and without disabilities, 'the focus is not on the disabilities but on the diversity. Every individual is different

and unique, seeking to develop his or her expressive means. Within Un-Label, everybody perceives diversity as an opportunity of expressive pluralism and innovation, thus as an opportunity to evolve.'<sup>43</sup>

- The **economic perspective:** as in other areas of cultural policy, initiatives in the field of culture and disability can also be conducted with an economic rationale, highlighting their potential contribution to maximising income or benefit. In this respect, New Zealand's Office for Disability Issues has suggested that '[arts] organisations can't afford not to market to disabled people because disabled people are a significant and growing segment of the population. One in six people has an impairment. Combine that with an ageing population and the knowledge that disability increases with age, and we're talking about a lot of people.'<sup>44</sup> Economic arguments may tend to focus on people with disabilities as audiences, rather than as active contributors to cultural life. While possibly less visible than other perspectives or rationales in the area of culture and disability, these arguments may be influential and relevant in the design of policies and programmes now and in the future.

## 2.5.



Braille

**Very often the policies and practices that can more effectively enable access to and participation in cultural life are initiated or managed by local and regional governments**

**Following the general framework of legislation and policies on culture and disability presented above, this final sub-section presents a set of final remarks which should be taken into account when analysing specific policies and programmes in this area.**

### The importance of cities and the local level

The countries covered by the present report have very different constitutional arrangements, with national (i.e. central, federal), often regional (i.e. provincial, state), and local (i.e. city, town) governments holding varying degrees of competence in the areas of culture, disability and others relevant fields. However, it should be noted that very often the policies and practices that can more effectively enable access to and participation in cultural life are initiated or managed by local and regional governments, particularly in countries where these tiers of authority have been provided with suitable competences and resources. This is also in line with the frequent observation that it is particularly at local level where the right to take part in cultural life is more often exercised.<sup>45</sup>

While the time and resources available for conducting this report have led to focusing the identification of legal and policy documents mainly at national level (which remains indeed the main focus of most of the existing literature on cultural policy), some examples of action at local level have also been identified, which serve to prove the increasing importance of cities and urban areas in providing people with disabilities with opportunities to

## Final observations

access and participate in cultural life.

The need to include people with disabilities in local cultural policies and strategies has been stressed by the [Agenda 21 for Culture](#), an international document adopted in 2004 which provides guidance for local cultural policies concerned with sustainable development. Among its undertakings is a commitment to 'promote expression as a basic dimension of human dignity and social inclusion without prejudice by gender, age, ethnic origin, *disability*, poverty or any other kind of discrimination...', and another one to 'guarantee that people with disabilities can enjoy cultural goods and services, facilitating their access to cultural services and activities'.<sup>46</sup> The Agenda 21 for culture was updated and complemented in 2015 with a new practical guide entitled [Culture 21: Actions](#), which refers to the need for cultural facilities and spaces to be accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities, as well as several other commitments promoting access and active participation of disadvantaged groups in cultural life.<sup>47</sup>

**The provision of clear and accessible information and the ability for people with disabilities to take part in decision-making on policies and programmes affecting them become fundamental steps in this respect – as embodied in the often quoted slogan ‘Nothing about us without us’**



### The ethical dimension

As in many areas of human interaction, work involving people with disabilities in the cultural life should take into account a set of ethical principles, serving to express the respect for everyone involved. Of particular importance is the ability of everyone involved in projects and programmes to do so out of one's free will and in full awareness of the meaning and implications of participation. The provision of clear and accessible information and the ability for people with disabilities to take part in decision-making on policies and programmes affecting them become fundamental steps in this respect – as embodied in the often quoted slogan ‘Nothing about us without us’.

A reflection on the ethical implications of work with people with disabilities is often found in culture and disability projects, whether made explicit or implicit. A drama project conducted between 2010 and 2013 in a community residential home for people with disabilities and in interaction with the local community in Roselea, Finland, applied a set of principles (choice, respect, equality, safety) inspired by a previous project in the UK. In the words of one of the project managers, ‘[the] principle of choice was critical to our programme. Under this principle, people define and decide for themselves how they want to use the creative process, what they want to do and how...’.<sup>46</sup> Another significant issue addressed in projects in this area relates to the tension between visualising or minimising the ‘otherness’ of people with disabilities, as Austrian artist Katrin Wölger has observed.<sup>49</sup>

### Diversity within disability

As noted earlier, disability is an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions, and comprises a wide range of conditions and circumstances. Policies and programmes in this area should be able to take into account this diversity, and ideally adopt specific measures to cater for different groups. Some authors have suggested that particular attention should be paid to women and children with disabilities,<sup>50</sup> although this general orientation may need to be adapted to the needs and challenges identified in each specific context.

Of course, the adoption of measures suited to diverse needs and adapted to different artforms and contexts for cultural participation (e.g. theatres, libraries, museums, heritage sites, schools, cinemas, streets and squares, etc.) is complex and demanding in terms of resources, as some authors have noted.<sup>51</sup> Measures in a wide range of areas and addressing a diverse range of groups are presented in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3:

# Policies and Measures on Arts and Disability in ASEM Countries

This section presents evidence of initiatives existing in ASEM member countries, at legislation, policy and programme level, which have addressed the relation between culture and disability. Rather than a comprehensive mapping, the aim of this exercise is to present the wide range of measures that may be adopted in this field, providing illustrative evidence for each. Information has been arranged in three successive levels, addressing legislation, policy, and programmes and projects respectively, with additional subsections allowing thematic structuring. A wide range of stakeholders is involved in the design and implementation of the measures presented hereafter, from regional, national and local authorities to civil society organisations and individual artists and professionals.

### 3.1.



**In Finland, the Constitution recognises the rights of persons using sign language and of persons in need of interpretation or translation aid owing to disability**

## Legislation

### Constitutions

References to people with disabilities can be found in the national Constitutions of some ASEM member countries. Occasionally, this is complemented with references to their relations with the broader community and participation in cultural life. Of particular interest is Finland, where the [Constitution](#) recognises the rights of persons using sign language and of persons in need of interpretation or translation aid owing to disability.<sup>52</sup> Meanwhile, the [Constitution of Portugal](#) refers to the State's commitment to implement a national policy in the field of disability, including the provision of support to people with disabilities and their families, social awareness-raising and guarantees that the rights of people with disabilities are effectively fulfilled.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, the [Constitution of Romania](#) establishes that the State shall develop a national policy of equal opportunities, disability prevention and treatment to enable people with disabilities to effectively participate in community life.<sup>54</sup>

### Inclusion of culture in national legislation on disability

In the wake of the adoption of the UN 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in the last few years several countries have adopted new laws on the rights of persons with disabilities, which in some cases updated previous legislation. Often adapting language from international standards, several of these texts include references to culture. In **China**, the Law on the Protection of People with Disabilities (2008) includes a full chapter on cultural life, addressing issues such as the State's duty to protect the equal right of persons with disabilities to participate in cultural life and public authorities' commitment, at all levels of government, to encourage and assist persons with disabilities so as to participate in cultural life. Furthermore, Article 42 refers to the need for cultural, sports and recreational activities to be 'integrated in public cultural life and geared to the different

characteristics and needs of different categories of persons with disabilities'. Article 43 presents a set of specific tasks to be accomplished by the government and society, including to reflect the life of persons with disabilities in the media and to support the writing and publication of books in Braille, audio books and other similar media, among others. Other articles address the provision of assistance for the engagement of people with disabilities in creative work and the promotion of mutual understanding and exchanges among persons with disabilities and their fellow citizens.<sup>55</sup>

**In China, the Law on the Protection of People with Disabilities (2008) includes a full chapter on cultural life**

In **Malaysia**, the [Persons with Disabilities Act \(2008\)](#), closely aligned with the 2006 UN Convention, addresses access to cultural life in Article 31, including references to equal access to cultural materials, TV programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities in accessible formats, as well as to cultural venues and facilities. Measures shall be adopted to enable the creative, artistic and intellectual potential of persons with disabilities to be developed not only for their own benefit, but for the enrichment of society, as well as to recognise and support their specific cultural and linguistic identity.<sup>56</sup>

**Cambodia's** [Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(2009\)](#) indicates that measures will be adopted to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities in social, economic and cultural development plans affecting them. On the other hand, measures are adopted to ensure full accessibility of all public places, including leisure and cultural centres.<sup>57</sup>

In 2010, **Viet Nam** adopted the [Law on Persons with Disabilities](#), which refers to the access of persons with disabilities to cultural services, their right to be provided with services suited to their forms and degrees of disabilities in a range of areas including culture, and the need for the State to adopt measures to support participation of people with disabilities in cultural life, among other areas.<sup>58</sup>

The [Rights of Persons with Disabilities Bill](#) adopted in **India** in 2014 includes one article on culture and recreation, which establishes that the appropriate Government and the local authorities shall take measures to promote and protect the rights of all persons with disabilities to have a cultural life. A range of possible measures

are listed thereafter, including the provision of support to artists and writers with disabilities, the establishment of a disability history museum, measures to make art accessible, the redesign of cultural courses to enable universal accessibility and the development of technology, assistive devices and equipment to facilitate access and inclusion for persons with disabilities in recreational activities.<sup>59</sup>

## Slovenia's Act Regulating the Realisation of the Public Interest in the Field of Culture (2002) indicates that special attention shall be paid to the situation of some themes and groups, including the cultural needs of persons with disabilities

### Inclusion of disability in national legislation on culture

Elsewhere, evidence can also be found of countries in which general or sector-based cultural legislation at national level has included references to the rights of people with disabilities and the necessary measures to enable their access and participation in cultural life. In **Hungary**, relevant references can be found in the 2001 Act on the Protection of Cultural Heritage, which provides that efforts must be made to ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities in terms

of the accessibility of cultural heritage. Likewise, the 1997 Act on Museums, Public Library Supplies and Public Education indicates that cultural goods must be accessible to everybody.<sup>60</sup> In **Finland**, changes to the legislation on creators' rights in force since 2006 have facilitated access for people with disabilities, through the translation of books into sign language, the establishment of visual arts exhibits that can be touched and other measures.<sup>61</sup>

