STEERING COMMITTEE FOR CULTURE

CDCULT(2002)11B, 30 September 2002

1st Plenary Session
Strasbourg, 9 (9.30 am) –11 (5.00 pm) October 2002 – Room 5

European Programme of National Cultural Policy Reviews

STAGE PROJECT

Cultural Policy in Georgia: Experts Report

Item 10.1 of the draft agenda

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1. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

There is an Arabic proverb that says you should choose the neighbour before the house and the travelling companion before the journey. While travelling to Georgia is always a fascinating and immense pleasure, the companionship of five wonderful colleagues on this cultural policy review exercise, Andrew McIlroy, Delia Mucica, Sanjin Dragojevic, Anne-Marie Türk and Dorina Bodea made it very special indeed.

We were the recipients of legendary Georgian hospitality during the visits and this openness extended to the fact that our various and numerous hosts in Tbilisi, Gori, Kutaisi and Butumi did their utmost to answer our often difficult, and sometimes intrusive, questions. If on occasions there were any gaps in information this was not because it was withheld or because it was sensitive but because it was simply not available. The very open and professional relationship with our Georgian colleagues has been a very positive theme throughout.

As we mention elsewhere in this report, the cultural policy review should be an ongoing process, not simply the producing of two reports submitted to a meeting of the Culture Committee of the Council of Europe. The process of developing cultural policy, in the Georgian context, is still in its infancy. Our colleagues in the Ministry of Culture, working in very complex and difficult circumstances, produced their report during the same period as we were working on ours. Their report provides an exploratory base for further research, analysis and policy development and in our report we indicate some directions and suggestions for taking that forward. The next stage in the process should also focus on widening participation and debate on cultural policy in the various parts of Georgia. Two of the over-arching issues we highlight in our report are the need for a wider and more inclusive definition of culture and the importance of advocacy to encourage wider commitment, debate and new partnerships in support of culture in Georgia.

As outsiders, carrying out a review of cultural policy in Georgia is an awesome task for several reasons. The first is that it is simply impossible to look at cultural policy in Georgia in isolation from some of the painful and difficult realities that have arisen since independence a decade ago. The economic, political, territorial, diplomatic and social problems, not to mention the equally important psychological ones, some a legacy of the past, some precipitated from outside and some self-inflicted, all have the most direct impact on culture and the cultural sector, limiting choices of possibility and action. In the Georgian situation it is unhelpful, but all too easy, for outsiders to make facile recommendations based on 'off-the-shelf' solutions which may be practical and applicable in some other European countries but are at best impractical, and at worst fantasies, in the local Georgian environment.

One simple illustration of this suffices. Even in the areas of the country where there has not been conflict, the remit of a national body like the Ministry of Culture, and its ability to develop partnerships, is weak. There is certainly the will to address this issue but the means are less obvious. A certain humility is appropriate when one understands the constraints. At a Council of Europe STAGE ministerial colloquy in Switzerland, during discussion of a policy decision by a Swiss festival to decline unequivocally some financially very lucrative but 'brand-diluting' sponsorship from a leading manufacturer, the Georgian Minister of Culture in a principled and

perceptive intervention quietly drew attention to the fact that her national budget for culture, under Euros 5 million, was smaller than that of this particular festival.

Yet it is also easy, and dangerous, to allow the belief to prevail that all difficulties and problems are financial. While not belittling the severity of the budgetary problems, exacerbated by the fact that agreed budgets and the funding eventually allocated often do not coincide, it is a fact that good governance at all levels and strong, intelligent public policy, effectively implemented, are two of the most important challenges facing Georgia and it is vital that the country gets them right. Getting them right is not simply, or even mainly, about money.

The President of the country has said that Georgia must save culture so that culture can save Georgia. It is not fanciful to suggest that with a redefinition of culture suited to a modern society, and with publicly agreed agendas to which all regions of the country and all sections of society can happily subscribe, the cultural sector could provide leadership, hope and a positive example for regeneration of the rest of the country.[1]

Some readers of this report will be familiar with the anecdote about the stranger who is lost deep in the countryside and asks a local peasant the way to a particular place. The peasant replies: "If I was wanting to get there, I would not start from here." To a certain extent, although we try to be practical and helpful, that is in fact one of the major messages of our report. That message raises other questions such as to what extent in Georgia and some other countries of the former Soviet Union, 'post-Soviet' is an adjective that is unwittingly and ingenuously a mutated form of 'Soviet' rather than something fundamentally different. Specifically, we try to argue that the currently-used 'definition' or perception of culture in Georgia is still a prisoner of a limiting and redundant Soviet concept unsuited to the needs and policy requirements of contemporary Georgia. We firmly believe that a wider and revitalised definition of culture (similar to that which has been gradually developed in recent years in western Europe), and most importantly an active perception of culture as a cross-cutting issue, are the keys to creating a more propitious creative and financial climate for the flourishing of cultural activity in Georgia which could give the sector stability in an environment where there is a need to navigate carefully a narrow path between stagnation on the one hand and chaos on the other.

It is the nature of the Council of Europe cultural policy review process that there is an inevitably heavy focus on the central Ministry of Culture but we hope we have not done this to the detriment of the wider gamut of cultural players – the cultural administrations of the regions, towns and districts, NGOs and other cultural players, not least artists and cultural producers. We have tried to ensure that our observations and recommendations encompass at least some of the issues and aspirations of this wider audience without which no national cultural policy can be achieved. We hope, as mentioned above, that in the next stages of the policy process the contribution of these other players can be properly harnessed to the debate.

Notwithstanding the help we received, the review has had its special challenges. There are three autonomous republics in Georgia. For reasons of time, weather, security and practicality we only

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[1] It is interesting to note that - although still narrowly defined and strongly buildings-based - at a regional level in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara there is a very conscious 'presidential' policy of using culture locally as a primary instrument to promote social cohesion, hope and regeneration

visited one, Ajara. We have not therefore been able to address important cultural issues related to the other two. Another challenge was the decision to run the two reports in parallel rather than consecutively, which previously had been Council of Europe practice. This had obvious ramifications especially in a context where for both the Ministry of Culture and ourselves the collection of 'hard' data was simply not normally possible because of the disruptions of the past decade. The events of 11th September and health problems in the team both affected the visits made and their timing[2]. We hope we have overcome those challenges but they did not make our work easier.

We are indebted to many people in Georgia, not least our hosts in Tbilisi, Gori, Kutaisi and Ajara, for organising so efficiently such excellent professional programmes. Our gratitiude goes not least to the Ministry of Culture and many of its committed staff, including Zviad Mchedishvili, Nino Gugunishvili and Gvansa Turmanidze, and to the Minister herself, Mrs Sesili Gogiberidze, who took the closest personal interest in ensuring that we were able to carry out our work efficiently. I am also personally grateful to her for the unexpected but highly memorable experience of the starlit fashion show in the Pankisi Gorge. In Ajara, we would like to thank Tsotne Bakuria and the local Ministry of Culture, including Teimuraz Komakhidze, for the very full and productive programme there. We were also conscious of the direct personal involvement of the Chairman of the Supreme Council and Head of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, Mr Aslan Abashidze in the organisation of our programme and appreciated the stimulating meetings, formal and informal, we had with him.

We have met many remarkable and impressive people in Georgia, including 'unsung' contemporary heroes and heroines. There is no shortage of 'good people' working vigorously and altruistically for the future of the country and its rich, varied and diverse cultural life. My hope is that the 'good people' will find each other and support each other, working together to create a 'culture of partnerships' which is another of the over-arching themes and recommendations of our report.

Terry Sandell, Director Visiting Arts (UK)
Chairman, Georgia Cultural Policy Review
August 2002

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[2] Anne-Marie Turk had to withdraw from the team at an early stage because of illness and Andrew McIlroy had to miss the second visit because of poor health.

2 AIMS AND DEFINITIONS

2 (i) Aims and Main Strategic Recommendations

In the Introduction above an anecdote about 'not starting from here if you want to get there' is mentioned. This is relevant in two senses in relation to cultural policy in Georgia. Firstly a lot of damage has been done in the country over the past decade, not least to regional and centre-region relations which both the peoples of Georgia and their friends and sympathisers outside regret and wish could be undone. Secondly, notwithstanding the achievements of the cultural authorities in Georgia at national, regional and local level, the Expert Group feels that the current starting point or foundation, i.e. the very way culture is currently officially defined and perceived in the country, is not the right one. One cannot change history but in terms of the second point of not starting from here we *recommend that a new definition and perception of culture closer to that now prevalent in western Europe should be adopted by the Georgian government*.

We specifically *recommend that the Ministry of Culture as part of its contribution to the wider state modernisation agenda should actively change currently held outmoded and static views and perceptions of culture at governmental and public levels. This should be done by a redefinition exercise using experience from other Council of Europe countries and taking an instrumentalist approach backed up by the use of sophisticated and persistent advocacy*.

Culture is currently perceived and defined in narrow, static and outmoded terms which ironically, in the context of a country where the peoples are immensely proud of their cultures, leads to culture being undervalued, underexploited and in many respects (but with some notable exceptions) marginalised in terms of political and developmental priorities. Even in the case of those notable exceptions - such as the impressive priority and generous level of public expenditure on culture and the arts in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara - there is still a tendency not to define or perceive culture in a way that enables culture to make a bigger return on the investment put into it. The Expert Group were concerned that while a lot of the good things of the past should and have been preserved, this needs to be in a completely new context - not simply an improved or softer version of the old Soviet one.

Part of the reason for the narrow and outmoded definition and perception of culture is of course explained by the unavoidable influence of the past. One can change one's thinking very radically but it may still be short of the paradigm shift which may be needed or appropriate in a given situation. There is no doubt that Georgia (and indeed some other countries) are 'Post-Soviet' but 'Post-Soviet' is still *ipso facto* Soviet in some ways. Thus to be more concrete and to take just one example, the current Ministry of Culture, dynamically led and with an impressive and very committed and hard working team, has brought in a lot of radical change including, for example, serious and genuine attempts at transparency and the offering of competitive project grants adjudicated by a group of external advisers, but it is still shackled both unwittingly and reluctantly to past influences, expectations and even structures.

The Expert Group would argue that one of those influences was the de facto Soviet definition of culture being what a Ministry of Culture *did* and by extension anything that a Ministry of Culture

did not do was not culture. This was inextricably also linked to a perception of culture as being 'high' classical culture (plus, for political reasons, "reinvented" folk arts forms and state controlled cinema). Of course things have changed radically, not least the Ministry of Culture is no longer a monopoly controller of, nor gatekeeper for, the cultural sector, but the change is still just short of the paradigm shift which we believe is needed and appropriate.

There are unreal expectations and other tensions between the state and the cultural sector. We believe the relationship could be enhanced by adoption of something like a *'cultural compact' or cultural charter* between not only the state and the cultural sector but between all levels of government – state, municipal, regional and local – and the cultural sector. This on the one hand would help to ensure that the cultural players were realistic in their expectations and on the other facilitate much more communication and strategic working. The nature of such a '*compact*' if it is going to be practical, can only be developed and designed by people in Georgia. We therefore **recommend that the idea of a 'compact' is discussed and explored particularly in the context of any national debate which follows this Council of Europe review.**

From this redefinition of culture and its functions will flow new roles and relationships and ways of working. This will require partnership working which we believe, notwithstanding the phenomenal social skills of people in Georgia at an individual level or an ability to form alliances in a traditional sense, is not yet either a natural way of working and thinking nor beyond a fairly 'primitive' stage. Partnership working also links in with the stakeholding concept which is discussed later. We **recommend that the Ministry of Culture and all the other regional, municipal and local authorities responsible for culture set examples and standards both for visible partnership working and for introducing a 'stakeholder' approach to how they work and account for their work and how they relate to outsiders**.

The rich regional diversity of Georgia (and not only in terms of the autonomous republics) is a wonderful cultural blessing and asset although one can understand that at certain moments it can seem for some of the politicians more like a political curse. The whole question of regionalism is far wider than our remit but the Expert Group felt that while centre-region relationships in the cultural sector were obviously subordinated to the general political climate and wider relationship between the centre and the regions, nevertheless getting the regional relationships right in the area of culture could contribute significantly to the wider centre-region relationship. We therefore believe the Ministry of Culture's desire to develop and extend its relationships with the regions is something on which it should be congratulated and encouraged. The Expert Group was however less certain to what extent the creation of Ministry representative posts in the regions was, without other measures, either the answer to the enormous amount of work needed to overcome the internal dislocation of the past decade or sufficient to carry out the extensive confidence building and generation of trust which seems to be needed. We **recommend that the Ministry takes as a priority the development of a two-way centre-region dialogue based on mutuality and respect, in order to identify practical measures to encompass legitimate local requirements (both at regional and local government level) and national needs.**

We make other recommendations below but our aim in this report is in particular to encourage debate and thinking about certain broader issues that we believe are fundamental to "getting there", wherever "there" might be. These issues are the redefinition of culture, the changing of

perceptions of culture at governmental and public levels through advocacy, a highlighting of the instrumentalist approach to culture and recognition of it as a 'cross-cutting' issue, the introduction of the stakeholder principle and partnership working, exploration of a 'compact' of some kind between the state, municipal, regional and local authorities and the 'cultural players' and priority given to proactive and practical dialogue with the regions to agree and marry the legitimate regional and national interests in terms of culture and cultural policy.

2 (ii) Definitions

A. Our Audiences.

This report is aimed at four audiences.

a. Public Institutions

The Ministry of Culture in Georgia, and public sector and local government bodies with a responsibility for cultural provision within the country plus others with indirect or potential interest or influence including non-cultural bodies, such as the Ministry of Finance or Education, or indeed the World Bank and other multilateral players in Georgia. This readership will be looking for broad policy recommendations which strengthen understanding and power of action.

There will inevitably be some readers who will fail to see in this report an immediate answer to their most pressing questions (mainly financial). A report like this cannot provide 'quick-fix' solutions but rather intends to encourage debate and a growth in awareness of what might be achieved. One of our deepest convictions is that culture, and the cultural challenge, needs to move up the agenda of a range of organisations and institutions and we hope that this report will provide food for thought for the various bodies whom we believe have the power or potential to influence cultural policy directly or indirectly in the next few years.

b. Cultural players

This audience will be looking for practical solutions, concrete ideas and motivation for restructuring and change. There is a very wide gamut of cultural bodies in
Georgia, ranging from state organisations to individual artists and other bodies who may not even conceive of themselves as cultural bodies at all (e.g. Sakpatenti, the copyright authority). These bodies include third sector, non-governmental organisations as well as the private, commercial initiatives such as art galleries. It is obvious that the expert report cannot possibly respond to all of the interests and concerns of such a wide constituency. It is a constituency, however, with some shared concerns and some common goals. We hope that this report can be read as being relevant in its language to these various groups. The Expert Group believe that the cultural sector must gradually, but consistently, move away from an expectation that the public sector is the only answer to either financial needs or indeed structural solutions. The cultural sector in Georgia will need to find a multiplicity of responses to the challenges it faces.

c. External audiences

This audience is likely to want to know more about the reality of cultural life and structures in Georgia, and perhaps to gain an understanding of how change can be implemented. This audience is varied and may include cultural policy specialists and students, other academics, cultural practitioners from neighbouring states, political scientists, aid bodies and perhaps even business people with an interest in Georgia's development. We must of course remind this audience that only a visit to the country can in any way give a sense of the enormous richness of the Georgian cultural experience. We recommend that they read the Georgian National Report which gives an overview of what culture means to Georgians at the start of the 21st century. Our report may, thereafter, serve to deepen their understanding of the challenges that face Georgia, and some of the practical ways to respond to these challenges. Our report does not, however, seek to be comprehensive.

d.   Council of Europe

The Council of Europe is deliberately placed last as an audience to reflect the fact that the Council's role is not to dictate nor shape Georgian cultural policy, but to listen, to understand and to assist where possible in the long process of modernisation and regeneration. The expert group is particularly keen to stress that the Council of Europe and any discussions related to this report are intended to be impartial and sympathetic. Any discussions which will be held are essentially to assist Georgians to shape and develop their cultural policy mechanisms, not to enable the Council to pass judgements.

We believe that the Ministry of Culture in Georgia is the lead custodian and coordinator for a wide range of culture stakeholders[3] that feel an interest in, or are affected by policies and decisions. These stakeholders include other government departments, arts institutions, audiences, practising artists, academics and the general public. Not all these stakeholders are necessarily aware of their relevance to the debate of course and *one essential role for the Ministry is to articulate the needs of passive, forgotten, excluded or disadvantaged groups.* The Expert Group is very keen that *stakeholding* be recognised as a concept that runs through this report and honesty and transparency be recognised as key principles for the work of all the public and private sector organisations in the cultural arena. It is particularly important for the Ministry of Culture to set the standard for this as it is fundamental to winning the support, trust and loyalty of all the various interest groups.

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[3] A "stakeholder" is anyone who has an interest in the long-term future of an activity, or is affected by the activity, whether positively or negatively. The term was invented in the 1960's to convey the growth of corporate social responsibility to various groups, over and above the shareholder. Stakeholder theory states that corporations must be accountable for their effects on employees, customers, communities, the environment, and the greater society - all who contribute substantially to the success of the enterprise or are significantly affected by corporate action. Henke van Luijk, a professor at the European School of Business Ethics has stated; "High ethics companies […] know that their reputation – a reputation for fair dealing, which gains them the trust of their customers, suppliers and the community at large – is crucial to their bottom line". We suggest that the same is true for government departments, with their stakeholder groups. Our point is that governments now have stakeholders as well.

B. Our Intentions

This is intended to be a policy-oriented paper. The purpose is to provide some elements of a conceptual and practical framework for the further development of cultural policy in Georgia in the next five to ten years. This framework reflects the experts' views and understanding of the possibilities and is of course open to discussion and indeed disagreement by the Ministry of Culture and all other Georgian interested parties. We hope that in any case it offers material for debate which can be shared and discussed in the widest possible fora in Georgia.

