

## Cultural Employment in Europe

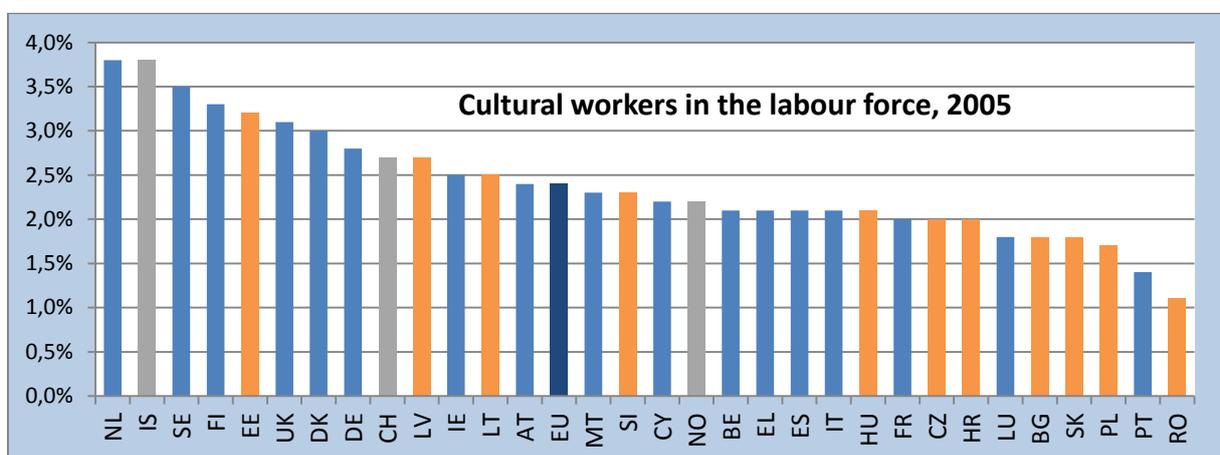
The Budapest Observatory has repeatedly communicated on cultural employment in Europe from our own angle, keen about the eastern half of the continent. [First in 2004](#), when Eurostat brought out relevant comparative figures for the first time. [Then in 2007](#), when Eurostat released the first pocketbook on culture. Now in 2015 two publications made us take a fresh look at the issue: one is [a study](#) by the multinational audit firm Ernst & Young, the other is [an ENCC report](#). Both examine the creative sector at large with due regard also to employment data. Keeping to the track that we began ten years ago, we limit the examination to cultural employment in the conventional sense, leaving video games, advertising, architecture etc. to other observers.

For us the starting point is 2002, [presented](#) by Eurostat in 2004. The total rate of cultural workers in the labour force of the European Union was established as 2.5% then, higher in the west, lower in the east. (As seen, Eurostat collected data from countries already before their accession to the EU.) Cultural employment soared in Iceland with 4.2%.



The great virtue of that first communication was its focus on the internal composition of cultural employment by education and status: temporary, part time and self-employed workers. We analysed it [then](#) but this time we keep to the general figures.

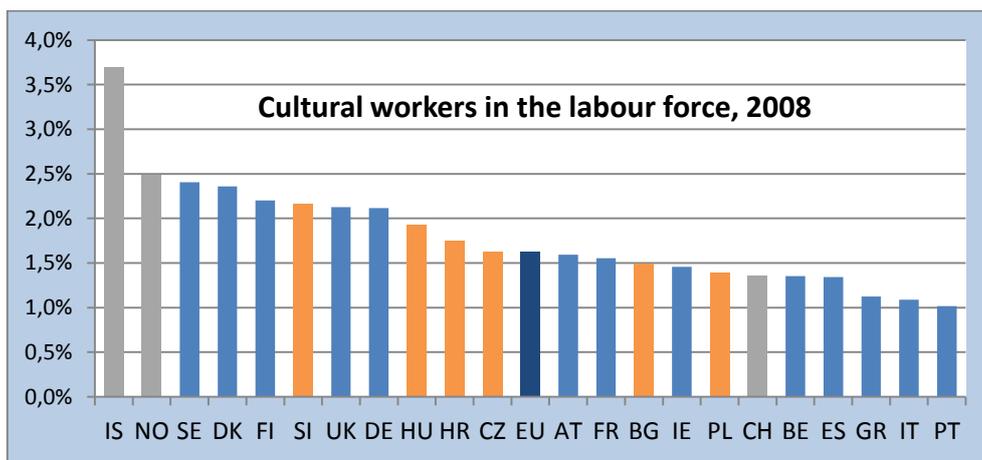
[By 2005](#), still before the deepest point of the global financial crisis, the EU rate of cultural employment went down a bit to 2.4%. Eastern countries on the other hand had made some advance, now all three Baltic republics were above the European average in terms of cultural employment. (We do not know whether Latvia had made a sudden leap ahead indeed after 2002 or data were counted differently.) Romania appeared for the first time and took the last position from Slovakia.



