

## **Art without Borders**

Letter on international cultural policy to the President of the House of Representatives from the Minister for European Affairs and the Minister of Education, Culture and Science

### **I. Introduction**

'Every culture has its origins in hybridisation, interaction, confrontation. In isolation, by contrast, civilisation dies out. The experience of the other is the secret to change.'<sup>1</sup>

Culture is dynamic and transcends borders. International patronage, international exchanges and international standards have been intrinsic to the art world for hundreds of years. It was not only Dutch merchants who bought Rembrandt's art; the painter also received commissions from Italy. Van Gogh lived much of his life in France and drew on the French landscape for inspiration. Dutch architects have been active around the world for centuries, leaving behind buildings that we now regard as part of our common cultural heritage.

Conversely, many foreign artists have found inspiration in this country: Mozart, for example, composed a number of variations on the Dutch national anthem after a short visit to the Low Countries. Mahler conducted his own works before a rapt audience in the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam.

With each passing year the art world has become more international. Artists and institutions generally find their own way to 'go global'. Game designers trained at Dutch art colleges enjoy professional success in Silicon Valley. Dutch graphic artists are much sought after wherever there is a demand for creativity, originality and user-friendly products. Dutch theatre directors are hailed abroad, particularly in Germany. Our museums, orchestras and dance companies are among the best in the world, thanks to the top talent they recruit from abroad. All this occurs without much interference on the part of the government, and that is a good thing.

At the same time, many developing countries are returning to their cultural roots. Cultures change when they come into contact with other cultures, a process whereby groups and individuals increasingly lay claim to their own definitions and modes of expression. More and more, the power of culture is cited as the engine of human development. Development cooperation can help build bridges in a world of intercultural conflict, both within countries and between countries at different stages of development.

---

<sup>1</sup> Octavio Paz, *De levensboom: essays over kunst en cultuur*, Meulenhoff, 1991.

This document deals mainly with those international aspects of art and culture that involve the state authorities: encouraging or reinforcing artistic development, preserving valuable heritage or taking measures for economic reasons or foreign or development policy considerations. The Minister of Education, Culture and Science and the Minister for European Affairs are jointly responsible for international cultural policy, while the Minister for Development Cooperation is responsible for culture & development policy. This letter, which is a response to the parliamentary motion on international cultural policy<sup>2</sup> and an elaboration of the plans set out in the policy document *Koers Kiezen*,<sup>3</sup> discusses the common priorities for the 2009-2012 period and the instruments available to us. In addition to a strategic commitment to culture and development, our mutual goal is to enrich Dutch art and culture and increase the effectiveness of international cultural policy. To this end the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) provides grants to cultural institutions, either indirectly (via cultural funds) or directly (through the ministry itself). Institutions that fall into the latter category are part of the 'basic infrastructure'. Some important functions within this national infrastructure are international representation and promotion, and the international platform function. Since 2005 OCW has overseen the creative industry programme with the Ministry of Economic Affairs (EZ). One of the goals of this programme, which provides support to the creative sector, is greater internationalisation.

International exchanges are expected to fulfil certain criteria:

- enrich and inspire Dutch culture;
- expand the market and connect to international networks;
- meet certain international standards;
- preserve heritage and foster dialogue about a shared past;
- deepen cultural life in a number of developing countries;
- practice cultural diplomacy: use art and culture to the benefit of foreign relations and employ diplomacy to strengthen Dutch art and culture.

We endorse the view of the Council for Culture that in the context of increasing globalisation and concomitant issues of identity,<sup>4</sup> the government must strive to ensure that Dutch art and

---

<sup>2</sup> Motion by MPs Leerdam, Nicolaï, Van der Ham and Halsema, House of Representatives, 2007-2008 session, 31 200 VIII, No. 116. The motion requested that the government 'flesh out its plans for international cultural policy with concrete proposals'.

<sup>3</sup> *Koers Kiezen: meer samenhang in het internationaal cultuurbeleid* (Setting a course: towards a more coherent international cultural policy), 10 May 2006. Available (in Dutch) at <http://www.minocw.nl/documenten/koreskiezen.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Council for Culture, letter of 14 April 2008 on strategic choices for international cultural policy.

culture has a presence abroad and that international culture has a presence in the Netherlands. International cultural policy is, in other words, a two-way street. International cultural exchange provides mutual inspiration that enriches both parties in a variety of ways. Such exchanges are expected to cause a certain amount of cultural friction. Our guiding principle remains the intrinsic value of culture. Culture has ramifications for foreign policy, development cooperation, education and the creative sector of the economy. Culture opens foreign-policy doors and can generate debate and social change, at home and abroad. This is a form of cultural diplomacy.<sup>5</sup> Culture is an integral part of Dutch foreign policy. Culture can strengthen our position abroad, for example when it comes to articulating human rights or development policy.

Cultural heritage also plays an important role in international relations. Material historical remains and immaterial historical events can generate curiosity and foster mutual understanding. Thus the past forms a source of inspiration for the present and a link is forged between cultural heritage and contemporary artistic expression: pioneers like Rietveld and Mondrian point the way forward to such present-day exponents of Dutch design as Marcel Wanders and Droog Design. The overseas remnants of our colonial and commercial past form a special type of heritage.

Since 1991 the Netherlands has pursued a policy that links culture and development. We take our cue from article 27(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.' Or, as Prince Claus once put it, 'Culture is a basic human need.' Art and culture in developing countries often go hand in hand with political and social engagement – a phenomenon that has of late been followed with growing interest within the Dutch cultural field as a whole. On 31 March 2008, for example, a special meeting devoted to this topic was held in Rotterdam, drawing a large number of organisations. In the years ahead we will examine ways of encouraging cross-pollination between culture & development policy and other types of international cultural policy. A total of €25 million in ODA<sup>6</sup> resources is spent annually on culture & development.