The expert group has set itself four aims:

a. To motivate the cultural institutions and players, both public and private sector to continue the process of modernisation. Where possible we try to give possible practical solutions for specific problems faced.

b. To act as a catalyst and supporter of new thinking in both the public and private sector. This 'catalyst approach' is essential to stimulate the new ideas required to answer the enormous challenges that Georgia faces in regenerating its cultural infrastructure and for which some kind of external encouragement or validation might be helpful.

c. To identify both current expectations of Georgian cultural policy and current problems and suggest approaches to marry these two elements. This process of redefining or 're-imagining' the questions is essential to implementing a process of change. [4] In the Expert Group's experience there is sometimes in Georgia a divergence between the supposed problem and the actual issue, and therefore between imagined solutions and the necessary steps towards a solution. This report, we hope, will shed at least a little new light on some of the challenges that Georgia faces and help the Ministry and other key players to redefine and 're-imagine' their own responses.

d. To respond to a number of key strategic and tactical issues around which cultural policy can form and develop in the future. These are not exhaustive, they could not be, but are those which the Expert Group felt to be most relevant in the given situation.

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[4] For example, 'national' cultural policy in Georgia may have the task of promoting a specifically 'Georgian' identity – a reaffirmation as it were of this ancient country's hereditary cultural identity. This is a noble expectation. On the other hand, there are very deep divisions of understanding within the concept of "Georgia-ness", even leaving out of account the specificities of the autonomous republics. The principle of cultural diversity is an accepted principle within the Council of Europe, and a stated belief of the Georgian Ministry of Culture. [In this respect it is interesting to note that Georgia was the first country to sign up to the Council of Europe's statement on human rights. However, in life as everywhere, politics sometimes intervene. There is sometimes a conflict between an expectation which is reasonable and a problem which is not amenable to reason. One response in this particular example might be to develop and to clearly explain, and thereby gain a consensus, for a cultural development policy in which 'national' cultural identity (but which embraces cultural diversity) is stressed externally, while regional and ethnic identity is properly supported internally. The Georgian government has already made steps relating to the latter by devolving much cultural decision-making to local instances. That trend may need to be accompanied by a legitimate and consistent expression of a national purpose for culture which is above and beyond regional aspirations (through cross sectoral themes which are non-contentious such as training, cultural employment, the creation of artist networks etc).

Finally, perhaps we should add that there is a wise Georgian saying, "Don't expect heaven from a parish priest". The Expert Group feel this to be relevant in terms of expectations of this report!

C. Our Understanding of Culture

There are two basic approaches to cultural policy. One is to stress culture *for its own sake*, the other to stress the *instrumental value* of culture in terms of other agendas. These approaches are usually intertwined with each other. In fact, it would be a mistake to ignore one approach in favour of the other. This would on the one hand lead to culture being merely an element in the economic and political jigsaw of a country or on the other hand being totally divorced from its social environment. The experts hope that this report manages to combine a fair appreciation of both of these roles for culture.

Having said that, throughout this report, the approach has been to stress the instrumentalist dimension, bringing to the fore and as a priority for Georgia the *"culture and…"* or *"arts and…"* arguments. What does this mean? Simply that the arts (including heritage and other cultural expressions) need to work in partnership. These partnerships are financial, geographical and thematic. Sometimes it might be a matter of arts and health, sometimes culture and economy, sometimes arts and international profile. Each cultural/arts opportunity can be, and should be, linked to the other agendas that the country is pursuing. This *"culture and…"* or *"arts and….."* approach does *not* exclude the "*arts are…*" argument. Of course the arts *are* uplifting, beautiful, challenging, relevant and necessary but this language alone will not provide the necessary framework for funding and structural support (legislative or fiscal) that the country so desperately needs, nor provide an expansion of opportunity, particularly at this delicate and economically challenging stage of the country's development. This report does intentionally attempt to shape the arguments for culture and argue for a wider definition of culture than is presently the case in Georgia.

The experts also accept as given the four broad areas of cultural support outlined in "In from the Margins". [5] i.e. support for cultural identity, promotion of cultural diversity, encouraging creativity and ensuring participation. We cannot overemphasise our view that pragmatically the arguments for culture and the arts that need defining and marshalling at the current time in Georgia must be those that are directly relevant to the decision-making process and to the current economic, political and social conditions of the country. The themes of culture and employment, culture and education, culture and tourism, culture and local regeneration, culture and conflict resolution, culture/arts and community development, culture/arts and social cohesion, culture and identity, culture and creativity and so on need to be stated frequently and with force if the cultural sector is going to maintain or enhance its place at the table of government and finance.

Finally, this report stresses the need for a planning-led approach. A serious approach to cultural planning is a sine qua non of a successful policy. While the Expert Group recognises the concerns that may exist, and that a reaction to planning may be understandable given the previous experience in many countries of the communist Five-Year Plan system, they are also keen to stress that there is planning and planning! In the market economy good planning is merely a tool to enable the right decisions to be made at the right time and such planning should

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[5] In from the Margins. Council of Europe publishing

be flexible. Such a 'longer-term thinking' approach can seem irrelevant in periods of crisis management but on the other hand only such planning will enable the sector to escape eventually from crisis management.

Longer-term planning is essential if the Ministry of Culture is to build any kind of credible collaboration with the regions and also very necessary if it wishes to attract any international funding in the future. Plans give a sense of stability and order to the thinking and, if nothing else, this is a valuable PR opportunity that cannot be missed.

D. Our Perception of the Role of the National Report

The Expert Group was very keen to work with the cultural environment where it actually is, rather than where we might want it to be.The National Report was a vital element in that and guided us. To draft a definitive National Report on cultural policy requires three elements: a consistent political and administrative will to draft, adequate resources in terms of personnel and finance and finally a base level of data and information structures to permit the information to be gathered and ordered in a recognisable fashion. The Ministry of Culture team have shown ample proof of the first, a brave and committed effort towards the second but have lacked the infrastructure for the third.

Georgia has been through a turbulent decade since independence with widespread disruption and instability. In such a context the necessary documentation, the specific data and the strategic guidelines, which are to hand in many countries, in this case are not forthcoming and this has made the task of the Ministry of Culture in producing a really sophisticated or comprehensive national report practically impossible. This does not reflect on the Ministry, but merely illustrates the problems faced by civil servants in Georgia at the current time. Many of the structures for communication within the country and for maintaining national (or even local) records have not survived the collapse of the previous system and current priorities are such that crisis funding and support has been more important within the cultural system than, for example, the creation of data banks or sustained communication.

The Expert Group believes that notwithstanding the constraints, the National Report has been an essential first step in beginning to develop both the skills and structures for policy building at state level. The National Report can also act as an important element in communicating and explaining culture in Georgia to wider audiences (both national and international). Thus, notwithstanding the difficulties of drawing up a National Report it is nevertheless an important step for the Ministry towards the realisation of other longer-term and more practical policy goals. We believe the Ministry's work on the report has enabled it to advance its own understanding of the cultural environment and that the National Report should be seen as an *ongoing* process. Indeed the Expert Group believe that for the immediate future the National Report should be a live document in terms of regularly adding to it and updating it. We recommend this because we believe it can help to achieve the following objectives:

- To build an accurate and communicable picture of past and current cultural practice

- To use this as a foundation to project realistic objectives for future cultural practice
- To identify any important weaknesses internal to the system/institutions
- To articulate pragmatic policy responses which are within the Ministry's remit
- To design and allocate action programmes to other organisations where the Ministry is unlikely to be able to play a role
- To identify necessary partnerships and collaborations within the public sector
- To develop best practice guidelines relevant to the national situation for cultural institutions and players
- To state with force and evidence the impact and potential impact of the Georgian cultural resource on other national agendas (economic, social and political)
- To provide basic data sources for national-decision making
- To provide basic data for international organisations
- Finally, and very importantly, a regularly revised and expanded report can serve as a common point of reference for future work in the area; it can be a starting point for the development of a modern cultural policy framework for Georgia and for any future researchers, policy makers and government officials.

It is suggested that turning the National Report into an ongoing process allows it to be used as a double opportunity – first to work towards a national consensus around the cultural *challenges* and second to raise the profile of the cultural *opportunity* with state and private actors. For example, an on-going national report process could be used to involve the support of an expert committee or working group, made up of Georgian Ministry representatives, academics, institutions and artists. The results of the on-going process might be made available on the Ministry of Culture's website. A series of seminars/conferences could be held, facilitated perhaps by such an expert working group (and perhaps initially in the context of the national debate activity which frequently follows Council of Europe reviews) to discuss and agree the principle issues and find possible answers. An on-going national report process would provide the basis of the work programme of the Ministry over a defined period of time. In this way, the National Report would itself become part of the practical work programme of the Ministry. Of course, the main challenge remains to find a workable mechanism to allow this to happen[6].

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[6] The Expert Group feels that there is a useful role to be played in monitoring and supporting the on-going national report system in Georgia. International experts could, with the support of the Council, provide a monitoring platform to encourage and to advise on the development of the report, in order that it meet the changing expectations of the Ministry and the other audiences.

3. BACKGROUND: GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

3 (i)   *Geography and People*

Georgia (Sakartvelo in Georgian) is situated in the western part of the South Caucasus adjacent to the Black Sea and bordered by Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation. It covers an area of 69,700 sq km. Preliminary data (released in February 2002) on the latest census suggest the population currently stands at about 4.4 million, about 900,000 less than at the 1989 census and suggesting about a million people have left the country in the past decade. According to the 1989 census ethnic groups included Armenians (8% of the population), Azeris (5.7%), Ossetians (3%) Greeks (1.9%), Abkhaz (1.8%), Ukrainians (1%) and Russians (5.7%). There have also been Jewish communities of different types in Georgia and it is interesting to note that in 1998 the 26th centenary anniversary of Jews residing in Georgia was marked. There are also some 100,000 Mesketian Turks (figures vary greatly) who were deported to Siberia and Central Asia in 1944 who are trying to return to Georgia.

Georgia is mainly a mountainous country with the main Caucasian range in the north, the Lesser Caucasus in the south, elevated plains in the east and the Kolkhida (Colchis) lowland in the west. Western Georgia (consisting of Imeretia, Mingrelia and the Autonomous Republics of Ajara and Abkhazia) has a humid Mediterranean-type climate and sub-tropical vegetation. Eastern Georgia (which consists of Kakhetia and the Autonomous Republic of South Ossetia) has a dry continental climate. Natural resources include manganese, oil, coal, hydroelectric power, non-metallic minerals and mineral waters. Maize, wheat, tea, tobacco and citrus fruits are cultivated plus extensive viniculture, some sericulture, the raising of sheep, pigs and poultry plus some chemical and light industry. In general the latter has been in an ailing state since the collapse of the Soviet system while the ready markets of the northern Russian urban areas are no longer as lucrative and easy as they once were.

The important towns apart from the capital Tbilisi include Kutaisi, Batumi, Sukhumi, Rustavi, Poti and Telavi.

The Georgians who are the majority population and probably represent about 70-75% of the population (but because of civil war, displacement, and emigration one can only estimate without the latest census data) are a Caucasian-speaking people but with considerable differences between those living in different geographical and historical areas of Georgia. The various groups often still use their own historical names, some of which go back to antiquity. They are predominantly Orthodox Christians and Christianity reached Georgia at an early stage. In this context it is interesting to note that two of Christ's apostles are buried in Georgia in Ajara and Abkhazia and there is a legend that Christ's shirt was brought to Mtskheta, an ancient Georgian capital, by a Jew named Elioz showing how early Christianity came to the area. In fact it has been the 'state' religion since AD 337. There are also a small number of Sunni Muslims, in particular the Ajars, a minority population in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara. The western Kartvelian peoples such as the Migrelians have officially been treated as Georgians since the Soviet period but have their own identity and unwritten language.

There are significant numbers of historically assimilated (Muslim) Georgians across the border in Turkey in areas which have cultural heritage of Georgian origin. It is interesting to note that several of the Turks of Georgian origin are at the highest levels of government and administration and we were told by some of our Georgian interlocutors that the heritage monuments in Turkey are well cared for. There are also significant numbers of Georgians working and living abroad, particularly in the Russian Federation and as mentioned above it would seem that about a million people, probably a high proportion of them the young, have left the country in the past decade.

The Georgian alphabet, one of the fourteen currently used in the world, originates from the third to fourth centuries AD. The first written literary monument is from the 5th century.

3 (ii) Historical Outline

A brief historical background to modern Georgia is appropriate to a cultural policy review not least because history, tradition and myth are still very potent shaping cultural and political forces in the South Caucasus. Where history begins and myth ends is occasionally not always clear. This encourages a strong and often romantic sense of identity and continuity in present-day Georgia and, in the case of the Georgians themselves, a particular view of themselves as a 'nation'.

History often throws a very helpful light on some contemporary issues related to Georgia, and Georgians themselves draw on this, but a lot of conflict in the South Caucasus also comes from differing interpretations of the region's history by those living there. It could be argued, for example, that a major cultural factor in the complex central government-regions relationship or in the on-going conflict between Georgia and its Abkhazian Autonomous Republic is an unresolved differing view of historical origins and identities.

The territory of present-day Georgia is rich in its multi-textured history and strongly influenced by legend and invasion. In the early period it had important links and cultural relations with the Sumerian and Urartians, with Achaemenid and Sassanian Iran, ancient Greece and the Roman Hellenistic world. In antiquity, for example, the economic, cultural and political links with the regions and cities of ancient Greek civilization were fairly intensive perhaps explain the parallel myths of Prometheus chained to the Caucasus mountains and the legend of the Georgian Amirani. There were thousands of invaders from the Argonauts in Colchis (western Georgia) onwards, attracted to the land of the Golden Fleece[7] and Medea and a legendary original home of the cultivated vine. Cuneiform inscriptions of the Assyrians as well as Greek chronicles refer to the real and legendary Black Sea state of Colchis. In the 4th century BC the Greeks founded new settlements on the eastern Black Sea including Phasis (Poti), Dioscurias (Sukhumi) and Gienos (Ochamchire).

At the turn of the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, the Kingdom of Iberia was created covering the west and south-west of modern-day Georgia. In the 2nd century BC Greek influence was eroded by the Romans who were expanding eastwards. In 65 BC under Pompey the Romans forced the

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[7] One interesting theory about the origin of the Golden Fleece associates it with the use of a sheepskin as a filter when panning for gold in mountain streams, a practice apparently still found in the region of Svanetia

Kingdom of Iberia to become an ally and act as a bulwark against invaders, such as Huns and Alans, coming through the North Caucasus.

Two states existed, Iberia and Egrisi (present-day Svanetia), when Christianity was officially adopted by King Mirian in the 4th century BC. By this time Persian influence was also very strong in the region. In the 5th century, Vakhtang Gorgasali, expanded the territory of Iberia and also moved the capital to Tbilisi from Mtskheta. Meanwhile the western kingdom of Egrisi in the 5th and 6th centuries was fighting off Persian and Byzantine invaders.

In the 7th century the Moslem Arabs arrived in Georgia and by the 8th century an Arab emirate was established in Tbilisi. Arabs and then Seljuk Turks were to rule Eastern Georgia until 1122.

In the late 10th century, the western and south western parts formed a unified state, with the capital at Kutaisi, ruled by King Bagrat III, who came from Speri (now part of present-day Turkey) and who according to some chronicles was a descendant of Solomon and David, the Jewish kings. This state became economically and culturally strong and expansionist.

In the 11th century a new invader arrived, the Seljuk Turks, who occupied the east and ravaged the west. In 1089, a 16 year old became King, usually known as King David the Builder (1089-1125), he centralized power and introduced major initiatives and reforms. In 1121 he defeated (including with some Crusader help) the Seljuk Turk army and with the liberation of Tbilisi in the following year moved his capital there from Kutaisi. This was an important period for the building of churches and monasteries including for example the Gelati complex in Kutaisi, now one of Georgia's UNESCO world heritage sites. Gggelati, with its academy, became an important religious and educational centre.

Georgian culture and military success and expansion continued under King Giorgi III (1156-1184) - and particularly under Queen Tamar (1184-1219) - when Georgia stretched from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea and from the North Caucasus to Armenia. Even today, Georgians look back to this 'golden age' and a knowledge of this period is important to an understanding of contemporary Georgian culture and identity. Shota Rustaveli's poem The Knight in the Panther's Skin, usually accepted as the most important work of Georgian literature, was written at this time.

New invasions came in the 13th century in the form of the Mongols who ruled for a hundred years. The successor to the Mongol empire, Tamerlane, in eight attacks during the period 1386-1403, brought widespread destruction to the region. The strengthening of the Ottomans and the fall of Constantinople further caused problems and during this period modern-day Georgian territory consisted of three kingdoms (Iberia, Imeretia, Kakhetia) ruled by different branches of the Bagraton dynasty and a principality (Samtskhe).

From the 16th century Persia and the Ottomans divided Georgia between them. It was in the i6th century too that Russian interest first began to be felt in the region, strengthening in the 18th century with the First Russo-Turkish war (1768-1794).

In the second half of the 18th century, King Irakli II (1744-1798), the ruler of Kartli and Kakhetia, and King Solomon (1752-1784) ruler of Imeretia, entered into alliance to protect their kingdoms and both became allies of Russia in the Russo-Turkish war. According to some historians, King Irakli II had tried to attract help from European countries but this failed and in 1783 his kingdom of Kartli and Kakhetia signed a treaty with the Russian Empire. Under this treaty, in return.for King Irakli II receiving Russian protection from his kingdom's enemies,.his kingdom was supposed to have autonomy in internal affairs but follow Russian foreign policy in external affairs.

In 1795 this protection was not forthcoming when a Moslem army under Aga Mahmad Khan marched on Tbilisi and seriously defeated King Irakli. Subsequently Russia annexed Kartli and Kakhetia in 1801 and these parts of modern-day Georgia became part of the Russian Empire.

