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NATIONAL CULTURAL POLICY IN MALTA

**Report of a European group of experts by Anthony Everitt
(September 2002)**

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The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily engage the responsibility of the Council of Europe.

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Preface

The task of reviewing Malta's cultural policy as part of the Council of Europe's series of National Cultural Policy Reviews has been a rewarding experience, both enjoyable and instructive. As is so often the case in a country abundant in heritage and contemporary culture, the multinational delegation of experts learned as much as they hope they are able to impart.

Our visit took place in June 2002, at an important juncture in Malta's cultural development. Recent years have seen numerous initiatives in the cultural sector, often accompanied by the formation of new institutions. Important legislation in the fields of the arts and heritage has recently been approved and is on the point of implementation. Plans are afoot to market the island as a cultural destination to complement its existing offer of 'sun, sea and sand'. A National Development Plan is in preparation. Finally, overhanging everything is a great debate as to whether or not Malta should join the European Union.

Our task was greatly assisted by the discussion document issued by the Ministry of Education, *Cultural Policy in Malta*, a clear and comprehensive account of the cultural scene. During our stay we met nearly fifty Maltese cultural practitioners and experts who gave us many candid and authoritative insights into the current situation and suggestions as to the way forward.

We are deeply indebted to Hon. Dr. Louis Galea, Minister of Education, for setting aside time to meet the delegation for a valuable exchange of views.

We are most grateful to everyone at the Ministry of Education for the painstaking trouble they took to make our stay comfortable and smooth-running – and, most particularly Dr Paul Mifsud, Co-ordinator of the Ministry's Policy Unit, and Mario Azzopardi, Research Consultant and Animator at the Ministry.

There are, of course, limits to what can be learned during a brief stay, but we hope that our report will be useful to all concerned with Maltese cultural policy and make a constructive contribution to its continuing development.

It is important to emphasise that, unlike some of its predecessors, this report does not purport to offer a complete description of Maltese cultural policy. That task has already been accomplished by the national report. Rather, we have sought to focus on the key strategic issues which we believe should be addressed in the coming years.

The views we express are, of course, ours alone and should not be attributed to any of those who gave evidence to us.

Pirkko Rainesalo
Chair,
European group of experts

Executive Summary

Culture and the Council of Europe

The Council of Europe understands culture to signify, first, a society's values and the institutions through which it expresses them and, secondly, all kinds of creative production. The National Cultural Policy Review of Malta focuses, although not exclusively, on the second definition, which includes the arts as traditionally defined, the built heritage, museums, libraries and archives. It recognises that cultural policy in many European countries is informed by four principles: the expression of identity, the promotion of diversity, the encouragement of participation and the cultivation of creativity – and seeks to measure Malta's cultural aspirations against them.

Analysis of Maltese Culture

Attendance at cultural events or activities in Malta is comparatively low. A key policy objective should be to increase access to the arts, heritage, libraries and archives by

- encouraging participation in creative activity
- ensuring cultural sustainability
- investing in culture.

Cultural development in Malta will require substantial additional financial investment.

The reform of the school curriculum will lead to greater promotion of creativity in schools and is a welcome development. A cultural policy for young people should be established covering formal education and the youth service.

Much of Malta's built and natural heritage is ruinous and needs restoration. There should be increased training in management and marketing for heritage administrators. An integrated heritage policy should be established, which encourages private owners and the Church to agree a common approach with the state. Some of the large stock of unused and dilapidated buildings in Malta should be adapted to new, contemporary purposes.

Malta's intention to develop cultural tourism should stimulate economic growth while at the same time enhancing the island's cultural facilities. However, further market research may be desirable and care should be taken to strike a careful balance between visitors' needs and the imperatives of conservation.

Greater investment in Malta's Libraries and Archives, both for capital purposes and the purchase of books, is necessary. A common approach to the conservation and development of archival holdings should be agreed by the Church and the state. The network of public libraries should be developed as local access points to cultural and public information and services through the installation of ICT facilities.

Carnival should be re-invigorated, in part through greater expressive freedom and the festas would benefit from a greater artistic input than at present.

A package of measures will be required to foster the individual artist, including international promotion, improved professional development, provision of rehearsal spaces and artists' studios, grants to artists, support for new writing (especially in Maltese), for book publishing and for the development of crafts. There should be more effective social protection for artists, and copyright observance and collection should be improved.

Consideration should be given to the institutional development of the performing arts. A fund should be established to support drama and dance of a more ambitious nature than at present. In time, this could lead to the creation of a national theatre company. Training in management and marketing for arts administrators should be prioritised.

There are gaps in the built infrastructure for the arts and an audit should be conducted to form the basis for a capital development strategy.

Greater attention should be paid to the development of the creative industries.

Consideration should be given to determining those areas of Maltese life where the language used should be Maltese; to promoting Maltese in schools and to encouraging new writing in Maltese.

A range of cultural measures should be taken to support Maltese populations in other countries.

The quality of local broadcasting and audiovisual production should be enhanced and participation by citizens in media activity encouraged. The Government should maintain its policy of creating a favourable financial and fiscal environment for international film producers.

From Policy to Implementation

Consideration should be given to the role of the private sector in support of cultural development and to the desirability of special hypothecated taxes, the proceeds of which would be expended on culture. Use should be made of the European Union's structural funds.

The new institutional arrangements for the management of the heritage, as determined by the Cultural Heritage Act, 2002, could provide an example of good practice for other European countries. The new Malta Council for Culture and the Arts should be empowered to act independently of Government and should make use of peer advice when making artistic decisions.

Local Councils have an important role to play in the cultural field; but the devolution to them of relevant powers and duties should be implemented gradually.

Malta's national cultural policy, once approved, should be translated into arts and heritage development strategies, with clearly identified priorities, targets and expected outcomes. These should be accompanied by robust evaluation methodologies which would enable the Councils to demonstrate the extent to which they have realised their aims.

A INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the Council of Europe's cultural policy and its National Cultural Policy programme.

A 1 National Cultural Policy Reviews

1.1 Initiated in 1986, the National Cultural Policy Reviews are one of the Council of Europe's flagship programmes. Their object is to assess, on request, a member State's cultural policies. It not only benefits the country studied, but also enhances European cultural co-operation, the wider understanding of different European realities and the elaboration of common cultural strategies.

1.2 The review process begins with a national report, drawn up by the authorities of the country under review. A group of examiners, appointed by the Council of Europe in consultation with the national authorities, examines this report, conducts one or more information-gathering visits to the country concerned and writes its own analysis. Their task is to offer a second opinion, seen from the outside, on the national cultural policy. They complement the national report by confirming or questioning statements, raising points that have not been addressed and making recommendations. They seek to help rather than to judge. The national report and the experts' accompanying analysis are then discussed at a meeting of the Culture Committee at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, and later in a public debate in the country concerned

1.3 Reviews have been carried out in: France (1988) Sweden (1989), Austria (1993), the Netherlands (1994), Finland (1994), Italy (1995), Estonia (1995), the Russian Federation (1996), Slovenia (1996), Bulgaria (1997), Lithuania (1997), Latvia (1988), Croatia (1998), Portugal (1998), Romania (1999), Albania (2000), Armenia (2001) and Moldova (2001).

1.4 Reviews are in progress in Andorra, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as well as in Malta. Two more countries have asked for a review of their cultural policy: Cyprus and Turkey.

1.5 The experts recruited to conduct the Malta review are Ms Pirkko Rainesalo, Counsellor for Cultural Affairs, Department for Cultural Sport and Youth Policy, Ministry of Education, Finland (chair); Professor Anthony Everitt, Nottingham Trent University, United Kingdom (rapporteur); Ms Carla Bodo, Vice-President, Associazione per l'Economia della Cultura, Italy; Professor Per Mangset, Telemark Research Institute, Norway; and Ms Delia Mucica, Director, Division of Harmonisation, Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs, Romania. Wolfdietrich Elbert, Head of the Council of Europe's Cultural Policy Division, acted as the group's secretary.

A 2 Culture and the Council of Europe

2.1 Culture is a word with more than one meaning. In its most extensive definition, it encompasses the totality of a community's learned experience – its conventions and values – economic, legal, political, religious, moral, familial, technological, scientific and aesthetic. According to UNESCO: 'culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features which characterise a society or social group. It includes ... modes of life, value systems, traditions and habits.'¹

2.2 In a second and more specific sense, culture embraces all kinds of creative production. It is what we do when we use our imaginations to celebrate, test, criticise or explore who we are and how we live or should live.

2.3 The Council of Europe's approach to culture embraces both these definitions, but this review will concentrate mainly on the latter. In practice, the range of activities under discussion include

- heritage and museums
- literature
- performing arts
- visual arts and crafts
- film and video
- architecture
- public libraries and archives
- education and lifelong learning

2.4 Alongside these traditional cultural forms, now largely supported by the public sector, lie the creative industries which, in many European countries, are an important engine of economic growth. They include

- advertising
- art and antiques
- book publishing
- computer games
- fashion
- industrial and graphic design
- journalism
- music publishing
- software design
- television and radio

2.5 The group of experts received little evidence about this latter class (indeed, we understand that little relevant statistical information exists) and its report does no more than touch on a few of the relevant areas (for example, television and radio). **It may be appropriate for the Maltese government to conduct an examination of the creative industries as a contributor to economic as well as cultural development.**

¹ Declaration of Mondiacult, UNESCO, Mexico City, 1982.

2.6 In recent years public authorities have come to place a growing value on culture, which they see not only as valuable in its own right, but as contributing to economic regeneration, community development, individual empowerment and the acquisition of life skills, and have developed far-reaching strategies with which to promote it.

2.7 In the Council of Europe's publication, *In from the Margins, A contribution to the debate on culture and development in Europe* (1997), four underlying principles are identified as underlying cultural policy in most European countries. These are the expression of **identity**, that sense of ourselves as members of often multiple communities, whether of place or of interest; the promotion of **diversity** in a world marked by globalisation and intercultural exchange; the encouragement of **participation** as a means of fostering individual empowerment and community development; and the cultivation of **creativity**, broadly defined as imaginative activity that produces original and valued outcomes not only in the arts but also in the sciences and technology.

2.8 The report that follows seeks to measure Malta's cultural aspirations against these principles.

B ANALYSIS OF MALTESE CULTURE

This chapter addresses the over-arching challenges which Malta's cultural policy should address across the complete range of cultural activity – the heritage and museums, libraries and archives, and the arts.

B 1 The Key Challenges

Malta

1.1 Malta, the largest of a group of six islands and islets, of which three are inhabited, is 122 square miles in area and lies in the Mediterranean Sea, 93 kilometres from Sicily and 288 kilometres from the coast of Africa. Between some time before 4000 BC and about 2000 BC, it was occupied by Stone Age farmers who left a legacy of fine megalithic structures. As a result of its strategic position, Malta has had a colourful and turbulent history and was held in turn by the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans and Arabs. In 1090, it was conquered by the Normans and in 1530 handed over to the Knights Hospitaller of St John, who successfully withstood a historic siege by the Turks. The Knights were expelled by Napoleon and Malta was annexed to the British Crown by the Treaty of Paris in 1814. The island sustained its second great siege, on this occasion by the Italians, during the Second World War. Malta became an independent state within the Commonwealth in 1964 and was declared a republic in 1974.

1.2 Malta has a population of 382,000. Its economy depends heavily on tourism and its traditional role as a trading entrepot. Manufacturing, which in 1994 employed 22% of the workforce, includes food processing, textiles, footwear and clothing, plastics and chemical products, electronic equipment, machinery and components. The political scene is dominated by two parties, the Malta Labour Party and the Nationalist Party. The Roman Catholic religion is endorsed constitutionally.

1.3 In 1990 Malta applied for membership of the European Community (now the European Union), but in 1996 the government announced its intention to withdraw Malta's application. After elections in 1998 a re-elected Nationalist Government re-opened negotiations for membership; the issue will be determined by a referendum.

Opening up culture to all.

1.4 Across Europe culture is only partially accessible to its peoples. By and large it is the better off and the better educated who participate in the arts as consumer or participant or actively experience their common past in museums, libraries and at heritage sites. In most countries, a prime object of public policy is to widen this engagement to all sections of society.

1.5 According to recent research published by the National Statistics Office, Malta, *Kultura 2000, a survey on cultural participation*, involvement in culture by Maltese citizens is as limited as elsewhere, if not more so. The survey did not measure the socio-economic status of respondents directly. However, it analysed the population according to educational

attainment and it is reasonable to assume a broad correlation between this and socio-economic status.

