

## EU-policy on cultural education - big aims with limited weight

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### Preface: context in advance

'My expectation is that the various forms of monitoring and mapping and a long-term portal of this kind will clearly lead to more information and, as a reference point, be helpful in forming policy at national and European level [for cultural education]. But as long as these actions are not accompanied by a greater political urgency, I am afraid that their impact will remain limited' (Knol 2014: 60).

In the context of the European Life Long Learning Programme the Comenius project on Visual literacy<sup>1</sup> creates a prototype of a 'Common European Framework of Reference on Visual Literacy' (CEFR\_VL) analogous to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), a guideline used to describe achievements in languages of learners across Europe. The Comenius project CEFR\_VL took the CEFR-framework as an example for the elaboration of its curriculum framework, which describes competencies that European citizens must have in the field of fine arts and applied arts (architecture and design) as well as the everyday visual culture when they participate in society and culture as responsible citizens (ENViL 2015). The question now is to what extent the work of the Comenius project CEFR\_VL aligns with the EU-policies in the field of in school cultural education and participation.

In 2006 UNESCO published its *Road map for Arts Education* containing basic comments on the phenomenon arts and cultural education<sup>2</sup>: 'Culture and the arts are essential components of a comprehensive education leading to the full development of the individual. Therefore, arts education is a universal human right, for all learners, including those who are often excluded from education' (UNESCO 2006: 3). Further down in this document UNESCO describes two 'arts in education' approaches: 'The arts can be taught as individual study subjects, through the teaching of the various arts disciplines, thereby developing students' artistic skills, sensitivity, and appreciation of the arts, and seen as a method of teaching and learning in which artistic and cultural dimensions are included in all curriculum subjects' (UNESCO 2006: 8). In addition to the UNESCO's Road map research of Eurydice tells us EU Member States share many aims for the arts curriculum. In her report *Arts and cultural education at school in Europe* (Eurydice 2009) we see what goals are found, such as 'developing artistic skills, knowledge and understanding, engaging with a variety of art-forms; increasing cultural understanding; sharing arts experiences; and become discriminating arts consumers and contributors. But in addition to these artistic outcomes, personal and social-cultural outcomes - such as confidence and self-esteem, individual expression, teamwork, intercultural understanding and cultural participation - were expected from arts educa-

<sup>1</sup> The applicant of the Comenius project on Visual literacy is ENViL, a European research group consisting of researchers operating in institutes responsible for curriculum development, in teacher training colleges and in national centers of knowledge. ENViL aims to explore the different concepts of competencies within European Visual Art Education. The acronym means 'European Network for Visual Literacy'.

<sup>2</sup> Arts and Cultural Education as well as cultural education comprise education for the arts, in the arts, and through the arts. Arts and Cultural Education encourage people to learn about their cultural heritage and to engage with various forms of traditional and contemporary art (= arts education in the narrow sense) and everyday culture (= cultural education in the broad sense) as a source and resource for their present and future life (OMC Working Group 2015).

tion in most countries' (Eurydice 2009: 10). When we speak about visual literacy as a part of arts and cultural education we mean in general the domain-specific tasks and problems of everyday life in the field of visual communication, for example the production and understanding of works of art or of media images, the design of objects, sketches or visualisations (ENViL 2015).

## Approach

For some years the EU has taken various policy measures to promote appreciation of the arts among youngsters and to ensure their cultural participation in the European countries. The new Work Plans' intentions on this topic are well-considered and ambitious, as were the previous ones. In this chapter I will characterise the EU arts and cultural education policy from 2006-2015, by looking at the steering instruments in this policy, starting with the recommendations for *Key competences lifelong learning* of the European Parliament in 2006. However, a systematic analysis of similarities and differences of these steering instruments is far beyond the scope of this chapter therefore it needs to be considered as exploratory work.

Governmental bodies, like the European Union, use different types of steering instruments for their general strategic management for in-school arts and cultural education: *Legislation* with regard to organisation, content and funding (including decisions, recommendations and Work Plans), *incentives* through temporary programmes and subsidy schemes, *monitoring and assessment* of programmes, projects and activities, and *communication of values and aims* in for example Work Plans and Agenda's and reports of OMC-Working Groups (compare: IJdens & Van Hoorn 2014).