Russian expansionism through the Russo-Turkish wars of 1828-1829 and 1877-1878 incorporated or re-incorporated further territory, including Samtskhe (1829) and other areas and Ajara (1878) so forming modern Georgia. The nineteenth century saw Tsarist Russia deepening its hold on the region including through the development of an education system using Russian as the teaching medium. Georgian nationalist aspirations grew in the 19th century, with language and literature issues being an important focus, and with this movement being led by writers and public figures such as Ilia Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli

The fall of the Russian Empire in 1917 led to the fragile creation, after the Bolshevik seizure of power, of an independent democratic republic, the Transcaucasian Federation. In 1918 this dissolved into the republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Independent Georgia, dominated by Mensheviks, came to an end with annexation of the whole region by Soviet Russia in 1921. This was followed in 1922 by the creation of a Transcaucasian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic which in the same year became a Union Republic of the USSR. In 1936 this republic was abolished and Georgia, like Armenia and Azerbaijan, became an individual Union Republic.

Before free elections in 1990 and independence in 1991, Georgia had had more influence and independence within the Soviet Union compared with some other union republics and taking into account its size. Several leading Soviet figures, not least of course, Stalin, came from Georgia but more generally, far from the centre and fiercely independent and nationalistic, especially in terms of their language, Georgians themselves established a reputation for adeptly 'playing the system' and not following the rules in Soviet times. Economic, administrative, demographic and social engineering during the Soviet period has both shaped and distorted the emergence of contemporary Georgia and the first decade of independence has been an often painful coming to terms with the consequences of that.

This is not the place to trace it in detail but it should be noted that Georgian culture, the Georgian language and the Georgian Orthodox Church, for Georgians, have been extremely powerful unifying forces in their history and still remain a major shaping influence both on policy and inevitably on how they relate to each other, to other ethnic groups within Georgia and to the outside world.

3 (iii) Constitutional Matters, Politics and Recent History

Georgia is a presidential republic. The principles of law are based on the 1995 Constitution. The Georgian Parliament has 235 members of parliament, of whom 150 are elected on the basis of proportional representation and 85 in a first-past-the-post system. General elections are every four years.

In the 1995 elections eleven parties were represented of which three (the Citizens' Union, the National Democratic Party of Georgia and the All-Union Georgian Union for Revival) cleared the 5% hurdle required to enter parliament on the basis of proportional representation. In the 1999 elections, of 51 parties and blocks which registered for the polls, 30 qualified of which three (Citizens Union of Georgia (42%), Revival of Georgia (25%) and Industry Will Save Georgia (7%) cleared the 7% threshold to pick up the proportional representation seats. Party politics in Georgia are complicated because of extensive fragmentation and the fluidity of alliances. For example President Shevarnadze and the Citizens' Union, his supporting political party, separated from each other in 2001, and that Party then split further. At the time of writing (June 2002) there are about 14 factions in the Georgian Parliament. There was significant criticism of the June 2002 local elections where there were irregularities which led to voting having to take place again in some places.

The President is Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the army. The President is elected for five years for a maximum of two terms. President Shevarnadze's second term began in 2000. At the second tier of government (districts (i.e. regions) and cities) there is an elected council but presidentially-appointed governors of districts (Gangebeli) and certain city mayors (but not in the three autonomous republics - see below). It is argued that this provides 'balance' and is a temporary measure to avert centrifugal tendencies. This however precludes Georgia itself from certain of the European local government institutions and groupings such as the Assembly of the European Regions and Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe of which the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, one of the three autonomous republics of Georgia, is a very active member.

There are three autonomous republics in Georgia: the Autonomous Republic of Ajara (capital Batumi 2900sq km and 4.2% of the territory of Georgia), the Autonomous Republic of South Ossetia (capital Tskhinvali 3,900 sq km and 5.5% of the territory of Georgia) and the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (capital Sukhumi and in Abkhaz Sukhum). Of these three entities only Ajara is properly integrated into the Georgian state structure and, for example and by contrast, Abkhazia and South Ossetia have been organising their own separate and independent elections. In addition to the comments we make on regionalism in this report, it should be borne in mind that about a third of Georgia's territory (in 2002) is currently either outside of central state control or subject to destabilisation problems (apart from the three Autonomous Republics this also includes areas like Samtskhe-Javakheti and the Pankisi Valley).

The cultural sector, as we emphasise elsewhere in this report, does not exist in a vacuum and it is important to appreciate the complexity of the political, economic and social context of Georgia not least because of the difficulty it represents for managing or implementing effectively any kind of change process or implementing policies. Without some awareness of some of the history

of the past decade it is very difficult to understand the challenges facing the cultural sector and the problems and threats of fragmentation in a country which to a casual visitor or onlooker seems to be cohesive.

When the Soviet Union began to collapse, Georgia began its path to independence. In 1990, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a former dissident, led a nationalist grouping which won almost 60% of the vote in the first pluralist general election. In a referendum the following year, 99% of Georgians voted for independence which was officially proclaimed on 9 April 1991 and Gamsakhurdia was subsequently elected president with almost 90% of the votes. The presidential style however was one of nationalism and authoritarianism and problems began to proliferate. At the beginning of 1992 there was a coup by the leaders of two paramilitary groupings, Tengiz Kitovani and XXXX Iosseliani, who set up a Military Council to govern the country. Under the Military Council there was further chaos and civil war. In the first years of independence Georgia actually hosted three civil wars: between ethnic Georgians and autonomy-seeking Abkhazes (1992-1994), between Tbilisi and the separatist South Ossetians (1990-1993)) and between supporters and opponents of Gamsakhurdia[8].

In 1993 the Military Council gave way to a State Council headed by Eduard Shevarnadze and the second pluralist general elections took place in October 1993 and led to his becoming President of the Georgian Parliament. These elections and the establishment of the 1995 constitution ended some of the post-Independence upheaval and established a foundation for some form of functioning democracy and rule of law in Georgia.

The Georgian-Abkhaz problem, (which some would describe as a Tbilisi-Sukhum problem) has not been resolved. The continuing problems of Georgian Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) not able to return to their homes is a serious humanitarian problem as well as an explosive political issue. The Ossetian situation has also not been fully settled and deep scars have been left politically and psychologically by the third element of civil war, that between the supporters and opponents of the first president.

Culture and the arts cannot flourish in unstable conditions. It is significant that in Ajara, where political stability was established and where a determined effort was made not to import the guns and violence devastating some of the other parts of Georgia, the cultural scene there is

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[8] It is not appropriate to go into detail in a report like this about how destructive this internecine strife has been but the degree of damage that was caused can be illustrated by what happened with the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. In 1992 Kitovani and his National Guard marched on western Georgia in pursuit of the 'Zviadists' (i.e. the supporters of the deposed president) but went on to attack the Abkhazian parliament. This was prompted by the Chairman of the Abkhazian parliament Vladislav Ardzinba (now the President of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia) announcing that Abkhazia would join the CIS as a full member which was tantamount to declaring independence from Georgia. Ardzinba had been appointed by Gamsakhurdia and at that time ethnic Abkhazes comprised about 17% of the population of Abkhazia but held over 50% of the parliamentary seats. The fighting was catastrophic for both Georgians and Abkhazes. In 1992 there had been about 245,000 Georgians in Abkhazia but by 1997 only 44,000. The number of Abkhazes dropped too from about 95,000 to 54,000 but because of the mass exodus of Georgians went from about 18% of the population to 37% becoming the largest ethnic group in Abkhazia. The fighting continued until September 1993 when Sukhumi, the capital of Abkhazia, fell to Abkhaz troops who were then joined by 'Zviadist' forces and together they moved to take Kutaisi where they defeated the Georgian government troops. At this point Georgia agreed to join the CIS and host Russian military bases and with Russian military support the Abkhaz and 'Zviadist' offensive was crushed.

comparatively healthy in terms of provision and growth and indeed this stability has facilitated a very strong and conscious policy of using arts and culture to develop cohesion, enlightened values, hope and a vision that helps people to believe there is something beyond the current very difficult circumstances.

But in which European country are politics not a minefield of sensitivities, concerns and insecurities? In that respect Georgia is not special but the specifics of the Georgian situation do illuminate some very important, practical issues for the cultural community. As can be seen from the above, at the present time Georgia exists within a tense political environment, domestically and regionally. To this must be added the unavoidable uncertainties of the parliamentary process, with an attendant lack of clarity of who is responsible for what, and for how long. Indeed, against this background the Ministry of Culture in Georgia is fortunate in having had a degree of stability in its administration and nominations and this is to be lauded and supported at every point.

The reality is that in this climate of fragile stability there is a struggle to develop in a narrow timeframe the democratic Institutions required for a functioning state, with all the proper checks and balances between executive and legislative. The Council of Europe has already identified[9] a number of issues pertinent to the establishment of full the rule of law in Georgia which require urgent attention. Several of these issues impact directly on the cultural sphere. For example a formal framework for the responsibilities of local authorities will have an enormous effect on how local cultural provision is handled. The setting up of institutions with a civil society remit (even if not specifically in culture) would have an effect on the level of debate and the understanding of issues in culture. The fight against corruption does not target the cultural sector, but will influence positively the financial environment and indeed the trust level in all sectors.

Regionalism in Georgia comprises both the issue of decentralisation increasingly common to all modern European states, and issues of politico-cultural identity, which are particularly sharp in the Caucasus region (although again, many European states have versions of the same issues). The Expert Group was privileged to visit Ajara and other areas during the second visit. These conversations outside of the capital and examples of culture in action have influenced some of the remarks in this report. The group was not of course able to visit all regions,

The Expert Group did feel that there was a general need for the centre to develop the principle of looking, listening and learning from the regional level, so that even in the absence of state and long-term agreed solutions to the regional issues, there might be the development of information, understanding and eventually co-operation between the various players. This belief is quite free from value judgements as to why such contact does not currently exist. But we are equally convinced that a readiness to work with the situation as it currently stands will be more fruitful than to await definitive and legislative solutions.

Getting the regional dimension right is possibly the most key issue. The Ministry of Culture in Tbilisi is no longer a simple funder of cultural activities. Not least because it does not have the

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[9] Council of Europe Information Document SG/inf (2001)45

means.[10] It in fact has fewer disposable and flexible resources than for example some of the regions or indeed some of the towns (Tbilisi in particular). For example in Shido Kartli, we were told that the budget for culture is doubling each year. This apparent anomaly is a situation common to many transition states. It is not a cause for despair but for new ways of working. The Ministry and ministerial role in this context is to advocate, to motivate and to promote the possibilities of partnership. Only the Ministry is in a position to overview the cultural provision of the entire country, and indeed to overview the entire range of areas where culture is relevant (The "culture and" and "arts and..." argument).

 On the regional front, there is a balance to be struck between the legitimacy of regional demands and the centre's desire for a degree of coherence and standards across the country. This is a positive balance for the country if it can be found. The real need at the present time is contact and information. The centre is not sufficiently aware of what is actually happening on the ground in various regions, and in return the regions are not sufficiently connected to the wider cultural objectives of the country as a whole. In other words the communication challenge is not simply to tell the outside world what is happening but to tell the country itself what is happening! The Expert Group senses that the Ministry of Culture appointee[11] in each region is not on its own enough to provide this information feed-back. There needs to be a much more frequent interchange of ideas and information. The Ministry should ensure very quickly that email facilities are provided in each regional context, and a regular system encouraged of weekly/monthly updates and discussions.

3 (iv) Economic Environment

Economics lies both *behind* culture, as the key resource on which it draws and *ahead* of culture, as one of the prime contributions it makes to a nation's development. The Expert Group was more aware than ever in visiting Georgia of how intimately the two themes are linked. Georgian culture will develop only to the extent that its economy and financial viability improve, and these latter can and should use culture as one of their tools and reference points in the process of development. The outlook for Georgia is not uniformly bleak, but there are causes for concern, indeed especially as regards cultural infrastructure.[12].

The cultural sector must recognise the challenges that face Georgia in economic terms. Culture flourishes in stable environments. The policy priorities for Georgia (including the reform of the energy sector which is slow, the fight against corruption, the reduction of poverty which is

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[10] A number of practical tools for the allocation of funds have been devised recently, focusing on committees and funds such as the Fund for the Development and Popularisation of Georgian Culture, founded in 2000, or the Ministry of Culture's Project Fund. These solutions may lend themselves to replication in other environments, and the expert group recommends that they be carefully and consistently documented to allow this to occur. One key requirement of these initiatives is that they be transparent and public. These are forward looking and flexible funding mechanisms but they may in the longer term require external representatives or some form of institutionalised scrutiny.

[11] The Ministry of Culture has a 'representative' in one or two of the regions, a recent development and something they wish to expand. This representative works in the regional government structure but is funded out of the central ministry budget and in practice acts as a liaison officer between the Ministry of Culture and the regional authority. The Ministry of Education has a similar but more extensive network of such 'local offices'.

[12] GDP has picked up and will be around 4% in 2002. Inflation remains low. However, these positive points should be read in the context of a worsening international situation particularly as a result of September 11th

increasing and improvement of the transport infrastructure) affect the cultural policy dimension in two ways. First and self-evidently, without transport, energy, and good governance as a whole the cultural sector is limited in what it can achieve; secondly, culture drops down the list in terms of priorities to be met. In one sense, the cultural sector should consider how actively it can support the state-led reform programmes, whether these be in terms of the privatisation programme or the restructuring of key areas of the economy.[13] This support can take the form of leading the way in terms of embracing change itself, or in terms of voicing support for the principles of restructuring. For example, good governance in the cultural sector could act as a beacon for other sectors and also raise the profile of the cultural sector in the eyes of both government and external aid agencies.

Even a cursory overview of the economic situation leads one to state that the Ministry of Culture cannot expect large increases in its financial resources in the near future, and that the priority must therefore be:

a.   the efficient disbursement of the funds that exist
b.   the development of improved policy making for the future funds when they may become available
c.   the development of alternative income sources
d.   contributing to the wider national reconstruction debate.

Of course, it is not always clear where culture can impact on economic restructuring! The expert group is not suggesting that there is a clear link. But even a cursory look for example at the World Bank funding programme, where there are programmes like the "Education System Realignment and Strengthening" programme or the "Social Sector Strengthening" programme, suggests that there are national priorities where the cultural ministry, public authorities and other arts and cultural players can be useful. Additionally, by staying close to other sectoral debates - for example in tourism - the arts will learn, and adapt quicker. There are several issues currently being debated in Georgia where arts and culture can have a voice.

3 (v) Societal Factors

"We Georgians have a strong feeling for our past centuries…. we feel very close to our 12th century – for some of us it is as if it were yesterday"[14] Anyone who has sat, as the Expert Group often did, at a Georgian feast table *supra* and listened to the eloquent toasts proposed by the *tamada*, will have felt the warmth, complexity and living traditional values of this ancient society. It is therefore very difficult to focus simply on proposing 'technocratic' and 'scientific' solutions to the current problems**.**

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[13] The cultural sector should recall that the two primary issues for Georgia are to manage external debt and to reduce poverty. The development plans and ambitions of the sector should take into account this wider economic reality, and work alongside it. For example, it is clear that there is not a great deal of flexibility in financial programming; as a result, fiscal adjustments favourable to the cultural sector might be difficult to maintain, given the drop in revenues and the still weak economic growth. Culture operates *within* the social and economic reality of a given environment, not *outside* it.

[14] From Peter Nasmyth "In the Mountains of Poetry" Curzon Press ISBN 0-7007-1395-6

Some things however are clear. The cultural policy of Georgia in the next 20 years will have to take into account the demographic facts of the country. As mentioned above, it would seem that about a million people have left the country in the past decade and in order to slow this down and indeed to attract back, when the economic situation is better, those who have left (who are mainly the young and the economically dynamic and mobile) cultural policy will have to take this into account. It will have to deal with challenging splits and the demand for differing cultural provisions that it needs to address. Georgia will continue to be a country that is both rural and urban, the former supplying the material and resources for the Georgian sense of identity, as we witnessed for example in the real strength and importance of the folk art movement. And yet the urban Georgian, who will increasingly have more in common with his or her counterparts in other European cities, will be the primary consumer of the cultural offer. How can this dichotomy be solved?

Yet another level of the social environment is of direct relevance, the degree of displacement in Georgia, where significant numbers of people live outside of their immediate cultural space, either as IDPs/refugees or as migrants or immigrants. These populations will need both to retain some sense of their cultural history and yet not be distanced or alienated from the national cultural experience, which needs to provide a unifying thread to Georgia's civil society. Finally, in social terms, Georgia will increasingly have to find ways to respond to the need for stability (tradition) with the drive for change (modernity). This is a social challenge that most European states face, a challenge made the more complex the more ancient and deep-seated the historical dimension is. Modernity has its price and not all aspects of Georgian tradition will survive the longer-term transitions in store. But it also has its value – the best of Georgia can be kept alive in new ways, new places and new people. This is the challenge of cultural policy.

3 (vi) Cultural Strengths and Weaknesses (SWOT Analysis)

It is perhaps worth taking stock of some of the broader characteristics of society in Georgia and the impact on culture. This can be usefully begun here and we hope be developed separately by others in Georgia. A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) can be a simple and useful tool for developing action plans. Its use can often trigger new perceptions and it also facilitates a split between internal and external perceptions i.e. internal perceptions and those controlled by the organisation/person and which often affect administrative capacity and external issues which include the given environment in which we work. Although the latter are more difficult to change, identifying them allows the organisation/person to focus on the key issues, which they can control rather than those, which they cannot. [15]

Below is what the expert group began to identify in their SWOT analysis. Discussion is invited.

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[15] The Free Theatre in Tblisi was an interesting example of both the problems and the answers. This theatre is resolutely facing the issues and gave a very clear account of what was going wrong and why. They are developing a nice balance between local work and international touring work and they have a commitment to children's theatre and education. It was difficult enough to see how this sat with an aspiration to be radical and political, but even more so since the finances are forcing them to consider much less appropriate avenues such as erotic theatre from Brazil! The expert group understand these temptations to fund the activities from more lucrative sources. The theatre needs some 24,000 lari to re-equip itself. Where will this sum come from, if the directors do not find commercial opportunities to fill the space? This short example shows that behind every abstract expression of the problems lie real people and real organisations who are trying to solve the problems in any way they can.