1.6 The proportion of the population attending a cultural event, institution or site is found to be low while attendance by those who have undertaken higher education is high. So, for example, 19% of the population attended one or more concerts during the reference year. While nearly 10% of those whose schooling ended after primary level and 22% after secondary level attended concerts, the proportion rises to 37% of those with a first degree and 45% of those awarded post-graduate honours.

1.7 Artistic events in general were attended by nearly 22% of the population and the weighting in favour of graduates is maintained with attendance by 43% of first degree-holders and 89% of post-graduate award-holders.

1.8 So far as the heritage is concerned, 30% of the population visited a museum or heritage site at least once during the reference year. The educational imbalance is similar to that found in the arts: of those whose education finished after secondary school, attendance stands at less than 30%, but at nearly 55% for those with first degrees and more than 90% for those with post-graduate awards.

1.9 These attendance figures are relatively low, as a comparison with the United Kingdom suggests. A survey conducted in 2001² reported that in the 12 months prior to interview 77% of respondents had attended or watched at least of a range of artistic and cultural events. 41% had attended a music event, 24% a visual arts exhibition and 22% a drama performance. Taking all types of event together the proportions attending at least one event in the last year ranged from 88% of the professional and intermediate groups to 61% of the partly skilled or unskilled manual group.

1.10 In the group of experts' opinion, a cultural policy that does not actively work to open the arts, heritage and libraries to all citizens will not only fail to attract popular support, but will miss the opportunity to maximise the benefits that culture can confer on a national community and the individuals it comprises.

1.11 It will take time and effort to make progress on this front and we strongly **recommend that a primary long-term objective of Maltese cultural policy be to increase access to the arts, heritage and libraries by citizens of all socio-economic groupings.**

1.12 This will be an arduous and long-term endeavour, for what is required entails not so much the provision of facilities and encouragement of creative endeavour, essential though that is, but a profound attitudinal shift among the public. There are three main ways by which the objective of increasing popular interest in and engagement with culture could be realised –

- **encouraging participation in creative activity**
- **ensuring cultural sustainability**
- **investing in culture**

² The survey was conducted by the Social Survey Division of the Office for National Statistics on the commission of the Arts Council of England.

Participation in creative activity

1.13 Participation by citizens as creative makers and doers is usually a noticeable feature of a thriving civil society. It is evident that Malta has a lively amateur or ‘voluntary’ performing arts scene (indeed some practitioners are only of an amateur status for want of paid professional opportunities), a subject that is discussed in **paragraphs B 6.1 ff** below. Carnival and the festas, although perhaps losing some of their traditional spontaneity (see **paragraphs B 5.1 ff** below), are remarkable cultural phenomena which foster the expression of local identities.

1.14 The *Kultura 2000* survey concentrates most of its attention on audiences, watchers, viewers and readers – in other words, on the consumption of the arts. Only one table reviews creative or artistic participation, but its findings show substantial public involvement in aesthetic practice. **Table 111** reports that 15% of the population practise ‘artistic activities’ (unfortunately, it is not made clear exactly what is covered by the term) in their leisure time: 8 % play a musical instrument, 8% dance (again it is not explained what the term includes), 2 % act, 7% sing, 7% write (presumably creative writing is intended here) and 38% take photos, make movies or videos. Apart from photography, no explicit reference is made to the visual arts and crafts, but it may be supposed that many people paint, draw, sculpt and make craft objects. Participation in the *festas* and Carnival is also not explicitly measured. It is suggested that **a more detailed survey be conducted of cultural participation by citizens as a basis for future policy in this field.**

1.15 The opportunity to play an active part in cultural life should not begin at the age of majority; it is a birthright to which every child is entitled. It is acknowledged that schools in many European countries place undue emphasis on academic learning at the expense of the creative intelligence. The knowledge and practice of the arts and engagement with the heritage foster a sense of identity. They not only enhance life skills, encourage problem-solving and lateral thinking and foster interaction with others, but they can also contribute to the teaching of non-arts disciplines in the curriculum. These claims have been backed by research; for example, a ground-breaking ten-year study (1987-1997), conducted by a team of anthropologists in the United States, has authoritatively demonstrated the special impact the arts can make on the development of young people.³ It found that creative engagement

³ Brice Heath, Shirley, and Soep, Elisabeth, *Youth Development and the Arts in Non-school Hours*, Grantmakers in the Arts, Vol. 9, No. 1, Spring 1998. 120 community-based organisations offering activities for young people outside school hours were surveyed. They clustered into three categories – athletic-academic, community service and arts-based.

Analysis showed that the arts-based organisations provided greater opportunities for risk-taking than those in the other categories, where activity tended to be more pre-arranged and predictable. ‘Heightened risk, dynamic rules and demands for identity characterise settings where the arts dominate.’ Creative engagement required ‘conjecture, debate, searches for information and critique.’ It promoted cognitive, linguistic, socio-relational and managerial capacities.

A selection of young people from the arts organisations in the study completed the National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS). It is important to note that they came from variously deprived backgrounds and environments and were not self-selectors. Their responses were compared with a national sampling of students who completed NELS and the outcomes reveal an emphasis among the participants on motivation, persistence, critical analysis and planning.

required ‘conjecture, debate, searches for information and critique’ and promoted cognitive, linguistic, socio-relational and managerial capacities.

1.16 The reform of Malta’s national curriculum is a major advance and, when fully implemented, promises to place creativity and cultural engagement at the heart of school life.

1.17 The importance of community arts is signalled in the national cultural policy report and it is encouraging to see that the new Malta Council for Culture and the Arts will be required to ‘encourage the exploration, development and expression of personal artistic potential and [to] promote participation, inclusiveness, equality and the freedom of artistic expression ...’.⁴ In many European countries artists work in community settings, often among people suffering from social exclusion and various forms of disadvantage, including older people and those with disabilities: arts programmes are delivered in prison, hospitals and other closed institutions. The object is to foster individual empowerment and community development through creative practice. The group of experts is aware of some high quality animation sessions of this kind in Malta, initiated by the Ministry of Education and involving animators from Europe and the United States, and argues that **there should be greater commitment to, and investment in, interactive community-based or outreach arts activity than there is at present by the Government and Local Councils.**

1.18 The island’s major state-funded arts and cultural institutions are a valuable resource not simply for their core activities, but for the help they can offer citizens to take part directly in creative and cultural activity. To fulfil their potential in this respect, they will need additional resources. **In return, it is recommended that, as a condition of grant-aid, they be required to engage in, or improve their provision of, educational and community-based outreach activity.**

Cultural sustainability and capacity-building

1.19 For all its wealth of talent and heritage, the Maltese cultural economy is under-performing. Creative artists find it difficult to make a living from their work. Few performers are engaged as paid professionals. Attendances at cultural events and sites are relatively low. Cultural organisations, both in the heritage and the arts, are often starved of funds, possess insufficient management expertise, and invest few human or financial resources in marketing and audience development. Outside Carnival and the *festas*, the participatory arts are undervalued and largely invisible.

Young people in arts programmes are

- 25% more likely to report feeling satisfied with themselves
- 31% more likely to say that they plan to continue education after high school
- eight times more likely to receive a community service award
- four and a half times more likely to win an award for writing an essay or poem
- three times more likely to win an award for school attendance
- twice as likely to participate in a science or math fair
- 23% more likely to say they can do things as well as most other people can
- 23% more likely to feel that they can make plans and successfully work from them

⁴ Malta Council for Culture and the Arts Act, 2002. Article 4 (2) (d) and (e).

1.20 Ways need to be considered of enhancing the sustainability of Maltese culture and of further professionalising artistic practice and presentation. With the exception of publishing, journalism and the audiovisual industries, the Maltese domestic market for the arts and creative industries is too small to sustain careers. The government should actively promote Maltese contemporary arts abroad, partly with a view to encouraging cultural tourism, but, more fundamentally, to enable Maltese artists to make a professional living from their work.

1.21 Sustainability would also be advanced by greater provision on the island of high quality training opportunities both for individual artists and arts and cultural managers in the artistic, technical and administrative fields. There is a particular need to improve the effectiveness of marketing and audience development.

1.22 More encouragement is required for the individual artist, whether as creator or interpreter. Improved social protection for Maltese artists should be introduced. Copyright regulations should be more effectively enforced. The legal and fiscal environment should be refined with a view to fostering the creative industries.

Financing Culture

1.23 The ferment of debate and activity in every corner of Malta's cultural scene is a sign of vigour and commitment. The island is on the verge of potentially important new advances in the heritage and the contemporary arts.

1.24 However, the group of experts is obliged to register the inescapable fact that **Malta's aspirations to cultural development will only be realised by substantially increased investment, especially by the public sector, both at national and local levels.** We discuss financial issues in **paragraphs C 1** below, but wish to make the point here that additional resources are unlikely to be forthcoming unless a powerful case is made, not only for the intrinsic value of cultural activity, but also the contribution it can make, if adequately funded, to the Government's wider social and economic priorities (including niche tourism).

1.25 The cultural situation in Malta and on the European mainland is evolving rapidly. New challenges and opportunities are likely to emerge and will need to be addressed. **The Ministry of Education should continue to monitor closely and publicise these developments both with a view to informing its own policies and to stimulating debate.**

1.26 The following chapters of this report will examine in more detail ways in which **cultural participation** and **cultural sustainability** can be extended and enhanced.

B 2 Education and young people

2.1 A National Curriculum for Malta, *Creating the Future Together*, was published in 1999 and one of its high-level objectives is ‘developing a sense of identity through creative expression.’⁵ The process of implementation is now under way, supervised by the National Steering Committee on the Implementation of the National Minimum Curriculum. The committee explicitly recognises the need to infuse school learning, at present over-academic and examination- and certificate-driven, with a more creative approach.

2.2 Creativity has recently been defined as ‘imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value.’⁶ It encompasses not only the creative arts, but the sciences and other fields of learning. As the proceedings of a conference on the National Curriculum notes: ‘Creativity can indeed be a focal point for the curriculum. It can be the soul in that family of bodies, called school subjects.’⁷

2.3 A Synergy Team has been created within the Division of Education to facilitate further creative initiatives at Primary School Level; its work has been restricted to the teaching of English through drama, music and art. The Policy Unit at the Ministry of Education has launched a strategy for inclusive creative action, focused on people suffering from cultural, social, physical or educational disadvantage (for example, children with learning difficulties, disabled people, refugees, women who are victims of violence and other excluded groups).

2.4 In a potentially important initiative the Ministry has started a scheme to employ Activity Teachers, working both within and outside school hours, with the aim of stimulating creativity and informal learning and of transforming schools into pro-active community centres.

2.5 **The group of experts warmly welcomes these developments and supports the proposal that an action plan be produced ‘for the promotion of creativity at school, class and education system levels, as well as evaluation instruments.’**⁸ This would be an important and constructive refinement of the National Curriculum document itself, where the objective of enhancing creative expression is rather narrowly interpreted in practice as enabling students to ‘acquire knowledge and information’ without reference to helping them also to develop their own creative skills.

2.6 In addition to the provision of appropriate arts facilities in schools, **the group of experts advises the comprehensive development of specialist arts training for teachers, both in higher education and through in-service short courses. We counsel a well-structured relationship between the education sector and Malta’s arts community and the further development of artists in residence schemes, designed to contribute explicitly to course-work in the class-room (supported by appropriate training for artists).**

⁵ *Creating the Future Together, National Minimum Curriculum*, Ministry of Education, Malta, 1999. p 50

⁶ *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*, National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, Department for Education and Employment, 1999. p 29.

⁷ Giordmaina, Joseph (ed.), *Proceedings, National Curriculum on its way, A conference on the Implementation of the National Curriculum Malta 9-11 June 2000*, Ministry of Education and Faculty of Education, University of Malta. p164

⁸ *Ibid.* p 163

Likewise institutions in the heritage and museums sector (for example, the National Museum of Fine Arts) should also develop interactive educational programmes. **The commissioning and wide dissemination of appropriate teaching materials would help to ensure early progress in fostering the creative ‘culture’ of schools.**

2.7 Education does not only take place in the class room. The National Youth Policy, under the auspices of the Department of Youth and Sport, encourages young people to engage with the heritage and creative activity in the various art forms. Also the Education Division has initiated a summer school programme which offers schoolchildren heritage education at historic sites.