Every year, €8.8 million from the Netherlands Culture Fund is reserved for international cultural policy. OCW and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ) formulate policy jointly, and

---

<sup>5</sup> See Gijs de Vries, *A Europe Open to Culture: Proposals for a European Strategy of Cultural Diplomacy*. Background document for the conference New Paradigms, New Models: Culture in the EU External Relations. Ljubljana, 13-14 May 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Official Development Assistance

each ministry is responsible for managing half of the available resources. In the period ahead (2009-2012), €4.4 million will be delegated annually by OCW to the various funds and heritage agencies. Individual artists and institutions can apply for grants from these funds. BZ strategically commits €4.4 million to Dutch Design, Fashion and Architecture (DDFA), common cultural heritage, the visitors' programme, the Centre for International Cultural Activities (SICA) and themed events and programmes abroad.

Of course, the Netherlands Culture Fund is not the only source of funding for international cultural policy. On the basis of real-world experience it has been estimated that subsidised institutions spend 7% of their resources on international activities, either directly or indirectly, investing another €17 million in this policy area.<sup>7</sup> OCW supports the international function of sector-wide institutions and funds, while BZ supports the Dutch institutes in Paris and Jakarta. In addition, both ministries fund the De Buren Flemish-Dutch Centre in Brussels and SICA. Businesses are increasingly inclined to sponsor international cultural events, while lotteries invest in collaborative international cultural projects. Private bodies, such as the VandenEnde Foundation, have also been active in international cultural entrepreneurship over the past few years. International activities do not have to be a drain on the budget: the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, for example, sometimes manages to turn a profit on its foreign tours. Over the past few years programmes, including those sponsored by EZ, have become more accessible to the cultural and creative industries. The Agency for International Business and Cooperation (EVD) has identified the creative industry as a priority for its export policy.

During the present policy period, a number of initiatives have already been put forward for solidifying and reworking existing international cultural policy and culture & development policy. These are covered in section II. Section III discusses how these initiatives can be modified to allow for more targeted choices, in terms of sector, theme and geographic location. That section looks at ways of strengthening the Dutch cultural presence abroad and the international cultural presence in the Netherlands. Section IV summarises the conclusions and lists the available financial resources.

## **II. Results of international cultural policy**

Over the past few years internationalisation has become an increasingly important item on the cultural agendas of European and other international forums. The Netherlands has been

---

<sup>7</sup> House of Representatives, 1999-2000 session, 26 591, no. 3.

at the forefront of this trend. Dutch artists have become more active abroad.<sup>8</sup> International opinion about Dutch cultural manifestations is positive, according to recent research. We are often thought of more highly than we think.<sup>9</sup> The sector-wide institutions and funds have expressed great interest in further internationalisation. The Council for Culture confirms this trend. In its advisory report 'Basisinfrastructuur 1.0' (Basic infrastructure 1.0), the Council concludes that internationalisation is playing a more important role now than four years ago.<sup>10</sup> Funds and institutions are free, within the new basic infrastructure, to set aside funds for internationalisation using the grant money they have been allocated.

### *Netherlands Culture Fund*

In recent years<sup>11</sup> the Netherlands Culture Fund has been an important instrument of the international cultural policy pursued by OCW and BZ. The number of strong applications exceeded the available budget. An average of €9.5 million a year was spent over the entire period. The resources could be allocated flexibly, to supplement regular grants.

The following results have been achieved:

- the internationalisation of cultural policy has become an established part of the agenda;
- more permanent funds for international cultural policy have enabled the sector-wide institutions to carry out multi-year programmes as well;
- BZ and OCW are working together more closely;
- in collaboration with Dutch cultural institutions and funds, an analysis has been made of the opportunities for the Dutch cultural sector in places like China, India, the Mediterranean region and the Arab world;<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> The number of registered activities by artists and cultural institutions increased by nearly 20%, according to a database maintained by SICA. See [www.sica.nl/buitengaats](http://www.sica.nl/buitengaats) (in Dutch) and the press release 'Nederlandse kunstenaars in 2007 actiever in het buitenland' (Dutch artists more active abroad in 2007), 2 April 2008. The SICA database offers an overview of all Dutch cultural initiatives abroad reported to SICA. The database is not complete, however, making it a problematic tool to use for assessing policy.

<sup>9</sup> Driessen Agency for sociocultural research, 'Omvang en receptie van de Nederlandse podiumkunsten in het buitenland in de periode 2001-2007' (Scope and reception of the Dutch performing arts abroad, 2001-2007), Utrecht, 2008; DSP group, 'Nederlandse dans en theater over de grens: onderzoek naar de internationale positie van dans en theater uit Nederland en naar de factoren die daarbij een rol spelen' (Dutch dance and theatre beyond our borders: a study of the international position of dance and theatre from the Netherlands and the factors that contribute to it), Amsterdam, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> Council for Culture, 'Basisinfrastructuur 1.0', 15 May 2008. According to the Council, the present proposals offer a 'sound basis for further expanding the sector beyond our borders'.

<sup>11</sup> The Netherlands Culture Fund's grant office closed on 1 October 2007.

<sup>12</sup> The analysis for India was not financed by the Netherlands Culture Fund.

- Dutch foreign missions have been given a more active role to play in the international policy of the funds and sector-wide institutions, leading to better projects and better cooperation.

Thanks to the Netherlands Culture Fund, a number of tangible results have been achieved over the past few years, with respect to both specific subsections of the cultural industry and contemporary Dutch art as a whole. Annexe 2 contains an overview of major cultural events outside the Netherlands, financed by the Netherlands Culture Fund. Projects like Dijkdoorbraak and the Dutch Chamber Music Meeting (see inset), conceived by the Muziek Centrum Nederland, have put Dutch music on the map. The Foundation for the Production and Translation of Dutch Literature (NLPVF) has done a great deal to boost the international position of Dutch literature, for instance by sponsoring appearances by Dutch authors at international book fairs. Since 2005, for example the NLPVF has had a stand at the Beijing Book Fair; a large number of Dutch titles have subsequently appeared in Chinese translation.

Various interdisciplinary presentations of Dutch culture abroad have been successful, including NL: a Season of Dutch Arts in the Berkshires (see inset) and the LOW Festival in Budapest (see inset). The last few years also saw a number of major joint projects between various museums, such as Go China!, an initiative of the Groninger Museum and the Drents Museum.