**Slovenia's** Act Regulating the Realisation of the Public Interest in the Field of Culture (2002) indicates that special attention shall be paid to the situation of some themes and groups, including the cultural needs of persons with disabilities. The implications of the law shall inform the work of both national and local authorities.<sup>62</sup>

Meanwhile, in **Sweden**, where national cultural policy objectives are adopted by the Parliament, the [latest set of objectives](#) (2009) include the promotion of opportunities for everyone to experience culture, participate in educational programmes and develop their creative abilities, as well as the promotion of accessibility. While not referring explicitly to people with disabilities,

references to them were included in the original proposition and several commentators have stressed that people with disabilities are in practice one of the visible beneficiaries of some of the aforementioned objectives.<sup>63</sup>

In **Belgium**, the Participation Decree adopted in Flanders, which came into force in 2008, provides a policy framework for participation initiatives in a range of policy areas, including access to culture and referring to a range of priority groups, including people with disabilities. The Decree identifies policy instruments and funding to stimulate participation among key groups.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, existing

legislation on territory, urbanism and heritage in Flanders establishes that all new cinema theatres should be accessible to people with disabilities.<sup>65</sup>

## In Sweden, the Copyright Act has included technology-neutral provisions which guarantee that persons with disabilities have access to copyright-protected works

### References to people with disabilities in copyright legislation

A subset of the previous section is that of legislation in the field of copyright, where several countries have inserted specific references to the needs of persons with disabilities. Among them are those that, in line with the aforementioned Marrakesh Treaty, address access to books and other printed works. In **Austria**, the Copyright Act permits the non-commercial use of a published work by means of copying and distribution to people with disabilities, in a form which is suitable for them.<sup>66</sup> In **India**, amendments to the Copyright Act have broadened the scope of the principle of 'fair use', first introduced in 1957 to enable exceptions to copyright; the amendments have also increased the access to copyrighted materials for people with disabilities and organisations working with them.<sup>67</sup> In **Sweden**,

the Copyright Act has included technology-neutral provisions which guarantee that persons with disabilities have access to copyright-protected works.<sup>68</sup>

### Regional guidelines

Operating in a middle ground between national legislation and policy, a set of recommendations, guidelines and related documents on culture and disability have been adopted by regional integration and intergovernmental organisations. Some relevant examples are presented in this section.

## The Council of Ministers of the European Union has adopted a range of documents relevant to culture and disability over the past few decades

The Council of Ministers of the **European Union** has adopted a range of documents relevant to culture and disability over the past few decades. Among them, a [Resolution on Accessibility of Cultural Infrastructure and Cultural Activities for People with Disabilities](#) was adopted in 2003, in the context of the European Year of People with Disabilities. The Resolution called EU Member States and the European Commission to examine ways to integrate people with disabilities into the arts and cultural sectors and to support equality of opportunities in the production and promotion of their work, to

encourage the culture sector to contribute to promoting a positive image of people with disabilities, to continue efforts to eliminate existing barriers and examine further ways and means to facilitate and improve the access of people with disabilities to culture, to encourage the improvement of accessibility by using appropriate signage, and to enhance information-sharing in this area.<sup>67</sup>

On the other hand, in 2010, in the framework of the European Year of the Fight against Poverty and Social Exclusion, a set of [Conclusions on the Role of Culture in the Fight Against Poverty and Social Exclusion](#) was also adopted. The Conclusions invited EU Member States to remove obstacles to access culture, by, among others, raising awareness within the cultural sector of the need to welcome all types of public and recognise their different needs, and circulating suitable and easily accessible cultural information, paying particular attention to the situation of people with disabilities.<sup>70</sup>

Also in 2010, the [European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#), entitled *A Renewed Commitment to a Barrier-Free Europe*, was adopted. References to culture were included in the chapter on 'Participation', one of eight 'Areas for Action' identified by the Strategy. In this context, the document indicated that the European Commission would work to improve the accessibility of sports, leisure, cultural and recreational organisations, activities, events, venues, goods and services and foster the cross-border transfer of copyright works in accessible format, among others. The EU was also to support national activities to make sports, leisure, cultural and recreational organisations and activities accessible, and use the possibilities for exceptions in the European Directive on copyright.<sup>71</sup>

Meanwhile, in 1992 the **Council of Europe** adopted a [Recommendation on a Coherent Policy for People with Disabilities](#), which stressed

## The revised European Social Charter (1996) stressed in Article 15 that access to cultural activities was a means to promote social integration and participation in community life for people with disabilities

that the rehabilitation of people with disabilities is one of the foremost tasks in social policy. The Recommendation stated that people with disabilities should have access to cultural activities and should be encouraged to participate actively in cultural, social and political activities, including at professional level, and receive information to this end. In addition, measures should be adopted to address the obstacles which limit access and participation in cultural life and to develop means and tools adequate to different forms of disability.<sup>72</sup> Later, the revised [European Social Charter \(1996\)](#) stressed in Article 15 that access to cultural activities was a means to promote social integration and participation in community life for people with disabilities.<sup>73</sup>

More recently, in 2013 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation to Member States on Ensuring Full, Equal and Effective Participation of Persons with Disabilities in Culture, Sports, Tourism and Leisure Activities. The text contained 11 specific

recommendations to the governments of Member States, including 'to take a twin-track approach, mainstreaming the participation of people with disabilities in culture, sports, tourism and leisure activities for the general population, while not neglecting particular activities aimed at persons with disabilities specifically, reflecting their diversity and needs'.<sup>74</sup>

A [Disability Action Plan](#) was adopted by the Council of Europe in 2006, covering a ten-year period until 2015. Among the 15 key action lines identified, action line n°2 deals with the participation of people with disabilities in cultural life.<sup>75</sup> Cultural aspects also played an indirect role in other action lines, including those dealing with information and communication, access to the built environment, and to transport.<sup>76</sup> The Action Plan has recently been the subject of an evaluation and led to the elaboration of a draft Strategy for the period 2017-2023, which is being subject to a public consultation at the time of writing.<sup>77</sup>

In Asia and the Pacific, documents adopted by the **UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)** should be particularly mentioned. In the context of the aforementioned Incheon Conference (2012), a [Ministerial Declaration on the Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities \(2013-2022\)](#) was adopted.<sup>78</sup> The Declaration made no explicit reference to cultural aspects, although some of its guiding principles could inform measures adopted in this area.

Finally, the [Bali Declaration on the Enhancement of the Role and Participation of the Persons with Disabilities in ASEAN Community](#), adopted by Member States of the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** in 2011, included a commitment to '[ensuring] the fulfilment of the rights of persons with disabilities in all aspects of life through mainstreaming disability perspective in the development

and implementation of ASEAN policies and programmes across the economic, political security and socio-cultural pillars of the ASEAN Community'.<sup>79</sup>



## 3.2.

### In Malta, the 2011 National Cultural Policy explicitly refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and identifies 'cultural inclusion' as one of the key principles of cultural policy

### Tokyo's vision towards the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and beyond aims to build a social infrastructure that allows everyone to enjoy the arts and culture and make it the most barrier-free city in the world in terms of culture

## Policies

### Inclusion of disability in major cultural policy documents

In line with the calls to mainstream the attention to people with disabilities in policies addressed to all citizens, some governments have included references to disability in broad-ranging cultural policy documents. Among them is **Malta**, where the [2011 National Cultural Policy](#) explicitly refers to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and identifies 'cultural inclusion' as one of the key principles of cultural policy, describing this as follows: 'Cultural inclusion involves social, physical, intellectual and economic accessibility. In close collaboration with the National Commission for Persons with Disability, the Malta Federation of Organisations [of] Persons with Disability, and the National Commission for the Promotion of Equality, this Policy supports initiatives that aim to overcome discrimination or exclusion and improving access for all.'<sup>80</sup> As the explanation shows, the integration of references to disability in mainstream policy documents needs to be accompanied with specific measures and methodologies, including partnerships with key stakeholders in the field of disability. The principle of 'cultural inclusion' is complemented by others which may also be relevant to people with disabilities, including 'Empowerment at all levels of the community' and 'Incentives and access for all'. Among the key policy actions deriving from this framework is the plan to 'Enforce measures to improve access whenever possible, in cultural sites and venues and in facilitating the provision of services for persons with disability, in close collaboration with the National Commission for Persons with Disability.'<sup>81</sup> Other measures also refer to the funding of cultural activities led by disadvantaged groups and the promotion of access to culture in schools, hospitals and other spaces not associated with culture.

Relevant policy initiatives have also been adopted at local level. In Tokyo, **Japan**, the Metropolitan Government has shown an increasing interest in the participation of people with disabilities in artistic activities. Measures of support for activities in this area and media coverage of arts and disability have increased and become priority areas in local cultural policy. These steps have been adopted in the context of preparations for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Indeed, the city's vision towards 2020 and beyond states the aim to 'use the opportunity presented by the Paralympic Games to build a social infrastructure that allows everyone to enjoy the arts and culture, aiming to make Tokyo the most barrier-free city in the world in terms of culture as well.'<sup>82</sup>

## Adoption of strategies and broad-ranging programmes on culture and disability

However, the adoption of specific strategies and broad-ranging programmes in the field of culture and disability arises as a more frequent option, as exemplified by the examples presented in this sub-section. Often, the adoption of strategies in this field combines several aims, including the provision of support to organisations active in the field of culture and disability, the promotion of adaptive measures among mainstream cultural organisations, venues and events, capacity-building of professionals, and awareness-raising within the sector and among the general public. In some cases, the adoption of strategies is preceded by intensive consultation and negotiation with key stakeholders, which may also be involved in subsequent implementation.