The second Eurostat pocketbook on cultural statistics came out [in 2011](#) with different methods, using five categories of [NACE Rev.2](#), the EU statistical classification of economic activities. This measurement is applied also in the new ENCC paper, as well as for the next few paragraphs. Eurostat enrolls five NACE categories under cultural employment:

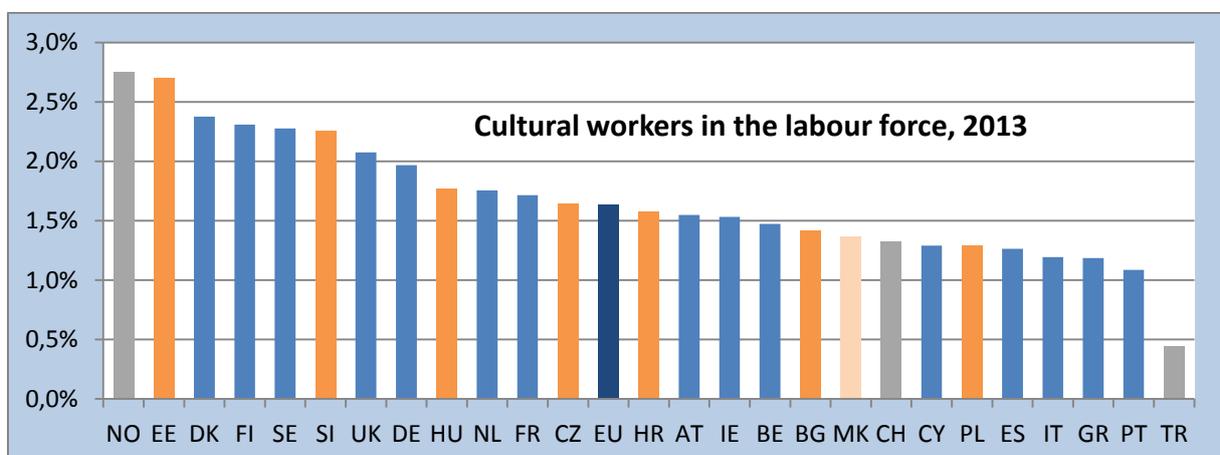
- J58 – Publishing activities
- J59 – Motion picture, video and television program production, sound recording and music publishing activities
- J60 – Programming and broadcasting activities
- R90 – Creative, arts and entertainment activities
- R91 – Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities

The graph presents statistics from 2008, the last full year before the financial crisis. Unfortunately there are data on all five categories for 22 countries only.



Besides three years, there is a fundamental difference in calculating method from the preceding diagram. The cultural employment rate in Iceland remains the highest, regardless how it is counted. Data for the three Baltic states are missing from 2008, nevertheless the 2005-2008 period, or with much greater likelihood the methodological shift pushed the majority of eastern countries above the European total of cultural employment rate. Which is much lower than it was according to the former method: instead of 2.4% in 2005, the new EU figure is 1.6%.

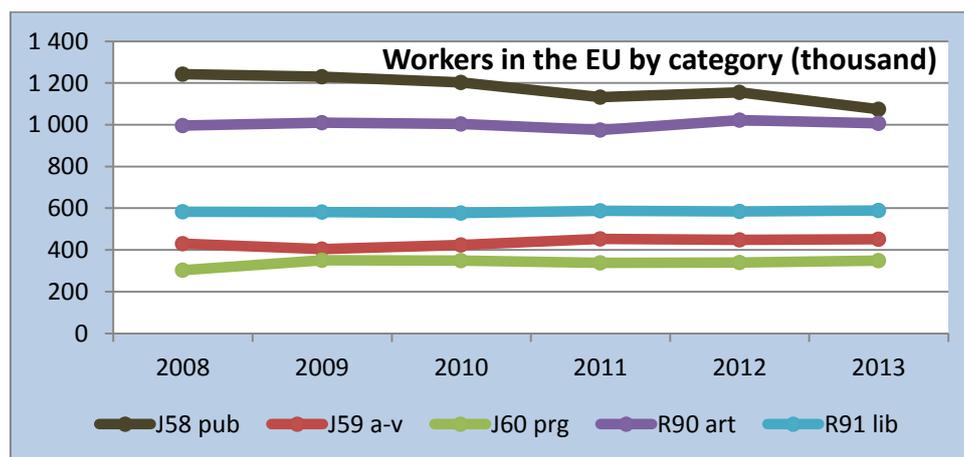
More exactly 1.62%; this precision is needed to express the change towards the latest available number: for 2013 [Eurostat](#) communicates 1.64%, a slight increase in the share of cultural workers in the total EU labour force.