A. Strengths (internal to cultural sector)

- Basic cultural provision is extensive and interesting
- Extensive tradition of hospitality and a rich cultural tradition
- Rich cultural diversity especially regionally but also ethnically
- Numerous examples of contemporary creativity and energy
- Extensive heritage resource
- Numerous examples of excellence and world standards in both traditional arts (folk dance, religious music and so on) and in modern art forms (e.g. contemporary theatre and cinema)
- Growing awareness of the need for change
- New voices beginning to be heard in terms of arts administration
- Evident commitment of the Ministry

B. Weaknesses (internal to the cultural sector)

- Lack of analysed data on the arts and heritage sector
- Poor communication at all levels
- Little tradition of prioritisation of needs
- Skills base and professional training patchy and in need of updating and extension
- Buildings in poor condition
- Mind-set of many institutions wedded to the past
- Lack of direction and lack of leadership frequently evident at institutional level
- Insufficient opportunities and generally unhelpful climate in the public sector for young talent (creative and managerial) to emerge and provide refreshed leadership
- Narrow and limiting definitions of culture which lead to an almost exclusive focus on a narrow structures-led, buildings-based approach to culture
- Not enough recorded 'success stories', positive case studies or inspiring role-models to motivate people to change and experiment

C. Opportunities (external to the cultural sector)

- Evidence of readiness for change, novelty and innovation in Georgia as a whole
- Pride in culture and culture widely valued at all levels of society
- Promoting Georgia abroad – culture is the country's passport to the world and its excellent 'visiting card' and an external audience, one part of which is already in place, is waiting to be developed
- Gradual shift to cultural economy and cultural entrepreneurship (but there is still too little awareness of what this even means, or might mean, in the Georgian situation)
- Employment in the cultural sector can grow
- Parents generally strongly motivated to ensure their children have cultural education and skills
- Non-state players are proliferating, and find their own solutions

- Cultural clusters could be built up of state and non-state organisations e.g. around key areas such as Tbilisi Old Town)
- Caucasus leadership is needed in these areas, and Georgia could provide a central point for discussion and ideas for the region as a whole

D. Threats (external to the cultural sector)

- Financial and budgetary uncertainty
- Uncertain legislative provision and low level of awareness of the legislation that has been passed
- No tradition of inter-ministerial collaborations
- Nationalism and regionalism are competing pressures and present real dangers to stability and without stability sustainable cultural development cannot be achieved
- International pressures in terms of finance continue to set the agenda for Georgia
- Time-scales and priorities are urgent – not all problems can be solved in time and the main problems are not always identified clearly

We have included the beginnings of a SWOT analysis for various reasons but it should be borne in mind that it also helps to explain an often complex situation to outsiders. The Georgian cultural message needs to be "clarified", especially for the international audience, whether for funding or other reasons. It is not enough to state that "culture is central to Georgia" or that "Georgian culture is a world resource". The international audience may agree with these statements without finding them sufficiently motivating. The external message needs to be simple *and* motivating. The priorities must be clear and they must be practical and achievable priorities. One approach would be to simply state, in an accessible format, exactly what projects require international help. This is not as simple as it sounds. A single shopping list needs to be created, an audit of relevance is needed, one that takes into account regional priorities and achieves a common agreement on what needs to be done and when. This would help to avoid the fragmentation of aid common in Georgia today (and elsewhere) where projects are not always joined up. An "aid and sponsorship " page on the Ministry web site could be a step towards providing this.

4. IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES

The Expert Group has identified at least six general challenges which are key areas for the debating of cultural policy in Georgia.

4 (i) The Challenge of Relevance

The aim of a forward-looking cultural policy must be to put culture at the centre of the various agendas of reconstruction and redevelopment in the nation. This is not to state simply that culture *per se* or in its narrow sense must be a key or a priority issue for Georgia. As is patently clear from the social and economic background outlined above, the country faces severe and long-term problems in adjusting to the post-Soviet situation. Culture is not currently and explicitly stated to be one of the key objectives for government policy. Culture, *as currently defined*, given the other serious economic and political demands, is not going to be placed as the primary key objective for government policy. The weakness or absence of wider cultural debate in Georgia often centres around the manner in which cultural issues are presented and perceived. In short, culture is seen and often presented as being a problem, something in need of funding, and of improved financial management, professional skill sets and flexibility of management. These needs and perceptions often either conflict (implicitly or explicitly) with wider government agendas or are seen as irrelevant to them.

It is an unfortunate fact that the degree to which culture is seen as yet another major problem to be solved, rather than an opportunity to be exploited, often characterises how seriously cultural issues are taken at the level of government policy. We did of course see that culture was being taken seriously in Georgia as an expression of the heart of the nation. Almost everywhere the group visited we witnessed the importance that the local administrations attached to the continuation of a distinct cultural identity, whether this was in Kutaisi, in the Autonomous Republic of Ajara or even in local historical sites such as the Chavavadze Museum outside Tbilisi. Culture matters. But its influence is often limited to inside the narrower cultural arena and the focus is on problems not opportunities.

We would suggest there is an enormous challenge to re-orient the cultural debate in Georgia towards the role it can play as an instrument for the development of other policy areas. Some of these agendas include;

- the economic agenda
- the educational agenda
- the social agenda
- the regional agenda
- the infrastructural agenda
- the tourism agenda
- the diplomatic/international relations agenda
- the resolution of conflict agenda

Addressing this need to present culture as a positive opportunity and of both direct and indirect relevance to other governmental agendas should be a priority and requires fresh and wider definition and presentation of culture and its role in a modernising Georgia.

4 (ii) The Challenge of Action

How to move forward? How to cut though the Gordian knot of problems and attitudes which surround any attempt to motivate change? This is a huge and pressing problem and one of which the Expert Group are very aware. But movement, action and results are necessary, and in a shorter rather than a longer time-frame. The group felt that in Georgia, in common with other transition states, there is an undue focus on legalism, as if there were a general, but unspoken assumption that the primary need was to create laws to cover any given situation and that these laws would lead inexorably to change.[16] While understanding both that much excellent work has been done in terms of legislation and that the legal situation in Georgia still leaves much to be desired, the Expert Group would like to stress that laws alone do not implement change, they only provide a backdrop, a frame inside which change is possible, or permitted. Laws require dissemination, monitoring and evaluation and finally enforcement. They also need to be rethought to fit new circumstances.

Taking action is particularly difficult when the authorities can seem paralysed by on the one hand financial problems and on the other underdeveloped structures for action. Nevertheless action at several levels is usually possible. Action can be at the individual level, the organisational level, the commune/city level, the regional or the national. Indeed, action can be interregional, without the necessity for enormous, overarching legal instruments to empower this. Action often of course breeds action.

This challenge might also be called "the challenge of priorities". What is most urgent? What should happen first, so that other things can happen later? Who decides on the priorities in the first place? Two sets of priorities have been identified by the Ministry to date. One set of priorities (contained within a document sent to the experts) targets very specific implementation needs of the Ministry. These were as follows:

- Cultural tourism
- Digitalisation programme
- Training strategy
- Attract extra budget finances via non tax sources
- Initiate a Book Policy Review[17]

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[16] Structural change can of course occur in a very short time, facilitated by legal changes. Sakptenti is one of the best examples we came across in Georgia. This appears to be a very developed and professional organisation which is now in receipt of no state subsidy at all. The structure was set up under advice from German experts, and with European Union Tacis funds. In many ways the organisation is advancing very well indeed (Georgia has been an early signatory to the Internet Convention), but of course in some others problems remain. For example, there is a poor regime for enforcement even though the legislative provisions are complete and detailed. Once again, laws are not the answer to a problem, only the precondition. Too few cases come to court and too few regions have either the training or the staff to enforce the legislation.

[17] A Book Policy Review was recently completed under the Council of Europe STAGE Programme

- Art Museum – needs to establish connections with foundations and organizations which give grants and other technical support
- Exhibitions to be organised e.g. of the Georgian painter Pirosmani
- A law on sponsorship and a law which defines co-ordination of artistic education by the Ministry of Culture.

A second set of priorities was communicated via the draft National Review, and these refer to broader macro-issues which require a response over the longer term.

- Preservation of cultural heritage
- Georgian Folklore
- Artistic Education (for professionals)
- Professional music, fine arts, theatre, film
- Museums and libraries
- Stimulation for Young Artists
- Improvement of socio-economic conditions for artists
- Improvements in material and technical infrastructure of organisations
- Intensification of international activity

The Expert Group felt that the Ministry is finding it difficult to cope with the enormous pressures and claims being made on it and for that reason needs a mechanism to assign projects according to their own perception of priorities. The problem is of course ensuring that priorities be part of an agenda which everyone signs up to both inside and outside the Ministry. The priorities we offer are only suggestions but the Council of Europe and its advisors, as external and neutral validators, could assist the Ministry hugely in identifying and justifying the priority areas and achieving consensus for action.

The Ministry's priorities could be split into these four areas:

A. Structural support
B. Policy developments and information
C. Training and professionalisation
D. Collaborations and partnerships

Taking these as a starting point we offer the following thoughts.

A. In terms of *Structural support*, the Ministry obviously has an important role as a funder and supporter of the arts infrastructure in Georgia. This is a primary role of any public administration, and one, which requires the necessary funding to carry out its role. In Georgia, as indeed in many other states, including more prosperous European states with developed economies, ministries of culture are trapped by too many "clients" and too few "resources" While the hoped-for improvement in Georgia's socio-economic conditions will progressively liberate more funds for the arts, there will never be enough to respond to the ever-growing needs. The Ministry must change the expectations of its stakeholder groups, so that the Ministry is not seen as the immediate port of call for funding needs. Who the Ministry funds, and why,

according to what criteria, is very important. There is therefore an essential need to define the priorities for support. [18]

Also, support must be understood not only in terms of direct finance, but also in terms of advice relating to other funding approaches. If the Ministry will not be able to respond to the financial demands made, it can at least start to provide some basic tools and ideas to enable organizations to find funds elsewhere, or to generate income from other sources. Where these conflict with the current fiscal and legislative framework, the Ministry has a role to suggest to parliament new approaches. In particular, the expert group felt that the Ministry probably has to retain a direct funding role for the National Cultural Institutions (although we suggest that these bodies and their requirements need to be defined very carefully and narrowly),

Possible areas of structural support: National Cultural Institutions, co-ordination of funding for cultural heritage, stimulation for young artists, building a national digitalisation program, improvements in material and technical infrastructure of organizations, Georgian folklore

B. In the category of *Policy Developments and Information* would be the priorities of the Ministry as regards legislation, policy and information both internal and external. These require the ministry to develop its own awareness and skills sets and an understanding of the best practice models all across Europe: in other words the policy priorities are about both learning and debate. Not all policy needs to be seen at the level of legislative intervention. The Ministry might consider developing polices which act as beacons, or lighthouses for the future, for example as regards 'Tourism and Culture' or as regards 'Private Sector Support for Culture'. The Ministry could develop discussions, papers, research and motions for debate and attract around these a series of consultations to test ideas and attitudes. Additionally, an important role of the Ministry is to inform its stakeholder groups about current thinking, both as part of the consultation process and as part of the promotion of the Ministry itself.

Possible areas of policy developments and information: how to attract extra budget finances via non-tax sources; how to improve the socio-economic conditions for artists; advise on the development of creative industry sectors; creation of an expert advisors panel, tourism and culture.

C. The category of *Training and Professionalisation* is an area of the Ministry's work where enormous change can be effected in a relatively short period of time. Indeed, one advantage of measuring one's impact in an underdeveloped area is that the smallest investment can have big results. The Georgian organizations and individuals we met were enthusiastic and willing, but everyone was aware of the skills shortage on the ground to cope with the new conditions. This is simply because the skills required to run modern cultural organisations are different from those required under the previous system. The Ministry needs to focus on the skills needs in the

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[18] One unintended but destructive result of the budgetary uncertainty is the fact that salaries are frozen for many state organisation and/or indeed at times not paid. This situation seems to be improving, but it cannot be underlined enough how important it is that the best and brightest are not tempted to simply leave the sector, due to their inability to earn a living wage. It is hard not to conclude that the Ministry needs fewer commitments, but ones that it can honour.

priority areas it has set itself and respond with training. This can take the form of expert advice, of training materials and conferences and of best practice manuals and demonstrations.

Possible areas of training and professionalisation: clarification of managerial and professional needs; set up a training strategy and invite professional experts from libraries, museums and other areas of the cultural sector, to organize workshops; develop artistic education packaged with the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance for professionals in the field.

D. The category of *Collaborations and Partnerships* is particularly important. "Nothing the slightest bit amazing has ever been done in isolation" [19]

Whereas many of the roles of the Ministry can be fulfilled by other institutions, the promotion of partnership and interregional/international collaboration cannot be easily assumed by anyone else. At its best, the Ministry in Georgia, if well informed about the cultural activity of the entire country, is well placed to be the natural and central meeting point for individuals and organisations across the country with their counterparts abroad, not in terms of being a 'gatekeeper' or controller, but in terms of encourager and facilitator. Also, the Ministry can operate at the level of interdepartmental collaboration. This means being aware of what other ministries are doing and relating the cultural agenda to the other agendas of those ministries in a consistent and meaningful manner. It means finding and explaining the connections between, for example, the cultural agenda and the health priorities, or even national defence and culture. These connections exist (as we have stressed throughout the report) and it requires only an impetus to think, find and explain them. The Ministry should be seen as an open and supportive meeting place for all the cultural actors in Georgia - this is an ideal, which is seldom reached in any European country, but staff in the Georgian Ministry are clearly inclined to pursue a style of openness and frankness and readiness to debate. This is the right platform for tackling the Ministry's own priorities of collaboration and co-ordination.

Possible areas of collaboration and partnership: Cultural tourism and the Ministry;[20] Intensification of international links; Identification of international best practice approaches; regional collaboration.

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[19] This is a quote from the book 'Funky Business. '"Funky Business" is a term (and book) about reinventing business for the Internet age. Although it principally focuses on the needs of the business world, it is relevant for anyone involved in culture or statecraft. One of the main contentions of the book is that everything now changes so quickly that we have to work in permanent and ever-changing partnership.

[20] Georgia is not yet at the stage where cultural tourism can be generally implemented. The infrastructural issues, the distances to travel, the political instability (or perceptions thereof) and the paucity of information available mean that cultural tourism in the area is likely to be limited for the near and mid-term future to the intrepid few. This reality was very clearly recognised by some interlocutors in Georgia and less clearly so by others. Nevertheless, there are many preparatory steps that can be undertaken immediately. These obviously include long-term planning and coordinating planning between the cultural ministry and other ministerial players and tying into other tourism plans and agendas such as the Silk Road project. Even on a very practical level, the cultural offer that currently exists can be made more accessible for the cultural tourists who do exist via more regular programming, offering limited but regular opening times for the museums (even those in poor condition) and by providing clear information in foreign languages.

4. (iii) *The Challenge of Regionalism*

As in all modern European states, there is and will be an on-going debate as to how to balance the national versus regional needs. Both needs are valid and indeed, at their best, complementary. But no one can fail to recognise the deeply held differences in belief and self-perception in the regions and the potential for conflict with the national perception. This universal truth has a particular relevance in Georgia where regional pride and identity, either within a context of some form of *Georgian-ness* or outside it (e.g. as in the case of the Autonomous Republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia), is particularly strong.

Regionalisation is particularly important in the cultural sector given the richness of the regional folk art, the linguistic and traditional identity and of course the monument stock, which is both local and universal in its importance. The Expert Group travelled and visited a great deal of Georgia and was impressed at every turn by the hospitality and the openness shown by the local administrations. They were also struck by the understandable and vociferous pride in the local achievements which were often nevertheless presented as being "Georgian" achievements, in the same breath as being singled out as different, specific and unique. Surely this is in fact the essence of regional cultural identity, that it is both locally meaningful but also part of something national, which of course does not need to be ethnically exclusive.

In a specifically administrative sense and in the context of cultural policy, regionalisation may of course be seen as a "de facto" process of financial delegation down to the appropriate level, leaving the centre as holding the methodological (standards and timescales) and legislative (mandatory or discretionary funding) reins. There are three challenges in this process and the centre is looked to as the source of both guidelines and decision making in each of these areas.:

- standards and coherence
- regional skills and governance
- mandatory or discretionary funding

The key role for the centre which needs to be fulfilled is to offer *guidelines* for cultural provision in these areas which can be understood and owned by the various levels of regional administration. This requires a clear central mission for arts and heritage, an articulated message, a process of active and ongoing consultation with the various authorities and a commitment to monitor and report back on results. This is necessarily a messy process (and the word messy here is used with a positive sense of being flexible, responsive and motivating!). There is no "right" or "wrong" solution to the setting of standards, and no standard is met all the time, by everyone. But standards are useful to build a common consensus on the goal, if not necessarily on how to get there. There are various areas of standard-setting where the Ministry in Tblisi might take a lead role (financial management, employment status, basic cultural provision) and others where indeed the regional authorities might themselves be better placed to state the desired standards (participation, representations of local traditions).

The central administration has another very pressing task. All over Europe decentralization has had both positive and negative effects on local cultural provision. Positive in that decisions are

being made close to the consumer and local specificity is therefore attended to, but negative in that the pressure to cut cultural budgets can be even stronger at the local level, and in response to specific interest groups, than it is at the national level, where the macro-impacts of culture are more recognized. One urgent task for the central authorities is therefore to *promote* the concept of culture to local decisions makers and populations. This promotion concerns many aspects, ranging from what constitutes excellence to how culture affects other agendas such as education or local development. There is a constant requirement for culture to be positioned within the thinking of decision makers, at local government level as well as at central government and as being relevant to their immediate needs. The Ministry in Tblisi, benefiting as it increasingly will from an improved overview of the cultural provision across the country, is well placed to invent and communicate a cultural message that will be heard at the various levels of administration.

In general, local organisations are positive about co-operating and working to a nationally defined standard of excellence. Often, however, the region has something to teach the centre.[21] One frequent problem is that the skills levels required to reach the necessary standards are not always available locally. This is particularly so where skills are leaching to other more financially successful sectors such as business or finance. The skills base for modern cultural management is complex and indeed many of the skills are increasingly to be found outside of the cultural infrastructure. Many people might argue that it takes more the skills of a businessman, than an actor, to run a theatre, although ideally the two skills need to be united in the same person.

