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STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE AND LANDSCAPE
(CDCPP)

COMPENDIUM OF CULTURAL POLICIES
AND TRENDS IN EUROPE

For information and action

Secretariat Memorandum
prepared by the
Directorate of Democratic Governance
Democratic Institutions and Governance Department

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Introduction

In the light of the Organisation's strategic priorities and prior to any choice on future budgets, there is a need to rethink the role and governance/business model of the Compendium of cultural policies that has been in existence for almost 20 years.

The Compendium has provided an effective tool for gathering, publishing, disseminating and making available on-line crucial information on national cultural policies, mechanisms and processes. Set up by the Council of Europe, the Compendium has been managed over the years by an operational project partner (ERICarts) on the basis of an agreement concluded with the Council of Europe and with a mixed funding: direct Council of Europe grant and indirect member States' grants¹ (voluntary contributions) channelled to ERICarts through the Council of Europe.

In its current format, the Compendium contains information about cultural policies in 44 member States of the Council of Europe. It is used by national/regional administrations as a source of comparative information on trends and measures at national level, and also by a growing number of independent researchers, academia and think tanks with the same interests.

The Secretariat has already engaged a dialogue with ERICarts and the Bureau on possible business models that would enable the Compendium to continue functioning at a high level of excellence, should the Council of Europe substantially rethink its strategy in regard of supporting existing databases such as the Compendium.

What follows is an account of the discussions held so far and a set of proposals for consideration by the CDCPP.

Progress

Meeting between the CoE Secretariat and Ericarts, 9 February

The models debated during the meeting included the following:

- A part-contribution / part-user-funded model: according to this model, data about States paying a significant contribution to the Compendium would be freely accessible, the remaining member States' profiles could be accessed for a user fee.
- Universities that heavily use the Compendium in their teaching of cultural policy courses (according to available data, between 20 and 25 do) could also possibly pay a voluntary contribution.

¹ In the past five years, the following countries have supported the Compendium through voluntary contributions: Austria, Croatia, Finland, France, Hungary, Monaco, Netherlands and Switzerland. In the same period, Compendium Authors' Meetings were hosted by: Poland, Belgium (twice), Austria and Finland.

- Should ERICarts want to cancel its participation, Universities or even some major publishing houses in Europe could be approached to check their interest and capacity to run the Compendium on their own.
- [ECURES](#)², the sister association of ERICarts, could oversee the Compendium. Since the staff who manage ECURES also manages the ERICarts Institute, this would ensure a continuity in project management if ever ERICarts had to step down from its commitments.³

CDCPP Bureau Meeting, 21-22 April

The above models were submitted to the CDCPP Bureau who instructed the Secretariat to organise a meeting to discuss the business models, inviting CDCPP members from member States who had previously made voluntary contributions in support of the Compendium.

Ad hoc Working Group on financing the Compendium meeting, 18 May

Representatives of Finland, Netherlands and Switzerland, as well as Professor Andreas Wiesand of ERICarts and the Secretariat discussed further the options available and agreed on the following.

General assumptions

- The solution (to be) found should not impact negatively on member States' contribution to the Compendium, or give the impression that the development of the Compendium was no longer the responsibility of the CDCPP and its member States.
- The Compendium management should continue to follow Council of Europe principles, as well as CDCPP guidelines on aspects such as to what extent commercial organisations would be entitled to participate in the system, or on the continued development of the Compendium along Council of Europe priorities.
- The Council of Europe would continue to contribute financially to the project, albeit, in all likelihood and as from 2018, tokenly.

² The European Association of Cultural Researchers (Ecures) is a founding body of the ERICarts Institute and dedicated to advancing cultural research through conferences, publications and other means. It has 101 members in 32 countries in Europe and other parts of the world. Thirty-two of these members are Compendium Authors.

³ This would be due to its legal status as a non-profit gGmbH - which rules out running projects if ever they become loss-making.

Practical and financial assumptions and conditions

- The project would need initially a minimum annual budget of at least €85 000 to be maintained effectively, but would require a higher annual budget in the long term⁴.
- Any decisions on commercialization of the Compendium or any aspect of it would have to be jointly agreed by the Compendium partners in line with CDCPP preferences.
- If a fee were to be charged for the content, such as under the part contribution / part user-funded model suggested, it should not be applied to the country profiles, which, as the most basic information service, would remain free. However, fees could be applied to the users of “value added” services of the Compendium (eg comparative print-outs) or to derivative products.
- Any tendering for the operational running of the project would depend on realistic financial perspectives. It should be comprehensive and include a request for a work plan, budget and additional management and development options.
- Publishing houses as partners or project operators were currently excluded as a viable option for the future.

Alternative solutions

After discussing the business models as suggested at the meeting on 9 February, the working group proposed the alternatives below for discussion by the CDCPP plenary. In each of these models, the Council of Europe would play its role, to ensure the affiliation of the Compendium project with the Organisation.

1. Continuation of the CoE-ERICarts partnership as before, with the hope of an increase of voluntary contributions made to the Compendium by member States or the attraction of other support funds.
2. Transfer of responsibility for Compendium management to ECURES or another organization. ECURES would ensure continuity in management staff. Furthermore, it has a work basis of 100 members many of which are (or have been) Compendium experts and cultural policy specialists. This solution could lead to the involvement of additional specialists. Finally, on the basis of its different legal structure, it would not be caught by the same financial restrictions as the ERICarts Institute.

⁴ The current split of financing between the Council of Europe and member States (voluntary contributions) is 40%-60%.

3. Establishment of a new consortium, whose members would include ERICarts Associates (eg Boekman Foundation (Netherlands) or CUPORE – the Finnish Foundation for Cultural Policy Research), supporting member States and research institutes, and a CDCPP member to sit on the Board. It could have a legal statute similar to that of Herein AISBL: International Association of the European Heritage Network (if ~~legally established in Belgium~~). It would also need a set of guiding principles, some of which could be taken from the Administrative Arrangement between the Council of Europe and ERICarts.

4. Transforming the project into a membership organization where members would pay a fee, the amount of which would depend on their status. Members could include academic institutions, cultural institutions, Council of Europe member states, individual users, etc. This model was expected to possibly generate some funds but not necessarily secure the daily management of such a complex project.

Recommendation by the group

The preferred option of the Group is the establishment of a new consortium (option 3 above) since it implies a strong driving force for the project, and, if selected, would aim to have it in place by the end of 2017. The consortium could entrust the practical management of the Compendium either to the ERICarts Institute, to ECURES or to another body and/or build synergies with other initiatives in view of the most cost-efficient running of the information system. The consortium would enhance fundraising opportunities through dedicated action and networking with a multitude of public and possibly private partners.

Action required

The CDCPP is invited to:

- take note of the progress made on revising the Compendium financing and management, discuss the options available and express its preferred line of action;
- nominate 3 CDCPP members to follow-up on the Compendium development plan and help with the implementation of the selected option, in close cooperation with the Secretariat.