

IGBK 2019 project "Übergänge/Nachbarschaft" - Results and call for action



In 2019, the Internationale Gesellschaft der Bildenden Künste (IGBK) held several events in Germany's border regions with artists and persons active in the cultural sector as well as the fields of science and administration to discuss the particularities of cross-border artistic cooperation at the transitions between Germany and its neighbouring countries.

Along the borders between neighbouring European countries are a wealth of decentralised artists' projects that are characterised by a high degree of local and cross-border networking. This artistic exchange between regions and across borders makes an important contribution to cultural and political cohesion in Europe.

At the same time, in view of Brexit and new forms of nationalism within the European Union, it is worth asking, in the year 2019, about the extent to which inner-European borders are transitions, what new demarcations exist and how artists deal with them.

Lastly, the final negotiations regarding the new 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework of the European Union are currently taking place and new operational and cooperation programmes in the areas of Cohesion Policy and European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg) are being drawn up at national and (inter)regional levels of the European Union.

The following aspects of cross-border artistic and cultural cooperation in border regions in particular were highlighted at the "Übergänge/Nachbarschaft" ("Transitions/ Neighbourhood") series of events:

- There are often asymmetric administrative and funding structures in the neighbouring countries, which makes cross-border cooperation more difficult between persons active in the cultural sector.
- The existing infrastructure plays an important role in cross-border cooperation in the cultural sector because the regions in question are often only sparsely populated or can be characterised as rural. Particularly important elements include an adequate transport infrastructure, a functioning data network, free formal and informal education offerings and basic cultural services.
- For this reason alone, also for the art and cultural sector, the importance of EU Cohesion Policy and European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg), as well as the opportunities for promoting cross-border and regional cooperation in the context of the ERDF and ESF Structural Funds, cannot be overestimated.
- At the same time, the potential of EU structural policy for the support of cultural and artistic cooperation (in the preparation of programmes, applications for funding and in public relations work) is often not sufficiently exploited or publicised.
- From the point of view of the sponsoring institutions and organisers, the historical background must be taken into account, especially from a German perspective, and an approach must be sought that respects regional cultural characteristics.
- The arts are an important component of the scientific and political examination of communities and borders. They can proactively create real-utopian images where existing demarcations obscure the actual bridging function of borders.

The IGBK and its projects are supported by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media and by the Kulturstiftung der Länder.



K U L T U R
S T I F T U N G · D E R
L Ä N D E R

IGBK 2019 project "Übergänge/Nachbarschaft" - Results and call for action

We call on the political and administrative actors at the different levels of the European Union and its member states to do the following:

- Take culture into account within the framework of the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund +, as already suggested by the European Parliament in the spring of 2019 in response to the European Commission's draft of new regulations for these funds.
- Mention culture explicitly in connection with Interreg-funded citizens' and small-scale projects, as the European Parliament also suggested in its amendments on the European Commission's draft for the forthcoming provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal in the spring of 2019.
- Take into account the potential of art and culture within the framework of the EU member states' rural development programmes.
- Emphasise explicitly the value of culture - alongside cultural heritage - for sustainable development, social cohesion, economic progress and the promotion of European integration.
- Create opportunities through the new operational and cooperation programmes for the structural funds and for Interreg in the EU member states and regions, which will allow for the (easier) support of cultural offerings, artists or people active in the cultural sector. Make clear recommendations to the regional administrative authorities in this regard.
- Use the new programmes to simplify access to EU regional funding for cultural actors and, in particular, to the INTERREG programmes. Offer practical guidance and advice for the cultural and creative sector on the development of projects within the framework of funds and programmes, as many EU member states regions are already doing by way of example.
- In the case of projects that are implemented with the help of EU funds, adequate remuneration for the artists involved must be guaranteed. No funding without adequate remuneration!

Cross-border cooperation among artists requires the effective removal of obstacles to mobility - also in border regions

- by supporting the work of and exchange between Mobility Info Points (within the On The Move network).
- by continuing and developing the i-Portunus programme and other EU programmes providing financial support for the short-term mobility of artists and cultural professionals.
- by removing administrative barriers faced by artists and cultural professionals in relation to social security (or with a view to European coordination of the various social security systems), tax and visa matters (when cooperating with non-EU partners), etc.

Background and further steps

IGBK unites Germany's three most important supra-regional artist associations on the basis of equality: [Bundesverband Bildender Künstlerinnen und Künstler](#) (BBK - Federal Association of Artists), [Deutscher Künstlerbund](#) and [Verband der Gemeinschaften der Künstlerinnen und Kunstfördernden](#) (GEDOK - Federation of Women Artists and Patrons of the Arts). IGBK therefore represents more than 14,000 visual artists in Germany.

As part of the European Secretariat of German Culture-NGOs, IGBK is active within [Culture Action Europe \(CAE\)](#), the major European network of cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics and policymakers with more than 140 members from 28 countries. In 2019, IGBK was part of the organizing team of the annual CAE conference, this year taking place in Konstanz/Kreuzlingen under the title „[Culture Crops – cultural practices in non-urban territories](#)“.

This paper has been initially published in German and sent to administrative and political representatives at the German national and Federal State level, to different regional and scientific organizations, as well as to the regional sections of IGBK's member associations. Furthermore, our aim is to initiate an exchange with our European partners on this call for action.

Find more information on the series of events "Übergänge/ Nachbarschaft" on the [IGBK Webpage](#).