Skills and professionalisation have an immediate pay-off: work is carried out better, more efficiently and with greater impact. But where can the skills sets be found? Who can provide the training? Where will the training happen and who pays for it? This is an area where regionalisation offers certain opportunities in a medium-sized country. Skills can be identified in different places, transfers and demonstrations can be arranged, external advisors and trainers can be brought in to lecture and work with groups of people from far-flung areas, start-up funding can be provided centrally and thus encourage local funding to follow.

The challenge of regionalism is a particularly important one in Georgia but also very complex not least because centre-region relations are neither stable nor always based on openly agreed and debated agendas. The political context of this can be understood by anyone with a reasonably detailed knowledge of the history of Georgia of the last decade. Issues such as the current system of presidentially-appointed mayors for the major cities are symptomatic of a general problem of maintaining some kind of equitable control at the centre to balance strong centrifugal power at the regional level.

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[21] Ajara is an interesting example. They are part of the Assembly of the European Regions, the only one in Georgia, since the mayor of Batumi is formally elected unlike the other key cities of Georgia. They have several projects running with Essex in England and with Cardiff in Wales. Kutaisi is twinned with and collaborating with Bristol. Tblisi is working closely with Bristol, Saarbrucken, Palermo and Ankara. No doubt lots of other European and international links exist, even if they have not all be registered and documented. Last year the director of Norwich Festival was brought to Georgia by the Dean of the Cathedral, for an active and long relationship has existed between Norwich cathedral and the church in Georgia. From this there may develop some arts educational and youth projects. These Transfrontier links are the precious material of collaboration in the 21st century, and they need to be promoted wherever possible, the lessons learned and the stories documented.

Of course all forms of decentralisation in all countries pose challenges in the cultural sector. Decentralisation is clearly evidence of a shift of responsibility away from over committed state budgets to local budgets, accompanied as it should be by suitable strengthening of local identity and autonomous action. In the Georgian example, 10 institutions have been devolved to local competencies and another 250 organisations have been subjected to local financial decision-making processes. However, the Ministry itself is uncertain as to the degree of genuine autonomy which is possible in current circumstances. The Ministry is perceived as retaining the responsibility to "realise the state policy objective" although a single statement of this objective was not forthcoming. The potential for conflict of purpose is thus considerable. An area of concern to the Expert Group is how to balance central and regional authority as well as allocate responsibility for funding and management to the most appropriate level.

In both cases, and once an appropriate balance is found, the Ministry still requires considerable funds to assure the smooth functioning of the system and to be able to be a meaningful player or partner from the regional point of view. This "system support" is not evident at the moment in Georgia. On the one hand the basic administrative capacity of the central Ministry is currently poor; on the other, the exact nature of the relationships between devolved responsibilities and central responsibilities is not clear. Given this, the Georgian example of cultural decentralisation is prone to very particular and excessive strains. These strains manifest (or will manifest themselves) at several levels in particular.

- the degree to which executive activities elsewhere are coherent with an overall cultural strategy
- the degree to which there is good, regular and productive communication between the regions and the centre and vice versa
- the degree to which regional authorities accept broad guidelines for cultural policy from the centre
- the degree to which municipal and local cultural activities are adequately funded and can access acceptable skill levels
- the degree to which the Ministry is given adequate financial means to carry out a co-ordination and information policy to enable the above system to function

This last point is very important. Regionalisation does not imply that the central ministry can or should renounce responsibility for national cultural policy. A strong mentorship and fiduciary function (what the French might call the *fonction de tutelle*) is essential. Various systems might be imagined in response to the Georgian specifics.[22]

4. (iv) The Challenge of Citizenship

Cultural policy increasingly sees itself in terms of citizenship and the relationship to civil society. This is a theme that preoccupies the Council of Europe which has been working around the concepts and the practical implementation of Civil Society processes within culture in a

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[22] One approach might be to enrich the identity debate by defining the various identity opportunities that exist. It was evident from the discussions held that culture in Georgia has international value (the image of Georgia in the world), sub-regional value (the Caucasus), a national value (Georgia) and a regional and local value.

number of environments.[23] This is not an abstract debate. There is an incentive to create an environment of rights and responsibilities that embraces the 'third sector'. Georgia is at an early stage in this process and issues such as motivation and personal responsibility can cause scepticism, if not downright suspicion, of some civil and 'citizen' initiatives in a country which has a tradition of only government or the state or clan loyalties. The citizenship debate is one that can also provide some solutions to the tension between individualism and regionalism and the state. One of the key mediators of this citizenship is the third sector, otherwise known as the non-governmental sector. The third sector is so vital because it provides key services, stimulates active citizenship and represents the citizens' interests via-à-vis the state.[24]

With regard to this last point, the Expert Group felt that the importance of 'dialogue partners' was not fully recognised. These 'dialogue partners' serve to provide a professional forum for the individual artist to articulate concerns to government and also as a testing ground for policies. There are of course different types of 'dialogue partner' - trade unions exist to ensure minimum labour conditions and pay, professional associations represent professional interests and values including new activities and training, general cultural associations provide an audience and a meeting place for artists and their producers and can help to forward artistic practice. These groups need to exist, and to be recognised, they need to work to internally coherent agendas and they need to develop a relationship with government where they seek to influence rather than oppose.

It is relatively easy to state with conviction where culture impacts on the citizenship process. This includes personal development (confidence, active engagement, enhanced understanding of rights and responsibilities), community development (internal co-operation, economic impacts, reduced crime, new skills, environmental improvements etc.), and social development (intergenerational issues, inter-racial harmony or at least better awareness, the break-down of gender and class barriers and other conflict issues). Of course, only good projects achieve these outcomes but sufficient case study material exists to allow us to state with conviction that the arts and culture are a primary tool for improvements in such areas.

4. (v) The Challenge of Youth and Participation

How can Georgian culture build the involvement for the future of its entire society especially in a context of increasing globalisation and urbanisation? This is a key area of work for the future of Georgian cultural policy. The National Report clearly indicates that this is perceived as an area of growing concern. There is a sense that participation is diminishing and that the prolonged

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[23] This report is not the place to go into an involved debate about civil society. The authors recommend that the interested reader consult the Council of Europe publications "Culture and Civil Society: new relationships with the third sector" and "In from the Margins", both of which give a detailed appraisal of the various relationships between the arts and civil society.

[24] There is a need in Georgia for more professional associations to act as a relay and s support system for current and emerging artist practice. The Unions of Artists are not exactly fulfilling that role at the moment, partly since they are inherited structures – in sense they are soviet structures in a post-soviet environment. They can be renewed, although to do so needs a new mission statement for them, and some improved systems and governance. Above all the Unions must not be perceived to be bastions of the old style privilege, and this perception will be difficult to change amongst younger or emerging artists. The approach must not be to simply throw out the unions but to remodel them according to objectives defined in part by the Ministry and in part by the user groups. The task force would be one good environment for discussing this.

social and economic crisis have weakened interest and capacity to attend arts events. The National Report also notes that professionalism has declined in all sectors in tandem with the loss of audiences/revenues, instigating a vicious negative circle whereby smaller audiences lead to reduced income and lower skills sets and thus further reduced audiences.

The National Report implies that there is some ground for hope in the development of youth audiences through association and education clubs. The report also contains an interesting, if complex, statement to the effect that "sub-cultures" have flourished and have found growing support from younger generations, while also claiming that this is seen as a "temporary occurrence, resulting from wider social tendencies, most probably from social and political transition which has been progressing since the early 1990's". The Expert Group would suggest that this statement is bound up with very deep-rooted (mis)conceptions of the reality of youth culture, how it develops and how it feeds from and into elite cultural or popular cultural expression.

A fear might be expressed that if youth culture is seen as an aberration from the desired cultural norms, it will not be given the necessary structural support and recognition which it requires to develop, to stabilise and to become, in its turn, representative of elite cultural expression. Simultaneously, the report makes tantalizing reference to the trend whereby "domains of larger cultural tendencies are crossed and pervaded by fractional sub-cultural forces". These cultural forces are not specified but may be read to include youth culture, minority culture, non-traditional cultural expression and international cultural expression.

If one might be allowed to coin a phrase, "The future *is* fragmented". This state of fragmentation is a given now in all developed democracies and it is unlikely that we will see a return to a single, endorsed and critically lauded conception of valid cultural expression. The existence in Georgia of such fragmented cultural expression is in fact the very proof that the Georgian cultural environment can and will renew itself over the coming years if it finds mechanisms and concepts to allow the Ministry and other state bodies to recognise variety and innovation in the cultural structures. This is the positive future of Georgian cultural policy and it is these developments which need to be welcomed and embraced.

It is not that traditional cultural expressions are not being passed on. The Expert Group on several occasions outside of Tbiilisi in particular heard that arts education was considered a priority and classes for music, art and folk dance are thriving (clearly seen by parents as important attributes for their children and by regional administrators as good for projecting Georgia and for tourism).

Grass roots participation in culture will, as in all transition states, take new forms in the future from those of the past. The elite cultures of the 21st century, while not losing any of their aesthetic and critical importance, will have to find accommodation within the new forms of cultural expression whether these are local and non-professional or indeed international and technological.

At another level there is a serious question of what to do with all the existing institutions. The 'preserve the best but re-invent the rest' principle is particularly needed in the Georgian context.

To take one simple example, and we saw several, it was in so many ways sad to be in Gori and visit the Stalin Museum and House where nothing had been changed (the last revamping of the exhibition had been in 1979 for the centenary) and where visitor numbers have dwindled from about 600,000 per annum to 25,000 as the relevance of what is on offer has not been adapted to today's (potential) audiences. A clear case of *preservation* when *re-invention* is what is required.

4. (vi) The Challenge of Europe

The South Caucasus is a real cultural crossroads and fusion of cultures from east and west, north and south. Georgia's history and experience are very much part of the common European heritage and indeed are part of its very foundations. The challenge for Georgia is that it must continue to draw on and identify with its deep-rooted civilisation but also manage to cross-fertilize in both directions with contemporary European culture and values. Georgia must equip itself with a range of technocratic tools and skills sets, use them to achieve and maintain a set of core modern European values and standards and nevertheless safeguard and promote its own cultural identity and diversity. Europe has continued to integrate, and to develop over the past half century, towards an intended result of common values and principles, balanced by local and national specificity and this can provide appropriate models for Georgia. This will not be an easy task but it is a task that can be aided by the adoption of a professional, managerial approach to cultural provision. This "Europeanism" is not a matter of harmonised approaches but of agreed standards and systems which are effective. In this respect the Expert Group would like to draw attention to the fundamental objectives of the Council of Europe as set out by the Chair of the Council of Europe in Vilnius in May 2002[25]. Good Governance was taken as the overall theme and he stated that the main objectives were as follows;

- Creation of Europe around core themes
- The guarantee of the role of law and the respect for the individual
- The strengthening of co-operation with other organisations
- Contribution to dealing with the problems of society
- Setting up of places and projects which are close to the citizen
- Follow up and attention to areas of political sensitivity
- Strengthening of links with European member states

This list might be taken by the Georgian authorities as a clear statement of areas in which their cultural policy can meet and match European norms and ambitions. Of course in each area there is a need for standards and systems and sometimes one must ask what these standards and systems are. One of the ongoing tasks of the Council of Europe is to answer such questions so as to provide practical guidelines over time**.** Georgia, in meeting and matching contemporary European norms and ambitions, will be able to engage on equal terms with the rest of the European environment with its own very distinctive message and cultural offer.

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[25] http://www.coe.int/T/E/Committee_of_Ministers/Home/General_Information/Sessions

5. DELINEATING STRATEGIES

The challenges outlined above call for a strategic response over time (and not simply an immediate reaction to the immediately defined and usually very urgent needs). The strategies, which we outline below, are not meant to be exhaustive and they are not meant to be permanent. Priorities change over time. But it remains essential that there be a strategic approach to the challenges and the following may illuminate some of our thinking, based as it necessarily is on limited information.

5 (i) Strategy of Joined-Up Government

The above approach requires much more than collaboration between the arts, it also requires collaboration between government departments and between local, regional and central government. Given the low priority accorded to culture in most departmental thinking, it will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Culture to both highlight the issue, develop structures for inter-departmental collaboration and track/evaluate the results. Joined-up government is a currently fashionable word for sharing knowledge, aims and processes. Georgia needs clearly stated terms of reference for culture that can be understood by all government departments and agencies.

Some steps towards a strategy might be to commission an annual overview of the cultural policy process, including general data, and circulate this around government departments, inviting feedback and comments. Another approach might be to set up an interdepartmental working group, focussing on perhaps the key 4 or 5 ministries where there is immediate relevance to the work in hand, such as those involved in education, tourism, social inclusion, youth, regional and community development and health.

Indeed in terms of a strategy of joined-up government an obvious area in which to try to get this right is tourism. There is some contact across ministries but the two expert visits did make it apparent that the responsibilities were divided (as opposed to shared!) between different departments, and under different ministers. Some attempts had been made to add coherence to the joint work programme but there was a feeling that an active framework for co-operation was for some time in the future. The Expert Group recommend strongly that an active, practical and frequent working co-operation be found between these two government departments given that the full exploitation of the potential is impossible without a clear and complete programme of co-operation. Some areas of work (particularly the Silk Road, the ecclesiastical heritage and the rural resource) require particular co-operation between the ministries concerned and indeed the international donor bodies. If joined-up government can work in this it can be applied to other areas. If it is not working well in these most obvious of areas it suggests joined-up government has yet to be introduced into Georgia as a practical concept.

5 (ii) Strategy of Good Governance

Many of these strategies interconnect: one leads to another. This is also the case with a strategy of good governance. What does good governance mean and how does it apply to the cultural sector?

Good *Cultural* Governance refers to the ensemble of principles which regulate the management and transparency of cultural organisations at all levels and of all types (state, non-governmental or commercial). These principles have been developed from accepted principles in the businesss sector. There are two broad principles which preside over good governance: one is that of honesty and respect for the law, the second is that of transparency and communications with stakeholders. In practice, the development of good governance is based both on certain legal requirements (accounting law for example) and via a general commitment to best practice. Some of the main areas which need examination in terms of good governance are financial standards and reporting; professional skills of directors and staff; adherence to codes and principles of good practice; the role of boards of trustees; the existence of a public mission statement for the organisation; stated aims and objectives; evaluation of results; accountability to stakeholders; consultation with user groups etc. Some of these concepts may seem very far from the current needs in Georgia, but this is a misperception. The cultural sector must become a source of excellence in its management and governance if it is to be taken seriously as a contributor to the redevelopment of the country.

Of course, one immediate area of concern is that of corruption and its corrosive side-effects. The political, economic and social changes in the transition countries have opened up endless possibilities for corruption and this problem affects the cultural sector as others. Steps have already been taken to combat some of the most flagrant abuses such as the legislation on the export of cultural artefacts. It is important for a general environment of good governance and transparency to develop. The Ministry can become a guardian of such values.

5 (iii) Strategy of Consultative Policy-Making

Many governments now recognise that it is essential to build coalitions of support to achieve their purposes. These coalitions are both inside and outside the state systems. There is a growing awareness that policy is neither formulated, nor delivered nor fully understood by government alone. The public sector has to work with a very wide range of state and non-state actors. These include other ministries, the NGO sector, the media and the informed public. Of course, Government is not being asked to simply give up on its own distinctive skills in setting forth the aims of its policies. There is a need for a framework inside which all the social partners can work to achieve their goals. So policy development is increasingly a matter of initiating broad discussions with all interested parties, refining information into broad policy statements, establishing mechanisms to debate the policy with the identified partners, implement agreed policy, measure impact and then resubmit the policy to debate and analysis in order to improve the policy. This process is also a key element in building a civil society.

One approach to developing such a comprehensive policy mechanism is to set up a stated and public *compact* between the State and the 'cultural sector'. This has been used with success in

the UK for issues such as relationships with the charitable sector and there is no reason why such an approach might not be extended to cover the cultural sector. A *compact* is a shorthand term for a framework of collaboration that is agreed and owned by all parties equally. Such a compact should be based around some key principles.

- It requires the broad principles of co-operation to be stated.
- It needs a statement of intention and some basic mechanisms to ensure that collaboration is ongoing and engaged.
- It is based around sharing responsibility for actions and giving ownership to other, non-state players where possible.
- It requires sensitive management and the very best professional skills to achieve a balance between the state's needs and the sector's needs.
- It needs to be documented and recorded for future use and reference

A compact cannot be *unilateral*, it cannot be fixed in stone, and it cannot be top-down. It must be flexible, democratic and owned by the sector. A 'compact ' is a process, not a product, but the process can be explained in detail, and given a form, an identity and a substance to which the owners/partners can relate in concrete terms.

Consultation is not absent in the system at present and we have given examples elsewhere in this report[26] but we believe it has to be a main focus which everyone recognises.

5 (iv) Strategy of Issues (Not Structures)

During both expert visits to Georgia much time was spent with the large-scale cultural infrastructure organisations which dominate most cultural provision in most countries. These ranged from museums to theatres to educational institutions. All were in need of money and all were desperate for a response from the Ministry, from the Council of Europe or from international donors in those terms. While this is understandable, it was less clear in what way the Ministry or other bodies would be able to respond on a case by case basis to these organisations, for the resources were not, and are not, available. And yet, the need remained. In talking through this issue, the Expert Group became increasingly convinced that one blockage was the need always to respond to the individual structures (with their individual, although in some ways specific, issues). Would it not be possible, we wondered, to approach the issues on a general basis rather than the demands being made by the specific institutions. What would such an approach look like? How would it differ from the current problems? How would an "issue-led" approach respond?

Obviously such an approach has to start out with a main task of identifying the issues. The main ones are easy enough to name but the more we thought, the more we were aware of less obvious, more slippery issues that lay behind. One possible list of "issues" might include some of the following themes;

- employment in arts organisations

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[26] In Shido Kartli region for example the governor meets with artists three times a year to find out about problems etc.