Steering instruments	2006 - 2010	2011 - 2015
Legislation and communication of values and aims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key competences lifelong learning 2006</li> <li>• Agenda for Culture 2007</li> <li>• Work plan for Culture 2008-2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work plan for Culture 2011-2014</li> <li>• Work plan for Culture 2015-2018</li> </ul>
OMC-Working Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Group 2008 - report 2010</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working Group 2010 - report 2012</li> <li>• Working Group 2013 - report end 2015</li> </ul>
Incentive programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013</li> <li>• Culture Programme 2007-2013</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erasmus+ 2014-2020</li> <li>• Creative Europe - Culture and Media Programme 2014-2020</li> </ul>
Monitoring and research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluations of programmes</li> <li>• Studies of Eurydice (EACEA)</li> <li>• Studies by NGO's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluations of programmes</li> <li>• Studies of Eurydice (EACEA)</li> <li>• Studies by NGO's</li> </ul>

Table 1\_ Framework for EU-steering instruments for in school arts and cultural education

## Legislation - EU-recommendations and Work Plans

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 the EU Ministers of Culture agreed on a new *Work Plan for Culture*, setting out the priorities for European cooperation in cultural policy-making for the years 2015-2018. Building upon the 2007 *European Agenda for Culture* as well as on the results of the previous ones (Work Plans for Culture 2008-2010 and 2011-2014) the 2014-Work-Plan addresses the key challenges faced by cultural organisations and enterprises in the creative sector at national and European level. The four main priorities are: Accessible and inclusive culture, Cultural heritage, Cultural and creative sectors (creative economy and innovation), and Promotion of cultural diversity and mobility.

Under the heading of the first priority: 'Accessible and inclusive culture' one will find as an intended action for the EU Member States *the development of the key competence cultural awareness and expression and its integration into education policies* (the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States 2014: 9).

The development of the key competence 'cultural awareness and expression' is put on the agenda since 2006, when the European Parliament recommended the European Commission to define new basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning. Besides competences as 'communication in the mother tongue', 'mathematical competence', the last of the eight mentioned key competences was 'cultural awareness and expression' (European Parliament 2006: 13). Cultural awareness and expression is recognised as necessary to be a competent actor in today's society, just as important as literacy, numeracy or digital skills, and closely interrelated to all other competences. In specifying this competence in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes the *Recommendation (2006)* speaks of 'creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts' (2006: 18). However, most of the recommendations are intended for the EU Member States, based on the principle of subsidiarity; the EU does not take action, unless this would be more effective than action taken at a national, regional or local level. From this principle we can imagine there is no European policy in this field of arts education. And this is also true, by the way, for a framework for visual literacy ENViL develops. Therefore ENViL has to choose other methods to disseminate this framework curriculum in EU Member States than through European Union policy.

The *Work Plan for Culture 2008-2010* invited a working group to make recommendations promoting synergies between culture and education (arts in education included), in order to implement the key competence 'cultural awareness and expression'. The working group is also asked to do proposals for the exchange of best practices on activities and structures at regional, national and local level to promote arts and cultural education, either in formal (as an integrated part of school curricula), non-formal or informal settings. According to the Commission this working group of Member State experts should build on the work of ACEnet, the Network of civil servants working in the field of arts and cultural education (Vos 2010).

This invitation is repeated by the European Commission in the *Work Plan 2011-2014*. Under the heading of 'Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture' one will find topic two, the 'Development of the key competence cultural awareness and expression' with the specification that the working group will identify good practices for the development of this key competence and its integration into education policies 'on the basis of knowledge and attitudes identified in the Recommendation of the European Parliament of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning'. The last part of this statement suggests that the working group 2008-2010 did not make progress in the development of the key competence 'cultural awareness and expression' or the Commission did not take into account the recommendations of the working group, because the European Commission again requires in December 2010 to identify this key competence on the basis of the Recommendation from 2006, not referring to the final report of the working group (June 2010). This time the Commission formulated a target: to develop a good practice manual for culture and education authorities at national and European level. Strange enough the *Work Plan 2015-2018* even literally repeats the invitations and the targets from 2008-2010 and 2011-2014 (see table 2). Once more, the Commission appears not to have taken into account the results of the working group 2011-2014.

### **OMC-Working Groups**

As said before, in all three work plans a working group of civil servants and cross-sectorial experts of the EU Member States were invited to compose a manual of good practice for authorities at national and European level, to develop the key competence 'cultural awareness and expression', a key competence which was first mentioned in December 2006, in the 'Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning'.

