



EU Referendum: a cultural response (2)

22 January 2016
12:00- 4:00 pm
HOME, Manchester

Participants: List in annex. All participants were either UK-based Culture Action Europe members, members of members, had been connected to the network via prior activities, or were suggested via participants. Approx. 25 people attended, representing primarily organisations active in the cultural, social and artistic field as well as political stakeholders.

Moderation: Clymene Christoforou, ISIS Arts, Member of the Culture Action Europe Executive Committee

Introductory input

IN campaign: Britain Stronger in Europe, Joshua Fenton-Glynn

- In a brief introductory statement, Joshua draws upon a personal experience during the flooding which hit the region recently: In all chaos, it was invaluable to see that when the world is unforgiving, people come together in solidarity. This solidarity should be the same towards Europe.
- He states the presumed date of referendum as 23 June, though the probability of this date must constantly be re-evaluated.
- In order to win the campaign, the IN campaign needs as many positive messages from as many different voices as possible.
- Answering to a participant's question, he states that he cannot yet confirm how financial resources of the official IN campaign could be spent on events promoted by others, but nonetheless encourages people interested to contact him.
- The Britain Stronger in Europe campaign could provide leaflets and adapt them to target groups if requested.
- He regrets the early presumed date of the referendum, as the longer people have to think, the more likely they can be expected to vote IN.
- Joshua has since written to underline his interest in linking with the arts and culture sector in the framework of the Britain Stronger in Europe campaign, particularly acting as case studies for why European working improves our sector. Feel free to contact him with suggestions and support: Joshua Fenton-Glynn, North West Field Director, Britain Stronger In Europe, joshua.fentonglynn@strongerin.co.uk, Phone: 07811 131 927

In a side-line, S. Mundy explains a possible rationale behind the choice of the date of the 23rd as date for the referendum:

- *Referendums led by the government have a history of being lost if in Autumn;*
- *Economic news might get worse, giving more strength to "out" votes;*
- *A prompt referendum avoids further "blood let" in the conservative party;*
- *Cameron wishes to avoid the referendum to become his "legacy".*

Culture Action Europe: A European perspective on the EU referendum, Katherine Heid

- Katherine explains the position of CAE, underlining the importance of culture and the arts to speak up in decisions that affect the culture in which today's and future generations shall be living. She questions the OUT campaign's position as the "people's vote" and stresses that the IN campaign should also underline issues such as solidarity and values, bringing it closer to the citizens.
- For an insight on CAE's position and European funding mechanisms benefitting the arts, see here: <http://www.artsprofessional.co.uk/magazine/article/european-perspective>.

Julie Ward, MEP for the North West of England

- Based upon her insights as MEP, Julie underlines that what is important about the EU is not the money, but the exchanges; in the event of an exit, it is the conversation, the process of creating a space to live together which would be at risk.
- She presents a booklet: "100 Things the EU has done for the North West", which she encourages using as inspiration to provide facts for pro-EU arguments and campaigns. (Note: This booklet is currently being amended; please contact Julie/Trevor soon for a link to the upcoming final version.)
- The groups that stand to lose the most in the event of an exit are the most vulnerable: people with disabilities, women, children (impact of European Arrest warrant), migrants, LGBTQIA communities etc.
- Julie regrets that that 16-18 year olds shall not be allowed to vote, as it is their future that is at stake.
- While the European Parliament is currently a centre right majority, making left-wing arguments less visible, the EU is bound by consensus politics, and seems in its political discourse more "mature" than the UK national parliament.
- Julie draws attention to her article on radical democracy: http://static1.squarespace.com/static/526e5978e4b0b83086a1fede/t/55ef5142e4b05354020f674a/1441747266058/Build+the+City_eBook.pdf (page 272)
- She also plans to write a piece about the impact of the EU on children and young people.
- Challenges lie in the fact that the right wing influenced press will not speak about the successes of the EU, e.g. in the field of humanitarian/development aid,...
- The "real" challenge is on the left, with left-wing / socialist thinkers and decision-makers speaking out against what they interpret as the conservative/ business-led model of the EU e.g. John Hilary (author of the War on Want): <http://www.waronwant.org/media/eu-referendum-how-should-left-vote>
- Julie suggests that the participants contact their MEPs for support, many of which shall be supporting an IN perspective (including conservative and in some cases even UKIP-politicians!).
- Trade Unions: Show Culture some Love campaign: https://www.facebook.com/Show-Culture-Some-Love-681369251974861/timeline/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel
- www.juliewardmep.eu