- how to renew the management structure
- basic repair needs across the sector
- marketing and promotion of the cultural offer (and how to share resources between organisations)
- organisational flexibility to raise funds from other sources, including merchandising, sales and other entrepreneurial initiatives
- attracting the youth market to the cultural provision
- who does what, in which organisation?
- how to build networks and interest groups

Much of this report focuses on issues rather than structures. We were motivated, of course, to meet organisational directorsand to discuss their specific problems and to recognise how broad and varied the challenge is. But we were also keen not to be perceived as trying to respond to each organisation's needs with a menu of responses as it is Impossible to do so. What can be done partly is to show how the problems that must be confronted by one or another arts group are in fact general, endemic and in many cases linked to other, deeper problems that are still being solved in Georgian society in general – for example shortage of professional skill sets. The responses therefore have to be shared out between the main players and there is a ray of hope in this. The more people who are involved in discussing the problems and the more individual responses which are shared and compared so the more strategic outlines that are drawn of how to move forward and the quicker the development will be.

The danger in the current situation is that a single answer, to a single problem, might be seen in isolation, applied, and then forgotten about. Lessons need to be learned in groups, and one way to motivate groups to learn is to show them where they share the same problems. Of course, they must also be encouraged to find joint answers. An issues-based approach is also one that focuses much more on *people* than on *buildings*.

While the expert group saw the enormous building and infrastructural challenge of Georgian culture (beautiful buildings, proud buildings falling into almost impossible disrepair),[27] we also felt that there was a tendency for people to wait for the buildings to be repaired before any other action would be taken. We felt this did an injustice to the vibrant cultural scene. Exhibitions can be held in temporary space. Galleries can be cleaned and prioritised so that the main works are seen in a few, well kept galleries and not spread through an entire building, theatre can happen in nontheatre spaces and so on. Even if electricity bills for opening the whole year are beyond budgets, opening for a few well-publicised, selected days is a practical, and indeed positive, response to grim reality.

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[27] The state of the State Historical Museum was a cause for immediate concern. 2002 is their 150th anniversary and the building is close to absolute infrastructural collapse. After a decade of turbulence, this is not surprising and there is no blame to be apportioned. Nevertheless, past problems are encouraging a sense of stagnation (perhaps partly due to fear of the possible chaos that lies around the corner?). The little that can be done does not seem to be being done. There was an air of waiting for solutions to come rather than devising even stopgap solutions to what is already there. And yet, there is a collection, there are curators and there is an audience or potential audience.. These museums need (for this particular period) to write a radical new role for themselves and to present the works in new environments (other towns, schools and universities, places of work, embassies). They need to develop new relationships with the great European museums, perhaps even lending artefacts for medium term periods in return for conservation help and expert advice.

These are not long-term solutions but they are an encouragement to act with what is available. The damage to the built historic environment is of course more difficult to answer and is partly dealt with below.

5 (v) Strategy of Sustainable Culture

Sustainable culture means different things to different people. In this context, the Expert Group takes it to mean the development of a longer-term planning system and the creation of the conditions for longer-term support that reflects the strategic goals of the cultural sector. These longer-term strategic goals may not answer everyone's needs and indeed the focus on the longer term may have some unintended consequence in the shorter term. Not every problem can be solved and it is often difficult to state this clearly and honestly.

One aspect of longer-term sustainable culture is clearly the potential to divest the state of its immediate responsibilities for funding organisations. This process can be referred to as either 'des-étatisation' or 'privatisation', depending on the focus. The National Report, and indeed our conversations in Georgia, left the Expert Group with the impression that the Ministry and the principal cultural players themselves draw very little distinction between the process of dés-étatisation and privatisation, or indeed more specifically between privatisation and the sale of cultural sites, venues and artefacts.

The recent Council of Europe study on des-étatisation demonstrates clearly that a wide variety of mechanisms are implicit in the desire that the state relinquish management control and that the market play a larger role in the management and financing of cultural organizations[28]. These include decentralization, retrenchment of the state, changes in ownership and the transfer of property rights, plural funding, purchaser/provider splits and outsourcing. The Ministry needs a more precise breakdown of what is required by each sector or institution, what technical approaches might be implemented and what their likely results might be, what skills need to be developed to manage the transition, what evaluation systems can be applied and which outcomes are sought.

The Expert Group also feels that it is urgent that the "tool kit" for public/private partnerships be researched and explored in detail by the Ministry in order that they fully understand the range of choices and mechanisms and might then serve as a central point for information and support to state and non-state actors in devising mixed economy solutions. Just as there is an unrealistic expectation on the part of some people interviewed as to what sponsorship will do for their finances (an expectation not matched by the current financial viability of most Georgian business), so the public structures must do some serious research in this area in order to avoid having unrealistic expectations of what state withdrawal from service provisions may mean.

That the state must withdraw further than it has from some areas is self-eveident as there is no choice. It is struggling, and in some instances failing, to keep the cultural infrastructure intact and the reality has to be faced that it must withdraw from some commitments. It is again a case

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[28] Theodoor Adams: Transversal Reviews of National Cultural Policy, National Cultural Institutions in Transition – Des-étatisation and privatisation CC-CULT (2001)10.

of preserve the best and reinvent the rest with new forms of ownership, partnership and management.

5 (vi) Strategy of Monitoring, (Not Control/Regulation)

Another important challenge for the state institutions, and especially in the cultural sector, is to move away from control and regulation to monitoring. While it is true that the old Soviet control system based on ideology has been abandoned and modern practices introduced, the Expert Group still felt that expectations of the state structures were that they were there to control. Of course in a certain sense they are but what did seem to be undeveloped was a real understanding of the primary importance of monitoring (and then, if necessary, of regulation and control). To a certain extent it is a problem of style inherited from the past even if the substance is now different and more benevolent.

To be more specific, a lot of good legislation has been put in place but one worries in the Georgian context whether the more important task of monitoring how the laws are implemented and working is sometimes lost. It is this balance between inevitable regulation with control functions on the one hand and monitoring functions with light and imaginative intervention on the other which we feel might not yet have been achieved.

This is perhaps also illustrated by the occasionally uncomfortable relationship of state institutions to NGOs. There will always be good and bad NGOs just as there will always be good and bad branches of the state apparatus but ultimately the benefit will be to monitor and have a light touch vis-à-vis the NGO sector rather than over-control or regulate it - even if there will be occasional abuses of trust. It may be right that NGOs are monitored by a relevant ministry but they should not be controlled by them, either in terms of accessing funding or in other ways. State structures should avoid the temptation of being gatekeepers. Good ministries are door-openers.

5 (vii) Strategy of Information Gathering and Provision

Is information gathering a strategy or a tool? In any case, the expert group felt that for the Ministry and for other public sector institutions a more formal recognition was needed of how important it is to know what is actually happening in the cultural environment. Of course, data gathering on its own is not enough; the relevant data must be analysed and then the appropriate policy decisions made. Ideally, the information gathered should also be made available for consultation and discussion. Not all these things happen to the desired standard at the moment. Also, this role of information gathering and provision is one that the Ministry can properly call its own. It could have an excellent and complete overview of the cultural provision in the country, it can provide a central point for analysis and understanding, it can make the information available to other government departments, practitioners or academics.

The Expert Group is fully aware and deeply sympathetic to the Ministry in terms of the enormous difficulties that exist in gathering such information. We also recognize that the immediate value of this data resource may not be self-evident. The data gathering is in the short term largely about developing the systems and skills necessary to assemble the aforementioned

data, and not in the forward reading of such data into a strategic framework. It is patently obvious that the financial resources of the country are not even commensurate with the urgent task of maintenance of the infrastructure, much less the longer term development of a cultural policy which will be their future function. However, it is suggested that the building of organizational capacity to gather, present/disseminate and interpret such data is a key function and role of the Ministry and one which is currently within their grasp. This links to an important area of the training of policy experts and the development of a public service ethos which will serve the Ministry's future needs.

5 (viii) Strategy of an Inter-Sectoral Approach

An intersectoral approach to culture means no longer thinking about each art form, or each cultural problem, in isolation. This "compartmentalisation" of culture is a common feature of much cultural policy in many European countries post-1945. It was encouraged by specialisation in certain academic disciplines, a view of culture as something fixed rather than dynamic and also by funding structures which encouraged competition between sectors.

The challenges which face the cultural sector today, however, are very different. These are transversal issues, not stand-alone issues. There are many areas in which the performing arts, the visual arts, museums and galleries, and even the built historic environment can and should collaborate to reach their goals. The state can promote this intersectoral approach in three main ways.

-   by bringing the main protagonists together on a frequent basis
-   by identifying common challenges to the entire sector,
-   by cross-referencing policy/legislation/action as to its impacts on other sectors.

For example, to what extent might legislation on ecclesiastical property encourage/discourage the use of churches or other religious sites for performing arts festivals or concerts? To what degree is this desirable or not? How will the development of town centres, and particularly their building stock, affect the visual art provision? And so on.

5 (ix) A Strategy of Community-Based Policy

The cultural task is a national task. It requires the active involvement, (not always the active agreement) of all the communities. The 'compact' approach proposed above in itself implies a significant degree of community involvement in policy making and indeed can be used as a tool to encourage community involvement. Some very good examples exist in the tourism sector, for example, where the principle of community-based tourism has been well developed. A community is many different things and communities vary between each other. Hence it is impossible to prescribe a single mode for what a community-based policy might look like. However, such a community-based cultural policy will have certain characteristics;

-   it will ensure participation at all levels of the community
-   it will avoid the marginalisation or exclusion of certain groups
-   it will listen to the communities' worries and priorities

- it will ensure that there is frequent and honest dialogue between the "community" howsoever defined and the "government" at whichever level.

A community driven cultural policy will be driven by the demand of the user groups, while not necessarily responding to each and every demand that is made. It should also be remembered that there are communities of the economic or intellectual elite, as well as of the excluded, communities of the city as well as of the countryside. The skill lies in combining and reflecting the common preoccupations of each.

In our visits outside of Tbilisi we were struck by how much commitment there is locally to culture so the task of developing community-based policy (and indeed community-based arts) in the regions is not as great as it might seem. It does simply mean more bottom-up communication and, as we repeat elsewhere more than once, research and information.

5 (x) Strategy of Creativity

A strategy of creativity is already being nurtured by the Ministry whether consciously or not. The initiative to set up its Department of Information and Communication is welcome, in particular since its remit is firmly focused on gathering information and providing an observatory in emerging trends on the sector. The institution of a web site is also to be welcomed.

The National Report demonstrates that the Ministry is aware of the concept of 'cultural entrepreneurship' and the Expert Group welcomes the openness of the Ministry and many of those we met to this. Many examples were given throughout the process of people with ideas and energy to achieve. These entrepreneurial attitudes were however often felt to be restrained by the existing framework of law and fiscal structures. But there was a positive energy in Georgia in this area and some, perhaps unavoidable, paralysis in the state-funded sector has undoubtedly encouraged a growth in private and semi-private projects which is to be welcomed as part of the harnessing of creativity and energies.

The National Report gives a very clear breakdown of the various schemes and awards that are available for the support of emerging and existing artists. The Ministry's approach has been to centre a degree of support on the provision of nationally recognised awards and honours. It appears that the selection process remains firmly within the remit of the Ministry itself. The Expert Group applauds the Ministry for the range and variety of awards which continue to be given and the amount of money disbursed is considerable given the financial state of the Ministry's resources (although clearly still not adequate to the needs). It should be noted however that support for creativity is very firmly oriented towards the classic areas of artistic excellence and little or no mention was made of support for creativity more generally whether this be in emergent creative industries or in the general education system.

This is obviously partly a reflection of the current situation: financial restraints, the fragile state of the high arts in Georgia and the low profile of young and emergent creators. The Expert Group would however recommend that the Ministry find ways (not necessarily financial) to identify and recognise creativity in less traditional areas as part of the encouragement for a new generation of artists and the emergence of new, borderline creative practice. Some areas that this

might cover would be design, graphics, fashion, contemporary music, architecture and town planning.

Creativity has many facets including at an individual level. Several points need to be made in the Georgian context.

A. Creative Plurality:

In a recent publication, a previous Minister of Culture in the UK states: "by creative industry I am not simply speaking about the performing and visual arts, but about publishing, recording, writing, photography, crafts, architecture, software, fashion, design, film, television and multimedia".[29] The National Report and the visits to Georgia did make available some significant information as regards the relations between the various creative sectors. It is clear that the Ministry accepts mass and modern media as being part of the broader concept of culture. In the National Report a fair overview of the main components of the cultural industries is given: books, music, film and cinemas.

But in general we felt that the definition of culture was not broad enough and focused on the needs of institutions and less on the potential of individuals (who are often of the younger generation and less practised at making their voices heard). [30]

B. Creative Infrastructure:

Creativity is not simply the work of the creative artist but also the context in which the creative artist thrives. This context is is in fact largely legal, fiscal and social, even though these issues may seem to be very removed form creative practice. There are some key areas of work to ensure that the creative artist (or indeed the creative entrepreneur) can emerge and the Ministry needs to examine both its track record and future plans in this area. They include protecting the status of the artist; the encouragement given to emerging crative industries; the approach of public institutions to creative artists; copyright protection.

In other words, there can be no creativity surge if there no solid legal and supportive environment for the individual artist (and this includes social protection which is not currently geared to the needs of a mobile, flexible and short-term creative work force). There can be no creative surge if, for example, investors and entrepreneurs are not being attracted to cultural clusters in places like Tbilsi which should provide a solid and advantageous legal,

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[29] Smith, Chris: *Creative Britain* Faber and Faber ISBN 0571196659

[30] Younger professional are starting to have some impact on the scene. One example is the League of Professionals. This is a mixed commercial/not for profit undertaking, which organises arts events and artists management. Clients include the State Piano Trio, the Rustaveli ensemble and some 14 painters and 24 musicians on a individual level. The organisation is 5 years old and is made up mainly of young people who have other jobs. Although the expert group once again found it hard to understand exactly the NGO structure of the organisation, it was clear that the group are active and problem solving. This generation of young people see the solution as being mainly private sector driven. There is a drawback to this, in that they aware not sufficiently aware of (nor interested in) what state policy and practice is. Both the non-governmental sector and the commercial arena need to build bridges into public policy. But on the other hand they do realise that the sector need to be more professional, more dynamic and more creative in their approach. These kinds of individuals of whom we met several, particularly in the creative industries are, in audio-visual and in the book sector, are a positive encouragement for the future.

fiscal, economic and generally supportive framework. There can be no creativity surge if public institutions do not ensure that the public have access to this new work.

C. Creative Protection

Creativity needs two kinds of protection: the protection of the artists and the protection of the content. As regards protection of the artist, some of these issues fall outside the remit of the current document but are important in the longer-term development of the cultural content in Georgia. Artists need some degree of social protection that allows them access to health care and eventually to pension provision. This must logically be based upon some kind of flexible scheme of contributions given the short term and changing nature of artistic practice. It is difficult to provide for collective agreements in this area where the individual artist is often by his/her very nature a self starter and a single operator. But at the very least some common standards and minima of treatment might be promoted in order to start developing a sense of the value of the artist to the public policy. Secondly, copyright protects both creators and creation. Without it, it is unlikely that a vibrant creative life will develop. Copyright allows for economic benefits both for the creator and for the environment through new enterprises and new jobs. This will be even more critical in the future as in a global economy the creative industries become 'global enterprises based on local creativity'. Sakpatenti has already made significant steps forward to create an appropriate framework for copyright legislation but enforcement of such legislation remains very weak. In this context it is important to stress that although copyright issues depend on the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Culture has a responsibility and a need to be aware of the latest developments in the area and to articulate the needs of the artistic creator at all times. The Expert Group therefore recommends an improved system of co-operation or information between the Ministry of Culture and the collection societies (such as Sakpatenti) and the Ministry of Finance and other relevant ministries.

5 (xi) Strategy of Economics

Employment in the cultural sector is but one aspect of an economic strategy. A brief section of the National Report focuses on current strategies to stimulate employment in the cultural sector. The report is honest in its appraisal of the difficulties that face the labour market in this area. The report correctly identifies the major problems being the lack of private sector investment and the poor system of regulation of standards. The Ministry does give an indication of some future activities in this area with regard to state support programmes for artists.

It is however noticeable that the perceived employment potential around the cultural sector is of narrow conception i.e. direct employment as practising artist, the response to which centres around scholarships and financial support for practising artists. There is little indicating that the wider cultural employment potential has been considered in this light. We feel that there is much interesting experience and research available in different parts of Europe which might be relevant to Georgia even at this stage of its deevlopment. We recommend that the Ministry, either directly or through others, explores more fully the area of culture and employment and indeed the whole area of economics and culture in the Georgian context. The Council of Europe in particular can help with developing a better understanding of these concepts and their modern

manifestations (this is of course an area which changes as quickly as creative entrepreneurship and where there are many and varied methods for encouraging economic growth some large sale and some micro).

5 (xii) Strategy of Management

Cultural management is highlighted in the National Report as an area of concern and an accurate breakdown is given of the previous concept of management under the Soviet system. The National Report is admirably forthright in this area stating clearly that the entire cultural sector "remains highly reluctant, compared to other areas of social activity, to adopt modern means". A large number of artists and professional staff working in the field of culture are proving essentially unwilling and very slow to abandon accustomed privileges". The report states clearly the Ministry's problems in both articulating a development strategy for cultural management and indeed acquiring even tacit support from the target group.

It was our impression that there are serious management issues that need tackling in some of the cultural institutions including problems of entrenchment, of management not providing leadership because of disenchantment, of lack of vision and lack of direction and of inability to cope with new contexts. There is also a general problem with lack of 'new blood' in the system. If, as seems to be the case, younger people are giving up the public sector institutions because of the poor (and irregular) salaries, at least for the key and flagship institutions something needs to be done to address this. There is a not unpredictable tiredness in some of the current senior management but no sign whatsoever of any succession planning as part of a policy or strategy - yet the present needs it badly and the future depends on it . Management skills are not inimical to artistic and programming skills and indeed the best arts managers are respected in both areas of work. There needs to be a recognition that the experience and knowledge of the older generation needs to be retained and exploited but power simultaneously needs to passed on giving a new generation an opportunity to explore new solutions with energy and commitment.

6. RESPONSES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this part of the report we try to draw together or develop some concrete responses and recommendations for the challenges, strategies and issues raised so far.