#### *Dutch Chamber Music Meeting*

The Dutch Chamber Music Meeting presents classical and contemporary music performed by leading Dutch chamber ensembles to foreign guests, including music journalists and programmers of major concert halls and festivals. Over fifty international programmers, agents and cultural attachés at Dutch missions abroad came to Amsterdam in 2007 for that year's edition of the Dutch Chamber Music Meeting. In addition to its world-class chamber music ensembles and soloists, the Netherlands has a strong reputation when it comes to staging concerts on location. To spotlight this, the concerts were held not only at dedicated venues like the Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ, but also at unusual and surprising locales in the centre of Amsterdam. One purpose of this meeting was to introduce programmers to leading Dutch performers and composers of chamber music and encourage them to book Dutch artists.

### *Festival in the Berkshires*

The festival NL: a Season of Dutch Arts in the Berkshires, which took place in the summer of 2007, was coordinated jointly by the Dutch Consulate-General in New York and SICA. The ultimate responsibility for the content of the festival, including the artistic programming, was left in the hands of American partner institutions, who produced a highly diverse programme of Dutch art, varying from seventeenth-century painting to avant-garde contemporary music. Dutch artists, dancers, choreographers, musicians, designers, composers, filmmakers and theatre companies were invited by such renowned American cultural institutions as MASS MoCa, Tanglewood, Jacob's Pillow and the Clarke Art Institute to create new works or present new interpretations of classical works. All told, the festival comprised about 50 well-attended events. NL has proven the value of the 'multiplier effect': American and international programmers who attended the festival are now programming Dutch artists.

### *LOW Festival (Budapest)*

In 2008 a new chapter was added to our international cultural policy with the first major Dutch-Flemish international project: the LOW Festival in Hungary. A team of nine Hungarian curators was in charge of programming the event, which gave a representative survey of the contemporary Dutch and Flemish art scene. It was not only the artistic choices of the Hungarian curators that were exceptional; the festival also set new standards for PR and marketing. LOW (a reference to the Low Countries) was a prime example of effective branding: the Hungarian media and art world perceived the name as synonymous with high-quality, innovative contemporary culture. By focusing so intensively on branding and on generating public interest, the LOW festival attracted large numbers of visitors. Over fifty thousand people visited the 30 local venues that hosted some part of the festival, and media coverage brought the event to the notice of over a million Hungarians. The festival, which was designed to generate ongoing international cooperation, has led to a number of collaborations between Dutch, Flemish and Hungarian institutions and artists. The most notable was probably the Dutch-Hungarian programme My City Budapest, which took place in Amsterdam in June.

### *Visitors' programme*

The visitors' programme, which is also financed by the Netherlands Culture Fund, was devised in 1998 and supplements the institutions' own activities with regard to foreign guests. The aim of the programme is to introduce international programmers and experts to Dutch culture, so they can programme Dutch exhibitions or performances or facilitate co-

productions in their own countries. The programme, which is open to all artistic disciplines, will continue in the period ahead. In deciding whom to invite, the sector-wide institutions will take account of the strategic choices set out in this letter and actively question their guests about current trends in their own country, so as to ensure that the visitors' programme helps to promote the objectives of international exchange.

#### *Common cultural heritage*

Common cultural heritage, a term that includes both material (listed buildings, archives, underwater archaeology) and immaterial heritage, has been a priority issue for international cultural policy since 2000. Over the past few years the Netherlands has worked with various countries to preserve such heritage, with the aim of increasing knowledge, raising awareness and cultivating local support. To make the best possible use of the available resources, this policy is confined to a limited number of priority countries.<sup>13</sup> Many common cultural heritage projects were financed through the Netherlands Culture Fund, such as Towards a New Age of Partnership (see inset), which opened up archives of the Dutch East India Company in Indonesia, India and South Africa, linked them together and made them accessible to researchers.

#### *Towards a New Age of Partnership*

Bringing together universities and archive repositories, Towards a New Age of Partnership sought to safeguard Dutch East India Company archives around the world by preserving the documents, making the material accessible and opening the archives to researchers. One of the project's most significant results was to broaden and deepen understanding of the economic, cultural and social interaction between East and West in a historical perspective. Archivists from the Netherlands, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and South Africa worked together closely to bring this project to fruition. A total of 13 countries were involved. The project, which ran from 2000 to 2007, was co-financed by Leiden University, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and others. Some project elements are still being continued by the National Archives.

#### *Culture & Development*

Over the past few years, steps have been taken to coordinate international cultural policy and culture & development policy, such as the Arts and Culture Trust in South Africa (see inset below). Culture and development cooperation is a separate policy area with its own budget and its own goals: contributing to the Millennium Development Goals and

---

<sup>13</sup> Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, South Africa and Suriname.

strengthening a country's cultural sphere as a way of helping it to choose its own path to human and economic development in a globalising world. More and more, networks supported by embassies, the Prince Claus Fund and Hivos are bringing Dutch cultural organisations and artists in contact with local artists, enabling them to advise artists in the developing world on how to get access to Western festivals, publishers and art markets. It is important to foster Dutch people's interest in the cultural roots and forms of expression of people in developing countries. In the fields of fashion, film, dance and music we are seeing more and more exchanges, in the mutual interest of culture for development.

*Arts and Culture Trust (South Africa)*

South Africa is one of the countries where both international cultural policy and culture & development policy are being implemented and where links are being forged between these two policy areas. With the financial support of the South African Department of Arts and Culture, three major sponsors and the Dutch embassy, a local culture fund has been set up, from which dozens of local projects related to culture, heritage and crafts can be financed each year. The two main thrusts of the Trust are capacity development and knowledge transfer. Local culture experts select the best projects and award ten prizes annually for the best artists and projects. The Dutch embassy in Pretoria acts as a liaison between Dutch artists who perform in South Africa and these local projects. For example, the Dutch dance companies Scapino, ISH and Introdans have worked with Moving into Dance, a local dance training institute. The Dutch groups learn about teaching dance in the townships, and Moving into Dance is the recipient of free master classes by Dutch dancers, choreographers and technicians. Building bridges between international cultural policy and culture & development has added value for both policy areas.

Supporting the cultural sector in a number of developing countries is a goal in itself. One of the central tenets of development policy is the belief that people should help themselves. This requires creativity and self-awareness. Culture generates the energy and scope for working towards the Millennium Development Goals independently, welcoming inspiration from other countries and civilisations, and making and following through on choices without outside assistance.