Existing campaigns in the field of culture (web-based)

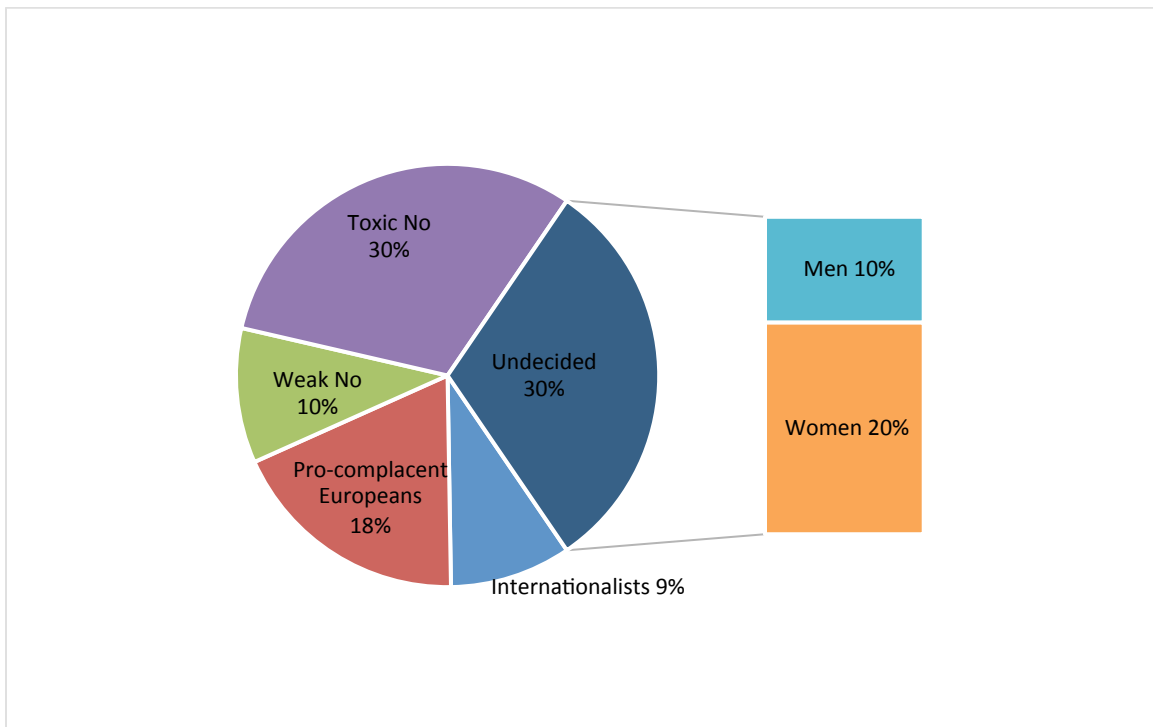
- Arts In : www.artsIN.com.uk

Geoffrey Brown presents this campaign, points out however his lack of time and resources to keep it up to date. Once the Creatives4Culture (see below) website is up and running, Geoffrey is happy to migrate content.

- **Creatives4Europe**

- Carole announces the approx. launch date as 17 March 2016.
- The campaign is linked as a “branch” campaign to the European Movement (see also other target specific campaigns on their website such as Students4Europe, ...)
- Carole will be collecting quotes and providing a list of events.
- She is considering a performance of comedian Eddy Izzard as a possible highlight of the campaign.

Whom do we target?



(above statistic via Carole Tongue)

- **The categories “Complacent Europeans” (might not turn up to vote) and “Undecided” need to be targeted specifically.**
- People need to be **informed** of the upcoming referendum and its importance, so that they have the opportunity to start looking for information and developing an opinion of their own.
- We need to understand target groups and build personal relationships. For many Europe is an abstract concept that does not have anything to do with their world (taking part in an Erasmus exchange etc.), but who might however be suffering from existential fears which make them prone to arguments of the OUT campaign (Bolton at Home).

- IN/OUT vote is creating fissures within parties and different views on Europe are to be observed throughout all of Europe.

What messages should we convey?

