

Bremen Declaration on the “Mobility of Museum Collections”

Since 2004 the topic of collections mobility has been held to be a high priority within the European Union. After co-operation between various presidencies, the Action Plan for the EU Promotion of Museum Collections’ Mobility and Loan Standards was endorsed by the Education, Youth and Culture Council in November 2006.

During the German EU-presidency a conference in Bremen on 6/7 May 2007 focused on one of the six key strands of the Action Plan – “Building up trust and Networking” to encourage the exchange of museum objects and means to explore measures in order to enhance the mobility of collections.

Much of Europe’s cultural heritage is held within the museums of Europe. Only through measures that facilitate mobility of collections will it be possible for a large number of European citizens to enjoy the authentic objects documenting their shared past and thus better understand and respect the many different origins of European culture.

The participants at the conference of experts, have declared:

It is a key task in each European member state to recognize at the political level that the larger European museums have already developed extensive co-operation in a number of activities. These large museums are now called upon to increase their cooperation with smaller institutions within the museum community. Small and medium sized museums should also now be strongly encouraged to participate in the important activity of sharing collections between member states and making them available to all European citizens.

Within the museum community various tools are already available or under development to support the exchange of collections (guidelines, standard loan agreement etc). These tools now need to be widely publicised, for example using the opportunities the Internet provides. Furthermore information on museums’ collections should be made known as widely as possible.

Representatives of several active networks in the museum community in Europe (NEMO, ICOM Europe and others) declared their readiness to work to reach that goal by using their resources to involve small and medium museums in this activity.

The participants at the expert meeting in Bremen also declared their intention to build closer ties between the European networks represented at their meeting in order to support collections mobility.

The participants called for action to be taken to overcome the existing obstacles which still hamper the mobility of museum objects within Europe – always taking into account the care and safety of the objects.

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They called for intensified and more creative use of existing resources within their own communities and member states.

The participants invited museum workers to work through networks to make use of as many funding opportunities as possible within the new cultural funding programme of the European Commission. In addition further funding should be allocated at European level for innovative projects to demonstrate Europe's rich cultural heritage, to support the exchange of museum professionals and their training and thus help develop increased understanding of common origins as well as to develop deeper respect for the different cultures in Europe.

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