In June 2010 the first OMC<sup>3</sup>-Working Group 'on developing synergies with education, especially arts education' published his final report (Lauret & Marie 2010). The summary notes that 'The implementation of synergies between education and culture depends on a reinforcement of the status of artistic and cultural education in formal, informal and non-formal education and on the recognition of the right to lifelong artistic and cultural education' (2010: 3). The sixteen recommendations - each with sub-recommendations - are on the level of the Member States and the European Union. Recommendation number twelve is interesting in the context of this Comenius-publication: 'Give sufficient support to the initial training of teachers, artists and other culture professionals and their continuing professional development'. In the sequel the report says it would be important to focus on the needs to 'develop strong curricula for arts and culture education at school as a pre-requisite for structural improvement of the general education curriculum' (2010: 6). Further on the working group suggests 'to promote, at the European level, the exchange of knowledge and experience on the development of artist and teacher competences in art and cultural education', 'identify matching competences between the national and European Qualifications Frameworks (EQF) to facilitate the mobility of teachers and artists active in educational activities' and 'examines the discipline-specific dimension of teacher competences in the various art disciplines as music, fine arts, dance, theatre and so on, and the status of art disciplines in arts and cultural education' (2010: 7). However, the report doesn't give a direct answer to the question of the Commission how to implement the key competence 'cultural awareness and expression'. The recommendations of this working group are more aimed at achieving the implementation of synergies between education and culture.

The next OMC-Working Group installed for the period 2011-2012, discussed the topic 'better access to and wider participation in culture, especially for socio-economically disadvantaged groups'. The report (October 2012) pointed out that culture and creativity are necessary elements of personal development, and: 'Schools, from pre-school to secondary schools, are the privileged field for the development of contacts between young people and the arts. Schools have access to the young and a cross-section of groups (from multi-ethnic groups to special needs), they may have the resources to teach them about the arts, and in most countries they have a mandate to do so' (Working Group of EU Member States' experts 2012: 60).

However, it did not touch upon arts and cultural education in the school, but focused on the way cultural institutions may cooperate with schools to raise an interest in culture from an early age. The report notes that all across Europe museums and performing arts institutions 'are increasingly committed to education programmes'. Nevertheless these activities (consisting of visits and cooperation) have little influence on arts education in the curriculum itself, which makes them dependent on the good will of individual teachers and school leaders. Besides that, the recent budget cuts in most Member States have put cultural education under strain (2012: 60). The report ends merely with recommendations addressed at the national level. The one on the European Union level argues for 'developing a platform for the sharing and exchanging of experiences'. One of the national level recommendations is important in the context of this Comenius project: 'In consideration of the key importance of culture for personal development and creativity, arts and cultural education should be part of the curricula of all school types, including vocational training (2012: 107-108). This is a follow-up of the recommendation the former working group did about 'developing strong curricula for arts and culture education at school' (2010: 6).

<sup>3</sup> The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) is the main working method of cooperation among Member States in the field of culture. It is a voluntary cooperation among Member States, sharing their practices and experiences so as to improve their own work (Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014. Annex II 2010).

In 2013 a third OMC-Working Group was installed and now explicit ‘on cultural awareness and expression’, the eighth key competence in the ‘Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning’ (2006: 13). Arts education as well as cultural education (formal, non-formal and informal) happens in two fields, reception and production. The combination of both terms ‘awareness’ and ‘expression’ in one phrase is representative for the main methodological approach in European arts education: ‘One cannot create without being aware of something and one can understand an artwork in a deeper and better way if there is a base in one’s own experience. That is why a lot of European school curricula claim both aspects with specific emphasis, on practice or on perception, depending on cultural traditions in the different art forms (Wagner 2014: 2). These two approaches can be considered, according to Wagner, as the key to achieve the competence of cultural awareness and expression (Wagner 2014: 4). This OMC Working Group for the first time tries to work out a definition about ‘cultural awareness and expression’ as key competence ‘consisting of components of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for new generations’ (Working group of Member States’ experts 2014; OMC Working Group 2015: 4).