2.8 The group of experts was pleased to hear of these measures, but would argue for a more holistic approach. **We recommend that, within the Ministry of Education, the Department of Youth and Sport work with the Department of Education and the Ministry’s Policy Unit to prepare a comprehensive youth cultural policy which would ensure consistency between what takes place in place in school and what outside it.**

2.9 It would be wrong simply to concentrate on the heritage and the arts as traditionally defined; as well as being offered access to the wealth of European and Maltese culture, young people should be encouraged to express themselves in their own way through media with which they are at ease. **A youth cultural policy should not only address the heritage and the arts as traditionally defined, but also popular forms, especially music, in which young people have a special interest.**

B 3 Cultural heritage

Towards an Integrated Strategy

3.1 Malta has an unparalleled treasury of built monuments, artefacts and archives, which bear witness to a long, culturally rich past. They range from megalithic temples and the fortifications of the Knights of St John to the labyrinth of tunnels which served as sanctuary for the Maltese people during the Second World War. This legacy from history is, first and foremost, an essential component of Maltese identity, which has an intrinsic value, both for the present generation and for posterity. Its protection and exploitation must go hand in hand with a sustained effort to raise the Maltese people's consciousness of its exceptional value.

3.2 This inheritance is so copious that it presents the island with a heavy burden of expense for its maintenance and conservation. The recent passage of the Cultural Heritage Act, the terms of which are discussed in **paragraphs C 2.1 ff** below, has opened a new hopeful chapter in the history of the island's patrimony.

3.3 A number of issues arise. The first concerns resources, both human and financial. Despite the excellent conservation and refurbishment of some important sites and buildings (for example, the Hypogeum), even a short visit to Malta reveals how much remains to be done. Many structures are in a poor state of repair. Substantial investment in restoration is required in the context of a well-grounded vision for the future exploitation of the heritage: more trained staff will be needed, not only as curators and archaeologists, but also as managers, interpreters and market developers.

3.4 Archaeology courses are run by the University of Malta and conservation studies are the responsibility of the Malta Centre for Restoration's research arm, the Institute for Conservation and Restoration Studies, which offers degree courses as well as, for heritage craftsmen, Certificate and Diploma study programmes. However, the quality of management and marketing in the heritage and museums sector is reportedly uneven – a problem that professional development can help to address. The challenge is similar in kind to that faced by the arts community. It is understood that consideration is being given to providing one-year part-time training programmes for existing heritage and museums staff. Attempts have been made to recruit the Malta Tourism Authority as an effective partner in organizing cultural management and site programmes, but financial constraints have prevented their materialisation. **The group of experts recommends that Heritage Malta and the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts agree and implement a joint strategy for training in management and marketing. A comprehensive (and perhaps compulsory) range of short courses should be developed and vigorously marketed to workers in the cultural sector. We further suggest that the University of Malta consider establishing a degree course in cultural administration (perhaps, in the first instance, in association with a European University with experience of the field).** (This recommendation is repeated in **paragraph B 7.11** below).

3.5 Professional development in colleges and universities should rest on a sound grounding in Malta's heritage at secondary school level. Until these matters are comprehensively addressed, the comparatively low awareness among Maltese citizens of the island's past (as evidenced by the attendance levels at museums, heritage sites and monuments reported in *Kultura 2000*) will not be raised and Malta's potential as a cultural destination (see **paragraphs B 3.14 ff** below) will be difficult to realise.

3.6 The Cultural Heritage Act envisages some future delegation of responsibilities to Local Councils and it will be essential to ensure that their officials too are equipped with the necessary expertise to administer new heritage responsibilities.

3.7 Secondly, the legislation does not squarely address a certain institutional fragmentation. While the state is responsible for most of the island's heritage, there is a substantial, not fully exploited private sector. Owners of the island's fine stock of private houses and collections are sometimes reluctant to make them available to the public, partly from lack of financial resources and partly because of fears of government intervention. They are worried by the prospect of a compulsory national register or inventory, as set out in the Cultural Heritage Act, 2002, Part III, 7 (5) (a). In sum, they neither have the money to invest in conservation nor the incentive to open their doors to the public.

3.8 The ecclesiastical patrimony is extensive, including the great majority of the island's churches (St John's Cathedral in Valletta is jointly owned by the Church and the state), many works of art and extensive archives. The Church is hard-pressed to find the resources necessary for conservation and maintenance. Security is another expensive problem, especially in small chapels. Also, the Church has an understandable instinct to maintain its independence *vis-à-vis* the secular power.

3.9 While being sensible of the difficulties, the group of experts believes it important the Malta's heritage policy offers a comprehensive overview of its heritage. **We recommend that the Government agree a common approach with the Church and private owners** (so far as the former is concerned, the Cultural Heritage Act, 2002, envisages an agreement at some time in the future between the competent civil and ecclesiastical authorities and gives the Minister of Education limited authority to regulate the powers and duties of the Catholic Cultural Heritage Commission after full consultation with the Malta Episcopal Conference or with the relevant religious authorities). It will be necessary to tread cautiously, with due regard to fears of a possible loss of autonomy. However, without an integrated strategy it is only too possible that some of the island's treasures will both deteriorate and remain inaccessible to its citizens.

3.10 There are many old buildings in Malta, often of considerable architectural distinction, which are dilapidated and unoccupied. A case in point is Strait Street in Valletta, formally a red light district and full of music halls that are now completely deserted. The group of experts was surprised to learn that 24% of the island's buildings are empty and unused. One of the reasons for this state of affairs appears to be the Rent Act of 1938, which fixed rents at levels set at the time of its enactment, with the result that owners are reluctant to let their properties. It falls well outside the remit of the group of experts to recommend that the Act be repealed or amended. However, experience in other European countries (for example, the rehabilitation of Bologna's historic inner city district as part of a low rent programme and the Spanish *paradors*, heritage buildings used as state-run hotels) shows the cultural, economic and social benefits of 'animating' heritage structures (apart from those of the first grade of importance) by adapting them to new, contemporary purposes – whether domestic or commercial.

3.11 Such buildings are often particularly suited for small businesses, especially in the creative industries. It has even proved possible by this means to establish 'cultural quarters', which bring together artists, craftspeople and those working in the new technologies (the

Temple Bar area in Dublin is a fine instance of the transformation a dilapidated down-town area into a thriving community of arts and crafts organisations and restaurants).

3.12 We recommend that the government consider means of offering incentives to owners and appropriate enterprises which would encourage the refurbishment and animation of old buildings.

3.13 The group of experts was worried by reports of new capital developments that would be out of keeping with highlights of the Maltese heritage context. Unsympathetically imposed modernity would subvert the state's efforts to restore Malta's architectural and natural past and very probably deter visitors, few of whom come to the island to admire its shopping malls or tower blocks. **Planning legislation aimed at the preservation not only of the built heritage, but also of the and natural environmental context and skyline should be rigorously enforced.**

3.14 As already noted, the *Kultura 2000* survey reveals a comparatively low attendance at heritage sites and museums. This supports the widespread view put to the group of experts that Maltese citizens are insufficiently aware of their cultural heritage. The Ministry of Education has recognised the problem and in 2001 launched heritage animation and eco-tourism programmes for schools. In addition, as well improving their educational, marketing and audience development programmes, **the major museums should be encouraged to develop small touring exhibitions and interactive outreach and educational programmes**, allowing the media full coverage of such events.

Cultural Tourism

3.15 The Malta Tourism Authority wishes to extend the island's appeal as a tourism destination. Many of the 1.2 million visitors to the island in 2000 came on package tours with a basic expectation of 'sun, sea and sand'. However, about 70% engaged in some form of cultural activity during their stays, by visiting heritage sites, churches and museums or attending artistic events. The Authority seeks to attract tourists with cultural interests during off-season periods and organises a variety of festivals and other performance attractions with this in mind.

3.16 Much thought is now going into a re-alignment of Malta's image with particular reference to its potential appeal as a cultural and, in the case of the island of Gozo, as an eco-destination. Two key cultural themes have been selected – the Knights of Malta, and Malta as an archaeological site – accompanied by a subsidiary prioritisation of traditional events, in particular Carnival, Holy Week and the *festas*.

3.17 The group of experts believes that the encouragement of cultural tourism would not only contribute to economic growth, but to the enhancement of the island's cultural facilities, which would be to the direct benefit of citizens, including the country's artists, as well as of foreign visitors. In addition, we feel that increasing and developing the quality of cultural supply for existing tourists would have positive effects. However, we would advise caution in two respects. First, we are not persuaded that sufficient research has been conducted into the size of the cultural tourism market. Cultural tourism as a prime motive for visiting the island is likely to appeal mainly to a relatively small but affluent segment of the market, whose members are likely to travel as individuals or in small specialist tours. It is a

segment for which there is sharp competition among tourism providers. **We recommend further research into this issue before a major commitment is made,**

3.18 Secondly, the development of public access to the built heritage and archaeological sites brings with it risks of physical and environmental degradation. **A careful balance will need to be struck (as in the case of the Hypogeum) between the needs of visitors and the imperatives of conservation.**⁹

⁹ Guidelines drawn up by ICOM and ICOMOS as well as broad principles in the Valetta and Granada Conventions may be useful here.

B 4 Libraries and Archives

4.1 The National Library of Malta is the island's central reference library and the National Archives of Malta is the repository of the nation's state and public documents, including the very fine collection of the Order of St John. In 1997 a government-sponsored review identified 'chronic weaknesses' in these institutions – a lack of trained, professional staff and underfunding.

4.2 The training issue has been taken in hand. The University of Malta, which started up a course for librarians in 1992, has awarded two-year part-time diplomas to about 150 people. It plans to up-grade the course to degree level from 2003. However, the university runs no archives courses and **it is recommended that it establishes a diploma course for archivists.**

4.3 Financial resources remain a problem. The National Library needs to improve its service to the public and both it and the National Archives suffer from too little space. As noted in *Cultural Policy in Malta* the Ministry of Education intends to provide a central building to accommodate the two institutions. Controlled humidity and temperature conditions should be installed. It would be timely for the most important documents to be digitised to facilitate scholarly use (plans for this are already in place) and for the number of documents available on microfilm to be substantially increased.

4.4 An adequate purchasing budget would help to ensure that gaps in the collections are filled and that books and documents relevant to Malta can be purchased as and when they come up for sale. Additional funding will also be necessary to enable the National Archives to collect material in electronic formats. It may be appropriate to consider the creation of an audiovisual and cinema archive. A comprehensive and integrated approach to the collection of archives relating to the performing arts in Malta should be adopted. These needs should be taken into account during the planning of the new central archive and library. The group of experts welcomes the proposal in *Cultural Policy in Malta* for a National Archives and Records Act which would address the archival situation in Malta.

4.5 The Church has its own substantial archives and also faces financial constraints. As we argued in the case of the heritage (see **paragraph B 3.9** above), **it would be helpful if a common policy approach could be agreed between it and the state regarding the future conservation and development of Malta's overall archival holdings.**

4.6 So far as public lending libraries are concerned, there are eight Regional Libraries and 26 smaller branch libraries, jointly managed by their respective Local Councils and the National Library of Malta. There is an on-line public catalogue. Only about one tenth of the population are members of their public libraries. Little money is available for book purchases – the group of experts was told that the average figure was a paltry 80 liri *per annum*. Ten Local Councils are without any libraries in their areas. The most popular books are all by English or American authors – with Agatha Christie heading the list.

4.7 The group of experts believes that an opportunity is being lost. A network of public libraries brings an invaluable cultural resource within a mile or two of every citizen. Experience in other European countries shows that, as well as lending books, they can be 'one-stop' shops both for local and national cultural information (in other words, a useful marketing tool) and indeed for public services as a whole. For their potential to be realised, it

will be necessary to introduce fully wired-up access to the Internet (or at least to local intranets), which would offer easy access to the full range of services provided by government departments and Local Councils.

4.8 It seems a waste of public resources to maintain Malta's public libraries in their present impoverished and under-used condition. In our view, **a medium-term development strategy is required which would up-grade Malta's public libraries by installing new information technologies, increasing book purchases and enabling them to operate as local access points to cultural and public information and services.** Such new facilities should be available not only to signed-up library members, but to all citizens on request.