- Differing opinions were expressed. The choice of message ultimately depends on the target group/individuals.
- While some participants (Tom Higham) expressed their concern and felt uncomfortable conveying **messages of fear** (seen as a right wing strategy, or also seen as increasing the burden of fear already weighing heavily on citizens), others underlined that there is no time left to start a **campaign on values and positive messages** on Europe.
- It is then suggested (J. Ward) to frame messages, even if threatening, in a positive manner (“this is what the EU gives us and we risk losing”).
- The business oriented tone of the IN campaign is seen as off-putting by some (T. Higham).
- It is also regretted that **emotions** are missing in the IN campaign.
- It is seen as important to point out that the UK might disintegrate if it were to leave the EU (Scotland, Northern Ireland being pro-EU).
- It is mentioned that we should not copy the “Scotland please don’t go” campaign, as this was seen as too patronising.
- Convey message: We will not stop being part of Europe if we’re out, but we will be weak.
- Refer to “Mythbusters” and “Fact checks”: The European Parliament’s Labour Party had published a printed “Myth buster”, available on demand. See also MEP Richard Corbett’s Mythbuster: <http://www.richardcorbett.org.uk/mythbusters/> or the app Doorstep EU: <http://www.richardcorbett.org.uk/app/>.
- The IN campaign has to speak to individuals, not groups (it is not groups voting!), generating individual fear and hope (just as the OUT campaign is generating fear).
- It must be made clear that mobility for artists will be cut after an OUT vote and that the EU will impose restrictions to avoid other countries following suit. (S. Mundy)

What can we do?

The role of culture and the arts

- Arts and Culture have a responsibility and role to play, as no one can communicate better on the ground (Trevor Mc Farlane)
- Culture is what makes us European.

Suggestions for strategy and positioning

- Take common history and upcoming commemorative events as an anchor for speaking about the EU’s history and the importance of the referendum (14-18 commemorations, 71st anniversary of D-Day on 9 May,...); Harry Lesley (WWII veteran)

- The voice of youth should be heard, even if they are not allowed to vote (it is their future!)
- The OUT side has strong speakers (Michael Caine's anti-EU film)→ the IN-side should also bring in celebrities and other respected/public figures
- The arts need to talk to their audiences and connect with people offline (not only via websites etc.) (S. Mundy)

Steps forward

- We need to manage to access newspapers (At the moment, OUT messages are dominant).
- 100 days "1 tweet a day" pro-EU
- Bring together a group of Ex-MEPs (C. Tongue,...).
- Create works on the topic of the referendum: G. Brown planning show at Brighton Fringe
- Encourage European networks to speak out for EU and integrate this message in their UK-based activities and via members.
- Encourage debating competitions to integrate EU IN/OUT debate.
- Sign up for Britain Stronger in Europe campaign; Keep in touch with regional branch managers of Britain Stronger in Europe campaign
- Issue a statement on the front page of websites/ your newsletter
- Using the arguments researched in J. Ward's "100 Things the EU has done for the North West" and extract those of use to your sector for your own line of argumentation. Refer also to articles and "Mythbusters" mentioned earlier.
- Share messages aiming at specific target groups for others to take on/ modify.
- **Campaign suggestion: Short films/ Photos** of 30 secs- 1 minute: Everybody finds 1 advocate who is respected in the community they work with and ask them for a 1 minute video on their position
 - o Inform others of these videos, create hashtag, youtube channel,... (coordination via Carole Tongue?),
- Link to Engaged University agenda https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/sites/default/files/publication/manifesto_for_public_engagement_final_january_2010.pdf
- Link up with What Next? (in Scotland possibly: Culture Counts <http://culturecounts.scot/>)

Katherine Heid, CAE, 8 February 2016

Suggestions received since the meeting:

- Jo Ward draws attention to the series of event "Speakers for Schools- Creativity and Arts Campaign launch" (25 January – 10 February). At this and similar events, it would be interesting to use this as a platform to get children and their parents speaking about "reasons to stay in Europe".
- Jo Ward also writes of the WEA's (Workers' Educational Association) activity in the field of voter education and the EU referendum and points out the campaign: <http://www.nw.wea.org.uk/whyvote>. WEA also confirmed they are starting two pilot

courses at the People's History Museum in Manchester in March and a second activity in Liverpool which will be followed by visits for students to Brussels in November. Contact is Julie Ballantyne: JBallantyne@wea.org.uk