Wherever figures are available for both years, the latest figures can be compared with the 2008 data. Regardless of the turbulences with regard to public finances and other conditions of culture in these post-crisis years, aggregated employment figures prove the resilience [in the title](#) of one of the new publications.



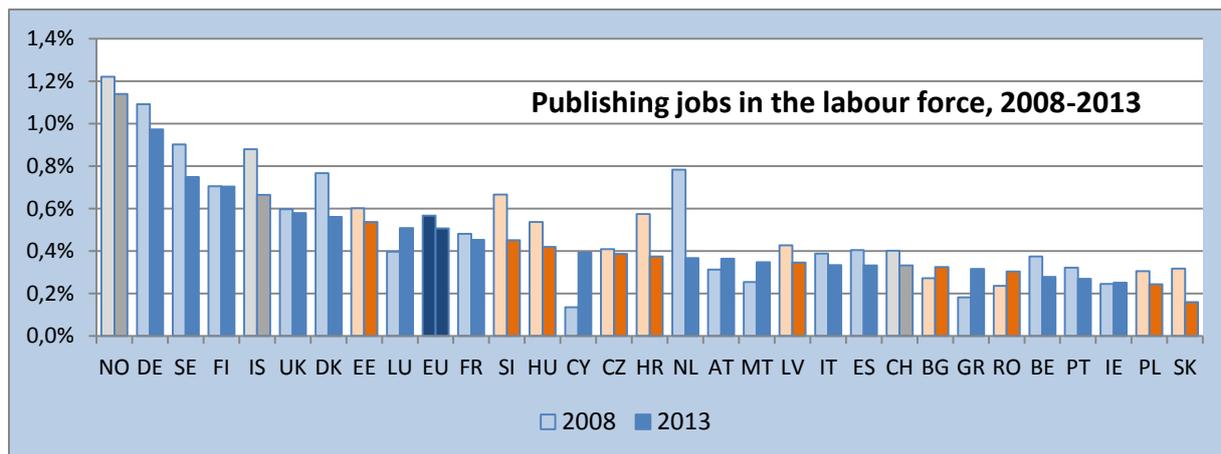
For the lacunae in statistics you can be compensated by looking at the five sub-categories, some of which are better equipped with data. First let us see the aggregated figures of the six latest years:



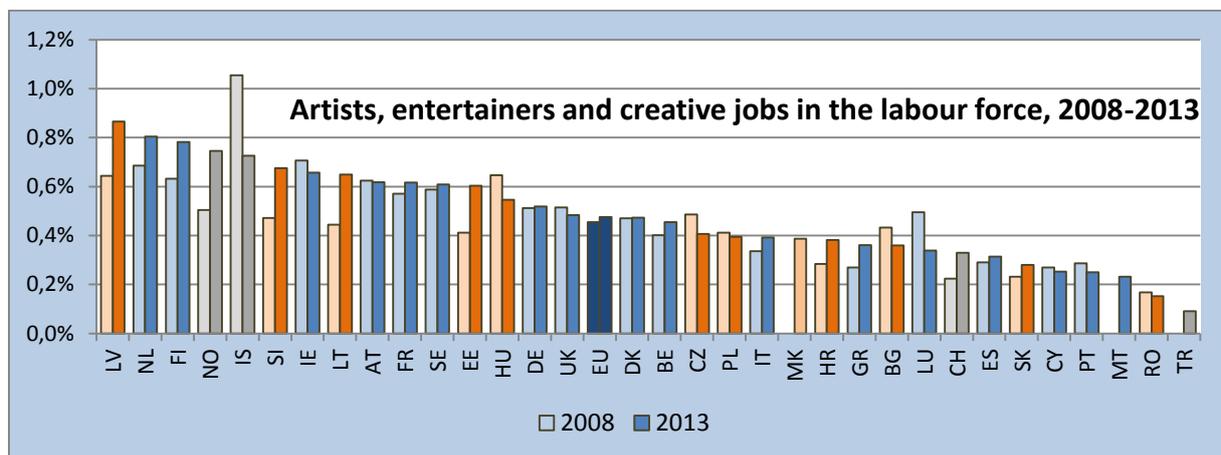
The most populous category is *J58 – Publishing activities*, the only one where decrease is clearly visible. Very soon there will be fewer than a million people in one or other publishing jobs in the EU, going probably below the number of “artists”, people categorised as *R90 – Creative, arts and entertainment activities*, who seem to be constantly around a million.