6 (i) Redefine and reposition culture in Georgia

This is an issue we have raised at various points and which we believe is central to any future policy formulation in Georgia. The legacy of seeing culture either as simply what the Ministry of Culture 'does' (the old Soviet view) or as traditional activities carried out within traditional categorisations of art forms/museums/heritage must be jettisoned if a healthy culture is going to survive and thrive in the country. A static definition of, and approach to, culture will lead both to its fossilisation and marginalisation. While culture is narrowly categorised (and therefore in some cases marginalised as a luxury), it is never going to be able to compete for the political attention or economic resources it needs and deserves.

In many countries in Europe, as a result of extensive research carried out over the past twenty years into the social and economic impact of arts and culture, there has been a redefinition and a repositioning. It will take Georgia time to assemble the data and research to measure scientifically the impact of culture in the country but it is likely that it will be much greater than almost anyone imagines. It would not be wild to speculate that the President of Georgia's comment about the spiritual and moral importance of culture and the arts[31] might well be applied, once the research is done, to its social importance and, both indirectly through that and directly, to its economic importance.

Culture and the 'cultural sector' in Georgia must be seen and defined in its widest sense to embrace new cultural forms and the nascent cultural and creative 'industries'. The age of a classical cannon of culture and classical definition is over – all the lines are blurred and the creative, social and economic forces different. Once a wider definition is embraced, new perceptions, contexts and actions arise. When France went through this process it led to innovations such as support being given actively to popular music both for economic and cultural reasons and contemporary 'rap' poetry took its place alongside Lamartine. In such an environment, subsidy and problem become investment and opportunity and culture effectively repositions itself in every sense and to the advantage and benefit of all.

Redefinition of culture allows 'instrumentalist' arguments for culture to be used in a positive way without threatening culture itself and most importantly allows culture to become a 'cross-cutting' issue relevant to a whole range of other agendas which for all sorts of reasons, especially in a country like Georgia at this stage of development, are of much higher priority than a narrowly cultural one can be.

By and large Georgians believe in their hearts in culture. It is up to the Ministry and all the other cultural players to translate this, through research, data gathering and professional advocacy, into a belief in people's heads.

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[31] "Georgia must save culture so that culture can save Georgia."

6 (ii) Redefine the role of the Ministry of Culture and reposition the Ministry

We have made frequent reference to the Ministry of Culture. We admire what it has been achieving and have no doubt about the commitment of its staff and their abilities. We do however believe that the very difficult circumstances of the country sometimes leave the Ministry wondering whether it will ever be able to live up to expectations and achieve real impact.

Again we think the starting point of the dilemma is one of definition and then positioning. Notwithstanding all the change and reform of the past decade, we believe that the Ministry is still, albeit unconsciously and unintentionally, moulded by a Soviet past. In particular we believe that it needs to adapt to current realities, readjust expectations (those of others as well as its own) and concentrate on what it can do well in present circumstances. In short, we believe it should redefine and re-state what it sees as its role, responsibilities and competencies as the national state institution for cultural development.

6 (iii) Introduce Mission Statements

The above programme would be ambitious. There may be areas which are impractical or impossible. Were the Ministry of Culture to refocus its activities around the broad goals we have suggested, there is a need for this to be articulated at the relevant levels of public discourse. Hence the need for a publicly stated "mission". The mission statement acts not only as a formulation of the Ministry goals and objectives (and therefore requires to be worked through and understood), it also serves to educate the arts audience as to the rights and responsibilities of the Ministry itself and of relationships, a necessary precondition for a civil society 'compact' to develop. [32]

A strong and clear statement of the mission of the Ministry would help to focus their work and their clients' expectations. There is a difference between mission and policy but it is contended

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[32] Some examples: The British Department of Culture, media and Sport state theirs as follows; *"The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has policy responsibility for museums, galleries and libraries, the built heritage, the arts, sport, education, broadcasting and the media and tourism, as well as the creative industries, the Millennium and the National Lottery. The activities of all these sectors bring us pleasure and broaden our horizons. Culture and creativity are vital to our national life. DCMS aims to improve the quality of life for all through increased access to and participation in all its areas of responsibility."*

The reference to "quality of life" has served in the DCMS as a focal point for extending their responsibilities to broader issues than the classic high art infrastructure and has also helped to put the UK's cultural resource closer to the centre of political debate. The French Ministry frames their work as follows: *« La culture est un service public. Elle est aussi un choix personnel pour chacun d'entre nous. L'Etat doit veiller à la protection d'un patrimoine architectural et artistique qui appartient à tous les français. Il convient de le rendre accessible au plus grand nombre dans les meilleures conditions. Il lui revient d' encourager la création sous toutes ses formes, d'en préserver la diversité, particulièrement dans un monde qui tend à s'uniformiser sous la pression d'intérêts économiques de plus en plus contraignants. La création est le lieu privilégié de l' expression de la liberté. L'économie de la culture ne saurait être exclusivement soumise aux lois de l'économie. Sa politique, loin de tout esprit partisan, doit s'inspirer de la conviction que la culture est non seulement une source d'épanouissement personnel mais aussi un moyen privilégié pour renforcer la cohésion sociale en donnant à chacun le sens du dialogue et la conscience de partager avec autrui les valeurs fondamentales. »*

that both are required. The mission states the agreed, common purpose of the Ministry and acts as both a motivation internally and an explanation externally. The policy states the aims and objectives of Georgian cultural practice and some of the tools/approaches that will be used to reach these. Both are flexible, and open to change, although it is suggested that this is at best evolutionary, and not frequent (i.e. a new mission every year is just confusing!).

In order to write a mission statement and some public policy guidelines there is a requirement for a challenging process, one that the Ministry can control and lead on. Four elements are key:

- Political debate and a goal for culture: culture needs to be discussed within the broader political and administrative structures of the state. Both the ministerial mission and the policy statements need to be informed by the ideas and contributions of all aspects of government. These ideas may not all agree with each, some may be in open conflict, but they are still part of the necessary process of refining an agreed position

- Discussion and consensus: debate is needed of course at all levels of society. Of particular importance in creating a policy is the input of the practitioners. This need not be specific to their field of interest but should draw on their general understanding and experience of cultural practice. Many Georgian artists and administrators have also international experience. This is a resource to be drawn upon. What do the artists and managers of art in Georgia want? Do they understand what they need? Are they able to formulate pragmatic plans for their realisation?

- Bottom-up contributions: everyone must be given the chance to express their understanding of and ambitions for the cultural domain.

- Ministerial clarity: at an important and appropriate stage the Minister for Culture will be required to state the mission and policy publicly and to defend and explain it to both fellow ministers inside the state apparatus, to artists and administrators and to the general public. A voice is needed to speak out for the cultural dimension in strong and unapologetic terms and to motivate the cultural sector to work together towards the realisation of a long-term strategy. This is arguably the most valuable and highest impact function of the Minister and of the Ministry.

We believe that this should be done as a 'western-style' public 'Mission Statement'. It should be a document which explains what the Ministry's fundamental purpose is and it should be against this document that the Ministry's performance and behaviour can be assessed. Self-evidently we believe that this will mean that funding (which at present is a central expectation of many) will become a secondary tier and a more tightly defined aspect of the Ministry's work while other activities will become the core ones.

We also see the management of expectations as a core issue and in that respect one of our messages is that it should focus on goals/activities that are not initially or directly finance-related.

Production of the 'Mission Statement' needs careful thinking, consultation and work by the Ministry (see task force working below) and needs to be a public document, including being posted on the website.

We would suggest that once this is achieved, it is used as a model for similar public 'Mission Statements' by other state institutions, not least all the national and flagship institutions. We believe that the process, as well as the Mission Statements themselves, could help some areas of "frozen" thinking e.g. in the museums and visual arts sectors where there seems to be loss of direction or confusion as to what role they should be playing in a post-Soviet and very tough environment.

6 (iv) Identify a limited number of broadly agreed priorities and focus on their presentation including a 'needs audit' for priority projects requiring international funding

It is easy to understand and sympathise with the fact that everything is a priority. The problem is that it is very confusing for everyone who is an 'outsider' whether they are a Georgian from other economic or social sectors or foreigners. The needs at present are greater than the resources and so it is vital to select certain priority projects or areas and achieve a reasonable consensus that those are the ones that are going to be promoted either internally or to external funding sources, be it bilateral agencies, the World Bank or whoever.

In the case of priority projects needing international funding a 'needs audit' should be done and, in other words, there should be a realistic 'shopping list', well documented and presented, and including state, regional, local, NGO and private sector projects as such a mix will add to the objectivity of the choice and have appeal for a wide range of potential benefactors.

As long as the Ministry assumes the kind of role and style we have alluded to in this report (as opposed to any venial temptations of being a gatekeeper) then it can effectively and legitimately become a source of reference and advice for international funders. Its ability to present professionally projects which are broadly accepted as the priority ones will be to the benefit of everyone.

Such a list should of course dwell on opportunity rather than emphasise 'doom and gloom' or desperation and a Partnership Opportunity page could be set up on the Ministry's website to promote projects to international interested parties.

6 (v) Introduce task-force working

One of the real stumbling blocks to effective change is the difficulty of breaking old modes of behaviour and bad or no longer appropriate habits. Change is primarily *about people* and is ultimately carried out *by* people and therefore behavioural factors and methods of working are critically important to any change process. It is a gross generalisation, but nevertheless not distant from the truth, that traditionally in Georgian society people worked with and through their relatives and as 'clans' – a strong tendency to work only with people who were 'one of us' or where there was mutual self-interest (whether of an objectively healthy or unhealthy variety). This traditional way of 'networking' was both a source of strength and of problems. It meant

that networks of trust and self-help could be established and fight off threat but it also meant that in the past decade the ability to adapt to a modern democratic societywith open networks - rather than oligarchic or clan society - was relatively complicated. It is certainly not a question of the old clan-driven society being wrong in the past, more to recognise that contemporary Georgia has new needs. The ability to work together in a much broader and more objective fashion for wider goals is one of them. The inability to do so is perhaps evident in some of the unresolved territorial and political problems which have arisen since Independence.

At a practical level this means that new ways of working, communicating and cooperating are required including the ability to work effectively and closely with people who are perhaps 'not one of us' or who have a differing view of the world or who have differing interests. In this context the Experts Group would very much encourage experimentation at all levels of the use of 'task-force' working as a model to be developed. 'Task-force' working quite simply means identifying an issue or a problem and then creating a team to address it by bringing together relevant people from disparate backgrounds. This might be in the form of a task-force which includes a mix of state sector, private sector and third sector people. It could be one of experts and public. It could be one made up of people from different specialisms or even simply from differing age groups. The task force must be clearly empowered within a clearly defined brief. The principle is that the diversity of the task force is likely to produce a lot of differing views which if they can manage them effectively leads to a recognised 'objective' (because they are representative or diverse) group producing solutions or suggestions which are more likely to be implementable.

Being seen to work in such a fashion, and involving wider groups or alternatively involving individuals in wider functions, will build confidence and help people to work in ways that break down some of the traditional suspicions and closed ways which seem currently to hamper stability and social unity at every level in Georgia.

6 (vi) Set up a National Task Force for culture

This is in addition to the above point. Leadership is always needed and the Ministry is in the prime position to provide it. One practical approach to providing leadership and to creating the conditions that make it possible would be to set up a national task force as a forum for debate and ideas. In order to fulfil its potential, such a task force would of necessity bring together representatives of all the cultural sectors and geographical areas. These might include, in so far as it is possible and appropriate, the three autonomous republics, other regions, local government, the main city councils and representatives of the legislative and executive structures (President, Parliament, Ministries of Finance and Education etc.). Finally foreign observers might be invited to help comment on or shape the task force and provide a sounding board. The aim would be to create a growing common awareness of what the cultural challenge is and alongside this a collaborative environment for problems to be solved.

We have mentioned repeatedly in this report the need for collaboration and it should manifest itself in numerous ways. Creating a national task force on culture would be one powerful way of doing this.

6 (vii) Explore the possibility of creating a 'Compact' between the State and the Cultural Sector

We suggested earlier in this report that one way of bringing people together for a common agenda might be a 'compact' between the state and the cultural sector. It is difficult, not being Georgians, to know to what extent this might work and how it might be implemented in the Georgian context. We do believe however that it has certain serious merits not least because it can be a tool for managing expectations, this time in both directions. We emphasise once again that the characteristic of such a compact would be its joint ownership by the contracting parties, its transparency, its flexibility and its ability to involve all parts of the cultural sector. Such a compact is a basis for collaboration, not a detailed programme of work.

6 (viii) Introduce, at all levels and for all types of cultural organisation, the 'stakeholder' principle and approach to communication and accountability

Earlier in this report we went into some detail about the concept and applicability of the 'stakeholder' model. We believe that if this could be introduced it would slowly have a radical effect on the 'culture' of the cultural organisations and we believe that if the Ministry first and publicly committed itself to such an approach it would enhance its authority and leadership credibility and allow a cascading down of the approach to all other players and organisations in the system.

6 (ix) Carry out an audio-visual sector review

The history of Georgian film is impressive so much so that the contemporary visitor is bound to wonder whether a revival of the Georgian cinema tradition should not be one of the first points for cultural revival. Georgia has a history and a tradition here that can certainly adapt to the future creative needs of the audience. The economic pressures may be different. TV and cinema today are caught in a complex web of relationships between the demands of profitability and the mass market as against aesthetic and critical success. Every European country is facing some of these issues and none is finding them easy to resolve. The dominance of the American film market is due both to their overwhelming economic power but also to the fact that the American movie speaks to a contemporary audience, sometimes in ways that are baffling to the cultural commentator. This "reconstructed taste" for cinema is going to affect Georgian cinema-going publics as certainly as it has affected other European countries.

Not enough time was spent with representatives of the audio-visual industry to gain a full understanding of the problems they face. The various groups we met, in Tblisi and in Kutaisi, were striving to make money in order to make TV and film. The economics of audio-visual production make this very difficult and in spite of the valiant efforts by all concerned there is a sense that the industry will not move forward until serious investments can be attracted, presumably from outside the country. It is also clear that the technical levels in the sector are very high. This even seems to the Expert Group as being a real draw for filmmakers to Georgia. Not only is there amazing scenery and wonderful venues, there is also a pool of well trained technicians. There was a feeling from some people interviewed however that the managerial competencies, and especially the financial skills, in the sector were not high enough.

One overwhelming problem that was clearly identified was the lack of appropriate cinema space. This is true in Tbilisi and even more so in the regions. We were told for example that of 90 cinemas in the country, only 10 were in anything like working order. This is like having writers but no paper. Without good cinema facilities the audience will not be attracted and neither will investment. This is clearly a key area for future work. So important is this sector, and so impressed were the experts by the people they met and the discussions they had, that a recommendation is made below for a sectoral review to be carried out in co-operation with the Ministry and possibly under the STAGE Project, into the audio-visual sector and its potential development.

6 (x) Clarify and draw up at Ministry level a new cultural policy framework

We would recommend that the Ministry draw up a new cultural policy framework that unambiguously places strategy, aspiration, people and issues at the heart of the policy process rather than operational requirements, financial wants and needs and buildings.

6 (xi) Practical dialogue and communication with the regions

We have brought up the question of centre-region relationships several times earlier. It is essential to make practical dialogue and communication with the regions (and, as possible and appropriate, with the Autonomous Republics too) a real priority and use every means possible to achieve this.

As a first step develop (and if necessary fund) a regular e-mail service between the Ministry and regional cultural offices. Collaboration between the centre and the regions is going to be a key factor in the success of cultural development in Georgia in the next decade.

6 (xii) Promote modern professional networks

We mention traditional 'clan' networking in Georgia earlier in this report. The Expert Group however has little sense in Georgia of any significant development of issue-based or sector-based networks. While it is true that networking is a concept that has grown up hand in hand with the growth of civil society philosophies in western Europe, and the retreat of the state, it is necessary that the advantages of networking be profiled and explained from an early stage in the development of a modern cultural infrastructure. Networking sits in opposition to competition and particularism and since the problems faced by the cultural environment are largely shared issues it seems only right and proper that the cultural sector should approach the solutions on a shared basis.

Some network enthusiasms exist and indeed some sectors (the book/library sector, the film sector) have already set up platforms for the joint discussion of issues[33]. However, the broad cultural sector has not yet embraced networking, either as a way to identify or as a way to solve

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[33] The expert group was particularly impressed by the work being done by the State Book Chamber, and also by the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia. A book sector review has of course now been carried out with a separate report – see Bibliography.

problems. Therefore, logically, networks are not currently and naturally seen as the first step towards creating coalitions around key areas in order to motivate government or other key players to improve the situation. It is a universal fact that groups are stronger than individuals and thematic issues are more interesting and relevant for the public sector than small-scale sectoral complaints.

The Expert Group therefore recommends that networks be established in the cultural sector with the aim of creating consensus around the key issues for cultural development. Such networks can be focused on transversal issues (arts managers, women in the arts, regional arts) or on sectors (museums, theatre, craft and folklore). They can be encouraged by the state to the extent that they are given places to meet or indeed travel/subsistence is funded. They must be independent of government to have any force of conviction while open to relationships with government in order to effect change.

6 (xiii) Create a 'trouble-shooter' advisory team within Ministry

As a part of a redefined Ministry responding to practical issues we see some merit in exploring the desirability of setting up a 'trouble-shooter' advisory team to respond to the needs and problems of arts organisations on the ground and throughout the regions. Such a team should receive appropriate training in the main challenges and be aware of wider contacts and expertise to whom the organisations can be referred. Such a team would also provide a first feedback point to the Ministry on practical issues on the ground as well as being seen as a service to the arts infrastructure.

6 (xiv) Carry out a skills audit/training needs analysis

This is part of a more people-focussed approach to policy. Almost any work done on this will be useful as we had the impression that there were numerous areas where serious problems could build up in the future if policy ignored the human resource dimension. With limited resources, but also with the possibility of external sources of help and funding if properly analysed and prioritised, some kind of national training targets need to be set.

6 (xv) Recognise less traditional areas of creativity

We have mentioned this earlier in our report. Recognition does not have to be financial. Imaginative use of awards, 'prizes' and other systems of recognition can be real motivators especially to less traditional areas of creativity. It also helps to reinforce publicly the wider definition of culture which we have recommended.