In a rapidly globalising world of open societies, the cultures of developing countries can come under pressure. At one end of the spectrum, you have insular, inward-looking societies and at the other, societies that are too quick to absorb new cultures, to the detriment of their own. This danger of cultural homogenisation is by no means new. As far back as 1859 John

Stuart Mill wrote, '[People] now read the same things, listen to the same things, see the same things [...]'. Cultural diversity has been a subject of debate from time immemorial. Yet the debate stays fresh because the circumstances that inform it are forever changing. It is important to continue supporting culture in developing countries and encouraging cultural self-renewal, so that artists can engage in dialogue with their fellow artists, partners and customers in the West on the basis of equality. Most artists from developing countries make politically tinged art, breaking taboos on issues like HIV/AIDS or violence against women, or addressing topics like human rights and the climate. Culture is a form of dialogue that increases mutual understanding, not only in developing countries but also in the Netherlands, where various festivals spotlight the cultures of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

### *Conclusions*

In the next policy period we will build on the positive elements of the cultural programme. Yet even in a strong programme, there is always room for improvement. Previously, for example, the wide range of applications and limited resources meant that a targeted, strategic effort could not be realised in full. The projects can be managed more effectively by transferring the budget to the funds, which are better equipped than the state for this purpose.

More specific priorities will be set for international cultural policy and culture & development policy; this will mean allocating the available financial resources more judiciously. The next section deals with the sector-related and geographical choices that have been made in this regard.

### **III. International cultural policy for the 2009-2012 period**

The criteria given in the introduction and our goals for the next four years demand close cooperation between the various actors in the cultural field. The government has an auxiliary role to play, encouraging or reinforcing certain trends. Below we explain the sector-related, geographical and thematic choices made in formulating international cultural policy for the 2009-2012 period. Annexe 1 describes the tasks and roles of the various parties.

Our guiding principles for the 2009-2012 period are as follows:

1. a targeted commitment of resources to disciplines in which the Netherlands has a strong international reputation: design, fashion and architecture;
2. a targeted geographical focus;
3. an ongoing focus on Dutch cultural manifestations abroad and international cultural manifestations in the Netherlands;

4. targeted commitment to common cultural heritage;
5. greater coordination between international cultural policy and culture & development policy.

### **1 . A targeted commitment of resources to disciplines in which the Netherlands has a strong international reputation: design, fashion and architecture**

A Dutch cultural objective is to continue to strive for a prominent international position in disciplines where we are already strong, but could become even stronger. The advisory report of 14 April by the Council for Culture on strategic choices in international cultural policy affirms that Dutch fashion, design and architecture enjoy an exceptionally good reputation internationally.<sup>14</sup> These sectors also offer exciting opportunities from an economic perspective. For the period ahead the trade associations and sector-wide institutions for fashion, design and architecture and the three relevant ministries (BZ, EZ and OCW) have joined forces to step up efforts to promote international exchange, cultural manifestations and market expansion, and to boost the innovation and competitiveness of these internationally strong sectors. Obviously, this does not mean that other sectors will be neglected. There is no branch of the arts that is not international in its orientation. Supporting international initiatives is a task of all funds and sector-wide institutions. In 2012 an assessment will be made to determine if other sectors are eligible.

The three ministries are setting aside €1 million each to fund this special partnership in the fields of design, fashion and architecture. These disciplines are an important component of the Dutch presence at international venues. Viktor & Rolf, for example, caused a stir with major retrospectives in Paris (Musée de la Mode et du Textile, in 2003) and London (Barbican Art Gallery, summer 2008). It is not only big names like Droog Design that are represented at the trend-setting design expo Salone del Mobile, but also emerging Dutch talent. Designers who are just out of college have come together in the group Groene Honden (Green Dogs), following in the footsteps of earlier designers who had their breakthrough at the Salone del Mobile. In architecture, big names like Rem Koolhaas, Ben van Berkel and West8 are seeing their designs realised in countries like China, Russia and the US and bringing along younger architectural firms in their wake. Over the past few years Dutch embassies and residences in cities like Berlin, Beijing, Warsaw, Kiev, Addis Ababa and Maputo have been built in collaboration with renowned Dutch architects, designers and artists, who have enhanced the image of Dutch culture abroad, with their innovative designs

---

<sup>14</sup> Council for Culture, 'Strategische keuzes internationaal cultuurbeleid' (Strategic choices in international cultural policy), 14 April 2008.

and international outlook. The strong cultural and economic position of these disciplines is also down to the efforts of the Netherlands Architecture Institute and Premisela, which are concerned with promoting Dutch architecture and design abroad.

We aim to achieve the following results by 2012:

- The establishment of an internationally known initiative to promote Dutch Design, Fashion and Architecture (DDFA). This collaborative undertaking sets priorities on the basis of market research and develops and implements large auxiliary, overarching projects in these fields. In the case of regular international activities related to design, fashion and architecture, the existing programmes run by the EVD and the various funds will obviously continue as before. The sector-wide institutions, too, will maintain their internationalisation policy and activities.
- The joint presentation of Dutch design, fashion and architecture at the Shanghai World Expo in 2010. The Dutch pavilion aims to be one of the ten best attended national presentations.

In 2012 an evaluation will be conducted of this initiative.

In collaboration with EZ and the EVD, OCW will continue its international incentives policy for other creative industries. OCW and EZ will also see whether the model used for DDFA could be applied to the audiovisual sector. The Netherlands has long been a major player in the development of new television formats, and there are also good opportunities in the fields of new media and gaming. Thanks in part to the programme MusicXport.nl, the Dutch music sector can operate more internationally. Muziek Centrum Nederland will be following up on this over the next four years with a programme that seeks to strengthen the support structure of the Dutch pop sector. OCW and EZ intend to fund this programme for the first two years of its existence.