One good example is provided by **Australia**, where a **National Arts and Disability Strategy** was adopted in 2009 by the Cultural Ministers Council, a body which brings together federal authorities as well as representatives of the federated states and territories. The document, adopted following a broad consultation process which received over 100 submissions from the arts and disability sector and people with disabilities, sets priorities which should inform policies and measures on arts and disability at all territorial levels, under a common vision: 'People with disabilities participate fully in the arts and cultural life of Australia. The artistic aspirations and achievements of people with a disability are a valued and visible part of Australian culture.'<sup>83</sup>

In subsequent years, the Australia Council for the Arts has recognised the area of disability within its Cultural Engagement Framework and delivered a range of outcomes through its Disability Action Plan, as well as requiring funded organisations to develop disability action plans.<sup>84</sup>

Another case in point is **Finland**, where several ambitious policy initiatives have been adopted over recent years. In 2001, an Accessibility Committee involving representatives of people with disabilities, cultural institutions and experts was established by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and led to the publication of the *Culture for all* study (2002), the setting-up of another committee on 'People with Disabilities and Culture' and the formulation of proposals for an action programme (2004). In its report, the Committee presented a vision of an ideal society, where everyone would have equal opportunities to enjoy the arts and culture and to express their own creativity, with the arts and

cultural services being accessible to all and cultural service providers being aware of the diversity existing among citizens, and their needs. Initial measures resulting from this consultation period included the establishment of a website to provide professionals with practical information on how to improve accessibility to cultural facilities, as well as the inclusion of people with disabilities in the broader Government Programme on Arts and Artists Policy, both as producers and as consumers.<sup>85</sup> A mid-term action programme entitled 'Access to Art and Culture for All 2006-2010' was adopted by the Ministry thereafter, with specific measures foreseen to improve cultural services for people with disabilities, increase resources and monitor progress.<sup>86</sup> The programme did not address people with disabilities exclusively, but also ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups. More recently, a new report by the Access to Art and Culture Committee published by the Ministry of Education and Culture highlighted that cultural rights provided an

enabling context to foster universal access to cultural life, including among people with disabilities.<sup>87</sup>

An **Arts and Disability Policy and Strategy (2012-2016)** was adopted by the Arts Council of **Ireland** in 2012. The document resulted from a specific consultation process but also built on the Arts Council's previous engagement in the sector, over 25 years. The key values underpinning the Arts Council's approach to arts and disability were presented as follows: equality, the adoption of the social model of disability (which implied embedding a consideration of access needs in all stages, so as to ensure that adopted measures did not further perpetuate barriers to participation), the complexity and diversity of people and practices, a holistic approach (namely, combining the mainstreaming of access and participation for artists and audiences with disabilities, the provision of strategic targeted support, and a capacity-building process). The Policy and Strategy included actions and commitments structured under three areas: structures and operations (e.g. training, review of all funding programmes, as well as their processes and impacts, communication, review of staff selection processes and procedures, etc.); resources and supports (a range of measures to support artists and organisations active in culture and disability, including through commissions, networking, peer-mentoring, awareness-raising, etc.) and strategic alliances (including partnerships at national and international level, including with Arts & Disability Ireland, the national development and resource organisation for arts and disability).<sup>88</sup>

In the **Republic of Korea**, a set of policies and major programmes to provide support to people with disabilities and their participation in the cultural field have been adopted since 2007. The Culture and Arts Enjoyment Support Project for the Disabled aims to broaden and intensify participation of

people with disabilities in arts and culture, building creative capacities, addressing existing obstacles and providing support to non-profit organisations representing people with disabilities. Other measures in this field have included the establishment of a Culture and Arts Center for People with Disabilities and the organisation of a fair on accessible art.<sup>89</sup>

In **Spain**, a cross-ministerial strategy entitled **Culture for All: Accessible Culture for People with Disabilities** was adopted in 2011, bringing together the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Health, Social Affairs and Equality. The strategy referred to the UN 2006 Convention and provided survey results on the obstacles experienced by people with disabilities as regards access and participation in cultural life. It also indicated the aim to bring together under a single framework pre-existing initiatives, as well as to establish common criteria and guidelines for all stakeholders intervening in

## In the United Kingdom, work in the field of culture and disability has progressively been integrated into broader policy initiatives, particularly those in the field of diversity

this field. 10 strategic objectives, accompanied by an action line, and ranging from universal accessibility, through research, employment opportunities, the adaptation of

intellectual property rights and awareness-raising, to the active involvement of representative organisations in the monitoring of the strategy, were listed.<sup>90</sup>

In recent decades, several major policy documents on culture and disability have been adopted by policymaking and funding organisations in the **United Kingdom**, including the Department of Culture, Media and Sport; Arts Council England; Creative Scotland; the Arts Council of Wales; and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. The Disability Equality Scheme 2010-13 adopted by Arts Council England established its commitment to 'mainstream disability equality into all of our decisions and activities', in line with national legislation in the field of equality and non-discrimination.<sup>91</sup> In line with the aim to mainstream disability, work in the field of culture and disability has progressively been integrated into broader policy initiatives, particularly those in the field of diversity. Arts Council England's 10-year strategic framework 2010-2020 refers to the aim to enable everyone to experience and be inspired by the arts, museums and libraries and to ensure that the leadership and workforce in this sector are diverse.<sup>92</sup> In this framework, disability issues have also been integrated in the so-called 'Creative Case for Diversity', which assumes that several social, economic and demographic variables need to be taken into account to ensure everyone's possibilities to access and participate in cultural life.<sup>93</sup>

## Inclusion of cultural aspects in national disability strategies

In several countries, national strategies and action plans on disability have included references to access and participation in cultural life. One relevant example is **Austria**, where the **National Action Plan for Disability 2012-2020**, a cross-ministerial initiative involving,



**The Australia Council for the Arts has recognised the area of disability within its Cultural Engagement Framework and delivered a range of outcomes through its Disability Action Plan, as well as requiring funded organisations to develop disability action plans**



among others, the Arts and Culture Division of the Federal Chancellery (formerly, the Federal Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture) and aimed at implementing the UN 2006 Convention, includes a section on culture. Priorities in this area include the adoption of measures to improve accessibility of cultural institutions, including sensory accessibility (e.g. tactile, visual and audio support) in federal museums and libraries; as well as cultural education and mediation activities involving children and young people with disabilities.<sup>94</sup>

The [National Disability Strategic Plan 2014-2018](#) adopted in **Cambodia** includes one strategic objective that aims to 'Ensure participation in social activities such as cultural, religious, sporting, artistic, recreation and other activities'. Specific strategies include the promotion of accessibility to cultural activities, tools, TV programmes and films and the provision of support to people with disabilities in order to actively take part in and organise their own cultural activities. Another strategic objective, focusing on access to the physical environment, public transportation and knowledge, addresses the aim to ensure accessibility to cultural facilities (theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries, etc.) and to heritage sites, as well as the enhancement of translation to sign language, sound, large print and Braille.<sup>95</sup> The

**Sweden's policy aims to turn people with disabilities from 'patients' into 'citizens' with rights and obligations as everyone else**

implementation of these measures involves, among others, the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, the Disability Action Council and NGOs active in these areas.

In **Sweden**, the [Government's strategy for disability policy implementation between 2011 and 2016](#) contains targets for ten different policy fields and identifies approximately 20 national bodies entrusted with its implementation. Ultimately, the policy aims to turn people with disabilities from 'patients' into 'citizens' with rights and obligations as everyone else. In the field of culture, media and sport, objectives include the broadening of opportunities for full participation among people with disabilities, the mainstreaming of a disability perspective into the allocation of grants, and the adaptation of media and film to make them more accessible to people with disabilities. The Swedish Arts Council has received a governmental mandate to implement disability policies in the field of culture and has adopted a range of measures in this area, including regular consultations with disability organisations, enhanced accessibility of online and offline information, participation in conferences and seminars, among others.<sup>96</sup>

In **Bulgaria**, an integrated approach to cultural policy has been promoted, leading to the inclusion of culture in national strategies, plans and programmes in a range of areas including poverty eradication, social inclusion, active ageing and regional development. In this context, some measures have been adopted to facilitate access to culture for people with disabilities.<sup>97</sup>

In the **Czech Republic**, as early as 1998 a national plan for the provision of equal opportunities for people with disabilities was adopted, that included a provision to facilitate audio recordings to people with visual impairments, as well as physical access to cultural

services.<sup>98</sup> The country's current National Plan for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities 2015-2020 also includes a section regarding 'Access to Cultural Heritage and Participation in Cultural Life'. Referring to Article 30 of the UN 2006 Convention, the National Plan states that its main aim in the field of culture is to support the removal of physical and administrative barriers hindering more intensive access of persons with disabilities to cultural goods and services, while allowing them personal fulfilment, e.g. by working in the cultural area. Several specific measures are outlined to this end, including improving the physical accessibility of cultural institutions, providing discounts and encouraging the use of digitised collections. The implementation of these activities is mainly entrusted to the Ministry of Culture.<sup>99</sup>

### Accessibility

As several previous examples have shown, physical and sensory accessibility are often visible elements in general strategies and action plans in the field of disability. At the same time, some specific policy initiatives in this field should be noted, including the elaboration of specific guidelines to enable universal accessibility to cultural life.

In **France**, a Charter on Accessibility to Cultural Facilities was adopted in 2004, a joint initiative of the Ministry of Culture and Communication and a specialised NGO. Operating as a recommendation, valid for all cultural organisations welcoming the general public, the Charter builds on existing legislation and provides guidance to enhance accessibility in three different areas: accessibility of the built environment; information and communication (including the production of specific materials

**Norway's government wants all of Norwegian society to comply with universal design by 2025, thus making society more accessible, equal and inclusive for everyone**

for people with disabilities, the identification of a focal point on disability issues and other possible measures); and specific cultural and artistic practices (including the broadening of opportunities for artists with disabilities, the use of tactile panels, etc.). The Charter has been presented as part of training materials, accompanied with practical examples.<sup>100</sup>

Another significant example is provided by **Norway**, where the national government's vision is for all of Norwegian society to comply with universal design by 2025 – universal design being understood as a strategy for making society more accessible, equal and inclusive for everyone. This objective informs the government's relations with subsidiary agencies and with funding recipients. The Ministry of Culture has published a set of regulations and guidelines for universal design in cultural institutions, whereas the Ministry of Climate and Environment, which has the responsibility for tangible cultural heritage, has published similar guidelines aimed at cultural heritage institutions. Additional measures are being adopted to increase available information on the cultural participation of people

with disabilities, facilitate the production of newspapers in audio formats and increase allocations to sign-language interpretation of plays, among others.<sup>101</sup>

### Establishment of specific public bodies

The setting-up of special public bodies entrusted either with policy leadership in disability-related areas or with the implementation or delivery of specific policies and programmes in this area is a frequent step. Often, bodies in this area involve participants representing people with disabilities, as shown by some of the examples presented hereafter.

