

## Madrid Report

On 24-25 April, the British Council held the second event of the EU-UK Culture and Education Series, in partnership with Siena Group in Madrid. 90 delegates representing the higher education, arts, culture, science, research, language, schools and skills sectors in 20 European countries gathered to better understand challenges and opportunities presented by Brexit, and agree practical actions.

Their deliberations built on recent findings from the Berlin Series Launch (February 2017) and a digital campaign that has been running since earlier this year. Presentations from leading cultural and educational figures across Europe particularly highlighted the views of young people and needs of future generations in the context of Brexit and a changing Europe.

Over the course of the Series, which aims to strengthen and renew relationships between the UK and European partners in the cultural and educational spheres through digital and face-to-face dialogue, institutional leaders are proposing recommendations to enable EU and UK leaders to make informed decisions during upcoming negotiations.

Institutions have also taken the opportunity presented by the Series to re-imagine models of pan-European cooperation in their fields, helping to overcome challenges and optimise opportunities presented by the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

The following points were widely accepted by delegates attending the Madrid event.

### Highlights from Madrid event

- Brexit and other changes in Europe present opportunities to sector institutions to review, re-imagine and develop new ways of working
- The term 'culture' should be understood in its broadest sense, including higher education, arts, science, research, language, schools and skills sectors
- Citizens of Europe, particularly young people, have benefited extensively from European cooperation in the fields of education, culture and society. Today, young people expect certain rights to be maintained – such as studying, working, volunteering, performing and creating in other European countries. Complicating or even removing these liberties altogether would be detrimental to their futures and therefore to the future of Europe as a whole
- There is wide consensus from all European countries that the education, culture and science fields share common risks and opportunities as a result of the UK's withdrawal from the EU with potential gains or losses felt equally on both sides
- In Europe, culture is especially central in defining the identity and economy of the continent
- On an increasingly competitive and challenging world stage, Europe is stronger global player when it boasts an integrated and successful education, culture and science sectors
- There is a pan-European appetite at institutional level for a 'European Cultural and Education Zone' – an open market academics, students, scientists, artists and researchers can study, work, perform and create with ease.
- Individuals and institutions from EU27 should work with their national governments to ensure that education, culture and science sectors are high on the priority list in the Brexit negotiations from both sides

## Next steps and the 'Communiqué'

- The final communiqué / open letter of the Series should begin with a narrative articulating the vision of the educational and cultural sectors. The opening section should define what kind of Europe the sector wants in the long term, and why is it of interest to institutions, the public and EU-UK policy-makers
- The statement should articulate clearly and in a compelling manner (using easy to understand language, and illustrated by data and specific examples) how education, culture and science sectors add long term value to societies
- The statement should demonstrate the sectors' breadth, scale and integration with other sectors, using examples to illustrate how the sectors far-reaching benefits support businesses, health, legal, financial services and many other industries
- Include concrete recommendations of what UK and EU leaders should consider and eventually agree over during negotiations
- Include specific commitments by institutions – what are sector institutions doing collectively and independently of governments to overcome obstacles, to continue collaborating and cooperating
- Ensure as many individuals, institutions and national governments as possible contribute to support the messages held within the communiqué. Encourage others to proactively share and promote the communiqué – the volume and quality of endorsers/signatories will dictate the Series' success
- The format of the communiqué should be diverse – in addition to a succinct report, messages will land most effectively if delivered through a variety of media and across a number of sectors, including:
  - Social media – Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook (possible hashtags could include #CultureConsensus, #CultureRicherTogether, #CultureEducationRights, #EuropeanCultureEducationZone, #CultureUndivided, #WeExpectCulture)
  - Newspaper, press and print
  - Digital platforms, such as subscriptions, newsletters, publications, communities