Work plan	Priorities	Instruments and working methods	Timeline and target outputs
2008-2010	Priority 2: topic 2 Promoting access to culture	<i>OMC-Working Group on developing synergies with education, especially art education</i> is invited to report on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies aimed at promoting synergies between culture and education, including arts in education, and the development of projects, in order to implement the key competence ‘Cultural awareness and expression’;</li> <li>• Exchange of best practices on activities and structures at regional, national, and local level to promote arts and cultural education, either formal (as an integrated part of school curricula), non-formal or informal (2008: 11).</li> </ul>	June 2008 to end 2010 (2 to 3 meetings a year): Output not formulated
2011-2014	Priority A: topic 2 Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue	<i>OMC-Working Group on better access to and wider participation in culture</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will identify good practices for the development of the key competence Cultural awareness and expression and its integration into education policies, on the basis of knowledge and attitudes identified in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2010: 3).</li> </ul>	2013-2014 Good practice manual for culture and education authorities at national and European level.
2015-2018	Priority A: topic 1 Accessible and inclusive culture (Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue)	<i>OMC-Working Group on Cultural Awareness and Expression</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Will identify good practices for the development of the key competence Cultural awareness and expression and its integration into education policies, on the basis of knowledge and attitudes identified in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2014: 9-10).</li> </ul>	End 2015 Manual of good practice for culture and education authorities at national and European level.

Table 2\_ An overview of priorities, working methods and targets in work plans 2008-2010, 2011-2014 and 2015-2018

## Incentive programmes

At EU level incentive programmes are meaningful steering instruments to grant funds and subsidies through temporary programmes and subsidy schemes for education and training. One of them is the *Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013* now continued in the *Erasmus+ Programme 2014-2020*. Concerning cultural and audio-visual actions and activities the current incentive programme is *Creative Europe - Culture and Media Programme 2014-2020* which was preceded by the *Cultural Programme 2007-2013*<sup>4</sup>, with a budget of € 1.46 billion (9% higher than its predecessors).<sup>5</sup>

The Erasmus+ Programme is designed to enable people, at any stage of their life, to take part in stimulating learning experiences, as well as developing education and training across Europe. With a budget of nearly € 7 billion, the first programme, which runs from 2007-2013, supports a range of exchanges, study visits, and networking activities. The current programme aims to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising 'Education, Training, and Youth work' and has a budget of € 14.7 billion; a 40% increase compared to current spending levels, reflecting the EU's commitment to investing in these areas<sup>6</sup>. ENViL is given a grant in 2013 - under a lot of terms and conditions - for the design and dissemination of a Common European Framework of Reference in Visual Literacy.

## Monitoring and research

The outcomes of monitoring and research are potential indicators to design, modify or change the EU policy regarding arts and cultural education. Therefore the EU often requires research - for example on general issues as the development of creativity for the empowerment of young people and on specific issues in the area of in-school arts education and the contribution of cultural institutions for implementation of the curriculum. The European political agenda reflects different approaches, targets, target groups and social outcomes to which arts education might contribute.

Most people, including policy makers, expect that arts education fosters creativity and possibly others skills conducive to innovation. In knowledge-based societies, innovation is a key engine of economic growth, and arts education is increasingly considered as a means to foster the skills and attitudes that innovation requires, beyond and above artistic skills and cultural sensitivity. The report *Art for Art's Sake?* (2013) indicates there is some evidence that arts education does matter for innovation 'because people trained in the arts play a significant role in the innovation process in OECD countries. Recognising the value of arts education for innovation, an increasing number of universities are developing new types of inter-disciplinary curricula or institutions that try to take advantage of the skills developed in arts education' (Winner, Goldstein & Vincent-Lancrin 2013: 20-21).

In EU Member States the subject art is on the curricula of primary and secondary schools and in some of them the study area arts is even an important part of it. When we look at *Education at a Glance* (2014), the OECD countries and their curricula for primary and secondary schools, primary students spend an average of 45% of the compulsory curriculum on three subjects: reading, writing and literature (22%), mathematics (15%) and the arts (9%), usually spread over visual arts, music, theatre and dance. The variations between countries in time spent learning arts are substantial. In Poland and Slovak Republic arts education accounts for 8% or less of instruction time, while in Estonia, Germany and Slovenia it accounts for 15% or more. In Finland it accounts for at least 13% of compulsory instruction time but schools must also allocate additional flexible time to arts, music or crafts (OECD 2014: 430-431).

<sup>4</sup> More information on [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/opportunities/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/opportunities/index_en.htm), accessed on September 7, 2015 at 6:34 pm.

<sup>5</sup> An amount of € 1.46 billion means an average amount of € 0.41 per inhabitant of Europe per year.

<sup>6</sup> An amount of € 14.7 billion means an average amount of € 4.14 per inhabitant of Europe per year.