**Cambodia's Disability Action Council, first established in 1997, operates as the national coordination and advisory mechanism on disability issues**

Several countries have established bodies which oversee or take the lead in all disability-related policies, including culture. One significant example is the aforementioned Disability Action Council in **Cambodia**, which operates as the national coordination and advisory mechanism on disability issues, first established in 1997. The Council is led by the Minister in charge of Social Affairs and involves representatives of several ministries, including that

**In India, the National Trust is a statutory body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which works towards providing opportunities for capacity building of persons with disabilities and their families, fulfilling their rights**

in charge of Culture, as well as representatives of organisations active in the field of disability and NGOs, among others. The initiative was praised in the 2011 *World Report on Disability*.<sup>102</sup> Meanwhile, in **India**, the National Trust is a statutory body of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, which works towards providing opportunities for capacity building of persons with disabilities and their families, fulfilling their rights, facilitating and promoting the creation of an enabling environment and an inclusive society. In practice, its work often involves cooperation with other Ministries.<sup>103</sup> The **China Disabled Persons' Federation** is a national umbrella organisation for persons with diverse disabilities, which works with the mission of promoting the full participation of persons with disabilities in society equally with others, ensuring that persons with disabilities share in the material and cultural achievements of society, and foster humanitarianism across society as a whole. Among its mission

is the opening of professional pathways in culture among people with disabilities.<sup>104</sup> In **Greece**, a Commission for Equal Treatment was established under the Ministry of Justice, the mandate of which included supervising the implementation of the Optional Protocol of the UN 2006 Convention, as well as the EU Directive on Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation, in cooperation with the Ombudsman and the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate.<sup>105</sup>

### **France's National Committee on Culture and Disability brings together representatives of the national ministries in charge of Culture and of Disability, as well as the foremost disability NGOs, representatives of people with disabilities and cultural organisations**

In other cases, institutions dealing with culture and disability or with specific areas thereof have been set up. The *National Committee on Culture and Disability (Commission nationale Culture et Handicap)* set up in **France** in 2001 is particularly

worth noting. The Committee brings together representatives of the national ministries in charge of Culture and of Disability, as well as the foremost disability NGOs, representatives of people with disabilities and cultural organisations, with the aim of proposing measures in all relevant areas, with particular emphasis on access to cultural facilities and activities, training and professional development. Each of its meetings addresses specific issues, and several policies and programmes have emerged as a result, as illustrated elsewhere in this report.<sup>106</sup>

### **In several countries, including China, Denmark, Latvia and Lithuania, national libraries catering for people with visual impairments have been established**

In several countries, specific centres have been established to provide access to books and reading for people with visual impairments. In **Latvia** and **Lithuania**, national Libraries for the Blind exist. These centres operate as cultural, educational and information providers, with the aim of facilitating access to library, bibliographical and information services to people with visual impairments. Further to book lending in Braille and talking books, these Libraries carry out outreach activities, organise meetings with authors and other activities in this area.<sup>107</sup> Similarly, NOTA is a national library under the Ministry of Culture of **Denmark**, which produces and

provides audio books, e-books and Braille for people with visual impairments and dyslexia. One of its major aims is to ensure that people with dyslexia have access to knowledge, participation and society and experiences in ways tailored to their needs.<sup>108</sup> In **China**, a National Braille Press has been established, to provide rich and diverse reading materials to people with visual disabilities. Likewise, a China Braille Library now exists.<sup>109</sup>

## **3.3.**

### **Projects in the field of culture and disability may be initiated either by public organisations (national or local governments, arts councils, public cultural bodies) or by private and non-profit organisations (NGOs, theatre companies, private museums, companies, NGO federations, etc.)**



# **Programmes and projects**

**This subsection presents a wide range of programmes, projects and measures that have addressed the relationship between culture and disability in ASEM countries. The experiences presented below involve a wide range of stakeholders, since projects in the field of culture and disability may be initiated either by public organisations (national or local governments, arts councils, public cultural bodies) or by private and non-profit organisations (NGOs, theatre companies, private museums, companies, NGO federations, etc.). Examples have been classified according to the main issues their address, while acknowledging that often they deal with several of the themes identified below. Given the extensive number of experiences existing, the information presented below does not aim to present a comprehensive mapping, but rather to illustrate the many areas in which initiatives in this area may emerge, and present some examples thereof.**

## 3.3.1.

# Arts development



**A very extensive number of experiences exist in ASEM countries which aim to facilitate the development of disability arts and other artistic practices related to people with disabilities, by strengthening creativity, production, distribution or access.**

Illustrative examples in the field of creation and production include the [Integrated Movement Research Collective \(IMRC\)](#) in **Croatia**, an integrated contemporary dance group which works on the premise that dance and movement are not conditioned on certain physical given abilities, but that physical expression, experience of dance and performance of it belongs to everyone.<sup>110</sup> Currently the only inclusive dance group of its kind in Croatia, IMRC has been presented in the context of the European project [Unlimited Access](#) and refers to the work of similar dance companies elsewhere, including **UK's Candoco** and **Spain's Liant la Troca** (Jordi Cortés), as sources of influence. Also part of the Unlimited Access project is **Portugal's Associação Vo'Arte**, which for 15 years has worked inclusively in dance/performance and cinematic creation and has established an integrated company, *Companhia Integrada Multidisciplinar (CiM)*. The latter was the result of collaboration with the Cerebral Palsy Association in Lisbon (APCL) and the Calouste Gulbenkian Rehabilitation Centre for Cerebral Palsy (CRPCCG). Among the company's stated aims is to give a voice to another body language and to give the chance, space and time to people with disabilities to achieve the desire of creating a work of arts with their own body.<sup>111</sup>

A relevant public project at local level is [Seoul Art Space Jamsil](#),

in **Korea**, a creative space solely dedicated to artists with disabilities. One of approximately 15 Art Spaces set up by the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture (SFAC) to facilitate artistic development and access to culture, SAS Jamsil selects 12 visual artists with disabilities annually and provides them with residence space and diverse educational services, as well as other professional development activities, such as disability art fairs. The centre also supports creative activities for children with disabilities and carries out a family programme.<sup>112</sup>

Across Asia and Europe, several initiatives contribute to strengthening the place of arts and disability in the public sphere by establishing partnerships. One good example in this area is **Ireland's Arts and Disability Connect (ADC)** programme, designed to support artists with disabilities to make new and ambitious work, by enabling them to connect with other practitioners or venues, to make a change in their practice, reach new audiences and engage in mentoring and training. ADC is funded by the Arts Council of Ireland, in line with its aforementioned Arts and Disability Policy and Strategy (2012-2016), and is managed by Arts & Disability Ireland.<sup>113</sup> Another significant case is that of the partnership between three arts organisations, coming from the fields of theatre

**Across Asia and Europe, several initiatives contribute to strengthening the place of arts and disability in the public sphere by establishing partnerships**

and the visual arts, in Rotterdam, the **Netherlands**, and supported by this city's local government. In early 2015, Theatre Maatwerk, Galerie Atelier Herenplaats and the roterdamscentrumvoortheater (rcth) entered into a partnership which will lead to the establishment of a 'House for inclusive art', tentatively named [Rcth+](#), which defines itself as 'a professional interdisciplinary theatre institution for artists with and without disabilities'. The initiative builds on Theatre Maatwerk and Galerie Atelier Herenplaats' previous experience in the field of arts, disability and health, as well as rcth's record in culture, education and social projects. Rcth+ is expected to open in 2017.<sup>114</sup> In

Melbourne, **Australia**, the [Dax Centre](#), named after the pioneering work of Eric Cunningham Dax in introducing art programmes into mental health institutions and treatment programmes, focuses on the promotion of mental health and wellbeing through the educative power of art. The Centre does this through partnerships with many organisations and practitioners, including the neighbouring University of Melbourne as well as stakeholders in the arts, health and education sectors.<sup>115</sup>

Festivals have become a frequent vehicle to provide opportunities to artists with disabilities and enhance access to disability-related cultural expressions among the public at large. Several examples can be found of festivals and events focusing on disability-related arts, including the [International Art Exhibition for People and Disabilities](#) organised by several organisations representing people with disabilities and artists in China, Korea and Japan, and first held in Wuhan, **China**, in 2015; and the [Disabled Persons' Culture Festival](#) organised by China's Disabled Persons' Federation and the Ministry of Culture, which reaches over 10 million people with disabilities annually.<sup>116</sup> Other relevant initiatives include the [International Special Art Festival](#) in **Hungary**, the festival [Una mirada diferente](#) ("A different perspective") organised by **Spain's** National Drama Centre, which presents work done by companies involving people with disabilities from Spain and other European countries; the '[Out of the Box](#)' [Biennial of Inclusive Arts](#) held in Geneva, **Switzerland**, which aims to foster a debate on the relation between the arts and disability, by involving artists with and without disabilities, from Switzerland and elsewhere; and the [Unlimited Festival](#) in London, Glasgow and other locations in the **UK**, first held as part of London 2012's Cultural Olympiad and which has become a biennial, increasingly recognised event.

Elsewhere, events addressing

culture and disability have been included in broader, mainstream festivals. In **India**, the National Trust has promoted the presentation of products made by people with disabilities in the context of the Surajkund International Crafts Mela, a recognised showcase of handlooms and handicrafts from across the country.<sup>117</sup> In **Croatia**, the annual Dance Week Festival has since its very beginnings promoted inclusivity and regularly presented work of integrated dance companies.<sup>118</sup> These practices are also visible in many other events across Asia and Europe.

