



## European Cultural Learning Network

Progress Report

Public Part

## Project information

Project acronym: ECLN  
Project title: European Cultural Learning Network  
Project number: **527993-LLP-1-2012-1-UK-LEONARDO-LNW**  
Sub-programme or KA: Leonardo da Vinci, Development of Innovation Networks  
Project website: <http://ecln-network.com>

Reporting period: From 01/10/2012  
To 31/03/2014  
Report version: 01  
Date of preparation: 27/05/2014

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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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# Executive Summary

## ***The Background to the European Cultural Learning Network (ECLN):***

ECLN has been established to explore the vocational education and training issues that are relevant to 'Cultural Learning' practitioners, and organisations that employ them. It is creating a brand new European Network, drawing together a 'body of knowledge' in relation to the Vocational Education and Training dimension of Cultural Learning Practitioners.

The term 'Cultural Learning' as it is used by ECLN includes the whole range of artistic and cultural learning that is delivered by artists and creative people within and across three different situations.

1. '*informal situations*' e.g. through the ad-hoc sharing of knowledge and skills between people within informal artist networks;
2. '*non-formal situations*' e.g. occurring in cultural or art centres or through cultural and community associations; within arts-based projects and programmes targeted at specific communities or young people; or to promote, support and develop specific cultural or artistic practice;
3. '*formal situations*' e.g. classes, workshops, lectures or seminars as part of a formal learning programme in school, college, adult education or university.

All Cultural Learning Practitioners are practising artists who enable other people to learn by engaging them in artistic practice.

Stakeholders that are targeted for the European Cultural Learning Network project is all those working within the realm of Cultural Learning in Europe. This includes Artists, Educationalists, Public Policy officials, Social and Cultural Workers, Tutors and Creative and Cultural Business Advisors.

## ***ECLN aims to:***

- a) Map the Cultural Learning Sector and specify the range of jobs and roles performed by Europe's Cultural Learning Practitioners;
- b) Create a curriculum for new, European sector-relevant professional qualifications that have EQF recognition;
- c) Secure certification of new relevant qualifications for Cultural Learning Practitioners;
- d) Widen opportunities and platforms for dialogue, sharing information, practice, research, and expertise across the sector by creating a new web-based Observatory,
- e) Establish a new European Association of Cultural Learning (EACL) that is self-sustaining.

### ***ECLN Partnerships***

ECLN has a strategic and constructive range partners, across 'new' and 'old' Europe, North, Central, East and South, incorporating a balanced multi-player dimension across the stakeholders required for a holistic Multi-lateral Network.

### ***ECLN Project Approach***

The ECLN project is operating in a very diverse sector that has two main constituencies: the first is the Artist Freelancers that share their practice through formal, non-formal and informal contexts and strategies; the second, is the Cultural Organisation that delivers Cultural Learning to different people for different reasons.

The approach of ECLN has to be congruent with these values and to assist in the articulation and recognition of the practice and to engage ECLN partners and their networks fully in the process. The Network is as strong as its individual node-connections and so it was a definitive strategy to de-centralise the network to strengthen the relationships between partners and to facilitate dialogues at a micro-level within the network. This approach has been very effective to enrich and develop partner relationships. The inclusion of external stakeholders beyond the Cultural Learning Sector has enlivened the debates, stimulated deeper thought and enabled the alignment of the ECLN results to a broader cross-section of stakeholders.

### ***Mapping the Cultural Learning Sector:***

The ECLN Research was carried out in 10 partner countries: Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain and UK. This research was highly qualitative and was carried out by partners using a Research Tool-kit of 7 ECLN Research Charts. The findings included that all Cultural Learning Support is predominantly delivered in the context of Artistic Practice so it can be conceived as '*Practice-based*' or '*Artist-led*' learning. Traditionally, there has always been a community of practice based on art-form: however, the ECLN research demonstrates that there is also a community of practice across art-form made up from those individuals and organisations that deliver cultural learning support.

ECLN research has identified the main focus of Cultural Learning work into 5 specific key areas: *Art-form Practice, Cultural Learning Contexts, Knowledge Transfer Strategies, Community of Practice Protocols and Evaluation strategies.*

**New European sector-relevant EQF-compliant professional qualifications,** ECLN partners have developed a curriculum that is based on the core competencies made evident in the research. This curriculum is flexible enough to support different art-forms, delivery contexts, purposes, knowledge transfer and assessment strategies. It has been devised as a series of menus rather than a prescribed set of core competencies because of the diversity of the practice in the sector and to cater for specific emphases and purposes. This will facilitate Cultural Organisations to value, integrate and embody it within their practice.