B 5 Traditional Popular Celebration

5.1 There are two kinds of carnival in Malta, those which are large, carefully planned and structured, and strictly regulated – as in Valletta (Malta) and Rabat (Gozo); and a few more spontaneous village celebrations – for example, in Ghaxaq (Malta) and Nadur (Gozo).

5.2 We received evidence that these annual celebrations are facing difficulties. In the first category, Carnival floats have become larger, more elaborate and ambitiously constructed, with the result that the role of improvising participants has declined. In the Valletta Carnival, for example, the floats take up more space in the streets than previously at the expense of the crowd and there is less room for revellers on the floats themselves. Also, it is alleged that official interference at governmental and local council levels has institutionalised what used to be a popular and uncensored public ritual. One of the traditional features of Carnival used to be political satire and the lampooning of public figures: this has now largely disappeared under the weight of official disapproval and from fear of controversy in an island where a keen, two-party political system prevails. Nevertheless, the Nadur Carnival in Gozo has recently introduced political themes, some of which draw on international affairs.

5.3 Small village carnivals have become events of interest to local and foreign anthropologists as well as to researchers interested in street theatre. Care should be taken to ensure that such ‘intrusions’ do not compromise the spontaneous character of such revelry.

5.4 These trends have been accompanied by an alleged decline in popular involvement, although it is estimated that about 50% of the population still takes part and many enthusiasts design and make costumes, masks and decorations.

5.5 The Government is aware of the need to re-invigorate Carnival and wishes to revive the traditional format of Carnival during the 18th and 19th centuries. It is possible that the ban on political satire will be rescinded. The Carnival Committee, responsible for the organisation of the festivities, was reconstituted in 2001 as the National Commission for Folklore, with terms of reference that empower it to revive the traditional features of Carnival and to work towards the creation of a research-based Institute of Maltese Folklore.

5.6 A ‘Carnival Village’ is to be established with eighteen workshops, a museum and retail outlets. The aim will be to foster higher artistic standards so far as the floats and costumes are concerned, to encourage more people (especially the young) to become actively involved in Carnival preparations and to market Carnival as a winter tourist attraction.

5.7 The Government has also re-structured the midsummer celebrations of *luminaria*, which features a popular form of traditional music, *ghana*.

5.8 The group of experts welcomes these developments, but advises the application of a light touch by the authorities when implementing reform. As *Cultural Policy in Malta* observes, ‘the physical excess of Carnival is actually supposed to “offend” the established order’; there is a potential contradiction in the established order seeking to inculcate freedom and spontaneity. The whole point of licence is that it be unlicensed.

5.9 We would also argue against any temptation to impose historical accuracy on Carnival. That is to say, new artistic and social developments (even reflecting influences from

abroad) are not necessarily to be condemned. If Carnival is to remain a living tradition, it will naturally reflect contemporary themes and issues.

5.10 Malta's popular culture is also distinguished by its annual *festas*. These are, in the first instance, religious celebrations under the Church's patronage. Their ritual aspect, however, is sometimes in uneasy relation to their 'ludic' qualities. Popular revelry is characterised, and on occasion marred, by intense rivalry between competing band clubs, representing different quarters of a town or village. That said, it is widely recognised that at their best *festas* can make a valuable contribution to community solidarity.

5.11 In the past the police has sought to curb some of the excesses of *festas* and the Church is increasingly worried by what it sees as their growing secularisation. Thus, in 2000, the Church issued a Circular denouncing discos associated with the feast of the patron saint of a town or village and declared that it 'cannot accept activities which experience has shown to be encouraging irresponsible and even immoral behaviour.'

5.12 The group of experts was fortunate to attend an evening *festa* during its visit to Malta and was much impressed by the liveliness of the event, the splendour of the decorations in the church and on the streets and the good standard of the band music. We were struck by the substantial and (it appears) rising scale of the local community's financial as well as cultural commitment¹⁰. **We hope that, while any necessary steps should be taken to control public disorder, the *festas* are maintained without bowdlerizing their popular, if at times rough, energy.**

5.13 We suggest that consideration be given to measures that would channel popular energies into further improving the already high artistic quality of the celebrations. As in the case of Carnival, there may be some **advantage in introducing artists and animators to work with the local organisers on enhancing the imaginative content of *festas* and broadening their creative scope.** It may be helpful to encourage the band clubs to seek to improve their musical standards. At present they train their own musicians. **We recommend the further development of international exchange and such initiatives as masterclasses run by professional band conductors; the encouragement of band clubs to commission new music; and the provision of training opportunities for band club members by the School of Music.**

¹⁰ According to the National Statistics Office (Press Release 82/2002), parish expenditure on *festas* rose to LM 593,091 in 2001, as compared with LM 574,641. It may be that expenditure incurred by local band clubs, fireworks factories and other local organizations are also rising.

B 6 Contemporary Creativity

6.1 The challenge facing Maltese culture does not lie in the absence of a vibrant artistic life. Quite the reverse; much excellent creative work is produced in all the art forms. The difficulty lies in the fact that Malta's population is too small to sustain a community of artists able to make a living from their practice without public subsidies.

6.2 The central question is whether it would be possible fully to professionalise Malta's contemporary arts. There is no simple or single answer. This is partly because the situation differs in the various art forms. Music, for example, is better funded than drama or dance; the members of the National Orchestra earn full-time salaries (and there is a commercial music industry), whereas there are no full-time paid actors or ballet/contemporary dancers.

6.3 Progress towards professionalisation could be made, if number of issues were to be addressed in a comprehensive and coherent package of measures. First, the example of other small countries such as Iceland, strongly suggests that, where a government invests in the promotion of its artists abroad, an international market can be created that will help them to establish a reputation, develop a career and provide a living by complementing their domestic activities with foreign engagements or commissions. This is evidently easier to accomplish in those art forms where language is not the primary medium of expression – music, dance and the visual arts. So far as drama and literature are concerned an emphasis would need to be placed on translation programmes and the export of educational drama, for which Malta has significant achievements to its credit. It may be objected that artists who study (see **paragraph 6.7**) or work abroad may not return to Malta, but experience elsewhere in Europe suggests that this is not necessarily the case where the state ensures a reliable supply of domestic work opportunities through its cultural programmes.

6.4 There are various administrative mechanisms through which the Government could operate an international cultural policy: the responsibility could be entrusted a) to a Government department – for example, the Department of Foreign Affairs; b) to a sub-committee within the new Council for Culture and the Arts; and c) **to a new pro-active agency specially designed for the purpose. Because promotion calls for enterprise and specialist commercial or quasi-commercial skills, we recommend option c).**

6.5 The second component of a policy package for artists in Malta concerns professional development. Across the art forms, full-time professional vocational training at the highest level does not exist in Malta. There is a wide range of often good-quality existing provision, including 24 private registered dance schools, a College of Jazz Dance, the Johann Strauss School of Music, the privately-run Euro Institute of Music and Arts and five private drama schools. The Theatre and Music Programmes at the University of Malta provide important educational opportunities, but it is understood that their courses focus on history and critical analysis rather than the development of practical expressive skills. There are no professional training courses for stage and lighting and stage management. A Centre for Orchestral Studies for in-career orchestral musicians has been proposed. However, there is no degree-awarding drama and dance academy, nor a music conservatoire.

6.6 **A proposal to create an Academy for the Performing Arts has fallen into abeyance and the group of experts agrees with *Cultural Policy in Malta* that it should be re-considered.** However, it may be wise to hasten slowly. This is because in most countries

there is a structural surplus of recruits to the artistic professions. It is characteristic of the arts that ‘many are called, but few are chosen’. It is a democratic virtue for a society to allow as many youngsters as possible to test their artistic potential. However, if Malta establishes and expands professional arts education, there is a risk that an oversupply of entrants to these professions will follow (although employment opportunities may increase if cultural institutions and Local Councils offer more education and outreach programmes and if a greater input by artists into Carnival and *festas* is encouraged). As elsewhere, some graduates will not find any employment in their art form; others will have to combine artistic practice with other kinds of work (whether arts-related or not). It will be necessary to train potential artists in Malta to cope with a situation where they have to combine different jobs/income sources.

6.7 Our view, then, is that the establishment of an Academy should be a medium- to long-term aim, to be implemented once the professionalisation of Malta’s arts has progressed to a more advanced stage and it is possible to estimate accurately the likely level of need for trained artists. In the event, it may turn out to be more appropriate to ‘up-grade’ some of the existing arts training establishments. For the immediate future, **we recommend that** the present limited and *ad hoc* funding opportunities for arts students wishing to train abroad be regularised and extended (the example of Iceland in this regard would repay study) and that **the Ministry of Education establish and administer a well-resourced scholarship fund for talented young people to study their art form abroad.**

6.8 The Malta School of Art delivers a four-year Certificate course; it has been suggested that it merge with the Arts and Design Centre in Valletta, which has itself been absorbed by the newly established Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology. **The group of experts** is not in a position to comment on the detail of these proposals, but, by one institutional means or another, it **recommends that existing provision be up-graded to, or complemented by, degree level training in the visual arts.**

6.9 Thirdly, arts development in Malta has been impeded by the lack of affordable, properly equipped rehearsal spaces (although it is good to learn that the Manoel Theatre will be building some) and, for visual artists, studios and installation spaces where new technological tools and audio-visual techniques can be deployed. **One way forward would be through the implementation of our recommendation above (see paragraph B 3.10 and 3.11) concerning the refurbishment and animation of unused heritage buildings.**

6.10 Fourthly, it will be necessary to find ways of promoting high quality artistic production. **The group of experts advises the Ministry of Education to require the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts to develop a system of individual grants to artists (including travel grants, support for young artists and artists-in-residency schemes).** The distribution of grants and subsidies to projects should be selective and based on artistic quality. A peer evaluation system should be introduced in order to ensure national and international standards. It may also be helpful to invite, at least the outset, some foreign artists/curators/specialists to assist local peer evaluation. A system of soft loans for visual artists and craftspeople could be considered. Music is characterised by its diversity of practice and genre; support for the art form should be based on a broad definition and not over-favour Western orchestral music.

6.11 The group of experts was pleased to learn of the proposal to develop an old hospital in Floriana as an Open Village of Art. This would provide technical assistance and workshop

spaces for the realisation of artistic projects and make studio facilities available students and artists. The Open Village would also enable the general public to witness the making of art and promote residencies that would enable interaction between foreign and local artists.

6.12 A notable feature of the drama scene is the very small number of new Maltese plays being produced. Some witnesses told the group of experts that the explanation lay in the poor quality of theatre texts, but leading authors complain of a stubborn reluctance on the part of theatre managers and drama companies to stage their work. We do not know whether this is so; however, if writers can see that there are real opportunities for performance of their work and a real demand for it from directors, experience suggests that plays worth presenting will emerge. **We recommend that relevant cultural institutions and drama groups in receipt of state funding (see our proposal in paragraph B 7.7 below) be encouraged to commission and present new Maltese work reflecting Maltese and Mediterranean realities.**

6.13 Maltese literature, whether in Maltese or in English, will require special supports. The group of experts welcomes the recent formation of the Malta Book Council and endorses its commitment to ‘explore new area in which readership and the diffusion of books can be further stimulated’ – in particular by improving the marketing of authors and books. **This will entail analysing the state of the Maltese publishing industry and considering how it could be strengthened through professional development and targeted investment (for example, in marketing budgets). It is suggested that a study of the publishing industry be commissioned to inform future policy for Maltese writing.**

6.14 In addition, with a view to directly supporting creation, **the group of experts recommends the establishment of a direct support scheme (administered by the Council for Culture and the Arts) to encourage literature, whether written in Maltese or in English.** One option would be to support the production of specific categories of literature in Maltese (for instance poetry and drama). Another might be to introduce a purchase scheme for Maltese fiction, whereby a certain number of books should be bought by the Arts Council and distributed into the library system (subsidises both production and distribution).