## 3.3.2.

# Accessibility

**In line with requirements in international standards and legislation and policies adopted in many ASEM countries, it is increasingly frequent for cultural organisations to adopt measures to facilitate the accessibility of venues, events and other activities. As noted earlier, accessibility in this context refers both to the physical accessibility of buildings and places and to sensory accessibility and the provision of information in a variety of languages and formats.**



**Accessibility in this context refers both to the physical accessibility of buildings and places and to sensory accessibility and the provision of information in a variety of languages and formats**

Many relevant measures have been adopted in the field of museums and cultural heritage, as proven by the following examples. A recent report published by the Council of Europe outlines a set of experiences conducted by national museums and palaces in the **Czech Republic**, including tactile exhibitions at the Swarzenberg Palace in Prague, as well as the work of the Technical Museum in Brno in making its own resources and those of other museums accessible to people with visual impairments, among others.<sup>119</sup> The latter example is similar to that of the **Typhlological Museum** in Zagreb, **Croatia**, a public, specialised institution established in 1953 that collects, stores, researches, documents and communicates tangible and non-tangible materials related to people with special needs, with an emphasis on people with visual impairment. Also worth noting is the **DiTACTA Multisensorial Collection**, an educational tool first developed in Croatia and which has been adopted by several museums and galleries elsewhere, with the aim of giving complete independence to visitors with visual disabilities, through specially-designed stands, tactile diagrams and an audio system. In **France**, as early

as 1986 the City of Sciences in Paris was identified as a 'pilot project' to foster the accessibility of people with disabilities to cultural institutions; last decade, the Quai Branly Museum was also designed as a completely accessible cultural facility, which would avoid segregation from the broader public – this was achieved through extensive consultation in the planning, design and building processes.<sup>120</sup> With a similar purpose, the restoration of the Herbst Palace in Łódź, **Poland**, placed particular emphasis on the accessibility of people with disabilities, and some of the exhibitions were designed to allow people with visual impairments to visit independently.<sup>121</sup>

Policies and measures fostering accessibility can also be found in other cultural facilities and venues, including theatres, auditoriums, libraries and cinemas, among others. In **France**, measures have been adopted to foster the access of people with disabilities to cinemas and to audiovisual works. Among them is the establishment of an incentive scheme, managed by the National Cinema Centre, to support the gradual introduction of subtitling and audio description of films



### Cultural mediation and outreach

In order to enhance accessibility, several governments and civil society organisations have adopted measures to foster the access of people with disabilities to culture, through the design and delivery of programmes which 'reach out' of traditional cultural venues or which aim to engage people with disabilities through collaboration with organisations in the disability sector. Some of these initiatives address specifically people with disabilities, whereas others are part of broader programmes aimed at disadvantaged groups.

One relevant example of the latter is **Apropos Cultura**, a large programme initiated in 2007 by L'Auditori, a public concert hall in Barcelona, **Spain**, and which has progressively expanded to many other cultural facilities across Catalonia. At present, 54 theatres, concert halls, festivals and museums and over 1400 social, health and educational organisations are involved in the programme, which in 2014 provided 19,000 people (including 11,000 people with disabilities, as well as young people at risk, elderly people, and homeless people, among others) with opportunities to access and take part in cultural activities in mainstream venues. In the context of the programme, several workshops enabling people with disabilities to take part in creative activities in collaboration with artists

from their first day of release; the launch of special projects focusing on the audio description professions and on coordination of information regarding works available with subtitles and/or audio descriptions; the setting-up of a working group to provide small and medium-sized cinema owners with support for accessibility projects; and the drafting of a new practical guide on accessibility in the film sector.<sup>122</sup>

Finally, in some contexts measures have been adopted to contribute to accessibility on an ad-hoc basis. **Luxembourg's** Ministry of the Family and Integration signed in 2007 an agreement with a sign-language interpreter, who is available on request to help people with hearing impairments in different contexts, including activities in the cultural sphere.<sup>123</sup>

and culture professionals have been carried out.<sup>124</sup> In a similar vein, in **Germany**, the national federation **Kulturelle Teilhabe** ('Cultural Participation') brings together over 50 non-profit organisations which work actively to enable access to culture for everyone in their respective cities and regions (e.g. the Kulturleben Berlin group and similar organisations elsewhere in the country) and which conduct, among others, activities targeted to people with disabilities.<sup>125</sup>

### Civil society organisations are often actively involved in projects involving 'cultural mediation' and reaching out to less traditional cultural audiences

Indeed, civil society organisations are often actively involved in projects involving 'cultural mediation' and reaching out to less traditional cultural audiences. In **Poland**, the largest available collections of books in Braille, large-print and audiobooks is that of the Central Library of the

**Polish Association for the Blind** in Warsaw, which holds approximately 6000 titles.<sup>126</sup>

Another distinctive aspect of initiatives in this area, as observed in the previous examples, is the involvement of organisations from different areas of activity (culture, social inclusion, health, education) and the strength of partnerships at city or regional level. A relevant case in point is Museum Friday, an initiative of local museums in Utrecht, the **Netherlands**, in conjunction with AxionContinu care institutions, which enables adults with disabilities to visit museums in this city.<sup>127</sup>

### Education

In many countries, measures have been adopted to facilitate the access and participation in cultural life of children and young people enrolled in formal and non-formal education activities. In **Singapore**, the **NAC-SPED Partnership Programme**, involving the National Arts Council and the Ministry of Education, supports efforts to promote the use of the arts as a pedagogical tool in Special Education schools, enabling the arts to become more deeply embedded as an integral and integrated part of the overall school experience. Artists and school teachers work closely together to co-develop and co-teach customised arts-based lessons that target the learning needs of students with different

## In Singapore, the NAC-SPED Partnership Programme, involving the National Arts Council and the Ministry of Education, supports efforts to promote the use of the arts as a pedagogical tool in Special Education schools

disabilities and address larger educational goals. The arts are one of the six core Learning Domains to meet the desired Living, Learning and Working outcomes of every student, as established in 2012's SPED Curriculum Framework. A Visual Arts Toolkit for Special Education schools has also been produced.<sup>128</sup>

Very often, educational programmes targeting children and young people with disabilities, or their families, are devised by individual cultural organisations, often in partnership with other stakeholders active in the field of disability. One good example is that of **Jamtli**, the county museum of Jämtland County, **Sweden**, which has developed over the years a range of educational programmes targeted at different groups, including people with disabilities. The museum has a disability policy for internal use, an information sheet for people with disabilities and a strategy for making its facilities more accessible. These documents have been developed

in close cooperation with representatives of local disability associations, who meet twice a year with museum staff in charge of disability issues in order to discuss changes and improvements as regards the physical environment and accessibility. In this context, several programmes have been designed for school children with physical and intellectual disabilities, developed by the museum in collaboration with Handisam, the National Institute for Special Needs Education, Jämtland County Council, Ostersund municipality and local disability associations.<sup>129</sup>

Meanwhile, in **Cambodia**, **Epic Arts** is an inclusive arts organisation which uses the arts as a form of expression and empowerment to bring people with and without disabilities together. Among its main areas of action is that of inclusive education, which encompasses an Inclusive Arts Course (involving young people with and without disabilities), a Special Education Project in Kampot (offering creative educational programmes to children and young people with and without disabilities so that they can become active members of society), and an arts delivery team, involving graduates from the Inclusive Arts Course who act as role models for younger students. Epic Arts, which also carries out community work and promotes social enterprise programmes, is registered as a charity in the United Kingdom.<sup>130</sup>

On some occasions, educational activities may lead to public events, thus contributing to raising awareness of disability and the importance of cultural participation. In **Thailand**, the annual 'Art for All' Camp has been held for 20 years. An initiative of the **Art for All Foundation**, its latest edition involved 150 students with disabilities, who could enhance their creativity and confidence. It opened with a high-profile event held at the premises of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), involving

national government and ESCAP representatives as well as the Art for All Foundation and the Thailand Association of the Blind, and where the importance of culture and the place of disability in the UN's Sustainable Development Goals were also discussed.<sup>131</sup>

## An increasing number of projects are exploring how mobile and digital technologies can enhance opportunities for people with disabilities and enable them to access and participate actively in cultural life

### Technology

An increasing number of projects are exploring how mobile and digital technologies can enhance opportunities for people with disabilities and enable them to access and participate actively in cultural life. The nature of these technologies often allows for these initiatives to be implemented simultaneously in different venues and facilitate networking.

One significant example is that of the city of Christchurch, **New Zealand**, which in 2009 launched the SoundPost Orientation System in its Cultural Precinct, with major support from the City Council. 60 base stations were placed in key spots throughout the area, enabling people with visual disabilities to receive directions, guiding them

towards the entrances and paths leading to cultural facilities, as well as within them, by using hand-held devices.<sup>132</sup> Meanwhile, in **Sweden**, the Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille is conducting extensive work on change, with digital technology being used for example for the downloading of talking books, as well as for talking newspapers.<sup>133</sup>

Initiatives in this area can be facilitated by companies and organisations in the IT sector. In **Spain**, the **Accessible Theatre** project, initiated by the Vodafone Foundation, in partnership with an association and a company specialising in accessibility services, has provided several public and private theatres and some performing arts festivals with subtitling, audio-description and audio induction loop equipment on individual sessions.<sup>134</sup>

### Access to information

Finally, accessibility to culture for people with disabilities should be supported by measures that contribute to making information more easily accessible and available. In **Slovenia**, the **Slovene Ethnographic Museum** has set up a communication centre for persons with disabilities for permanent exhibitions, where computer applications and an introductory film give access to the content of the exhibitions.<sup>135</sup> In **Spain**, the Spanish Centre for Subtitling and Audio Descriptions (CESyA) has worked in partnership with other organisations since 2005 in order to provide accessibility in the media and cultural life. In this context, the **Accessible Culture** website provides information for the general public to facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in cultural life.<sup>136</sup>

Measures in this field may be adopted in the context of broader programmes aimed at people with disabilities in a wide range of sectors, including culture.