## **2. A targeted geographical focus**

By definition, international cultural policy spans the globe. Given the limited nature of the available resources for international cultural policy, human as well as financial, the policy should concentrate on places and regions where intensive cultural exchange would add value. Of course, interesting opportunities can also present themselves elsewhere. Dutch funds enable these to be exploited by providing grants and financing residencies all over the world, including developing countries. The goal is to keep the Netherlands plugged into the most important international networks and cultural meeting places, both real and virtual. An

embassy or consulate-general can temporarily be provided with extra staff at the time of a major cultural event or in order to examine opportunities for Dutch artists.

## **2a. International networks and cultural meeting places**

The reasons for selecting certain countries and regions over others stem from a mix of factors related to culture, history, economic considerations and foreign and development policy. In consultation with the relevant ministries, sector-wide institutions and funds, the embassies will conduct local analyses to determine how and when the Netherlands should commit its resources. This policy applies to both contemporary art and cultural heritage.

### *Cultural hotspots*

London, Paris, Berlin and New York are cultural melting pots, magnets for artists and art lovers. As in the past, we will maintain an extra strong presence in those cities. These cultural capitals also function as hubs of cultural networks with branches in developing countries. The Dak'Art biennial in Senegal is a good example of a major international event with links to the great cultural capitals of Europe. Cities like Bombay and Bamako are continually adding fresh and exciting new events to the international agenda. If we truly want to engage in an intercultural dialogue based on mutual respect, we have to invest there as well. Spain, Italy and Japan are, to a lesser extent, also prime targets for investments.

New cultural hotspots are popping up in China and Russia too. In 2007 the Netherlands-China Arts Foundation was set up to coordinate cultural exchanges and partnerships with China. In its initial phase, the organisation has elected to concentrate on sectors where bilateral cultural cooperation is already well established. At the end of the year an evaluation will be made of the Foundation and our overall relationship with China in this policy area. Both the recent China exhibitions in the Netherlands and the cultural activities the Netherlands is sponsoring in Beijing (e.g. the Dutch Music Week) demonstrate that cultural interaction between our two countries is highly dynamic and diverse. The outcome of the evaluation will determine the future of the Foundation.

At present the Netherlands is working closely with Russia in areas that address our shared interests. The opening of the Hermitage Amsterdam Museum in 2009 will give a powerful impetus to the relationship. The Groninger Museum, with the help of several major sponsors, also plays a leading role in cultural exchanges with Russia, making it possible to mount a number of high-profile exhibitions of Russian art in the Netherlands. It is hoped that similar collaborative projects can be organised in the future.

### *Belgium*

Flanders and Brussels, which is not only the European capital but also home to the De Buren Flemish-Dutch Centre, occupy a special position in Dutch policy. The Dutch Language Union is a valuable organisation in this respect. The advisory committee for the Flemish-Dutch Cultural Treaty and the De Buren Centre are currently being evaluated. Over the next several years the Dutch Cultural Broadcasting Promotion Fund will focus on further collaborations and exchanges between Dutch and Flemish audiovisual producers. The Netherlands and Flanders should explore options for duplicating the success of the LOW Festival in Hungary elsewhere. In South Africa, for example, a joint undertaking is in preparation, in the area of international cultural policy and culture & development policy.

### *Historical ties*

The Netherlands has a special historical relationship with India, Brazil, Suriname, South Africa and Indonesia, and an intensive development relationship with the last three of these countries. These countries are also of interest to contemporary artists. In late 2008 a large Indian cultural festival will be held in Amsterdam. A sectoral mission to India, organised by SICA, concluded that the best opportunities for joint projects were in the new media and architecture sectors. The sector-wide institutions in question will explore these opportunities further. Last year the Netherlands signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India on cultural cooperation. At the end of the year SICA will take stock of opportunities for Dutch art and culture in Brazil. Last spring a Memorandum of Understanding on common cultural heritage was agreed with Brazil. The relationship with Suriname, South Africa and Indonesia, where the Erasmus Huis is located, is a healthy and productive one. In these three countries, synergy has been achieved between culture & development, contemporary art exchanges and common cultural heritage.

### *Africa*

Africa is the continent with which the Netherlands has the most intensive development relationship. Its art and culture are an important source of inspiration for contemporary artists in the West. More will be done to take advantage of cultural opportunities in this part of the world. To strengthen the cultural sector in a number of countries and give them a greater presence in global networks, investments will be made in international networks and in South-South partnership and exchange.

### *The Mediterranean region, the Arab World and intercultural dialogue*

The greater focus on the Mediterranean region and the Arab world is not limited to Morocco, Turkey and Egypt. Obviously, there are other countries in the region that are potentially

interesting for cultural exchange. Recommendations made in a SICA-commissioned study of opportunities in this part of the world will be translated into concrete plans over the course of the next four years. Culture can contribute to a better dialogue that fosters mutual curiosity and understanding. The leading performing artists from the region can often be found in New York, London, Paris or Madrid, and our cultural attachés there should follow developments in those specific networks. This year the Netherlands will have a presence in Damascus, the 2008 capital of Arab culture. Our experiences there will be used to decide whether to participate in events related to future cultural capitals in the region. In addition, development funds are being invested in various countries in the region; the culture & development programme can help build bridges between the West and the Mediterranean/Arab world.

### *Central Europe and the Balkans*

Central Europe and the Balkans are valuable to the Netherlands, not only from a cultural standpoint but also from the perspective of history and foreign policy. (Many new EU member states and candidate countries are located in this part of Europe.) Cultural policy for this region consists of a combination of support for local cultural infrastructure (capacity building through programmes like MATRA) and cultural exchange. Henceforth, resources will be distributed more evenly across the entire region, with less of a concentration on Prague and Budapest.