6.15 Also, we believe that **support for translation of literature in Maltese into English and other languages would enhance the international profile of Maltese writers and grow the market for book sales as well as enhance the status of Maltese literature.**

6.16 It is important to remember the wealth of popular cultural activity among the population at large. We discuss the important role of band clubs in **paragraphs B 8.10 ff** below. Malta is also rich in traditional crafts, some of which (the building of Maltese rowing boats are an instance) run the risk of dying out. The Malta Crafts Council, founded in 2000, seeks to revive local crafts and to ensure long-term sustainability by developing their commercial potential, both domestically and internationally. This and other relevant initiatives (some in the private sector) are to be welcomed. More needs to be done, though, through apprenticeship schemes, financial incentives and soft loans, as well as marketing advice and training in the management of small businesses. **The group of experts believes that Government should support for crafts development, perhaps through the Department of Economic Services.**

6.17 While accepting the need to classify films (largely for the protection of minors), the group of experts believes that stage productions should only be subject to the usual

application of the criminal law and was surprised to learn that theatre in Malta is censored by a Board of Classification. In our judgement, **such controls over the freedom of expression are inconsistent with the principles of the Council of Europe and the European Union and should be abolished.**

Social Protection

6.18 The group of experts found little information to hand concerning the system for social protection and health-care for self-employed creators/artists or for artists between jobs. It would appear that artists are assimilated with other kinds of self-employed freelances and professionals, but while the latter can, and usually do, have some continuity of earnings, which allows them to contribute to pension and health-care funds, self-employed artists seldom earn a regular income from their work, although many have full-time jobs as teachers. Therefore, consideration should be given to establishing a flexible scheme of contributions for artists who do not have other permanent employment.

6.19 Additional issues that are causing concern in Malta and might merit collective address are rates of payment or fees to artists and the costs charged by arts venues for their use by artists or arts organisations. The former are low and the latter relatively high.

6.20 We received no evidence of trade union activity on behalf of self-employed creators/artists or for any other cultural workers (although the Musicians' and Entertainers' Union claims to cater for the interests of musicians and singers working in nightclubs and hotels). Especially in the case of a small community of creators/artists as in Malta, trade unions can play a useful role in negotiating with large employers, such as broadcasters, issues relating to minimum wages or fees and with the Government on legal provisions for social protection and labour conditions. Collective agreements in these fields could help to establish minimum wages or fees for artistic work, work conditions and employer contributions to social protection and health care schemes.

6.21 **It may be appropriate for artists' groups or associations to seek association with larger, already established unions** (as we understand to be the case with members of the National Orchestra whose interests are looked after by the General Workers' Union).

6.22 More generally, the Government is hampered in its efforts to establish an effective and robust cultural policy for want of partners in the sector with whom it can conduct a continuing dialogue. Trade unions, whose function is to ensure minimum standards of social protection, and professional associations, which promote professional interests and concerns, would help to fill this gap.

6.23 Also, **it would be helpful if cultural and artistic associations or networks co-operated with one another with a view to co-ordinating their efforts to raise the status of culture, to agree a unified agenda for cultural development and act as an effective lobby.**

Intellectual Rights

6.24 Malta has already to a large extent achieved alignment with the *acquis* in the field of industrial and intellectual property rights. However, according to the European report on

Malta concerning *Chapter 5 – Company Law*¹¹, enforcement of intellectual property rights is still insufficient and the level of counterfeiting and piracy remains high. Further implementation will be necessary, particularly in view of the new European Commission Directives on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights regarding information technology and on the resale right for the benefit of the author of an original work of art. Contrary to the Directive harmonizing the term of protection of copyright and related rights, Malta fails to provide for the revival of rights for those works which have fallen into the public domain. The Ministry for Economic Services has incorporated no collecting society (although the Performing Rights Society and Kopjamalt collect dues) in the cultural sector.

6.25 It is suggested that the Ministry of Education discusses with the Ministry of Economic Services the improvement of copyright observance and collection in the cultural sector.

6.26 Unlike creators in other art forms, visual artists receive no continuing recompense for the use of their work after its first sale. **Consideration should be given to establishing the *droit de suite***, the system of payment to artists on the resale of works of art.

¹¹ See the European Commission web-site <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement> or the Maltese Government web-site http://www.mic.org.mt/MALTA-EU/mlteu_docs.htm.

B 7 Arts development

7.1 Government policy, however well-intentioned, cannot create great theatre, dance, music or painting and sculpture. What it *is* in a position to do is to establish the conditions favourable to the production of art. In the previous section of this report, the professionalisation of the individual artist was discussed. This will be of little value if the institutional and infrastructural needs of the arts are not also adequately catered for.

7.2 Despite the fact that Malta is a very small country, it would be easy to draw parallels with other European nations and propose the same kind of elaborate structures in the field of cultural policy in Malta as exist (for instance) in Denmark, Finland or France. That said, Malta is an independent state with a distinct identity. If it is to develop a stronger cultural policy of its own (as is the case in a country such as Iceland, whose population falls even below that of Malta), it also must create a range of *national* structures in the cultural field – even if the population and the surface are limited.

7.3 If the Maltese arts sector is compared with those elsewhere, it is striking that the levels of a) *institutionalisation* and b) *professionalisation* are limited. The arts sector is still mainly a part of “civil society” – and most successful artists are semi-professional. In order to improve the quality of artistic production and the esteem in which it is held it is necessary for Malta to reach a higher level of institutionalisation and professionalisation.

7.4 As with the individual artist, an integrated package of measures will be required. Theatre in Malta is weakened by the absence of professional companies. The group of experts was told that about six theatre groups produced good quality work and three or four dance companies, all of them amateur or at best ‘semi-professional’. Dance is an under-developed art form, despite the dedicated efforts of teachers and the promotional and other activity of the Dance Council-Malta. Audiences for drama and dance are reported to be rising, although from a comparatively low base: theatre attendances increased by more than 23 per cent between 1997 and 1999, but this was apparently due to an extension of the Christmas pantomime at the Manoel Theatre. In the same period 107 productions were presented, but only a small fraction represented native original work..

7.5 It would be unrealistic to envision the immediate professionalisation of the sector. This would not only be extremely costly, but would place too great a strain on its administrative capacity and the existing talent pool. A period of measured, incremental growth is a more practical proposition.

7.6 Some argue for the immediate creation of a fully-fledged professional theatre group, perhaps to be seen as a national company and based at the Manoel Theatre (which is not in favour of such a development itself). The challenge here is to balance the need for continuity/work security/predictability on the one hand – and for creativity and risk on the other. The group of experts sees three possible options:

- a) a permanently subsidised – ‘fully-fledged’ National Theatre with an artistic director, an administration, a technical staff and a permanent staff of professional actors

- b) a permanently subsidised 'National Theatre' – with an artistic director, recruited by public appointment, and a small administrative and technical staff – which hires actors for limited periods
- c) a national *fund* for theatre, administered by a drama panel of the Arts Council, which allocates support to specific, time-limited projects upon application by directors or theatre companies. As in option (b) the actors would be hired to work on a project.

7.7 The group of experts is aware that at this stage the organisation of a permanent professional company might require financial resources that would be difficult to obtain. The second and third options are similar, except that the former envisages a permanent theatrical management. On balance, we believe that the third option is the most realistic. Its main advantage is that measured development is likely to bring consensual success. It would create a constructively competitive and flexible environment in which the liveliest talents would emerge over time. It would then be a practical proposition to posit a later phase some years in the future when the establishment of permanent company or companies could be undertaken. **It is recommended that the Government (through the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts) should establish a project fund to help existing 'amateur' drama and dance groups or directors/producers to present work of a more ambitious nature than they are in a position to do at present.**

7.8 Community arts are a powerful means of introducing ordinary people to their own creativity, fostering social empowerment and combating social exclusion. Opportunities potentially exist for Malta's drama and dance companies to work in community and education contexts. In these ways they would help to make creative practice more widely accessible, while at the same time generating revenue and stimulating demand for their work. **We recommend that funding be made available for theatre groups to provide theatre-in-education, productions addressing social issues and other kinds of outreach activity.**

7.9 In addition to these measures to support artistic creation, the question of organisational sustainability must be squarely faced. The group of experts was told that few arts administrators in Malta have undertaken management training. The comparatively poor rates of arts attendance recorded in *Kultura 2000* suggest that the cultural sector should place a high priority on effective audience development and, it follows, on improving and refining its marketing skills.

7.10 There is a widespread need across the sector for professional development in administration, financial planning, marketing and programming/ interpretation. (We have argued in **paragraph B 3.4** above that the same applies in the heritage sector). The Mediterranean Institute at the University of Malta launched the first arts management training programme in Malta in 1999 in the form of short courses: a series of lectures covers the management of arts organisations, marketing of performance events and artistic programming. This, although to be applauded, is insufficient to meet requirements and further measures need to be taken.

7.11 As Maltese culture develops in future years, **the group of experts recommends that the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts and Heritage Malta agree and implement a joint training strategy. A comprehensive (and perhaps compulsory) range of short courses should be offered and vigorously marketed to workers in the cultural sector. We**

further suggest that the University of Malta consider establishing a degree course in cultural administration (perhaps, in the first instance, in association with a European University experienced in the field).

7.12 Attention needs to be paid to the built infrastructure for culture. There are some splendid museums and well-programmed performance spaces – among them, the 18th century Manoel Theatre and the Centre for Creativity at St James Cavalier, an old fortress transformed into a state-of-the-art theatre, cinema and visual arts venue, the Hypogeum, a prehistoric site restored and displayed with state-of-the-art technology and the Mediterranean Conference Centre, originally the Holy Infirmary of the Order of St John. However, there are some major gaps in provision; a temporary visual arts exhibition space with high-grade security and air-conditioning would offer a prestige venue for the best Maltese art and for major visiting exhibitions from abroad: it is good news that the National Museum of Fine Arts is planning to establish a Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art. The plans to rebuild the opera house, destroyed during the Second World War, are welcome, but it will be important that the nature of the provision in the new building is based on well-researched evidence of need. As noted in the preceding section (see **paragraphs B 6.9**) little affordable rehearsal space and, for visual artists, studios are available. The group of experts heard evidence that some existing performing arts spaces charge rentals which not all companies can easily afford. **We recommend that a study of Malta’s infrastructural needs be commissioned, accompanied by an audit of dedicated arts buildings as well as spaces available for part-time arts usage, as the basis for an arts capital development strategy.**

7.13 It was surprising to note the relative lack of emphasis placed on the creative industries in *Cultural Policy in Malta*. The creative industries have considerable potential for the exchange and interaction of talent with the rest of the cultural sector. They publishing, broadcasting, cinematography, recording industries (audio and video), publishing (print), advertising and software design and are a rapidly growing economic sector in many European countries. The *Kultura 2000* survey shows comparatively low levels of Internet, mobile phone, fixed line telephone, satellite and cable TV and PC usage: nevertheless the rising trend in take-up suggests the probability of rapid growth in the coming years. This is confirmed by boom in the sales of mobile phones and satellite receivers in the past few months (2002): 64% of the population now use mobile phones, a 36% increase over 2000. Internet usage has increased by 38.5% and satellite television by 103.% over the same period.

7.14 Stimulation of domestic creative industries/media entertainment may extend employment opportunities for artists and other cultural workers. This may be particularly important in Malta because of the limited artistic labour market, especially in the performing arts. Thus, by combining work in the theatre, TV soaps, dubbing, and so forth, an actor might be able to ‘construct’ a full time professional career.

7.15 In most European countries, special legal provisions have been put in place for the creative industries (for example, state aids for independent audio-visual production, publishing and so forth). The Ministry for Economic Services has a special department concerned with the promotion of small businesses. The group of experts suggests that **the Ministry should investigate ways of supporting the creative industries.**

B 8 Maltese language

8.1 For historical reasons Malta is unusual in that its citizens are mostly bilingual. Maltese, a Semitic language in origin, gradually enriched by Romance and Teutonic elements, is the national language and is spoken by the vast majority of the population, but one result of the island's long period under British rule has been a widespread fluency in English, which is also an official language (although it should be noted that a substantial minority of citizens, perhaps up to 25 per cent mainly drawn from lower socio-economic groups, only communicate effectively in Maltese).

8.2 Generally speaking, Maltese is used for speaking, but that, in many fields of life, English is the main written language. (An exception to the rule is that Maltese is the language of the law courts, having succeeded Italian in the 1930s). In schools, subjects such as mathematics and the sciences are taught in English and Maltese with English textbooks. Use of the old Maltese numerals has nearly vanished. Civil servants routinely use English for their correspondence and internal communications. Popular entertainment is also dominated by the English language.

8.3 In one important sense, this state of affairs is greatly to Malta's advantage. The pressures of economic, financial and indeed cultural globalisation continue to quicken and English has become the dominant medium of international communication. The fact the Maltese are masters of this new *lingua franca* gives them an edge in an increasingly competitive world.