The **New Zealand Federation of Disability Information Centres** gathers centres that operate as 'one-stop info-shops', providing information for people with disabilities to take part in different areas of society, including culture.<sup>137</sup>

### 3.3.3.



**The Unlimited commissions programme for artists with disabilities, first established in the context of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, has become a long-term initiative, recently renewed until 2020**

**In several countries of Asia and Europe, funding programmes have been established to support the development of initiatives in the field of culture and disability. A wide range of models and priority areas can be identified, as described hereafter.**

#### **Funding of arts projects**

Several organisations, including in particular public authorities and organisations in receipt of public funding, have established permanent or temporary funding programmes meant to contribute to projects in the field of disability arts or which contribute to the professional development of artists with disabilities. One good example is the **Unlimited** commissions programme in the **United Kingdom**, managed by Shape and Artsadmin, with funding from Arts Council England, Creative Scotland and Arts Council Wales, first established as a three-year programme in 2014-16 and recently renewed until 2020. By providing funding and mentoring support to talented artists with disabilities and enabling them to develop, produce and show ambitious work, Unlimited aims to embed their work within the cultural sector, reach new audiences and shift perceptions of people with disabilities. The commissions programme is also linked to the aforementioned biennial Unlimited Festival, which contributes to showcasing relevant productions and also presents international work.<sup>138</sup>

In **Ireland**, inspired by the experience of Unlimited in London 2012, the Arts Council, Arts & Disability Ireland, and local authorities in Cork, Galway and

## Funding

Mayo established in 2013 **Ignite**, a platform designed to showcase talent from people with disabilities, led by international and Irish artists and performers with disabilities. Three projects were implemented in the three aforementioned cities and toured in 2014 and 2015. The **Australia** Council for the Arts also allocates **funds to support artists and groups who identify with disability**. Both development grants, contributing to individual artists' and disability-led groups' careers, and project grants are available. In **Belgium**, specific programmes have been established in the French-speaking Community to support cultural expressions by people with disabilities, including via the **Walloon Agency for Quality of Life's** support for film and performing arts projects.<sup>139</sup> In **Croatia**, the Ministry of Culture and other public authorities have financially supported projects and programmes of associations of persons with disabilities that contribute to raising awareness among the general public about the artistic work of persons with disabilities.<sup>140</sup>

#### **Funding for accessibility**

Several examples can be found of budget lines established to support the different dimensions of accessibility to cultural facilities and activities. In the **Czech Republic**, in 2009 the Ministry of

### **Public authorities in some countries have established disability-related requirements for cultural organisations as a condition to access or maintain funding, in line with legislation in the fields of discrimination and equality**

Culture established the 'Mobility for All' programme, which, in line with broader governmental objectives, has provided funding to make cultural facilities and buildings accessible to people with disabilities.<sup>141</sup> In **Slovakia**, the Ministry of Culture has subsidy programmes facilitating accessibility to culture for people with visual impairments, including through the provision of books and other printed materials in adapted formats.<sup>142</sup> Similarly, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of **Slovenia** has established specific calls for projects to co-finance cultural projects designed by organisations representing people with disabilities. Selected initiatives included the purchase of books, newspapers and newsletters in Braille, audio books, and books and other printed materials in bigger print for people with visual impairments, as well as audiovisual and web content with interpretation in Slovenian sign language or with subtitles for persons with hearing impairments.<sup>143</sup> In **Italy**, the Ministry of Culture established in 2008 a fund to support the production,

adaptation and preservation of books and printed materials accessible to people with visual impairments.<sup>144</sup>

Support measures have also been established in the field of accessible media and the broadening of opportunities for people with disabilities to become active contributors to them. In **Austria**, the Federal Chancellery established the Fund for the Promotion of Non-commercial Private Broadcasting in 2009. Among its aims was the provision of access to production and broadcasting skills and opportunities for people with disabilities.<sup>145</sup>

#### **Accessibility and disability action as a condition for funding**

In recent years, public authorities in some countries have established disability-related requirements for cultural organisations as a condition to access or maintain funding, in line with legislation in the fields of discrimination and equality. In the **United Kingdom**, in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the Equality Duty 2011, public bodies as well as organisations receiving regular public funding are required to have equality action plans in place, addressing a range of social and demographic variables, including disability. The major regularly-funded organisations also need to report on the make-up of their audiences on a regular basis, with disaggregated data on the basis of age, gender, race and disability status of a sample of audiences.<sup>146</sup> Similarly, the **Australia** Council for the Arts requires its funded organisations to develop disability action plans.<sup>147</sup> In **Sweden**, since 2013 it is a precondition for cultural institutions receiving financial support from the government to have a detailed access plan. The plan is expected to address in particular the needs of people

with disabilities. This has led to an increase in the number of organisations adopting measures in this area.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.3.4.



## Access to employment

**In line with international standards, measures should be adopted to facilitate the access of people with disabilities to employment, including artists and other cultural professionals.**

**A range of studies have pointed to the difficulties experienced by people with disabilities when trying to obtain jobs in the cultural sector**

Indeed, a range of studies have pointed to the difficulties experienced by people with disabilities when trying to obtain jobs in the cultural sector. The elaboration of these reports may be seen as a first step towards the adoption of corrective measures in this area. In **Australia**, a survey conducted by DADAA on behalf of Arts Access Australia in 2012 found that significant barriers remained for people with disabilities, including employer concerns around additional resourcing and widespread discrimination against people with disability, as well as broader difficulties found by everyone to access employment in the cultural sector. However, the report also found that 'many arts and cultural organisations already seem to be demonstrating good practice in this area'.<sup>149</sup> Research conducted in the **United Kingdom** on access to professional dance for young people with disabilities has identified a range of barriers to training, including attitudinal barriers (from young dancers themselves, or from their peers, parents, teachers and others), barriers related to training (e.g. lack of available technical training, content of training sessions, and teachers' lack of knowledge), qualifications, logistical aspects (e.g. transport), building access and others.<sup>150</sup> A further study suggested talent identification criteria and methodological approaches in order to enhance the opportunities for

young dancers with disabilities to access training.<sup>151</sup>

Active measures in this area have been adopted in several countries, often in the context of broader policies and programmes aimed at fostering the employment of people with disabilities. Specific steps towards employment in the cultural field can be found, among others, in **Finland**, where the EU-funded TARU project sought to foster employment among artists with a migrant background or with disabilities. One of the results of the project was the increasing acknowledgement of target artists as facilitators of interaction among minority communities and the broader arts sector in Finland, rather than passive beneficiaries of support.<sup>152</sup> In **Belgium**, people with hearing disabilities have been trained as guides in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts.<sup>153</sup>

### 3.3.5.



## Consultation and involvement in decision-making

**Programmes and projects addressing people with disabilities should take measures to involve them in consultation processes and in other activities related to decision-making. The engagement of people with disabilities may take place on an individual basis (e.g. by consulting artists with disabilities or members of the general public with a disability) or through representative organisations (e.g. NGOs representing people with disabilities).**

Examples of measures in this area can be found in some of the countries examined. In **Slovenia**, the **Slovene National Theatre in Maribor** holds regular exchanges with disability organisations to gather suggestions and requests.<sup>154</sup> Similarly, as already noted, the **Jamtli Museum in Sweden** has developed a range of disability-related documents in partnership with representatives of local disability associations and meets them regularly to discuss changes and improvements. In the **United Kingdom**, the Department for Culture, Media and Sports works to ensure that all groups in society, including people with disabilities, are represented on the boards of public bodies including Arts Council England as well as major national museums, galleries and libraries. Similar initiatives have been adopted by the Scottish Government.<sup>155</sup>

## 3.3.6.

# Training and capacity-building



The improvement of conditions for the access and participation of people with disabilities in cultural life also demands measures which build the capacities of representatives of organisations active in the field of culture and disability, as well as of other cultural professionals and organisations. In several countries, evidence has been found of measures adopted to this end, as described hereafter.

In several countries, public bodies and organisations active in the field of culture and disability, often operating in partnership, have produced toolkits, guides and other practical tools

### Capacity-building of organisations active in the field of culture and disability

Measures enhancing the capacities and skills of organisations representing people with disabilities are often established by other civil society organisations. In **Bangladesh**, *Protibandhi Kallyan Somity* (BPKS) has developed an approach called Persons with Disabilities Self-Initiative to Development (PSID), a rights-based, holistic approach that empowers persons with all types of disabilities to take responsibility for the initiation, participation and ownership of development processes. Over the years, 23 organisations representing people with disabilities have been established across Bangladesh. The evaluation of a related project found that activities conducted by the organisations benefitting from this support had contributed to an increase in cultural participation among people with disabilities.<sup>156</sup>

### Toolkits and Guidebooks

In several countries, public bodies and organisations active in the field of culture and disability, often operating in partnership, have produced toolkits, guides and other practical tools to improve work in this field among cultural professionals and other relevant stakeholders.

In **France**, a range of [practical guides on culture and disability](#), including a guide on the several dimensions of accessibility in culture, one on accessibility in the performing arts and a guide on cultural facilities and intellectual disabilities, were published between 2007 and 2010 by the Ministry of Culture and Communication.<sup>157</sup> Later, non-profit organisation EUCREA France, with support from the Ministry, published [a guide which provides a rights-based approach in the field of culture](#) for organisations representing people with disabilities, collecting good practice examples and stressing the importance of access to culture.<sup>158</sup>

An [Arts and Disability resource pack](#) was published in **Ireland** in 2010, resulting from a partnership between the Arts Council, Arts & Disability Ireland, Mayo County Council, the Irish Museum of Modern Art and South Tipperary County Council. The resource pack captures the learning from a set of previous projects and aims to share its practical application with artists and cultural professionals.<sup>159</sup> Similar initiatives include the [Arts for all](#) guide first published in 2009, and updated in 2014, by Arts Access Aotearoa and Creative **New Zealand**.<sup>160</sup>

several local, regional and national institutions.<sup>163</sup> In the **United Kingdom**, the annual [Creative Minds conference](#) is notable in being led by artists and performers with learning disabilities.<sup>164</sup> Of course, the list of professional development events in the area of culture and disability is much larger and expands regularly.