## **2b. European and global dimensions**

### *Harmonising Dutch policy with the European cultural agenda*

The Council for Culture has argued in favour of active involvement in the cultural dimension of the EU by investing in bilateral and multilateral programmes and activities with European countries and regions. We want to encourage the participation of Dutch cultural organisations in European programmes, euroregion partnerships and networks. With the European Cultural Contact Point (CCP), SICA endeavours to provide good, practical information to artists. In a study it conducted on the use of European instruments, SICA made a number of recommendations to Dutch sectors.<sup>15</sup>

Last year the European Commission issued a Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalising world whose themes and methods dovetail neatly with those of the Dutch cultural agenda. The Communication encourages cooperation in cultural education,

---

<sup>15</sup> Lagroup (for SICA), 'De internationale promotie van Nederlandse cultuur en creativiteit: het instrumentarium van regelingen en activiteiten geëvalueerd' (The international promotion of Dutch culture and creativity: an evaluation of the instruments and activities involved), 4 August 2008.

the creative industry and the mobility of both works of art and artists. The Dutch government works with experts from the cultural sector to realise ambitious plans on these very same themes. In 2004 the Netherlands put the themes of collection mobility and the creative industry on the EU agenda. These issues are now being discussed in working groups of experts from various member states. The Netherlands takes an active role in the working group on cultural and creative industries, which it co-chairs with Portugal. With respect to cultural education and the mobility of artists, the Netherlands has also taken the lead by setting a good example and by keeping a focus on matters of substance.

For the Netherlands, the most important results achieved during the French Presidency of the EU have been:

- the European Heritage Label, a project that involves drawing up a list of common European heritage that represents a shared history of ideas, scholarship, science and technology;
- Europeana, a European digital library located at the National Library of the Netherlands, which will be officially launched in November.

#### *International protection of cultural heritage*

2009 will mark the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Second Protocol of the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (UNESCO 1954). The Netherlands was instrumental in the drafting of the protocol. Next year the Netherlands will spotlight this anniversary internationally, in order to raise awareness of the Convention and its protocols and to promote the international exchange of experiences. After being debated by the Dutch Senate later this year, the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property is scheduled to be ratified and implemented by the Netherlands.

#### *Disasters and other emergencies*

In the case of disasters or other emergencies the international community can avail itself of the expertise of the National Archives (NA), the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) and the National Service for Archaeology, Cultural Landscape and Built Heritage (RACM). The NA offered their assistance after floods in Poland and the Czech Republic, and after the tsunami of 24 December 2004 the RACM and the NA provided guidance to Indonesia and Sri Lanka. With the right expertise and equipment and prompt action, damaged heritage can be preserved. An example of this would be freeze-drying waterlogged books or archival documents. Situations will be assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine what kind of assistance is possible and useful. Currently, the relevant parties are

considering a more permanent system for channelling the specialist knowledge available in the Netherlands to those in need following a calamity.

### **3. An ongoing focus on Dutch cultural manifestations abroad and international cultural manifestations in the Netherlands**

#### *Interdisciplinary events*

A number of successful large-scale events have been financed over the past few years by the Netherlands Culture Fund (see chapter 2), a process in which Dutch foreign missions have played a pivotal role. This policy will be continued, with an emphasis on reciprocity.

For the upcoming period, the following large-scale events have already been identified:

- In 2009 it will be 400 years since Henry Hudson set off on his voyage of discovery to North America for the Dutch East India Company. Exhibitions will be mounted on both side of the Atlantic to illustrate the historical ties between the Netherlands and the US. The NA will organise a major exhibition in New York, where the deed of purchase for the island Manhattan and other highlights of its collection will be on display in New York for the first time. The exhibitions will also draw attention to diversity and tolerance.
- A joint Dutch-Flemish event in South Africa is being planned for 2009/2010.
- In 2010 there will be a special focus on the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia. (That year the cities of the Ruhr Valley will collectively be European cultural capitals.)
- In 2012 events will probably be held to celebrate 400 years of diplomatic relations with Turkey.

In addition to large-scale or interdisciplinary events, sector-based events (e.g. the Dutch design month held in Madrid last spring) are also a possibility. At the end of the year Dutch music weeks will be held in Beijing and Moscow. For events of this nature, sector-wide institutions and SICA can submit up to three grant applications a year to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

#### *International events in the Netherlands*

The OCW cultural grant scheme for 2009-2012 seeks to provide funding to festivals that offer high-quality, innovative content. To be considered for a grant these festivals must meet three criteria: an international programme, a large potential public and international

exchanges between organisers and contributors. One international platform will be eligible in each branch of the arts. Thirteen international festivals will be receiving a grant from OCW for the 2009-2012 period, totalling around €8 million. Foreign ministry funds are no longer available for international events in the Netherlands.

The international dimension of contemporary art at Dutch museums will be strengthened by sponsoring a handful of high-profile international exhibitions a year. The exhibitions selected will be artistically significant and of interest to a wide cross-section of the public. Grants may also be given to international artistic events/festivals that have been organised by museums or other artistic institutions. The sum of €500,000 is available each year from the Mondriaan Foundation for the 2009-2012 period.

### *Kosmopolis*

Kosmopolis, a multimedia-based platform that uses art and culture as a stimulus for intercultural contact and dialogue, was established in 2006 at the initiative of OCW and BZ. Kosmopolis has a dual focus, concentrating not only on fostering dialogue between Dutch people of different cultural backgrounds but also on furthering dialogue and exchanges with these people's countries of origin. As announced, Kosmopolis will be evaluated by the Council for Culture in 2009 to see if it has met its stated objectives and to determine whether any modifications should be made. The Netherlands' four largest cities will play a crucial role in setting the agenda for this platform. On the basis of the evaluation, OCW and BZ will decide whether to continue funding Kosmopolis.

## **4. Targeted commitment to common cultural heritage**

Over the next four years OCW and BZ will continue their commitment to common cultural heritage. Cooperation agreements will be made with eight priority countries, emphasising collective responsibility and decision-making, sustainability, knowledge transfer and exchange, capacity building and digitisation. These agreements will differ from country to country, to allow for flexibility and tailor-made solutions. This programme will address overarching themes like urban development in historical surroundings and the history of migration, emphasising the connection between culture and development and enabling attention to be devoted to shared history and the relationship between various disciplines and sectors. Projects and their results will be made as accessible as possible. The Centre for International Heritage Activities (CIE), a private initiative, is in the process of developing a database for this purpose, which will be managed by the Netherlands Institute for Heritage.

For the implementation of common heritage policy, OCW and BZ will each be setting aside €1 million a year, starting in 2009. To stimulate greater involvement on the part of the priority countries and local parties, half of the available resources will be delegated to the relevant embassies for multi-year projects. Government agencies, like the NA and the RACM receive state funds for international activities in this field. As a sector-wide institution the Netherlands Institute for Heritage is expected to support the various parties in their efforts by providing information and documentation, monitoring international trends and promoting cooperative ventures. In other words the Institute acts as a broker, without actually carrying out projects itself.