8.4 However, a balance needs to be kept between the island's two languages. Four major questions need to be addressed. First, how can Maltese be protected from degradation through the excessive introduction of loan-words? Some linguistic purists have sought to lessen the influence of foreign languages, especially, English, by coining Arabic-derived terms where Maltese ones do not exist. Others take the view that attempts to preserve linguistic 'purity' do not take account of the organic nature of linguistic change.

8.5 The second key issue concerns the need to determine which linguistic 'space' across the range of Maltese life should be occupied by which language, with particular reference to writing. In this connection, much work has already been done to assure an orthography of Maltese, but there is a continuing need (as one of our interlocutors put it) to 'guarantee a certain degree of correctness'.

8.6 Thirdly, more needs to be done to promote Maltese in schools. It was surprising to learn that the qualification in the Maltese language required for university entrants has recently been lowered.

8.7 Finally, the oxygen of a language is its literature. As Dr Charles Briffa points out: 'One way of increasing the importance of small languages in 21st century Europe is to foster the native literature that could be translated into other languages.'¹² Creative writing courses in higher education would encourage young people to maintain Maltese as a vehicle for

¹² Briffa, Dr Charles, *Small Languages in 21st Century Europe – Vive la différence*, Malta Yearbook 2002, De La Salle Publications, Malta.

imaginative expression. Language being closely associated with collective memory, the work of professional authors could be usefully complemented by the encouragement of written reminiscences by older Maltese citizens, which will record and celebrate a traditional way of life that is passing.

8.8 Recent Governments have addressed the challenge of protecting the Maltese language by nominating a Board for the Maltese Language charged with the formulation of a linguistic policy for Malta. The Board has suggested the creation of a governmental General Directorate for the Language, which in turn will establish an expert and advisory Language Council. Through specially appointed commissions, questions of terminology, teaching, linguistic research and orthography will be addressed.

8.9 The Government has issued a Broadcasting Code on the Correct Use of the Maltese Language on the Broadcasting Media, 2002, to take effect from October 1, 2002. It calls for the correct use of Maltese, caution in respect of neologisms drawn from foreign languages and good quality translations from foreign languages.

8.10 There are a number of measures that could profitably be taken to protect the Maltese language. **The first would be to foster the practice of writing in Maltese by establishing creative writing courses in higher education; secondly, in the context of preserving the memory of Malta's social heritage, to establish a community-based policy to encourage memoir-writing in Maltese by older people; thirdly, to invest in translation, not only of Maltese writing into other languages but of foreign writing into Maltese.** The expert group was surprised to learn that 80% of the books in public libraries are in English. **We suggest that steps be taken to increase their holdings of books in Maltese.** Perhaps, with the future development of the language in mind, priority could be given to children's books.

8.11 At present we understand that broadcasters rarely offer translation from English. **The group of experts also suggests that it might be useful if speech in English on television was routinely subtitled in Maltese.**

B 9 The Maltese Diaspora

9.1 The number of people of Maltese origin probably exceeds one million – more than twice the island’s population. Some first generation migrants are approaching or have passed retirement age and have specific social needs. Second and subsequent generations of expatriates need educational guidance and, sometimes, ethno-sensitive advice and psychological support. Returning migrants sometimes face difficulties of psychological adjustment and a range of practical settlement problems. The Government is committed to improving links with Maltese communities abroad and a Commission for the Maltese Abroad was formed in 1987. The Roots Programme, established in 1996, run by the Ministry of Tourism with input from the Ministry of Education, seeks to foster Maltese culture among the younger generations of Maltese descendants and encourages expatriates to visit the island as tourists. The planned development of cultural tourism will give a positive boost to this continuing policy.

9.2 If, as the group of experts recommends (see **paragraphs B 6.3 and 4** above), the Government adopts **a pro-active international dimension to its cultural policy, this should be targeted in part at those countries with large Maltese populations** – for example, Australia and Canada.

9.3 **Other appropriate cultural measures could include the creation of a distance-learning language programme. The cultural and broadcasting communities in Malta could play a constructive role by further developing the production and distribution of films, videos and CDs for the benefit of Maltese expatriates.**

B 10 Broadcasting and Film

10.1 The group of experts does not seek to offer a comprehensive analysis of radio and television in Malta, a project that would require a complete report of its own. Rather, we focus on a number of cultural opportunities and challenges confronting public service broadcasters.

10.2 The Broadcasting Act 1991 introduced a period of liberalisation of television and radio licences under the regulation of the Malta Broadcasting Authority. Both major political parties run their own commercial radio and TV stations. There are three commercial television stations and a wide range of radio broadcasters (in Malta and Gozo there are 27 national, private and community radio stations). Public Service Broadcasting (PBS), which depends on a licence fee, operates three TV stations, one of them for educational broadcasting, and three radio stations, including one devoted to the arts and culture, Radio Bronja (sadly, attracting only a small audience). There are a number of community radio stations, mostly organised by the Church.

10.3 A major re-organisation of PBS has been announced, with a view to creating a slimmed-down organisation, but has not yet been implemented. A Media Commission, which would collect the licence fee and monitor the quality and quantity of content, and a National Institute for AudioVision, which would be a radio and audio-visual archive, have been proposed.

10.4 In a largely deregulated environment with competition from satellite television and Italian TV terrestrial broadcasting, many argue that the public service content of Maltese broadcasting has deteriorated in recent years. Professional standards of production are said to be low. The sector is highly unionised and the costs of local production are high.

10.5 Little home-grown drama is produced either for radio or television. Cultural programming is relatively infrequent, although jazz and folk music series are presented annually and a three-month summer season of weekly live opera relays. A regular programme on new Maltese writing is presented.

10.6 The group of experts is unconvinced that a rigorous application of quotas for local production or for cultural content would necessarily lead to constructive results unless there was a real likelihood that it would win viewers or listeners in reasonable numbers. As one witness told us: ‘There is little point to public service broadcasting if there is no public to receive it.’

10.7 From a cultural perspective, two key issues call for attention. The first is to enhance the quality of local production and the second to stimulate more participation by citizens in media activity. So far as the former is concerned, **we suggest that advantage be taken of existing production and script-writing training opportunities (such as those offered by Eureka Audiovisual and the Media Plus Programme) and that other such opportunities at the national level be increased and improved and that consideration be given to incentivizing independent production.**

10.8 Secondly, regarding participation, examples of good practice in community media can be found throughout the world— that is, radio, video and television production by citizens as

distinct from professionals. Bearing in mind that community radio already has a presence in Malta, **we suggest that the Government should encourage the further development of small-scale radio stations whose programmes are produced and presented by people from the communities they serve.**

10.9 Film is economically important for Malta. Through the Malta Film Commission (MFC), formed in 2001, the island is promoted as a film location. In its first year, the MFC assisted 35 film productions (including feature films, commercials and television series) which generated \$20 million. Closely following European Union policy regarding state assistance to film, tax credits are offered as well as VAT refunds and tax breaks for companies and individuals investing in the necessary infrastructure and equipment.

10.10 A number of film facilitating companies exist, the oldest of which is Mediterranean Film Studios, which employs about 20 full-time staff. Productions generate a substantial amount of casual work – ranging from six for a commercial to 150 people for a feature film.

10.11 Cinema is a volatile and highly competitive international industry. Further investment (for example, in a sound stage that would allow producers to film exterior as well as indoor scenes on the island) may be necessary if Malta is to maintain its appeal to film producers. Whether the Government should help to finance capital developments of this kind is a moot point. **It may be sufficient for it to maintain its current policy of creating a favourable financial and fiscal environment for international film producers.**

C FROM POLICY TO IMPLEMENTATION

This section considers how Malta's cultural policy could be implemented effectively.

C 1 Financial and Fiscal Analysis

1.1 Malta's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for 2002 is projected to be (Maltese Lire) LM 1,337,600,000. Direct Government expenditure on culture, excluding the general education budget, is estimated at LM 7,751,683 or .58% of GDP. It is reported that expenditure has been slightly on the increase over recent years, although exact figures are not available.

1.2 As **Table 1** shows, by far the largest proportion of the total cultural budget, 46.51%, is devoted to the heritage (museums, the built heritage and restoration). This can be compared with 23.21% for the arts.

1.3 The real level of expenditure on culture by the Ministry of Education, outside the direct cultural budget, is hard to ascertain, although a number of particular 'cost centres' can be identified. There is no explicit and budgeted cultural policy for schools, but there are cost centres for maintenance and materials at the Drama Unit, the School of Art and the School of Music, ranging from LM 10,000-LM 12,000 annually. The Department of Student Services and International Relations has a small vote of LM 5,000 for its Language and Arts Programme, spent mostly on travel to overseas seminars and/or very short *étages*. The Youth Service Organisation has a budget of LM 16,000 for travel assistance for cultural visits by students and activities related to youth exchanges. The Department of Public Libraries spends LM 25,000 annually for book purchases for its regional branches, 87% of which are housed in schools.

1.4 The Malta Tourist Authority, under the umbrella of the Ministry of Tourism, spent LM 118,000 in 2001 and LM 200,000 on the organisation of cultural activities, a rise which reflects the growing policy emphasis on cultural tourism. The Authority also budgets LM 65,000 annually for 'cultural products', including restoration programmes.

1.5 It is likely that the estimates/budgets itemised above or listed in **Table 1** fail to take all expenditures into account and so understates the Government's overall financial commitment to culture.

1.6 Budgets for the newly established Heritage Malta and the Malta National Council for Culture and the Arts have not yet been set.

1.7 No information is collected about cultural spending by Local Councils and figures are not available for sponsorship and patronage by the private sector, nor for aggregate earnings by cultural organisations.

1.8 The available statistics make it difficult to offer an authoritative financial analysis of cultural expenditure in Malta, and the group of experts recommends that **the Ministry of Education and the National Office of Statistics prepare a comprehensive programme of cultural financial data collection, for early implementation.**

1.9 Bearing in mind the fact that heritage and artistic activity can have beneficial social and economic impacts, **the Government should carefully examine ways by which culture could contribute to the implementation of Malta's National Development Plan as well as regional and structural policy and should prepare to make use of the opportunities which European Union Structural Funds can offer for the development of cultural life in Malta.**

1.10 As is the case, for example, in the United Kingdom and Finland, national lotteries are used in part to help to finance cultural activities. There are six lottery games in Malta for the organisation of which the Public Lotto Department is responsible. In the case of the Presto Instant Lottery any net proceeds can be directed to objectives of a social and civic nature: also a percentage is allocated to promote sports. It may be that a larger proportion of lottery proceeds could appropriately be directed to the support of cultural activities. It may be worth exploring other fund-raising possibilities (for example, proposals for a tax on smoking and a levy on first-day-cover philately sales were drawn to the attention of the group of experts).

1.11 It is recommended that the Government should study the possibility of using lottery proceeds and other specialist taxes or levies for promoting the arts and contemporary artists and for other cultural purposes.

C 2 Legislative Arrangements

2.1 The Cultural Heritage Act, 2002, is an imaginative and radical law, which promises to offer a sound foundation for heritage conservation and development. Resting on the principle of devolution, it reserves to the Minister for Education the responsibility to produce a national strategy for the heritage. Within this framework a regulatory authority (the Superintendance) will supervise and monitor other state agencies in the field and promote good practice. These agencies will comprise Heritage Malta, which will have mainly operational and managerial duties; the Malta Centre for Restoration; a Committee of Guarantee, on which all the agencies will sit and which will help to co-ordinate their activities; and the Cultural Heritage Fund, which will receive and distribute government monies allocated to the cultural heritage. It is anticipated that Heritage Malta will delegate responsibility for the management of some heritage sites to Local Councils and private agencies, as and when deemed appropriate.

2.2 It will be very interesting to see how this arrangement, which partly resembles the structures established in some European countries to manage the delivery of privatised public services, works in practice. In effect, as in most Italian legislation, it functionally separates the protection of the heritage from its management and promotion, handing over responsibility for managing part of Malta's historic assets and museums not only to local authorities, but also to the private sector, within an overall policy framework determined by the Government. It also functionally separates the protection of the heritage with its management and promotion. If successful, it could be a model of innovative practice from which other states might wish to learn.

2.3 The new system will, however, be complicated to administer and could lead to confusion and dissension. **The group of experts believes that success will depend on three things – first, clarity in the national heritage strategy, which should set clear, measurable sociocultural, as well as economic, standards and targets and establish an efficient monitoring and evaluation system; secondly, firm but sensitive handling of its regulatory functions by the Superintendance; and thirdly, explicit demarcation of the roles of the respective agencies** (perhaps in the form of written bye-laws which interpret the Act in terms of operational detail).