### ***New web-based Observatory***

ECLN partners have undertaken a comprehensive programme of dissemination,

communication activity and stakeholder engagement, and have constructed a framework and blueprint for a web-based observatory to widen opportunities and platforms for dialogue, share information, practice, research, and expertise across the sector.

**A new European Association of Cultural Learning**

Current ECLN research, together with feedback and participation within the Observatory, will help ECLN to establish the unique selling proposition and determine the key sources of value-add for investigating the potential European Association for Cultural Learning. This will enable ECLN to establish a sustainable and on-going outcome from the Network, (EACL).

**ECLN Project Web-site: [www.ecln-network.com](http://www.ecln-network.com)**

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# 1. Project Objectives

ECLN has been established to explore the vocational education and training issues that are relevant to 'Cultural Learning' practitioners, and the organisations that employ them. It is creating a brand new European Network, drawing together a 'body of knowledge' in relation to the Vocational Education and Training dimension of Cultural Learning Practitioners.

The term 'Cultural Learning' as it is used by ECLN includes the whole range of artistic and cultural learning that is delivered by artists and creative people within and across three different situations.

4. '*informal situations*' e.g. through the ad-hoc sharing of knowledge and skills between people within informal artist networks;
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6. '*formal situations*' e.g. classes, workshops, lectures or seminars as part of a formal learning programme in school, college, adult education or university.

All Cultural Learning Practitioners are practising artists who enable other people to learn by engaging them in artistic practice.

Stakeholders that are targeted for the European Cultural Learning Network project is all those working within the realm of Cultural Learning in Europe, incorporating:

- Artists, Trainers, teachers, educationalists;
- Vocational information, advice and guidance personnel;
- Public policy officials and managers responsible for culture, economic development, and lifelong learning;
- People working in the field of culture and social inclusion;
- Tutors and Advisers working with learners who start up new CCI enterprises.

ECLN has a number of specific objectives. These are:

- f) To identify the pattern, applications and current qualification routes within National VET systems across Europe that are relevant to the field of Cultural Learning;
- g) To specify the range of jobs and roles performed by Europe's Cultural Learning Practitioners;
- h) To create new, European sector-relevant EQF-compliant professional qualifications,

- i) To develop, test and implement methods for the certification of new qualifications for Cultural Learning Practitioners;
- j) Through the creation of a new web-based Observatory, to widen opportunities and platforms for dialogue, share information, practice, research, and expertise across the sector;
- k) To establish, as a sustainable and ongoing outcome from the Network, a new European Association of Cultural Learning (EACL).

In order to meet these objectives ECLN has been working to date to do the following:

- Increase the sector's knowledge base and widen access to it;
- Encourage interaction and exchange promoting sharing of models of good practice;
- Facilitate the move towards EQF aligned VET accreditation.

If we are successful in achieving our goals, we will have made a substantial contribution to the European knowledge for what is a relatively unexplored, yet long-standing and important sector. We will have consolidated a new Network and considered the formation of a new Professional Association, equipped to train and accredit its members, having raised awareness at a public policy level of the scope and effectiveness of this hidden European 'asset' that has been contributing to Europe's growing creative industrial economy and to helping disadvantaged learners access Europe's vocational systems for many years.

## 2. Project Approach

The ECLN project is operating in a very diverse sector that has two main constituencies: the first is the Artist Freelancers that share their practice through formal, non-formal and informal contexts and strategies; the second, is the Cultural Organisation that delivers Cultural Learning to different people for different reasons.

There is a very diverse set of work contracts and organisational structures for this type of work according to the research participants. However, there is a remarkable consensus about the competences and resources needed to do this work and there is a highly qualified work-force to do this. There is very little public recognition and validation for this work which exists as a cultural learning ecology and consists of a networked community of practice who transfer creative and cultural knowledge to each other as a means of developing talent and other human potential.

The approach of ECLN has to be congruent with these values and to assist in the articulation and recognition of the practice and to engage ECLN partners and their networks fully in the process.

One of the end goals of the project is to consider the feasibility of and potential for creating a European Association for Cultural Learning and this is the end that the partners are bearing in mind. Through the research project, which was able to engage individuals and cultural organisations from Partners' country networks in an in-depth dialogue about their practices, environment and challenges there was a strengthening of relationships and an opportunity to recognise and consolidate a community.