6 (xvi) Produce an annual overview of the cultural sector

We have set out the arguments for this earlier. We believe it could be very useful and be linked to the introduction of the Ministry's 'Mission Statement' as part of a more public accountability and open communication policy as well as being very valuable in terms of advocacy.

6 (xvii) Identify and exploit champions for culture

Throughout our visits we met people with ideas and energy. Many of these people and their organisations are successfully achieving cultural goals in the face of overwhelming problems. They were motivating and positive role models. One collaborative approach to these individuals would be to highlight their successes and learn from them. Cultural success stories are necessary to prove to others that they too can achieve their goals. They are also good people around which to coalesce specific themes such as artists' salaries, training needs or raising the profile of the sector to business. [34]

Another group of possible champions are not linked to culture at all. It is increasingly important to create wide-ranging networks of support for culture among, in particular, the business community, the NGO sector and among recognised names. Consistent statements of support for the cultural sector and its aspirations from business people has the effect of making government departments listen. If business people can be found who believe in the contribution of Georgian culture to the economic success of the country, they must be encouraged to advocate for the cultural sector in print, in the media and in presentations in order to prove that culture is not narrowly focused but relevant to the wider development of Georgia. These champions from outside the sector cannot be accused of special pleading and are accordingly taken very seriously.

6 (xviii) Identify and promote demonstration projects

Nothing succeeds like success. And nothing sells better than a good story. Georgia has a wealth of interesting cultural experiences and these positive stories need to be told and retold. There is no reason why the heritage world should not be interested to know about and learn from successes in the performing arts and vice versa. Case studies of what works are needed and the Ministry could build up a data file on the best examples of cultural progress and practice from across the entire country.

The Ministry may need sometimes to fund/support success (rather than failure which is often the nature of crisis funding). Sometimes support for a successful project can create an awareness of what can be achieved and encourage other people to attempt what had seemed impossible. The Ministry and other players need to be on the constant look-out for good, new ideas and where possible support them with advice, and even occasionally seed-corn funding. These stories need writing up and disseminating (perhaps via the web-site) in order to spread the information about what works and encourage others to try.

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[34] These individuals might not identify themselves as playing this role. One interesting organization we met was the Professional Musicians Association "Aisi". The representative quite properly laid out the worries and problems that the group was facing, but the experts could see that this was an organization that appeared to be making headway and finding solutions. Also, their ambitions for the future were motivating and linked to various other projects such as tourism.

6 (xix) Develop a favourable climate for mixed funding possibilities (public-private and public-public)

One of the most interesting draft pieces of legislation given to the Expert Group was that on Sponsorship and Charity in the Sphere of Culture. Many of the provisions - or rather the philosophy which lies behind the law - are laudable and demonstrate a commitment on the part of the Ministry of Culture to engage fully in the sponsorship possibilities. The Expert Group salutes the blanket authorization of sponsorship and "charity" for the cultural sector and also the statement that "Restriction of a free choice, as determined under this law, by the state for conducting sponsorship and charity actions and/or selecting the type of their realization is unauthorized, except if they infringe the rights of other persons and/or if they seem doubtful from the outset ". There is also an interesting statement that the state will recognize or rewards sponsors and donors via prizes, awards or honorary citizenship of town or country. The Expert Group was however less favorably struck by some of the practical procedures of the law. Overall while the law is to be welcomed as a statement of legality in principle, the law once again focuses to a very great extent on creating a legalistic environment rather than a motivating environment for this kind of public-private partnership to develop.

There is a common misconception that the business world is eager for the sponsorship and funding opportunity. In very few situations has this proven to be the case in transition countries. Even in highly developed and highly mature sponsorship markets, most sponsorship contributions hover around the 5-10% mark of overall arts and cultural funding. It would be a mistake to believe that sponsorship is likely to be an important element of arts funding in the near future in Georgia.

The public-private debate is much wider than sponsorship. Raising money from non-governmental sources is also a wide palette of techniques. These include merchandising, hire of spaces and equipment, private investment in productions and programs, 'friends' groups, sponsorship in kind and charitable/philanthropic fundraising a well as sponsorship and so on. The Expert Group felt strongly that it was important for the Georgian public sector and the Georgian cultural actors to understand the range of public-private approaches that were possible in order to create an environment that motivates such partnerships. The key area for this is training (in techniques) and promotion (of the opportunity). The legal framework is an important background consideration but on its own will not motivate either sponsor or funding seekers to improve their game.

The opportunity for more public-private funding opportunities will open up if a wider instrumentalist view of culture is taken. Experience elsewhere shows that when culture is feeding other agendas, funding from those other agendas begins to contribute to culture.

6 (xx) Run sponsorship and fundraising seminars

The Expert Group is cautious about the ease of developing alternative income sources - this is a great challenge for the future in every European country. Additionally such alternative sources,

while useful, are often modest supplements to public income. However, new sources of funding such as sponsorship are avenues that need to be explored.

The techniques and professionalisation of fundraising (and sponsorship fundraising in particular) are relevant and interesting for a country like Georgia. The skills include prioritising projects, planning, marketing and PR, good budgetary management, network development and client servicing. This fundraising "package" of techniques is useful in terms of creating a professional arts management structure and impact should not only be measured in terms of the amount of money raised.

6 (xxi) Experiment with new organisational forms

Invent the future! Most art forms and the arts structures (buildings, careers and skills) are inherited. This inheritance is a rich resource for the future but also at times, as so often implied in this report, a weight. Cultural policy in contemporary terms is also about trying to re-invent how we do things, how we fund them, where we put them, who sees them, who does them. This re-invention is painful, but also liberating. In the current situation in Georgia there is a need for action and ideas, not just models and standards. Perhaps some arts institutions have to be privatised. Perhaps some have to stay in the state remit. Perhaps some would really benefit from a mixture of public-private funding and control. Perhaps some art forms need to be made more commercial, perhaps some need to stay elite and untouched by the ravages of the market. There is no single answer that will cover all art forms in all places. There is a need for inventiveness and problem-solving. Of course models exist for this inventive process. Almost every country in Europe has some examples of new approaches, whether it be the part privatisation of services in Italy's museums or the loosening of the regime for foundations in France, or the innovative local art polices in Ireland or the way Belgium has split its cultural competencies on a regional basis. There is a rich menu of choice. Of course, choice needs to be informed but as well as generating its own home-grown innovation Georgia can usefully look, listen and learn from other experiences in Europe.

6 (xxii) Commission public opinion/social survey research on cultural participation trends and related areas

We were conscious that there is very little serious research about the cultural sector in Georgia and an absence of quite a lot of basic data including statistical, social and public attitude data. We believe this is really needed if sophisticated cultural policy responses are to be made. Such research should be commissioned by the Ministry and outsourced. If there are budgetary problems in doing this then the possibility should be explored of it being carried out as a joint project with a foundation or of it being one of the priority projects for external funding (see our recommendation 6 (iv) above).

6 (xxiii) Make use of a 'National Debate'

Some of the recommendations we have made hinge on creating a real climate of trust, positive attitudes and collaboration. This is not easy and may need some external support, mediation and validation. As part of most Council of Europe cultural policy review exercises there usually

ensues a 'National Debate' in the country concerned. This can take many forms. In the case of Georgia, we strongly recommend that there be a National Debate component, organised under the STAGE Programme, and that it is used not only as an opportunity to learn from the reports but is actively used to find a new collaborative framework for future partnerships. It is an opportunity for the Ministry in particular to signal a new style of consultative leadership.

6 (xxiv) Some comments on heritage

It would be a serious gap if we did not add a few comments on heritage given the enormous importance of the heritage stock both to Georgia, the region and the world. The Georgian built heritage is extensive, of great academic importance and of outstanding aesthetic value. It is relatively unknown outside the borders of the country and is an enormous resource for future tourism and economic development. The heritage stock of the Georgian territory is doubtless one of the strongest areas of potential in future Georgian cultural policy. Specific issues pertain to heritage however and they require some careful thought.

Concerns over the loss of heritage artefact have prompted the enactment of a series of laws in the area and this formalization of the legislative regime is to be welcomed. However, such codification does not in itself assist the process of prioritisation of heritage preservation and exploitation which is a problem that confronts many European countries. There are two dangers. First, that all heritage artefacts and sites be accorded equal priority with the result that resources are not available for the maintenance or exploitation of any and secondly, that a very restrictive regime limits the possibility of the development of an arts market, even state regulated, the proceeds of which might be available for the preservation and exploitation of "prioritised" projects. The Expert Group do not deny that this is an area of great sensitivity. No solution is likely to be generally acceptable. But it is contended that the role of the state is primarily to classify and prioritise sites and projects while tracking and supporting the emergent arts and antiquities market in an attempt to deflate the black market in such goods.

A very difficult area is that of ecclesiastical properties. The proposed Church-State Concordat states that "The state shall recognise the ownership by the Church of the Church's entire treasures [sic] which are under the State's protection (in museums, depositories) except for those who [sic] have been private property" (Article 18.1). The Concordat goes on to state that "The Church treasury, as an integral part of the national treasury, shall be in the State's and the Church's common ownership (except for the holy parts [sic] and holy relics)" (Article 18.2). There is a need for a clearly articulated methodology to answer the obvious questions of ownership, questions implicit in Article 18.2 over division between "the Church treasury" and "Holy Parts and Holy relics". It is clear that the treasury is conceived under this legislation as extending beyond the places and artefacts of worship of the Georgian State church but no guidance is explicitly given in the legislation as to how or where a line is drawn between historically and religiously significant items. "Common ownership" is a laudable intention but notoriously difficult to manage in practice especially where as in this case the possibility of withdrawing items "of the Church's treasury from the depository […is stated to be…] allowed on the basis of an agreement between the state and the Church". Clearly, the Concordat itself does not provide this agreement.

The Expert Group recognise the vital importance of the Georgian Church for the nation's identity and future nation building and applauds the attempt to manage the relationship between state and church under a broad set of applicable principles. The Expert Group also recognises the preponderance of religious and semi-religious sites and artefacts within the cultural resources of the Georgian state. The obvious possibility of conflict however exists to the extent that the cultural function of an artefact/site may not accord with the spiritual dimension of the site/artefact's character.

Obviously, items of iconic spiritual significance should be limited in terms of their exposure to a secular cultural environment. This is already the case in other parts of Europe where items of religious significance from any tradition are sensitively treated. This is not to say however that all religious items can be extracted from the cultural environment since this would remove the majority of painted, sculpted and designed works from the great museum collections. This issue will be a particular challenge when and where the state requires Georgian artifacts to be exhibited abroad and as part of the necessary process of education and profile building for the Georgian state. There is a large audience for these items and although the audience is largely secular in its interest, this in no way detracts from or minimises the spiritual significance of the artifact.

There is therefore a need for clear methodology in this area, both as regards the classification of religious sites/artifacts and the co-decision making procedure for their exploitation. One approach would be to grade sites/artifacts into three groups: (a) Liturgical sites/sites, where the Church's decision is final; (b) Cultural sites/sites with a religious significance where the State has full autonomy to display, promote and exploit the resource, without recourse to the Church; (c) Liturgical sites/artifacts of cultural significance where a committee, comprised of Church, State and cultural NGO's or specialists follow a pre-established process for agreeing acceptable use on a case by case basis. Note that in the three cases above it is accepted that the sites/artifacts are in any case inalienable.

6 (xxv) Next steps ?

What happens next? The document above launches both a debate and a wide-ranging series of challenges – the Expert Team are under no misapprehension that these transformations will be easy either to achieve or even to set in motion. The Ministry and other public and private players will themselves prioritise and develop the agendas set out above but in the immediate future, in order to help them with that task, the Expert Group has drawn up a brief list of next steps which might facilitate the change process. These are mainly administrative, and some of these will seem very simple indeed, but we believe that all of them have a value in terms of the longer-term evolution of the cultural policy process in Georgia.

- Read the report. Appoint a small team to work through the report in detail and draw up a Ministry response that focuses on practical actions
- Circulate the report internally as widely as possible. Include a circulation list that targets key players in other ministries
- Run at least one information day internally with other ministries in order to gauge feedback and reactions

- Publicize the report in appropriate ways (printed copies, on website, via presentations to arts groups and relevant bodies). Stimulate discussion around the issues
- Identify information gaps as highlighted in the report and plan for updates. For example, it is important to run a detailed sectoral overview of the audio-visual area similar to that carried out for the book sector and also under the aegis of the Council of Europe
- Prioritise which aspects of the experts' report require implementation. Draw up a limited and time-specific action plan around the main recommendations, as adapted by and developed by the discussion process. If something is impossible state why.
- Write a new mission statement for the Ministry of Culture and promote this as a template and approach for other cultural state bodies (at regional and local level) and national institutions. For example, state and clarify a new cultural policy framework for the Ministry that places strategy and aspirations at the heart of the policy process rather than operational requirements and financial needs.
- Create a trouble-shooter team within the Ministry to respond to practical issues from arts organisations on the ground and throughout the regions.
- Examine how information and communication exchange could be improved at the ministerial and public level. For example, develop and fund a regular email service between the Ministry and regional cultural offices.
- Explore setting up a task force on culture to bring together the principal government and non-government agencies to promote a detailed agenda for the development of the cultural sector in Georgia.
- Provide for culture and the impact on culture to be considered in all legislative acts along the lines currently adopted by Article 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community which stipulates that "the Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under the proviso of this treaty, in particular to respect and promote the diversity of its cultures". Explore the possibility of a similar declaration of principle at ministerial level
- Set up a small fund or support service for networks (offering venues to meet, secretarial support or advice) to encourage the development of sectoral and intersectoral partnerships
- Run a skills audit and tie this to the feasibility of developing skills training in specific sectors. For example, run a series of sponsorship and fundraising seminars, using international skills sets focusing on project development, general fundraising techniques and professional business skill sets. Extend this to other priority areas (marketing, project planning, IT).
- Draw up a needs audit for international funding of projects. Set up a 'Partnership Opportunity' page on the Ministry web site to promote this to international funders and multilateral bodies
- Extend prizes (or more importantly recognition which may be non-financial) to less traditional areas of creativity such as design, graphics, fashion or architecture
- Commission and write an annual overview of the cultural sector as background to deliberation and policy-making in other government departments

6. (xxvi) Postscript

"Les choses ne sont pas difficile à faire; ce qui est difficile, c'est de nous mettre en état de les faire"

Brancusi

The above quote, our postscript, is not intended to minimise the challenges that face Georgia. The entire aim and intention of our report is to encourage a new view, if you like a repositioning and a reconnection of the cultural policy debate with wider issues in Georgian society. The Expert Group do not of course believe that this "rethink" is the *only* issue for Georgia's culture. We witnessed a great deal of exciting, aesthetically satisfying and emotionally engaging arts and culture in our visits. Georgia has an important and distinct arts offer for the world and we hope that mechanisms will be found to support it and make it available ever more widely to Georgian and international audiences.

We believe, however, that even the "art for art's sake" can only benefit by the cultural process moving further up the political and economic agenda. To do so, art and heritage have to become one of the tools for the step-by-step realisation of the reconstruction of post-Soviet Georgia in the 21st century. We believe that this is possible given energy, commitment, rational planning and above all communication and the interchange of ideas. This last point has not come out as strongly in the report as we would like it to and perhaps we should end on it. In real life there is no single solution, no final result, there can only be a series of improvements, changes, adaptations and resolutions to the on-going issue of how culture is organised, with what means and for what ends.

This is the condition of modernity – change, flux, adaptation and contingent answers. This is not a bad thing, it can be liberating and energising. We need to be flexible and also to borrow; reshape and re-apply the lessons learnt elsewhere while keeping a close eye on what is distinctive in our own environment. Given the kinds of challenge that confront numerous states in the world today, for states which are making painful transitions, culture can seem to be a diversion from the real problems of infrastructure, of economics, of community and of identity. This is a false perception. Culture is a central language to approach, understand and solve these key issues. In Zygmunt Bauman's "Liquid Modernity" he states that "*The job with which humans are charged today remains much the same as it has been since the beginning of modern times: the self-constitution of the individual and the weaving as well as the servicing of the network of bonds with other self-constituting individuals".[35]*

Culture is central to this and can help us to know who we are as individuals and to build bonds with our fellow citizens. Cultural policy and the cultural sector have a key and multifaceted role to play at many levels in the building of Georgia's future.

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[35] Liquid Modernity: Zygmunt Baumann ISBN 0745624103 Polity Press reprint 2001

7. APPENDICES

7 (i) Summary of key recommendations

- Redefine and reposition culture in Georgia

- Redefine the role of the Ministry of Culture and reposition the Ministry

- Introduce Mission Statements

- Identify a limited number of broadly agreed priorities

- Run a 'needs audit' for priority projects requiring international funding

- Introduce the concept, and create a climate, to enable task force working –
  as a first step to setting up a national task force for culture

- Explore the possibility of creating a 'compact' between the state and the cultural Sector

- Introduce, at all levels and for all types of cultural organisation, the 'stakeholder' principle and approach to communication and accountability

- Clarify and draw up at Ministry level a new cultural policy framework

- Promote by all means possible (financial, training, partnership working) modern professional networks as interlocutors of the state and the individual

- Recognise less traditional areas of creativity

- Produce an annual overview of the cultural sector

- Identify and exploit champions for culture

- Identify and promote demonstration projects and 'success stories'

- Develop a favorable climate for mixed funding possibilities (public-private and public-public)

- Promote good practice, introduce training and reward or give recognition to modern, efficient management

- Experiment with new organisational forms

- Commission public opinion/social survey research on cultural participation trends and related areas

- Launch, pursue and learn from a 'National Debate' based around the Ministry's report and the Experts' response

- Be courageous with the issue of national heritage – look for new solutions and not just old answers

- Recognise the barriers to change are psychological and involve people, not just practical issues

7 (ii)   Select Bibliography

Laws consulted:

- Draft law on export and import of cultural property
- Law of Georgia on cultural heritage preservation
- Law of Georgia on archaeology
- Georgian law on urban planning
- Georgian law on Sponsorship and charity in the sphere of culture
- Georgian Church-state concordat
- Fund for the Preservation of Cultural heritage of Georgia

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