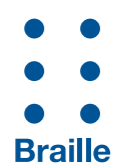
### Seminars and workshops

Capacity-building initiatives often take the form of professional training seminars, workshops and similar events, which aim to present existing expertise and bring together relevant stakeholders from different areas. Initiatives in this area can be found in a wide range of countries, including the **Netherlands**, where [DanceAble](#), a three-day international symposium on dance and disability was organised by Holland Dance in 2015. The event built on a pre-existing [course on integrated dance](#) which Dance Holland first launched in 2014.<sup>161</sup> In **Australia**, Accessible Arts organises a biennial conference on arts and disability, known as [Arts Activated](#), which aims to showcase the accomplishment of people with disability in the arts as well as to present best practice and to foster knowledge exchange.<sup>162</sup> In May 2016, an international symposium entitled '[All In: Quality and Opening Up to Cultural Work by Inclusion](#)', addressing how cultural policy, cultural institutions and actors can open up to the diversity of abilities, was held in Cologne, **Germany**, with support from the EU's Creative Europe programme as well as



### 3.3.7.

## Awareness-raising and communication



Braille

**Programmes and projects in the field of culture and disability often contribute to raising awareness about the rights and potential of people with disabilities in society, including in cultural life**

**As already noted, programmes and projects in the field of culture and disability often contribute to raising awareness about the rights and potential of people with disabilities in society, including in cultural life. As proven by the examples presented below, in many countries of Asia and Europe some measures hold a visible communication component and aim to reach the general public.**

Often, awareness-raising, communication and visibility of culture and disability take the form of festivals and other arts events addressing the general public. In **Korea**, the Province of Gyeonggi has strengthened collaboration between its Mental Health Commission and several major arts festivals, which have provided the stage where to present performing and visual arts work related to major mental health issues, including depression and its consequences, as well as to raise awareness about them. Cultural festivals have been identified as an adequate setting to give visibility to these topics, to present artistic work done by people suffering mental illnesses and to positively affect their recovery. All the community mental health centres in the province have taken part in the partnership and contributed to its activities.<sup>165</sup> Meanwhile, the **Mental Health Noise Orchestra**, an initiative of artist Ryo Ikeshiro in partnership with a mental health centre in Lublin, **Poland**, developed a set of performances in public spaces in July 2016, with the aim of challenging preconceptions about people with mental disabilities and health issues, as well as 'what music is or should be'.<sup>166</sup>

Significant contributions to awareness-raising and communication can also be made through the official recognition of places and institutions which positively contribute to broadening opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in cultural life. In **France**, the Ministry of Culture and Communication established in 2011 the annual 'Heritage for All, Heritage for Each' Award, which recognises heritage institutions that develop a significant, integral and sustainable approach to accessibility for people with all kinds of disabilities.<sup>167</sup>

Other initiatives in this area include the setting-up of websites and other means of dissemination. The **Disability Arts International** website and newsletter, presenting experiences from the **United Kingdom** and other countries, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, is a good example thereof. The website, which emerged from an EU-funded project, aims to promote the work of the current generation of artists with disabilities, disabled-led companies and inclusive arts organisations, as well as the ways in which arts organisations are increasing access to the arts for people with disabilities as audiences and visitors.<sup>168</sup>

### 3.3.8.

## Networks and partnerships



**Often linked to some of the areas of activity outlined above, including arts development, capacity-building for organisations and awareness-raising, measures in the field of culture and disability can take the form of partnerships and networks involving a range of stakeholders in culture, disability, social affairs and other relevant areas. The setting-up of new partnerships and networks may contribute to scaling up existing projects, enhance the reach, impact and visibility of individual organisations and projects, advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and facilitating the transfer of knowledge and practices, among others. Resulting from a common vision, the emergence of networks can often be seen as a sign of maturity.**

**The setting-up of new partnerships and networks may contribute to scaling up existing projects, enhance the reach, impact and visibility of individual organisations and projects, advocating for the rights of people with disabilities and facilitating**

**the transfer of knowledge and practices, among others**

In several countries, networks bringing together organisations active in the field of culture and disability have been established. Significant examples include **Australia's Arts Access Australia**, **France's EUCREA France** – National Federation on Art, Culture and Disability, **Spain's National Federation on Art and Disability**, as well as the local **Arts for All networks** set up as a joint initiative of Arts Access Aotearoa and Creative **New Zealand**. In many other countries, umbrella organisations and federations in the field of

disability may involve working groups or thematic projects in the field of culture.

In addition to permanent, broad networks, partnerships among different stakeholders with a more thematic, time-specific approach may be established. In **Switzerland**, cooperative society Migros has developed the [IntegrART project](#), which supports the inclusion of artists with disabilities and has contributed to strengthening partnerships and networking among existing and new festivals and venues in this field.

## A significant international partnership between public bodies is that of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2015 by the National Arts Council of Singapore and the British Council (United Kingdom), which includes a section on arts and disability

### International networking and cooperation

Partnerships and networks in the field of culture and disability have in some instances been

established across national borders. These examples of international cooperation may be initiated by public authorities or by civil society or private organisations, as shown by the examples below, and may be seen to respond to similar aims as those presented in previous paragraphs, with an additional transnational dimension.

A significant international partnership between public bodies is that of the [Memorandum of Understanding](#) signed in 2015 by the National Arts Council of **Singapore** and the British Council (**United Kingdom**), which includes a section on arts and disability, aimed at sharing best practices on how the arts can bring value in enriching lives and contributing to health and well-being in the disability sector.<sup>169</sup> One early result of this collaboration was the [Arts and Disability Forum](#) held in Singapore in March 2016, which presented speakers and experiences from the UK and Singapore and is expected to become an annual event.

Another example of bilateral cooperation, initiated by arts development organisation, is the multi-year [Unfixed](#) project, resulting from a collaboration between the Australian Network for Art & Technology (ANAT), Access2Arts (**Australia**), Unlimited (**UK**) and Watershed (UK). This partnership, funded by the Australia Council for the Arts, Arts South Australia and the British Council Australia, enables artists with disabilities to creatively investigate the determination of bodies as 'disabled' or 'abled'. Following a first creative residency in Australia in 2015, involving five artists from each country, the second edition of Unfixed has taken place in the UK in 2016.

Several cross-national projects addressing culture and disability in Europe have taken advantage

## Several cross-national projects addressing culture and disability in Europe have taken advantage of the European Commission's Creative Europe programme

of the [European Commission's Creative Europe programme](#) and its predecessors, including the Culture 2000 and Culture (2007-2013) programmes. Among them is the aforementioned [Unlimited Access](#) project, involving partners in the **United Kingdom, Croatia, Greece** and **Portugal**, and which led, among others, to the setting-up of the [Disability Arts International](#) website. More recently, [Un-Label – New Grounds for Inclusive Performing Arts](#) has been set up to address the stigmatisation that affects people with disabilities, through the promotion of mobility and collaboration among artists with and without disabilities from all over Europe, to deal with new inclusive and innovative forms in the performing arts. Between 2015 and 2017, it is expected that approximately 100 artists will be actively involved in the project, and a range of performing arts productions and symposiums will also result from the initiative. Led by Sommertheater Pustebblume e.V. in Cologne, **Germany**, the project also involves Synergy of Music Theatre (**Greece**), Candoco Dance Company (**United Kingdom**) and the Association for the Development of Social and Cultural Life (**Turkey**), as well as the Cologne University of

## The establishment of permanent networks in the field of culture and disability in Asia, Europe and the Pacific remains a challenge, despite increasing exchanges and partnerships

Technology, Arts and Sciences as research and evaluation partner. Similarly, [Crossing the Line](#) brings together three theatre companies from **Sweden, France** and the **United Kingdom** and will lead to three new productions involving artists with learning disabilities and a showcase festival to be held in Roubaix, France, in January 2017.

Some initiatives have been launched to establish permanent cross-national networks involving different countries in the ASEM space. Among them is [EUCREA International](#), first known as EUCREA Europe, which defines itself as the 'International association for the promotion of equal opportunities for people with disabilities in the areas of art, culture and media', as well as a member of the European Disability Forum. Following an international conference held in Melbourne in 2011, an [Asia Pacific Art and Mental Health Network](#) was established, in order to bring together art and mental health leaders from the Asia-Pacific regions to share experiences. However, there is no evidence of subsequent activities, and in general terms the establishment of permanent networks in the field of

culture and disability in Asia, Europe and the Pacific remains a challenge, despite increasing exchanges and partnerships.

## 3.3.9.

# Research

The relative newness of policies and programmes in the field of culture and disability in many countries of the ASEM space serves to explain that research and evidence in this field remains limited in many places. As data presented in this report has shown, however, research may contribute to several objectives, including the identification of obstacles, challenges and needs for the access and participation in culture of people with disabilities and the analysis and evaluation of policies and programmes. The diversity of themes which may be the subject of research means that work in this area should comprise both quantitative studies, including disaggregated data identifying different types of disability, and qualitative studies. A set of methodologies and initiatives can be identified in this area, as described below.

### Research and evidence in this field remains limited in many places

#### Baseline research, monitoring and evaluation

In some countries, regular research is conducted on the participation of people with disabilities in cultural life and this provides the basis on which to design policies and programmes. In **Sweden**, a report on access to culture among people with disabilities published by the Swedish Arts Council in 1998 was the basis of subsequent action plans in this field, including the adoption of measures to ensure universal accessibility to public facilities.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, as explained in section 3.2, in **Finland** a series of reports conducted at the turn of the century also provided the basis for subsequent policymaking. Similarly, in the **United Kingdom** several major policy documents on culture and disability have been backed with data from existing surveys and other research documents.<sup>171</sup> By performing similar analyses regularly, it is possible to monitor trends and analyse the impact of measures adopted. Similarly, the integration

of evaluation in programmes and projects in the field of culture and disability also contributes to enhancing the knowledge base in this area and may provide the basis for subsequent policymaking and programme design.

#### Research bodies and networks

In some countries, specific bodies have been entrusted with the analysis of developments in the field of culture and disability, and research networks have been established. One significant case in point is **Demos**, a knowledge centre established in Flanders, **Belgium**, to address participation and democracy in the context of culture, youth and sports policies, which regularly collects and disseminates information on the relation between culture and disability. Demos' activities include the publication of books and magazines, the organisation of symposia, workshops and other events and the provision of advice to public authorities and

other stakeholders, with particular emphasis on the social and cultural participation of underrepresented groups, including people with disabilities.<sup>172</sup> In **Germany**, a new **Network on Culture and Inclusion**, bringing together researchers and experts, was set up in 2015. Among the main issues being analysed at present are the training and professional development opportunities for artists and culture professionals with disabilities. The Network, which has held two workshops, is supported by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and Media.<sup>173</sup>

#### Research for advocacy purposes

Often initiated by civil society organisations and bodies representing people with disabilities, some reports and studies may contribute to raising awareness of existing obstacles and challenges and advocating for the adoption of new policies and measures. In the **Czech Republic**, the League for the Rights of People in Wheelchairs has been mapping the accessibility of cultural sites for more than a decade, and uses modern information and communication technologies to this end.<sup>174</sup>

## Chapter 4:

### Conclusions and Recommendations

On the basis of the evidence presented in chapters 2 and 3, this final section presents some general findings and observations, as well as some recommendations addressed to member countries of ASEM, as well as to other relevant stakeholders active in culture and disability across Asia and Europe.

