

Ireland

There have been a number of key developments in terms of cultural policy in Ireland which are of relevance to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. Culture as a policy priority at national level, whether measured in terms of public resource allocation or in political weight at the Cabinet table, has managed to hold its own in the face of increasing pressures on the public purse. The Irish Government has remained committed to the development of the sector throughout the current economic crisis, recognizing its importance as a net contributor to the economy, a vital source of inspiration and creativity, and as a highly effective means of presenting a sophisticated, potent national brand internationally.

In its most recent Statement of Strategy (2001-2014), the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht includes specific references to culture – "to promote and support Ireland's world-class artistic and cultural strengths, at home and abroad and - to foster, promote, conserve and present our heritage and culture, including the Irish language".

The body with the primary responsibility for the promotion and development of the Arts in Ireland is the Arts Council. The Arts Council understands Arts Participation to be an important area through which it protects and promotes the diversity of cultural expressions in line with the UNESCO convention. The Arts Council's approach towards access and participation is built on a commitment to ensure that those who are particularly vulnerable to social exclusion have opportunities to access and participate in the country's artistic and cultural life, at least to the extent that is the norm in Ireland. It acknowledges the value of this approach, not only in terms of cultural equity but also in terms of informing and enhancing arts practice, enabling a diversity of voices and perspectives that enrich the arts in Ireland.

Following a series of discussions, the Arts Council drew up and agreed a policy and five year strategy for Cultural Diversity and the Arts and this was launched in September 2010.

Culture Ireland was established to promote and advance Irish arts in a global context, helping to create international opportunities for Irish artists and cultural practitioners and leading to a deeper mutual understanding between Irish and other cultures and communities.

A number of grant programmes are available to support mobility of artists in and out of Ireland - Culture Ireland Grant programme; Travel and Training Award (Arts Council); Banff Residency (Arts Council); Location One Fellowship (Arts Council); Artist-in-Residence Programme (Centre Culturel Irlandais / Culture Ireland); "See Here" Programme (Culture Ireland); Translation Bursary Programme (Ireland Literature Exchange); Residency programmes.