2.4 The Maltese Council for Culture and the Arts Act, 2002, establishes an arts council, the arrangements for which resemble those in Anglophone countries. Although devolutionary in intention, it is markedly less so than the Cultural Heritage Act. The Council's powers will be restricted in that it will be obliged to 'advance' funds allocated by the Government for a number of named arts organisations (including the Manoel Theatre, the National Orchestra and the Centre for Creativity at St James Cavalier) and to 'administer schemes prescribed by the Minister for the purpose of funding or subsidizing the organisation of cultural and artistic programmes'. By contrast, Heritage Malta is only under a general obligation to ensure that museums, collections and so forth operate effectively.

2.5 At the same time, the legislation does not require the Minister to prepare an arts strategy, although he will, as already noted, prepare a heritage strategy under the terms of the Cultural Heritage Act.

2.6 **The group of experts is puzzled by the discrepancy between the two Acts and hopes that an 'arms length' principle will be established, enabling the Council to act**

independently so far as any artistic decisions are concerned. This is partly because of the importance of ensuring that freedom of expression is seen to be protected and partly because there may be some advantage in setting a distance between the Government and the sometimes controversial nature of the contemporary arts.

2.7 We believe that the strength of most arts councils is their use of peer advice. Coming to a view (say) on literature bursaries or music commissions will call for in-depth knowledge, which the Council as a group may not possess to the necessary degree. While welcoming the fact that the Act allows the Council to invite experts to some of its meetings in connection with specific subjects, **we recommend that the Council be empowered to convene working groups or advisory panels to help it with its work.**

C 3 Local Councils

3.1 Although Malta's Local Councils were only created ten years ago, they have become an established feature of public administration on the island. There are 68 of them and their catchment areas and populations are small. The councils receive annual grants from the Government on a formulaic basis, but may also raise local taxes by means of bye-laws. The number of elected members ranges between four and fifteen and, most of their tasks being contracted out, have few permanent staff (so, for example, Valletta Council employs four full-time equivalents). As the duties of Local Councils are essentially administrative, party political rivalries are said to be less intense than at the national level.

3.2 Although they are under no legal obligation to deliver arts and heritage services, the group of experts was informed that many local authorities have adopted culture as one of their most important functions. As has already been noted (see **paragraph C 2.1** above), the Government has authorised the devolution of certain kinds of responsibility under the terms of the Cultural Heritage Act, 2002.

3.3 In many European countries local authorities play a crucial, some would argue the leading, role in cultural development and the delivery of cultural services. However, the situation in Malta is distinguished by the small size of its Local Councils and there will be limits to the scope and complexity of what they can undertake. Also, they will need to be provided with appropriate financial resources. The group of experts has been informed that some Councils are requesting a mandatory role, expressed through a legal provision, to promote cultural activities through a discrete budget.

3.4 It may be advisable for devolution to proceed gradually. The local councils are comparatively new institutions: while it is right to encourage them to support the arts and heritage in their areas, it may be moving too fast to impose a statutory duty on them in these respects. The pace of delegation of centrally administered powers should be measured. **A reasonable first step would be for the Government to invite Local Councils to participate in drawing up the overall cultural policy framework and to produce cultural plans of their own consistent with this framework.**

C 4 From Policy to Plan

4.1 *Cultural Policy in Malta* offers, as has already been pointed out, a comprehensive overview of the current situation of Maltese culture. It sets out in broad terms an assessment of needs as well as proposing a range of possible policy developments. However, it is not, in itself, a development strategy. If its aspirations are to be realised, the next stage will be for the newly established Malta Council for Culture and the Arts and Heritage Malta to produce medium-term, costed and targeted plans, time-tabled over perhaps a five-year period. Specialist development strategies for libraries and archives, the arts and the cultural dimension of education would also be necessary.

The Nature of Planning

4.2 Across Europe ministries of culture and cultural funding agencies operate in a planning environment that calls for target-setting and the measurement of policy outcomes. In recent years they have become accustomed to producing development strategies. However, there are few models of excellent practice and many cultural plans fall into the trap of expressing general aspirations, the accomplishment of which is hard to measure, and of setting too many priorities for a focussed programme of change. It is often difficult to tell whether or not outcomes have been attained. So it may be helpful at this point to rehearse some of the basic features of planning.

4.3 The principles need to be borne in mind – (a) change, (b) choice and (c) evaluation. It is easy to put too much into a plan and a useful guideline is only to include in it descriptions of what needs to be changed.

4.4 While Malta's Ministry of Education and its executive agencies, such as Heritage Malta and the Council for Culture and the Arts, will retain functions of a service nature which are not directly developmental but support development, a cultural development strategy should be focussed on a few carefully selected priorities. More than a handful of them and they lose their force.

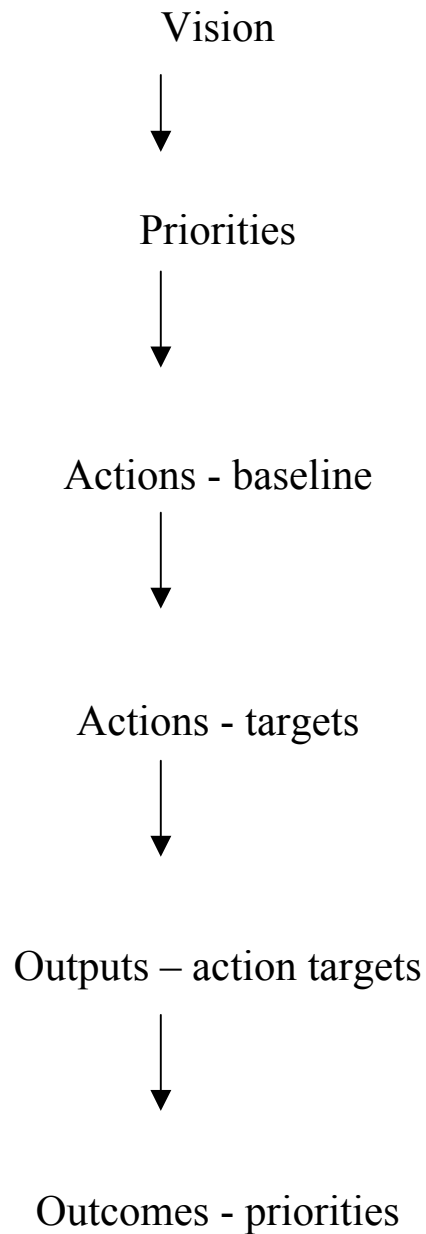
4.5 Once a prioritised plan is in place it is more difficult than might be thought to be sure that an organisation's goals have been achieved. A robust evaluation methodology should be built into the planning process from the outset. In business and commerce the underlying aim is straightforward and quantitative – profit. However, in the public sector, especially in fields such as the arts, education or social welfare, the aims are often qualitative and hard to assess objectively. Performance appraisal and evaluation must be sensitive to the needs of artists and art organisations, museums, libraries and archives to grow and change (and in the case of the contemporary arts sometimes to fail), when pursuing their goals.

4.6 It is essential that sufficient resources be devoted to evaluation. It is only too easy to measure what is easy to measure than what is necessary to measure. Malta's cultural development strategy should define objectives in terms that will allow measurement through simple but sensitive performance indicators. It should be accompanied by budgetary estimates that assemble financial, human and technical resources in support of the chosen priorities.

4.7 Plans often confuse outputs with outcomes. An output is what an organisation does to achieve a priority (for example, a grants programme or a research project) and is basically an

administrative action. The outcome, or impact, is what really counts – namely, the performance indicator that shows the extent to which an action has actually delivered the priority (see **Table 1**).

Table 2 - THE PLANNING NARRATIVE



4.8 It is not possible to demonstrate impact without having robust baseline information. This is why a well-researched needs assessment, conducted at the beginning of the planning process, is important which not only produces the evidence on which policy can be based but also identifies the ‘starting line’.

4.9 Some other factors need to be borne in mind. First, the Ministry of Education will very probably set objectives which it will not be able to achieve on its own. Partnerships with other agencies and institutions (for example, local councils) will be an essential ingredient of its cultural development strategy. Much will depend on executive agencies such as Heritage Malta and the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, which will need to be given the necessary breathing-space to develop their own thinking.

4.10 Secondly, experience in other countries suggests that cultural workers and organisations are often suspicious of planning, for they fear that their work is being supported not for its intrinsic value, but for other social or economic reasons (for example, for tourism development) – in other words, that it is being ‘instrumentalised’. Some also resent the fact that their work will be appraised by people whom they do not consider to be their peers. It is essential that planning be not allowed to encroach on freedom of creative expression or on the professional traditions of museum culture, archaeology and so forth.

4.11 Finally, for a plan to work all those involved in its delivery should feel that it belongs to them. The planning process should be open, transparent and fully consultative.

Implications for Malta

4.12 Despite the high quality of *Cultural Policy in Malta*, there is insufficient hard evidence fully to support a cultural development strategy. More resources could profitably be invested in research: to cite two examples, too little is known (although much can be guessed) about the socio-economic structure of arts audiences and cultural consumers and the market basis for the development of cultural tourism seems insufficiently robust. It would be helpful if the National Office of Statistics were to extend its research into cultural issues on a structured, on-going basis. A greater role could also be played by the University of Malta (with particular reference to the arts, education, communications studies and sociology) and the Institute for Tourism Studies.

4.13 It is recommended that one of the first tasks for Heritage Malta and the Arts Council be to identify gaps in useful knowledge and to establish research requirements in their respective fields of responsibility.

4.14 A robust tradition of monitoring and evaluation does not appear to exist in the cultural sector. **Within a framework set by the Ministry of Education, Heritage Malta and the Council for Culture and the Arts should create an evaluation methodology which would govern their relations with the organisations and individuals they may come to support and enable them to demonstrate the success with which they deliver the Government’s objectives as enshrined in its cultural policy.**

4.15 Finally, a simple but flexible planning regime should be installed. Bearing in mind the devolution of many powers to independent agencies, Heritage Malta and the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts, the process should be kept as simple and flexible as possible. **The**

group of experts recommends that the Ministry of Education publish a planning policy framework which sets out in as concrete terms as possible the Government's high level objectives. So far as possible, the Ministry should avoid concerning itself with executive or operational detail. **The relevant agencies should then be invited to prepare timetabled, targeted and costed development strategies.** They should do so in consultation with their respective sectors and with the public. Where evidence of need is missing and baseline information (for future comparative purposes) inadequate, research should be commissioned to fill the gaps.

D CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When considering Malta's cultural policy, the Council of Europe's group of experts recommends that

General

- 1 the Maltese government conducts an examination of the creative industries as a contributor to economic as well as cultural development (A 2.5) and investigate ways of supporting them (B 6.15)**
- 2 a primary long-term objective of Maltese cultural policy should be to increase access to the arts, heritage and libraries by citizens of all social classes (B 1.8)**
- 3 Malta's aspirations to cultural development will only be realised by substantially increased investment, especially by the public sector, both at national and local levels (B 1.21)**
- 4 the Ministry of Education should continue to monitor closely and publicise cultural developments in Malta and on the European mainland both with a view to informing its own policies and to stimulating debate**

Participation

- 5 a detailed survey be conducted of cultural participation by citizens as a basis for future policy in this field (B 1.11)**
- 6 there should be greater commitment to, and investment in, interactive community-based or outreach arts activity than there is at present by the Government and Local Councils (B 1.14)**
- 7 as a condition of grant-aid, Malta's major cultural institutions be required to engage in, or improve their provision of, educational and community-based outreach activity (B 1.15)**

Education and Young People

- 8 following the welcome emphasis on creativity in the revised national Minimum Curriculum, an action plan be produced 'for the promotion of creativity at school, class and education system levels, as well as evaluation instruments' (B 2.5)**
- 9 the comprehensive development of specialist arts training for teachers, both in higher education and through in-service short courses (B 2.6)**
- 10 the establishment of a well-structured relationship between the education sector and Malta's arts community and the further development of artists-in-residence schemes, designed to contribute explicitly to course-work in the class-room (supported by appropriate training for artists) (B 2.6)**

- 11 **the commissioning and wide dissemination of appropriate teaching materials with a view to fostering the creative ‘culture’ of schools (B 2.6)**
- 12 **within the Ministry of Education, the Department of Youth and Sport should work with the Department of Education and the Ministry’s Policy Unit to prepare a comprehensive youth cultural policy which ensured consistency between what takes place in place in school and what outside it (B 2.8)**
- 13 **Malta’s youth cultural policy should not only address the heritage and the arts as traditionally defined, but also popular forms, especially music, in which young people have a special interest (B 2.9)**
- 14 **the comprehensive development of specialist arts training for teachers, both in higher education and through in-service short courses (B 2.10)**

The Heritage

- 15 **Heritage Malta and the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts should agree and implement a joint strategy for training in management and marketing. A comprehensive (and perhaps compulsory) range of short courses should be offered and vigorously marketed to workers in the cultural sector. We further suggest that the University of Malta consider establishing a degree course in cultural administration (perhaps, in the first instance, in association with a European University experienced in the field) (B 3.4)**
- 16 **the Government should agree a common approach to heritage policy with the Church and private owners (B 3.9)**
- 17 **the Government should consider means of offering incentives to owners and appropriate enterprises which would encourage the refurbishment and animation of old buildings (B 3.12)**
- 18 **planning legislation aimed at the preservation not only of the heritage, but also of the natural environmental context and skyline should be rigorously enforced (B 3.13)**
- 19 **the major museums should be encouraged to develop small touring exhibitions and interactive outreach and educational programmes (B 3.14)**

Cultural Tourism

- 20 **the encouragement of cultural tourism would not only contribute to economic growth but to the enhancement of the island’s cultural facilities, which would be to the direct benefit of citizens as well as of foreign visitors (B 3.17)**
- 21 **further research into the market potential be conducted before a major commitment to cultural tourism is made (B 3.17)**

- 22** careful balance should be struck between the needs of visitors to heritage sites and the imperatives of conservation (*B 3.18*)

Libraries and Archives

- 23** the university establishes a diploma course for archivists (*B 4.2*)
- 24** a common policy approach should be agreed between the Church and the state regarding the future conservation and development of Malta's overall archival holdings (*B 4.5*)
- 25** a medium-term development strategy is required which would up-grade Malta's public libraries by installing new information technologies, increasing book purchases and enabling them to act as local access points to cultural and public information and services (*B 4.8*)

Traditional Celebrations

- 26** while any necessary steps should be taken to control public disorder, the *festas* should be maintained without bowdlerizing their popular, if at times rough, energy (*B 5.12*)
- 27** consideration be given to introducing artists and animators to work with the local organisers on enhancing the imaginative content of *festas* and broadening their creative scope (*B 5.13*)
- 28** the further development of international exchange and such initiatives as master classes run by professional band conductors; the encouragement of band clubs to commission new music; and the provision of training opportunities for band club members by the School of Music (*B 5.13*)

Contemporary Creativity

- 29** a new pro-active agency, with enterprise and specialist commercial or quasi-commercial skills, should be created to promote Maltese culture abroad (*B 6.4*)
- 30** a proposal to create an Academy for the Performing Arts which has fallen into abeyance should be re-considered (*B 6.6*)
- 31** the Ministry of Education establish and administer a well-resourced scholarship fund for talented young people to study their art form abroad. (*B 6.7*)
- 32** existing visual arts training provision be up-graded to, or complemented by, degree level courses (*B 6.8*)

- 33 the Ministry of Education should require the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts to develop a system of individual grants to artists (including travel grants, support for young artists and artists-in-residency schemes) (B 6.9)
- 34 relevant cultural institutions and drama groups in receipt of state funding should be encouraged to commission and present new Maltese work reflecting Maltese and Mediterranean realities (B 6.12)
- 35 the state of the Maltese publishing industry should be analysed with a view to considering how it could be strengthened through professional development and targeted investment. A study of the publishing industry should be commissioned to inform future policy for Maltese writing (B 6.13)
- 36 a direct support scheme (administered by the Council for Culture and the Arts) should be established to encourage literature, whether written in Maltese and in English (B 6.14)
- 37 support for translation of literature in Maltese into English and other languages should be introduced to raise the international profile of Maltese writers and grow the market for book sales as well as enhance the status of Maltese literature (B 6.15)
- 38 support for crafts development, perhaps through the Department of Economic Services, will be necessary (B 6.16)
- 39 stage censorship, being a control over the freedom of expression, is inconsistent with the principles of the Council of Europe and the European Union and should be abolished (B 6.17)
- 40 to protect their members' interests, it may be appropriate for artists' groups or associations to seek the support of larger, already established unions (B 6.21)
- 41 cultural and artistic associations or networks should co-operate with one another with a view to co-ordinating their efforts to raise the status of culture, to agree a unified agenda for development and act as an effective cultural lobby (B 6.23)
- 42 the Ministry of Education should discuss with the Ministry of Economic Services the improvement of copyright observance and collection in the cultural sector (B 6.25)
- 43 consideration should be given to establishing the *droit de suite* (B 6.26)

Arts Development

- 44 the Malta Council for Culture and the Arts) should establish a project fund to help existing 'amateur' drama and dance groups to present work of a more ambitious nature than they are in a position to do at present (B 7.7)

- 45** funding should be made available for theatre groups to provide theatre-in-education productions and other kinds of outreach activity (*B 7.8*)
- 46** a study of Malta's infrastructural needs should be commissioned, accompanied by an audit of dedicated arts buildings as well as spaces available for part-time arts usage, as the basis for an arts capital development strategy (*B 7.12*)

Maltese Language

- 47** the practice of writing in Maltese should be fostered, first, by establishing creative writing courses in Maltese in higher education; secondly, in the context of preserving the memory of Malta's social heritage, by establishing a community-based policy to encourage memoir-writing in Maltese by older people; thirdly, by investing in translation, not only of Maltese writing into other languages but of foreign writing into Maltese. Steps should be taken to increase the holdings in public libraries of books in Maltese (*B 8.10*)
- 48** speech in English on television should be translated or routinely subtitled in Maltese (*B 8.11*)

The Maltese Diaspora

- 49** if the Government adopts a pro-active international dimension to its cultural policy, this should be targeted in part at those countries with large Maltese populations (*B 9.2*)
- 50** other appropriate cultural measures to maintain contact with the Maltese diaspora could include the creation of a distance-learning language programme. The cultural and broadcasting communities in Malta could play a constructive role by further developing the production and distribution of films, videos and CDS for the benefit of Maltese expatriates (*B 9.3*)

Broadcasting and Film

- 51** we suggest that advantage be taken of existing production and script-writing training opportunities (such as those offered by Eureka Audiovisual and the Media Plus Programme) and that other such opportunities at the national level be increased and improved and that consideration be given to incentivizing independent production. (*B 11.7*)
- 52** the Government should encourage the further development of small-scale radio stations whose programmes are produced and presented by people from the communities they serve (*B 11.8*)
- 53** the Government should maintain its current policy of creating a favourable financial and fiscal environment for international film producers (*B 11*)

Financial and Fiscal Analysis

- 54 the Ministry of Education and the National Office of Statistics should prepare a comprehensive programme of cultural financial data collection, for early implementation (C 1.8)
- 55 the Government should carefully examine ways by which culture could contribute to the implementation of Malta's National Development Plan as well as regional and structural policy and should prepare to make use of the opportunities which European Union Structural Funds can offer for the development of cultural life in Malta (C 1.9)
- 56 the Government should study the possibilities of using lottery proceeds and other specialist taxes or levies for promoting the arts and contemporary artists and for other cultural purposes (C 1.11)

Legislative Arrangements

- 57 the successful implementation of the Cultural Heritage Act 2002 will depend on three things – first, first, clarity in the national heritage strategy, which should set clear, measurable sociocultural, as well as economic, standards and targets and establish an efficient monitoring and evaluation system; secondly, firm but sensitive handling of its regulatory functions by the Superintendance; and thirdly, explicit demarcation of the roles of the respective agencies (C 2.3)
- 58 an 'arms length' principle will be established, enabling the Council for Culture and the Arts to act independently so far as any artistic decisions are concerned (C 2.6)
- 59 the Council for Culture and the Arts should be empowered to convene working groups or advisory panels to help it with its work (C 2.7)
- 60 the Government should invite Local Councils to participate in drawing up the overall cultural policy framework and to produce cultural plans of their own consistent with this framework (C 3.5)
- 61 one of the first tasks for Heritage Malta and the Arts Council should be to identify gaps in useful knowledge and to establish research requirements in their respective fields of responsibility (C 4.13)
- 62 within a framework set by the Ministry of Education, Heritage Malta and the Council for Culture and the Arts should create an evaluation methodology which would govern their relations with the organisations and individuals they may come to support and enable them to demonstrate the success with which they deliver the Government's objectives as enshrined in its cultural policy (C 4.14)
- 63 the Ministry of Education publish a planning policy framework which sets out in as concrete terms as possible the Government's high level policy objectives and that Heritage Malta and the Council for Culture and the Arts

be then invited to prepare timetabled, targeted and costed development strategies (C 4.15)

E APPENDICES

Appendix A - List of those whom the group of experts met

Ms Francesca Abela Tranter, artistic director, Contact Dance Company

Leslie Agius, director, Foundation for International Studies

Paul Attard, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education

Monsignor John Azzopardi, curator and art historian, Mdina Cathedral Museum

Ms Hella Jean Bartolo, archivist, National Library of Malta, President of the Friends of the National Library

Tanya Bayona, President, Malta Dance Council

Ms Ritienne Bonavia, Council of Europe Desk Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Professor Albert Borg, Head of Linguistics, University of Malta

Rev. Joe Borg, consultant, Public Broadcasting Services

Philip Borg, Director, National Library of Malta

Dr Paul Borg Olivier, Mayor of Valletta

Dr Charles Briffa, President, Akkademja tal-Malti

Paul Buhagiar, senior officer, Department of Youth and Sport

Felix Busuttil, artistic director, Yada Dance Company

Oreste Calleja, dramatist and art teacher

Professor Maurice Cauchi, Researcher

Dr Vicki Anne Cremona, Department of Theatre Studies, University of Malta

Ms Silvana Cristina, Head of Radio Programmes, Public Broadcasting Services

Mr John Demanuele, Director for Culture, Ministry of Education

John Muscat Drago, PR, Malta Tourism Authority

John Ebejer, Marketing Manager, Malta Tourism Authority

Salvino Ellul-Bonici, PRO, National Youth Council

Noel E. Falzon, senior officer, Malta Tourism Authority

Victor Fenech, member, National Book Council and author

Stephen Florian, Co-ordinator, Educational Channel 22

Victor Formosa, Consultant Radio/TV

Ms Maria Frendo, senior officer, Department of Youth and Sport

Professor Joe Friggieri, playwright and Head of Philosophy Department, University of Malta

Professor Oliver Friggieri, Head of Maltese Studies, University of Malta

Dr Ranier Fsadni, anthropologist and lecturer, University of Malta

Chris Gatt, Manager, St James Cavalier Creativity Centre

Hon. Dr Louis Galea, Minister of Education

Anthony de Giovanni, Mayor of Fgura

Anton Grech, artist and art lecturer

Chris Grech, Director, Bay Street Complex

John Inguanez, Head of TV Programmes, Public Broadcasting Services

H.E. John Lowell, Chairperson, Manoel Theatre

Alfred Mallia, board member, Manoel Theatre and ex-Head of Drama School

Ms Marie-Louise Mangion, Malta Tourism Authority

Albert Marshall, Head of Programmes, Super 1 TV

Luciano Micallef, artist

Ronnie Micallef, Director, British Council, Malta

Joe J. Mifsud, Chairperson, National Commission for Folklore

Dr Paul V. Mifsud, Co-ordinator, Policy Unit, Ministry of Education

Dr George Mifsud Chircop, lecturer and researcher, Department of Ethnography, University of Malta

Anthony Pace, Director of Museums

George Peresso, cultural radio broadcaster, retired

Nicholas de Piro, private curator

Professor Roberto Prantin, lecturer, Institute of Media Studies, University of Malta

Antonio Espinosa Rodriguez, Curator, National Museum of Fine Arts and Malta Maritime Museum

Dr Lillian Sciberras, director, Melitensia Section, University of Malta

Adrian Tonna, senior officer, Department of Youth and Sport

Raphael Vella, artist and critic

Appendix B

- Cultural Funding Organigram
- Cultural Budget and Analysis