

Input provided for the Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International Relations Committee of the Welsh Parliament's inquiry into 'Culture and the new relationship with the European Union'.

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- As two Celtic nations in close proximity, Ireland's artistic and cultural collaborations and connections with Wales have strong historical roots. These cultural connections remain vibrant today. Ireland and Wales benefit from a rich and often shared cultural heritage which flourishes in each country. Artists play an essential role in both countries, preserving traditional art forms and also re-imagining and representing our current societies through a modern and creative lens.
- The Government of Ireland continues to maintain a close working relationship with the Welsh Government at official and Ministerial levels through, for example, fora such as the **British Irish Council (BIC)**.
- We welcome that Culture and Heritage remains one of the three key pillars of policy collaboration under the BIC. Ireland highly values the ongoing policy engagement with our Welsh counterparts under this pillar on the topics of (i) Creative Industries, and (ii) Indigenous, Minority and Lesser-Used (IML) Languages. The Creative Industries work sector of BIC provides a valuable platform for sharing expertise and learning on policies and approaches to creative industries between Ireland and Wales.
- Ireland and Wales are engaged closely through the BIC in sharing policy information and experience on a number of key areas of policy development for the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media, including (i) Climate and Culture, (ii) Health and Wellbeing in the Creative Sector, and (iii) Strengthening the resilience of the sector.
- Ireland also continues to collaborate bilaterally with Wales through the **Ireland-Wales Ministerial Forum**. Through this engagement Ireland and Wales have agreed the '[Ireland-Wales Shared Statement and Joint Action Plan 2021-25](#)', under which Culture, Language and Heritage is identified as a key area for cooperation between the two nations.
- Recent examples of this cooperation include:
 - **Other Voices Festival:**

Ireland continues to support and promote the three-year partnership which began in 2019 with Other Voices Festival and Lleisiau Eraill between South Wind Blows, Theatr Mwldan and Triongl TV. Ireland is also seeking to develop opportunities to engage with Ireland's Edge, a multidisciplinary creative event series that makes up a distinct strand of Other Voices festival of music and ideas. A multi-annual support framework was agreed with South Wind Blows in respect of the Other Voices presentations at Dingle and Cardigan in the period 2023-2025. It was further agreed that the achievements of Other Voices at Cardigan would be reviewed jointly by the Welsh and Irish official partners in early 2025.
 - **Horizons partnership and WOMEX:**

Culture Ireland engages with Wales Arts International and Welsh colleagues through participation in the Horizons partnership, a collective of export offices and funding agencies across Scotland, Wales, England, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The Horizons partnership was founded during the 2013 edition of WOMEX held in Wales and spotlights emerging music artists from England, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – helping talented musicians gain international recognition on the world stage. For 10 years, the Horizons partners have joined

together at WOMEX (Worldwide Music Expo) to ensure our grassroots musicians reach wider audiences by providing advice, funding, showcasing opportunities and assistance at the event. Based on this, Culture Ireland has also worked with Welsh colleagues on coordination of national presences at other international showcase events such as Classical: NEXT.

○ **Other Culture Ireland supports for Irish-Welsh artistic engagement:**

In addition to Culture Ireland's participation in the Horizons Partnership, Culture Ireland also continues to support Irish artists to present at festivals and venues across Wales. Recent projects include:

