

# Conclusions and recommendations

## *Museum Collections on the Move*

The Hague, 27-29 October 2004

### **Aim**

*Opening up collections across Europe and sharing our cultural heritage.* (Medy van der Laan, October 28, 2004)

The aim of the conference was to explore the policies behind collection mobility in a European context. Furthermore, the conference facilitates the exchange of ideas and information about innovative forms of collection mobility, and about related practical problems and their solutions. Special consideration has been given to insurance issues and the development of European guidelines for museum practices and standards in relation to collection mobility.

### **Participants**

The conference Museum Collections on the Move was attended by policy advisors on cultural heritage and museum directors out of the 25 Member States.

### **General conclusions of the conference:**

During the conference it became clear that collection mobility is positively perceived by the experts present. Opinions converged on the importance of **trust** as an essential factor for collection mobility. Trust may be gained by exchanging people, expertise and knowledge. The conference emphasized that collection mobility not only covers art but cultural heritage in general.

**The core of the conference was six debating sessions on October 29. The outcomes of these sessions are:**

#### **1. European Citizenship**

Museums have an enormous potential to bridge different cultures and deepen the feeling of Europeans citizenship. The richness of local and regional cultures is the key to European identity: Museums can be used as catalysts in this respect.

#### **2. Collection Europe**

Several countries perceive collections in total as opposed to others who see them as individual collections. Experts believe European collection management & cooperation is a feasible path to explore. In doing so, European diversity should be taken into account. Experts noted that exchange of collections may lead to object added value because when objects return back after the loan period extra information might be added to the object.

#### **3. Museum satellites and de/centralisation**

The EU should stimulate museums to invest in relationships.

#### **4. Museums extra muros** (placing museum objects outside the Museum)

Museums extra Muros contribute to greater access of collections. This concept gives different views on the object, and supports European identity and visibility of Europe. However, well defined preconditions are necessary like: demands of both parties should be met, free access to collections (financially, socially), distance management is needed, and do's and don'ts to be prescribed.

#### **5. Indemnity and non insurance agreements**

The study by the Reunion des Musees des France and Staatliche Museen zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz on request of the European Commission was discussed and the recommendations are taken in consideration and supported. ([http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources\\_info/studies/garanti\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources_info/studies/garanti_en.html))

The main conclusion is that circulation of objects between European museums should be supported by a combination of non-insurance, state indemnity and insurance. Museum should not focus on market values but on

the values which really matters to decrease costs of exchange. Experts believe a European scheme of re-insurance should be developed.

#### **6. Back office**

There is a clear need for standardisation of practical documents regarding European lending (confirming Naples 2003). A research group, like the British registrars group, could be facilitated to synthesize existing documentation with the view to develop these European guidelines. Exchange of knowledge, expertise and personnel of umbrella organisations in charge of collection mobility should be supported. Finally, the experts note the importance of the *General principles on the administration of loans and exchange of works of art between institutions* (2002) of the 'BIZOT-group'.

#### **EU relation**

Collections mobility is included in the draft-workplan 2005-2006 of the EU Council. Furthermore mobility of works is included in the proposal by the European Commission for a Framework Programme Culture 2007-2013.

#### **Follow up**

Based on the recommendations of the report of the European Commission on indemnity and the outcome of the conference Museum Collections on the Move and with regard to the envisaged workplan the Presidency of the Council installs a working group of experts. This working group will particularly advise on insurance (indemnities), standards setting on couriers and loan, registration and digitisation.

A further follow up by the upcoming Presidencies of the EU is foreseen in the draft work-plan of the Council (EU).

The full programme of the conference, speeches and related information can be found at [www.museumcollectionsonthemove.org](http://www.museumcollectionsonthemove.org)