At the lower secondary level on average rather less attention is given to the arts. An average of 39% of the compulsory curriculum is composed of three subjects: reading, writing and literature (14%), first and other foreign languages (13%) and mathematics (12%). On average, an additional 11% of the compulsory curriculum is devoted to natural sciences and 10% to social studies. Together with physical education and health (7%) and the arts (7%), these seven study areas form the major part of the curriculum for this age group in all OECD countries. Again, time paid to learning arts varies here too. In Belgium (Fr) arts education accounts for 3%, in Austria and Italy for 12% or more of compulsory instruction time (OECD 2014: 431-440).

The probably best-known publication about arts and cultural education in the EU is the Eurydice-report of 2009 *Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe*; so far there is no successor of this study. The study presents comprehensive and comparable information on arts education policy in Europe and covers the aims and objectives of arts education, its organisation, initiatives and recommendations for development and planned reforms. It includes information on pupil assessment and teacher education in the arts. The study focus besides visual arts on the other art subjects as music, drama, dance, media arts and crafts (literature is not included).

Only the introduction of this report deals with the European Union policy level and pays attention - besides some concentration on initiatives of EU Member States for organising conferences about this arts and cultural education theme - to a resolution on Artistic Studies in the European Union submitted by the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament (2009). Key recommendations included: 'artistic education should be compulsory at all school levels; arts teaching should use the latest information and communications technologies; teaching of art history must involve encounters with artists and visits to places of culture' (2009: 7). In order to make progress on these issues, the resolution called for greater oversight and coordination of arts education at European level, including monitoring the impact of arts teaching on the competencies of students. A consequential *raison d'être* for arts education, according to this report, is the development of creativity by using appropriate pedagogical methods, which will have a major impact on the later career opportunities of the pupils in the artistic and creative market sector (2009: 9). The report was discussed in the European Parliament on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 2009 in Strasbourg and with the praise of Jan Figel, Commissioner of Education and Culture (Figel 2009) the resolution was adopted in Parliament on the 24<sup>th</sup> of March (European Parliament 2009). It is only used as a call to all EU Member States - amongst others - to recognise the importance of promoting artistic education and creativity in the context of a knowledge-based economy and to establish joint strategies for the promotion of artistic education policies and policies for training teachers specialising in this subject.

There are also useful studies of the EU Member States' policy for arts and cultural education by independent experts and non-governmental organisations in Europe; for instance Educult, the Austrian Institute for Cultural Policy and Management published *European Arts Education Fact Finding Mission* (2012) and *Arts Education Monitoring System (AEMS)* (2013).

The aim of the first mentioned report is 'providing a structural tool to close the gap of information on resources and provide data for facilitating an evidence-based policy and empower practitioners to discuss funds and resources'. The importance of the personal commitment in the field of arts and cultural education and the unstructured recording of financial resources within cultural institutions and public services was the rise to a follow-up: Arts Education Monitoring System (AEMS) (2011-2013). The final report of this project describes just how difficult it is to define current cultural education practices. To start with, there is little agreement on what is meant by the concept of 'arts and cultural education'. International studies demonstrate just how widely the connotations of this concept can range; it is defined differently and serves different objectives in every country. In Spain and Hungary, for example, the concept describes training programmes for professional artists, while Germany and Austria apply a

very broad definition: reaching out to other policy fields like economic development, social inclusion and the obligatory formal education system. The AEMS provided a structure to help understand this complexity. The report says 'more robust evidence is needed to keep on monitoring the development of arts and cultural education across Europe, or the sector will remain precarious and subject to the political fads and sweeping changes of emphasis that have characterised the period of this study. (Educult 2013: 3-4).

Last but not least there are the two editions of the International yearbook for research in arts education (2013 and 2014) with a contemplative article of Daniel Gad (Germany) about *Perspectives on arts Education within International Cooperation: a culture-political reflection*. Gad notes a serious lack of regional, national and international strategies and efforts. 'Without those, arts education will certainly continue to be marginalized' (Gad 2013: 253).

## Closing remarks

I finish this exploratory work with some closing remarks. My primal observation is that steering instruments in EU-policy largely consist of communicating values and aims, alongside temporary subsidy schemes to encourage and support cultural cooperation within Europe, in order to bring the European common cultural heritage to the fore (Culture Programme) and to support learning opportunities from childhood to old age in every single life situation (Lifelong Learning Programme). There is an increasing focus on political statements and policy development, while in proportion to the multitude of words and opinions less attention seems to be drawn towards policy measures and their implementation.