- Ulster Touring Opera participating with performances of *Nia Ben Aur* in the National Eisteddfod in Pontyprid, August 2024.
- *Beyond Two Shores* presented by Wex-Art and West Wales Arts Centre in Fishguard, August 2024.
- Ceol Connected and Fidget Feet presenting *When the Moon Spun Round* at Opening Doors Festival in Aberystwyth, March 2024.
- Fishamble presenting Irish language work by Eva O'Connor as part of TAIGH TŶ TEACH (HOUSE), a tri-lingual co-production with Theatre Gu Leor and Theatr Bara Caws, in Scotland and Wales, January - February 2024.
- Gaeltacht musician Padraig Jack undertaking a tour of the Welsh Gaeltacht region, February 2023.
- Eoin Colfer and illustrator Celia Ivey presenting *Little Big Sister* at the Hay Festival, Hay on Wye, June 2023.
- Gatehouse performing at The Valley Folk Club, Ponterdawe, Swansea, and the Tredegar House Folk festival, Newport, May 2023.
- Tom Mooney attending *Borderless and Bold*, presented by Wex-Art at West Wales Arts Centre, August 2023.
- 4InaBar performing at Narbeth A Cappella Voice Festival (NAVF), Queens Hall, Narbeth, March 2023.
- Nuala O'Connor presenting her book *Finding Nora* at the Llangwm Literary Festival, August 2022.

○ **Arts Council Ireland collaborations with Welsh and UK-wide partners:**

Finally, the Arts Council Ireland are engaged in a number of projects promoting collaboration with Welsh partners, including:

- The Arts Council of Ireland is joining the *All In* cultural access scheme, which aims to improve the experience of people with disabilities when attending arts and cultural events in the UK and Ireland.
- Ireland is participating in the Northern European Mobility programme, a pilot mobility and exchange opportunity supported by the arts funding agencies of Ireland, Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland and the Nordic Culture Fund.
- Arts Council Ireland is collaborating with British Council Ireland on research designed to better understand the connections that exist between the UK and Ireland in arts and culture.
- Arts Council Ireland has participated in the Beyond Border programme, which aim is to supports the creation, touring and promotion of innovative and high-quality new music across all genres and encourages engagement with audiences across England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland through multiple performances and digital activity.

- However, Brexit has created a number of challenges for arts and culture engagement between Ireland and Wales. For instance, while the Common Travel Area has mitigated mobility issues between the two countries, the Arts Council Ireland have noted that they have seen the

emergence of barriers and tariffs affecting the movement of art goods across borders (e.g. visual arts material, technical equipment, etc.), which has had an effect on individual artists working between the two countries in particular.

- However, perhaps the biggest impact on potential Irish-Welsh cultural collaboration has come from the UK's withdrawal from the EU's Creative Europe programme. While data on specific Irish-Welsh collaborations under Creative Europe is hard to disaggregate, we would note the following Creative Europe strands as areas where collaboration may be negatively affected:
 - **European Cooperation Projects:** Between 2014 and 2019, of the 55 projects funded with Irish organisations under the Creative Europe funding strand 'European Cooperation Projects, 30 projects (56%) involved at least 1 UK-based organisation. 10 of these projects (18%) were led by UK-based organisations. Through these projects, Irish organisations worked directly with 50 UK-based organisations. Unfortunately, as the UK is not currently participating in the Creative Europe programme, this avenue for fostering connections between Irish and UK-based arts organisations is no longer open. Ireland continues to participate in European Cooperation Projects, however, we now have increased focus on fostering and developing relationships with non-UK European partners for these projects. Over time this could have a negative impact on the level of individual and institutional collaboration between Ireland and Wales.
 - **Individual Mobility:** Irish artists travelling to the UK for residencies are no longer eligible to apply for Culture Moves Europe funding such as the Individual Mobility Award. Again, over time this will again have a negative impact on cultural collaboration between Ireland and all UK regions.
 - **Film Distribution and Sales:** Ireland is currently facing particular challenges in accessing funding for film distribution and sales projects under Creative Europe post-Brexit. This is largely due to the fact that the Irish market often relies on UK-based distributors and sales agents who purchase rights for film distribution in the UK and Ireland territories. This has led to a lack of access for Irish stakeholders to Creative Europe calls such as Films on the Move, whereas, previously we benefitted from UK-based company's participation in this scheme.
- Finally, at a policy level, while we have noted the ongoing collaboration through BIC and the Ireland-Wales Ministerial Council above, Ireland notes that previously we had additional opportunities to engage with the UK government through multilateral EU fora such as the Cultural Affairs Committee. Engagement through this European fora is also no longer possible.