## **5. Greater coordination between international cultural policy and culture & development policy**

Reducing poverty is the primary goal of development cooperation. Culture can contribute to this goal, as stated in the Millennium Declaration and the policy memorandum 'A Common Concern'.<sup>16</sup> In a world in which political, cultural and religious differences can be increasingly polarising, art and culture can serve to bring people together, giving rise to intercultural ties and dialogue.

Every country has culture, whatever its level of economic development. The need for beauty is universal. From Hanoi to Bamako, from La Paz to Ramallah, people enjoy film, dance and architecture, both as spectators and participants. Local heritage, such as adobe architecture in Mali and the Bamian caves of Afghanistan, is particularly important in developing countries. Art and culture are also often used in developing countries to express political and social engagement. Every society needs its whistleblowers, especially those in the developing world, where good governance and human rights are sometimes neglected. Art can also have a healing effect in countries torn by conflict. Theatre, for example, can be used to encourage dialogue or to help people cope with traumatic experiences. The arts can also be a way of addressing issues like the position of women, HIV/AIDS, and sexual and reproductive health and rights. That is the power of culture.

The Netherlands, which was one of the first donors to take an active role in culture & development, has been highly influential in setting the international agenda in this area. An important example of this was The Power of Culture conference, which was held in Amsterdam in 1996 and which was based on the UNESCO report 'Our Creative Diversity'.

---

<sup>16</sup> 'A Common Concern', policy letter to the House of Representatives, 16 October 2007.

The subject of culture & diversity is on the agenda of UNESCO and the European Commission, and the Netherlands intends to use these forums even more intensively to promote this theme.

In June 2007, 17 Dutch cultural organisations and the Minister for Development Cooperation signed the Pact of Schokland, which sets out specific commitments for meeting the Millennium Development Goals. On 31 March a special meeting, attended by an even larger number of organisations, was held in Rotterdam to discuss this theme. It emerged from this meeting that Dutch cultural and civil society groups have a growing interest in increasing the mobility of artists from developing countries, giving them access to the global art market, bringing together existing networks and finding more points of contact with partner organisations in the developing world. For Dutch artists the art sector in developing countries is often a source of inspiration. Dutch cultural organisations have expressed their willingness to work more with and in developing countries in the future. For the culture & development programme, the Minister for Development Cooperation has set aside an additional €2 million, on the condition that the Dutch organisations also make a financial contribution. The Minister of Foreign Affairs will play a coordinating role in talks with the Schokland partners. One of the first initiatives is from the Mondriaan Foundation, which has established a new partnership, Arts Collaboratory, with the DOEN Foundation and Hivos to support initiatives in Africa, Asia and Latin America and encourage collaboration between artistic organisations around the world. Another noteworthy initiative in this context is Dutch Design in Development, which is sponsored by the National Committee for International Cooperation and Sustainable Development, Premsel and the Association of Dutch Designers and which coordinates supply and demand in the Netherlands and in developing countries in the areas of design, product development and production. Dutch experts draw inspiration from their colleagues, products and materials, while they can use their knowledge and experience to open new markets for small and medium-sized businesses and design schools in developing countries.

The goal for the next few years is to better coordinate the activities of the various Dutch organisations and embassies.

About €25 million is spent each year on culture & development from ODA resources. A certain proportion of this amount is delegated to Dutch embassies in a number of developing countries, so that connections can be established between culture & development and international cultural policy. This is already the case in places like Egypt, Suriname and South Africa. Funding also goes to organisations like the Royal Tropical Institute and the

Prince Claus Fund (including the Cultural Emergency Response (CER), a fund that receives support from BZ).

#### **IV Conclusions**

In the 2009-2012 period OCW and BZ will concentrate more on disciplines in which the Netherlands has a strong international reputation, such as design, fashion and architecture, and on countries and regions which present the best opportunities for the Dutch cultural sector. Ongoing, targeted efforts will be made to stimulate Dutch cultural manifestations abroad and the international cultural presence in the Netherlands. Heritage is an important part of our relations with many countries. During that same period we will build stronger ties between international cultural policy and the theme of culture & development.

At the end of the period, a team of renowned experts will conduct an evaluation of international cultural policy that will assess the Netherlands' international position, the effectiveness of the various partnerships and collaborations, and the division of labour between the various actors in the cultural field.

The following financial resources are available:

- OCW, BZ and EZ are each setting aside €1 million a year for Dutch Design, Fashion and Architecture (DDFA) for the next policy period, totalling €12 million.
- OCW and BZ will each contribute €1 million a year for common cultural heritage.
- OCW administers €4.4 million from the budget of the Netherlands Culture Fund. This money will be channelled through various funds and heritage agencies to encourage the international development of the arts, literature and heritage.
- BZ will administer another €4.4 million from the Netherlands Culture Fund; €1 million has been reserved for DDFA, €1 million for common cultural heritage (delegated to embassies) and the remainder for the foreign visitors' programme, SICA and large-scale interdisciplinary or sector-based manifestations.
- A total of €25 million in ODA resources will be spent on culture & development.

### Roles and tasks of the various actors in the cultural field

- OCW is responsible for allocating grants to Dutch cultural institutions, providing an internationally oriented basic infrastructure and offering guidance to funds and sector-wide institutions.
- BZ is responsible for providing guidance to the foreign missions and to the institutes in Paris and Jakarta, approving the annual plans and the distribution of cultural resources to the missions, evaluating grant applications for visitors' programmes and major projects abroad (including joint projects with the Netherlands).
- OCW and BZ are jointly responsible for the Netherlands' international cultural policy. Each ministry is in charge of its own share of the available resources. OCW and BZ hold regular consultations with funds and sector-wide institutions to discuss their international plans.
- BZ coordinates consultations with the Schokland partners and devises and oversees the implementation of culture & development policy.
- Dutch cultural attachés abroad act as brokers between the various parties. Our diplomatic representations have the key function of matching foreign demand with supply and encouraging cultural initiatives wherever possible. Embassies are responsible for implementing international cultural policy in their respective countries, advising the funds about the local impact and feasibility of projects, and issuing grants to local institutions interested in working with Dutch artists or institutions. Embassies in priority countries have cultural sections with a delegated culture budget of approximately €1.5 million a year. Collaborative projects can be initiated through the visitors' programme. Interdisciplinary or sector-wide manifestations are also a possibility in these countries. The results depend to a large degree on the level of coordination and cooperation between cultural and economic attachés. The embassies will also seek to establish links with Dutch departments at higher education institutions abroad, and universities and other educational institutions in the Netherlands.
- Embassy staff in developing countries play the same role, actively strengthening networks, in the developing world and beyond.
- The funds support artists, artistic companies and institutions that are interested in operating internationally. In all branches of the arts and in the heritage sector the funds provide scholarships, grants, travel expenses for foreign tours, and