Less numerous are the remaining three groups: *R91 – Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural activities*, followed in size by *J59 – Motion picture, video and television program production, sound recording and music publishing activities*, and finally *J60 – Programming and broadcasting activities*.

The next graph tells us how the decrease in publishing jobs is spread across countries. In some cases the large drops can be explained by the monotonous descent in the annual tables (e.g. Denmark and Netherlands), but sudden overnight slumps often embarrass the observer, suspicious of statistical anomalies. Nevertheless we can see that the share of publishing jobs in the total labour force of the EU fell from 0.56% to 0.51% in five years. (EU stands for EU28 in every case, i.e. Croatia is included in the 2008 figures, too, and Norway, Iceland and Switzerland are excluded from them.)



The million artists are presented in the following graph. As seen, there has been a slight growth in proportion, from 0.46% to 0.48% within the total work force in the European Union. Nevertheless the one instance where such occupations reached one per cent is memory only: Iceland in 2008. The title of most “artistic” labour force has been taken by Latvia. On the whole, this type of occupation remains more stable in the east: out of eleven countries the percentage share increased in six cases.



The study prepared by Ernst & Young (EY) applies an entirely different approach. No wonder that the outcome is different. Remembering the one million artists and related jobs found by Eurostat, one is astonished that EY found that the performing arts and music sectors employ more than 1m people each. EY looks at eleven branches within the cultural and creative industries, eleven markets as they say. The most populous market, performing arts, is built up the following way (2011 data):

Non-profit sector	271,554
• Performing arts activities — production and creation	213,122
• Supporting activities to performing arts	40,247
• Venue activities	18,185
Profit sector	962,783
• Performing arts activities — production and creation	755,613
• Supporting activities to performing arts	142,694
• Venue activities	64,476
Total employment (estimate)	1,234,338

The music market (which EY defines as being different from performing arts) consists of the following segments (2012 data):

• Sound recording and music publishing activities	44,660
• Musicians, song writers	650,000
• Entertainment workers (profit sector)	375,239
• Entertainment workers (non-profit sector)	81,466
• Employment in non-specialized stores	9,133
• Employment in music radios	5,714
• Employment in music TV channels	1,884

Total employment 1,168,096

Besides Eurostat and other international and national statistical agencies, data were collected from professional associations and various studies.

The basic difference between NACE-based Eurostat data and those collected by EY is that the former counts people whose job is “cultural” and EY counts people in enterprises that are “cultural”. The former includes people who perform cultural tasks in non-cultural enterprises (e.g. doing publishing in a university, playing music in a hotel or running a school library), while the latter includes all kinds of workforce within cultural undertakings (e.g. accountants, catering, drivers etc.). It is indeed important to examine cultural employment from both aspects.

We have nevertheless a number of reservations about the EY study. Here are some. Probably the least important remark relates to the 650,000 musicians and song writers, who certainly are not full time employees as the list suggests. Laudable in this case is the figure rounded up to 000, while most other numbers are indecently exact (375,239 entertainment workers, not one less or more) when most if not all statistics are admittedly estimates. Furthermore, the sharp division between non-profit and profit sectors is highly problematic.

We have no doubt, however, that the figures of this study, docilely quoted in the introductions by two high ranking personalities (“the creative and cultural industries account for 4.2% of the GDP of the Union, nearly 7 million jobs” and “culture and creative industries employ 7 million people, ... generate 4.2% of EU GDP”) will ring in our ears during the next few years.

Péter Inkei, March 2015