Regarding the Work Plans for Culture and the reports of the OMC-Working Groups one can find little to nothing about the way the Commission evaluates those. Despite of publishing the first OMC-report in June 2010 the EU Member States gave in December 2010 only as an indirect and limited response that the *Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014* is build 'on the June 2010 recommendations of the OMC-Working Group on developing synergies with education, especially arts education' (the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States 2010: 3). And in the *Conclusions of the Member States on a Work Plan for Culture 2015-2018* (2014) there is hardly any attention for the outcomes of the October-2012-report of the working group. The only paragraph dedicated to their outcomes is in the *Report on the implementation and relevance of the 2011-2014 Work Plan for Culture* (2014). In it is said Member State experts analysed more than eighty policies and practices - gathered together in a good-practice manual that was published in 2013<sup>7</sup> - which led them 'to conclude that the issue of access is also an issue of lack of public demand' and that 'audience development' has, therefore, to be encouraged. The paragraph ends with the comment 'an OMC Working Group is currently focusing on developing cultural awareness and expression through education at all levels' (European Commission 2014).

However, what is currently happening at national level is not clear because it is not systematically examined. After all there is a substantial lack of information about whether and how EU Member States prepare and implement their policies in the field of in-school arts and cultural education. Even the Compendium Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe - a tool for research - with Section 8.3.2 providing information on 'arts in school', is - due to a lack of predetermined criteria - not usable for comparisons because information is often outdated and therefore unreliable and not analogous.

<sup>7</sup> The publication year of this report was not 2013 but 2012 (October 2012), as the cover shows. See more: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/documents/omc-report-access-to-culture\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/strategic-framework/documents/omc-report-access-to-culture_en.pdf), accessed on September 7, 2015 at 2:49 pm.

An external evaluation report of the Open Method of Coordination (2013) used by the European Union to implement tools at EU level noted there is 'potential to achieve greater impacts, through stronger connectivity and dissemination channels between OMC-participants and key decision-makers at national level' (2013: iv). The evaluation report recommends: 'Retain and further develop the use of dissemination plans for OMC-outputs and consider in collaboration with Member States how more resources can be made available to translate more outputs in order to improve dissemination' (McDonald, Mozuraityte, Veart & Frost 2013: 85).

The EU-policy seems focused on formulating and setting work for OMC-Working Groups, assuming that the policy outcomes are implemented by the Member States. That way the EU ensures that there is a 'common policy', carried out at the level of the Member States, according to the principle of subsidiarity. In terms of content the EU policy aims to explore and promote arts and cultural education as catalysts in supporting and fostering creativity and innovation. The EU requires action based on the recommendations of the successive OMC-Working Groups. Nevertheless the EU does - apparently - nothing with them itself. Words seem to stay without any action.

The action has to come from the Member States and in the particular case of the common European framework of reference on visual literacy from ENViL itself. It was a challenge to ask UNESCO to support the dissemination of the framework because of the outcome of its second World Conference on Arts Education held in Seoul in 2010. The Seoul Agenda *Goals for the development of Arts Education* (2010) gives on a worldwide level a very strong strategic instrument to promote and encourage in school cultural education, considering the UNESCO-statement that the Seoul Agenda 'will serve as a concrete plan of action' (UNESCO 2010: 2). Maybe ENViL can cooperate with the recently created European UNESCO Observatory as well as with The International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) and the European League of Institutes in the Arts (ELIA) to disseminate this framework curriculum so that learners are able to resolve domain-specific tasks and problems of everyday life in the field of visual communication.

Finally, however, strategic considerations go in advance for the drawing of the further development of a European policy agenda for cultural education. Meaningful are policy principles in which attention is paid to important socially and economically ambitions in the European context. It looks like this weight can be especially emphasized when the importance of art and cultural education is linked to such social and political issues in the Member States and at the European level: citizenship, youth, education and the education and training of teachers (Van Hoorn, Hagenaaars & Maaijwee 2009). And take into account the quote in the beginning of this article of Jan Jaap Knol 'but as long as these actions are not accompanied by a greater political urgency, I am afraid that their impact will remain limited' (Knol 2014: 62).

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Hagenaaars has written a significant number of policy-related publications in the field of cultural education. Outside his daily work, he is also actively involved in provincial and national institutes and commissions in his capacity as policy advisor, board member and chairman, including the Crown membership of the National Council for the Arts. Hagenaaars works now at the Center of Historical Culture - Erasmus University Rotterdam - as a PhD student to his thesis on Cultural Education policy in the Netherlands 1975-2015.

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