contributions towards exhibitions of Dutch art abroad (and exhibitions of foreign art in the Netherlands). There are also studios available in various countries where artists can work on a temporary basis. To support their activities, funds use resources from their regular budgets. They also receive a delegated project budget for the implementation of international cultural policy. These projects are assessed by the local cultural attachés. Starting in 2009 the funds will be able to take advantage of a special scheme developed by BZ for funding exceptional presentations abroad.

- The sector-wide institutions gather information for artists and organisations that will enable them to establish long-term international contacts independently. Contacts can be made in a variety of ways: attending international expos, symposia and seminars (featuring showcases subsidised by the funds) and assembling an accessible international database. Collective promotional tours and manifestations by a given sector in a certain country can also serve this function, assuming there is a valid artistic, economic or foreign policy-related reason for them.
- The Institut Néerlandais in Paris, the Erasmus Huis in Jakarta and the De Buren Flemish-Dutch Centre in Brussels will continue to receive funding, which can also be used to finance new programmes. No new grant relationships will be established with cultural institutions in the coming policy period, though existing relationships will be maintained. Neither BZ or OCW has the resources for a new institute in New York, as proposed in the motion by MP Van der Ham.<sup>17</sup> Consultations with various actors in the cultural field have shown that there is insufficient enthusiasm for such an institute. Both ministries will, however, remain open to opportunities for working with private initiatives.
- The Centre for International Cultural Activities (SICA), an information centre for foreign missions and cultural institutions, manages a database that provides an overview of Dutch international activities, coordinates sector-wide programmes and projects, and acts as a European point of contact which keeps Dutch cultural institutions apprised of European grant schemes.
- Dutch cultural heritage agencies – the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, the National Archives (NA)<sup>18</sup> and the National Service for Archaeology, Cultural Landscapes and Built Heritage (RACM) – actively participate in international forums that stress exchange, knowledge-sharing and development regarding the use of

---

<sup>17</sup> Motion by MPs Van der Ham and Leerdam, House of Representatives, 2007-2008 session, 31 2000 VIII, No. 132.

<sup>18</sup> The National Archivist is the official representative of the Dutch archive system abroad and the contact person for the Netherlands within international forums.

digitisation to manage, preserve and improve the accessibility of heritage. They can also identify and implement projects in the field of common cultural heritage.

Overview of large-scale international Dutch cultural events in the past six years

Events financed by the Netherlands Culture Fund:

- Viktor & Rolf Retrospective  
A 10-year retrospective of the work of Viktor & Rolf at the Paris Museum of Fashion and Textiles in 2003
- Thinking Forward  
Cultural activities in the new EU member states, especially those in Central and Eastern Europe, during the Dutch EU Presidency in 2004.
- Celebration of the 400th anniversary of Dutch-Moroccan relations  
Performing arts programme in the Netherlands and Morocco in 2005
- Netherlands-Australia, 1606-2006  
A celebration of a long-standing international friendship in the form of a jointly organised series of cultural events
- Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival  
In 2006 the Netherlands was the partner country at this annual music festival in Northern Germany. From Hamburg to the Danish border, 62 musical performances took place with a Dutch flavour (Dutch orchestra/ensemble, soloist, conductor or composer), in concert halls, on country estates and in monasteries.
- Seeing is Believing – the Dutch Urban Perspective, Dutch entry for the 2006 Venice Biennale  
Perspectives on the modern city, based on the contemporary architecture collection of the NAI
- Haut les Pays-Bas! 50-jaar Institut Néerlandais  
2007 was the 50th anniversary of the Institut Néerlandais, the Dutch cultural centre in Paris. This occasion was used to organise a year-long programme around Dutch language and culture in France.
- NL: a season of Dutch arts in the Berkshires  
An extensive, multidisciplinary Dutch cultural programme with the collaboration of major American cultural institutes in 2007
- A Cultural Celebration, 2007  
Multidisciplinary art and culture programme in Romania, Bulgaria and the Netherlands at the time of the former two countries' accession to the EU

- LOW Festival

A Dutch-Flemish multidisciplinary festival held in Budapest in the spring of 2008.

Events funded with ODA resources:

- Ghana300Holland

In 2002, the tercentenary of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Ghana were spotlighted in a number of ways, including the restoration of Fort Elmina and a visit by Prince Willem-Alexander and Princess Máxima.

- Curiosity without borders (31 March 2008)

A conference held in Rotterdam by various cultural and development organisations, to discuss aspects of culture & development

- A celebration of ten years of culture & development in South Africa

In 2004 a special event, the Power of South African Culture, was held to commemorate a decade of Dutch-South African cultural cooperation.

- Prince Claus Prize

Every year the Prince Claus Fund awards the prestigious Prince Claus Prizes to prominent artists, thinkers and cultural organisations from developing countries. The Principal Prize for 2007 went to the Congolese choreographer Faustin Linyekula.

- Festival Mundial, North Brabant

One of the largest world music and cultural festivals, Mundial presents a mix of music, dance, poetry and debate, functioning as a meeting place for artists and programmers from developing countries and the West.

- Architecture conference in Mali

In 2004 an international conference was held in Djenné, 'the most beautiful city in Africa', to discuss the restoration of world heritage sites featuring adobe architecture. This meeting was the culmination of a project that restored around 100 (occupied) historical structures in Djenné.