The Network is as strong as its individual node-connections and so it was a definitive strategy to de-centralise the network in the curriculum development work through opting for a set of sub-groups initially supported by the lead partner and then developing sub-group leadership roles. This has strengthened the relationships between partners and facilitated dialogues at a micro-level that have been able to be captured by Skype and in partnership meetings.

The lead partner, Collage Arts, has been connecting with individual partners regularly to ensure that everyone feels that they are supported with the work, particularly during the research and analysis process. Our Network project methodology is peer review based, founded on the fact that this is a relatively unexplored area and with the knowledge being 'in the heads' of those Cultural Learning Practitioners that constitute the target group, it will be highly reflection and dialogic-based, in relation to the development of methods, tools and pedagogical approaches and contributing also to learning mobility.

This approach has been very effective to enrich and develop partner relationships. Stakeholders from outside the Cultural Learning Sector have been particularly useful to continually challenge those inside the sector and to offer a range of perspectives. This has enlivened the debates, stimulated deeper thought and enabled the alignment of the ECLN results to a broader cross-section of stakeholders.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

ECLN has met the following specific objectives in the following ways:

#### ***Mapping the Cultural Learning Sector:***

The ECLN Research was carried out in all partner countries, with the exception of Denmark, as our partners there were from an Academic (Higher Education) Institution, which was solely concerned to give the background to the research, highlighting the current landscape and thinking and to support the research design and methodology.

The research was highly qualitative and was carried out by partners using a Research Tool-kit of seven ECLN Research Charts. Routes into Cultural Learning are evident as predominantly graduate and post-graduate but there are a number of people educated by the sector who need access to recognition and validation of their informal and non-formal learning to access employment and mobility.

Artists working in this sector average about 40% of their working time delivering *cultural learning support* and over 60% of their working time is used on their own *Artistic or Creative Practice*. This trend is reversed with Cultural Organisations who spent 30% on their time on their own practice compared to 70% of the time spent delivering *cultural learning support*. However, all Cultural Learning Support is predominantly delivered in the context of Artistic Practice so it can be conceived as '*Practice-based*' or '*Artist-led*' learning.

The ECLN research has specified a diverse range of job-contract types in Cultural Organisations and portfolio work practices of Artist-Freelancers. This portfolio approach also applies to both cultural learning art-forms and cultural learning contexts. Despite a diverse range of sector organisations, individuals, purposes and art-forms, the cultural learning practitioners have a consensus about the skill, knowledge attitudes and resources used in Cultural Learning Practice. ECLN also has access to a consensus of the novice, competent and proficient cultural learning practitioner profiles through the work of Euro-Aspire (<http://www.euro-aspire.com/>) although ECLN will necessarily adapt these and apply them at European Qualifications Framework levels 3, 6, and 7.

Traditionally, there is an art-form based community of practice but the ECLN research now demonstrates that there is also a community of practice across art-form made up of artists and cultural organisations that deliver cultural learning support.

ECLN research has identified the main focus of Cultural Learning work into 5 specific key areas: *Art-form Practice*, *Cultural Learning Contexts*, *Knowledge Transfer Strategies*, *Community of Practice Protocols* and *Evaluation strategies*. There is an *Art-form Practice* preference that differs between Freelancers and Cultural Organisations based on access to dedicated creative space and resources. There are 9 specific *Cultural Learning Contexts* in which work occurs with Professionals, Specialists and Generalists and with individuals, groups and communities. There are a range of *Knowledge Transfer Strategies* used for different

learners and contexts and these include more informal approaches such as coaching, mentoring, group-work, project inquiry as well as formal training and tutoring. There are Community of Practice Protocols which are soft skills valued by the Sector. These include Self-Awareness, Teamwork and Communication. Finally, there are Evaluation strategies from informal to formal at 4 levels: the immediate satisfaction level; the behavioural/attitudinal 'distance travelled' level; the performance improvement level; and the value-added level.

**New European sector-relevant EQF-compliant professional qualifications,** ECLN partners have developed a curriculum that is based on the core competencies made evident in the research which will be tested by partners in due course. Collage Arts has been in discussions with the UK Sector Skills Council to explore possibilities for the certification of new qualifications for Cultural Learning Practitioners.

The business case for this set of qualifications to be delivered across Europe is now being formulated. The ECLN curriculum is flexible enough to support different art-forms, delivery contexts, purposes, knowledge transfer and assessment strategies. It has been devised as a series of menus rather than a prescribed set of core competencies because of the diversity of the practice in the sector and to cater for specific emphases and purposes. The most important issue is that the ECLN Curriculum Framework is able to provide the means for Cultural Learners to attain a series of competence levels using their own selection from the Curriculum elements including art-form, cultural learning context, knowledge transfer strategies and assessment strategies but in such a way as to ensure individuals demonstrate a spread of competences across the framework at the appropriate level.