**Evidence presented in this report demonstrates that a vast array of experiences in the field of culture and disability have developed over the years across Asia and Europe, overall covering a wide range of artforms, disciplines, approaches and beneficiaries. Both the adoption of international standards in this area, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and increasing awareness among policymakers, practitioners and representative organisations seem to lie at the basis of these developments.**



**A vast array of experiences in the field of culture and disability have developed over the years across Asia and Europe, overall covering a wide range of artforms, disciplines, approaches and beneficiaries**

Indeed, increasing awareness exists at all levels about the universal nature of the rights of people with disabilities and about the fact that access to and participation in culture are part of the desirable life to which all human being should aspire – and that measures to this end should be adopted, by public, private and non-profit stakeholders. Whilst not always phrased in terms of human rights, the adoption of measures in areas such as universal accessibility has become inescapable in many countries.

Within this global context, and despite the limitations of this report (including language limitations and the focus on online information), there is also evidence to suggest that an unbalanced landscape continues to exist among the countries surveyed. Several European countries have long-established legislation and policy in the field of disability, with measures addressing participation in cultural life, and some Asian countries have also made progress to this end. However, it is not certain to what extent similar measures have been adopted elsewhere, and it is certain

that much progress is still pending in several countries of both Asia and Europe.

Some imbalances as regards the actual nature of the measures adopted may also be pointed out. The report has shown that many public authorities, cultural organisations (theatre and dance companies, museums and heritage sites, libraries, symphony halls, etc.), disability NGOs, and individual artists and cultural professionals have increasingly engaged in measures addressing the challenges of culture and disability, in many diverse contexts. There is also evidence of legislation and policy, but this may be more limited in some cases – indeed, it may appear as if, in many countries, efforts have focused on specific, often short-term projects, rather than more structural approaches. In recent years, several new initiatives in legislation and policy have emerged, and this type of measures should continue to develop in the near future, thus generating an enabling environment for specific measures on the ground.

As regards the individual measures adopted, significant evidence has been found in some of the thematic areas analysed (e.g. arts development projects, accessibility measures in cultural facilities, arts and disability festivals, etc.), whilst some other aspects (e.g. access to training and employment for artists with disabilities, research, and international networking) appear to be less often covered.



**Drawing on the findings of the report and the conclusions outlined above, the following recommendations aim to improve the current context of culture and disability policies, programmes and projects in Asia and Europe:**

1. Efforts should continue to be made towards **mainstreaming disability across cultural policies, programmes and initiatives**, including in the work of public cultural bodies and organisations and other stakeholders active in cultural life. Of course, steps in this direction should be provided with adequate resources, including in terms of funding and capacity-building of organisations and professionals, and could take advantage of expertise existing within individual countries and elsewhere in the ASEM space.
2. Furthermore, and particularly in those countries which have had more limited experience of work in the field of culture and disability so far, there is a need to **support demonstrative, illustrative projects** which contribute to raising awareness of the need for people with disabilities to fully take part in cultural life and of the potential of initiatives in this area. High-profile projects can provide the basis on which to build longer-term, structural strategies, including the mainstreaming of disability issues across all relevant policies and programmes.
3. Progress in this area can be fostered through **cross-sectorial partnerships**, including organisations and professionals from culture, disability, social affairs and education, among others, and taking advantage of expertise and other resources available within public authorities, civil society and the private sector. Where these do not exist, committees and working groups gathering all relevant stakeholders should be set up.
4. Particular **attention should be paid to developments at the local level**, within cities and towns, since it is here that access to and participation in cultural life primarily take place. The availability of local resources to make rights enshrined in international and national law effective should be considered, and measures enabling local governments and other local actors to implement policies and programmes in this area and exchange good practices should be adopted.
5. The **potential of digital and mobile technologies to facilitate access to culture** for people with disabilities, including through the accessibility of information and contents and the facilitation of interaction, should be a priority at all levels. In this area, partnerships could be established with Internet providers, technology development centres and other agents in the sector.
6. Access to **specialised training and employment in the cultural sector for people with disabilities** remains an underdeveloped area in many countries, and one which should deserve more attention. Full participation of people with disabilities in society, as equal citizens, requires equal access to employment. Of course, measures adopted in other areas, including funding for organisations and projects active in the field of culture and disability, are also indirectly conducive to broadening the professional opportunities for people with disabilities, but more targeted initiatives will also generally be necessary.
7. Further progress may also be necessary as regards **research in the field of culture and disability**, including an identification of the needs and challenges existing, consultations with relevant stakeholders and monitoring and evaluation of the legislation, policies, programmes and projects implemented, as well as their results and impacts. Where these do not exist yet, measures should be adopted to ensure that statistical data is disaggregated and takes into account different types of ability and disability.
8. The potential exists for **international cooperation and networking in the field of culture and disability across Asia and Europe** to be enhanced. As this report has shown, many relevant experiences exist and there is increasing awareness of the need to work in this area, but mobility and networking remain limited. There appears to be a need to support permanent networks for the cross-national exchange of experiences and the facilitation of projects and to establish other mechanisms for the mobility of information, knowledge and professionals. This report has attempted to provide an initial basis on which to further this exchange.

# About the Author

**Jordi Baltà Portoles works as a freelance consultant and trainer in the areas of cultural policy and international affairs, with a particular interest in cultural diversity, the place of culture in sustainable development, and international cultural relations. He currently works for the Culture Committee of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Asia-Europe Museum Network (ASEMUS), among others. Previously he was a researcher and project coordinator at the Interarts Foundation, where he coordinated the European Expert Network on Culture (EENC) between 2011 and 2014. He is a member of the UNESCO Expert Facility for the implementation of the Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the U40 network 'Cultural Diversity 2030', the board of the Catalan Association of Cultural Managers (APGCC) and the board of the Interarts Foundation. Jordi teaches at the Online MA in Cultural Management of the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) and the University of Girona (UdG), as well as the Degree in International Relations of Universitat Ramon Llull (URL). He holds a BA in Political Science (Autonomous University of Barcelona) and a MA in European Cultural Policy (University of Warwick).**

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Additional references are provided in footnotes throughout the document. Online resources have been retrieved in the course of October 2016.

# Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities was adopted in New York on 13 December 2006 and came into force on 3 May 2008, upon ratification by 20 State Parties. As of October 2016, it has been ratified by 168 Parties, including all ASEM countries except Ireland, as well as by the European Union. The full text of the Convention is available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an intergovernmental forum for dialogue and cooperation established in 1996 to deepen relations between Asia and Europe, which addresses political, economic and socio-cultural issues of common concern. ASEM brings together 53 partners (21 Asian and 30 European countries, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the European Union). The 53 ASEM Partners are Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cambodia, China, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, the Lao PDR, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mongolia, Myanmar, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Russian Federation, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand,

the United Kingdom, Viet Nam, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the European Union. <http://www.aseminfoboard.org/>

<sup>3</sup> Among the issues that lie outside the scope of the report is legislation on the status of the artist, which, where available, often refers to artists' right to health, pension and disability insurance. However, this should be understood as a measure in the field of labour legislation applying to cultural professionals, rather than a specific measure meant for people with disabilities or to the adaptation of cultural organisations and policies to them. Likewise, legislation and policies in the field of non-discrimination have not been covered, except where these explicitly addressed disability and culture. Nevertheless, the adoption and effectiveness of legislation and policies in the areas of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including measures to combat discrimination and relevant monitoring mechanisms, should be understood as a fundamental principle that provides for the effectiveness of policies and measures in the field of culture and disability.

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Article 1, available at <http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>

<sup>6</sup> Article 1, 2006, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, accessible at <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/rights/convtexte.htm>

<sup>7</sup> UN CRPD Preamble Par. (e)

<sup>8</sup> Madden, C. (2004), 'Arts and Disability Policies', *D'Art*, 10, pp. 3-4. Sydney: IFACCA. Retrieved from <http://media.ifacca.org/files/artsanddisabilityreport.pdf> [3/10/2016]; see also McLaughlin, K. et al. (2003), *Towards Inclusion – Arts & Disability Information Booklet*. Belfast: Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

<sup>9</sup> World Health Organisation (2011), *World Report on Disability*. Geneva: WHO, p. 3. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/disabilities/world\\_report/2011/report.pdf](http://www.who.int/disabilities/world_report/2011/report.pdf) [3/10/2016]

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 4. For additional information about ICF, view <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/> [4/10/2016]

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 22.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup> Ibidem, p. 216.

<sup>16</sup> UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), Article 1.

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- <sup>35</sup> WHO (2011), pp. 263-268. The set of recommendations presented here is literally taken from the World Report on Disability, but additional details have been provided for clarity purposes, including the specific implications in the field of culture.
- <sup>36</sup> The discourses presented below may overlap in practice, e.g. through policies and programmes that refer both to human rights and to social inclusion as their goals.
- <sup>37</sup> Referring to the right to take part in cultural life enshrined in 1966's International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has indicated that the obligation to respect this right requires States to refrain from interfering, directly or indirectly, with its enjoyment; the obligation to protect requires States to take steps to prevent third parties from interfering in this right; and the obligation to fulfil requires States to take appropriate legislative, administrative, judicial, budgetary, promotional and other measures aimed at the full realisation of the right. UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2009), 'Right of everyone to take part in cultural life (art. 15, para. 1(a), of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights', General Comment n°21, E/C.12/GC/21, para. 48. Retrieved from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cescr/docs/gc/E-C-12-GC-21.doc> [7/10/2016]
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