The ECLN Partners selected specific art-forms, contexts and evaluation strategies that they would be aiming to use in their usual practice, projects and on-going work from the Curriculum Menus. They carried this out as a collective exercise through discussions held in 3 sub-groups of 3-4 partners using email and Skype supported initially by ECLN Project Facilitator and then developing a Leading Partner in each sub-group. Each sub-group selected certain shared and individual Curriculum elements e.g. 3 Curriculum items shared between each subgroup and one individual curriculum item for each partner.

It is important that the means of accessing the menus and content and collecting and recording the evidence of individual attainment is rigorous but also to be able to fit within the values of the Cultural Learning Sector Community of Practice. This will facilitate Cultural Organisations to value, integrate and embody it within their practice and perhaps, also enable these organisations to offer support to individual artist-freelancer practitioners within their locality;

### **New web-based Observatory**

ECLN partners have constructed a framework and blueprint for a web-based observatory to widen opportunities and platforms for dialogue, share information, practice, research, and expertise across the sector. This will provide the key roles of 'Connecting', 'Training', 'Monitoring', 'Researching', 'Lobbying' and 'Recognising' that were tested in the research. The 'Connecting' and 'Training' functions were seen as the most important, with 'Connecting' having an overwhelming response

from both Artist-freelancers and from Cultural Organisation representatives.

### **A new European Association of Cultural Learning**

There has been some preliminary exploratory work carried out in the research but not relevant to the country and pan-European report (Charts 3 and 6). This research is examining issues of language diversity, concepts and terminology (Chart 6) and examining current sources of individual and organisational development and support within the sector. This research, together with feedback and participation within the Observatory, will help ECLN to establish the unique selling proposition and determine the key sources of value-add for the potential European Association for Cultural Learning. This will enable ECLN to establish a sustainable and on-going outcome from the Network (EACL).

In order to meet these objectives ECLN has been working to date to do the following:

- Increase the sector's knowledge base and widen access to it;
- Encourage interaction and exchange promoting sharing of models of good practice;
- Facilitate the move towards EQF aligned VET accreditation.

## 4. Partnerships

We have a strategic Network of 12 partners from 11 countries that are participating in the consortium. In addition, from our base of a further 20 associate partners, bringing 3 additional countries, we are building a 'network of networks' and an extensive contact list, through the extensive use of social media and on-line networking, to complement the traditional mechanisms of events, conferences, workshops, press articles and presentations which form part of our dissemination activity.

The core ECLN membership incorporates 'new' and 'old' Europe, North, Central, West, East and South, incorporating a balanced multi-player dimension across the stakeholders required for a holistic Multi-lateral Network. As a Network, we have brought together a core group of partners, some of whom worked together in a 2008 LdV Transfer Project, others in a 2009 DoI project and a number of new partners identified through previous dissemination activity - substantially extending to new countries, bringing together stakeholders to ensure full synergy and a route to sustainability.

The core and founding membership of ECLN consists of the following organisations:

Collage Arts (contractor and lead organisation), London, UK.

<http://www.collage-arts.org>

For almost 30 years Collage Arts has created opportunities for greater participation through cultural learning and training in the arts, cultural and creative industries. It also manages two Creative Industries Business Centres and Incubators in a former 'Chocolate Factory' contain over 220 creative industries SMEs and employers (see [www.chocolatefactoryartists.co.uk](http://www.chocolatefactoryartists.co.uk));

Rinova Ltd (management coordinator), London, UK

<http://www.rinova.co.uk>

Rinova is a social enterprise that specialises in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of Skills, Learning and VET programmes, particularly for young people. It specialises in the interface between VET, Employment and Employability, Enterprise and Cultural Learning.

VIA University College, Denmark

<http://www.viauc.com/Pages/via-university-college.asp>

VIA-UC is Denmark's largest University College and the third largest educational institution. VIA-UC has more than 17.000 students and its Faculty of Media, Arts, and Design offers programmes in character animation, textile handicraft and communication, as well as performing arts and cultural entrepreneurship.

DIMITRA ITD, Greece

<http://www.dimitra.gr/default.en.asp>

Dimitra has operated since 1989 as a private certified vocational training institute with extensive experience and unique competencies in both methodology development and production of practical solutions matching specific vocational and professional development needs. It provides professional training to participants (unemployed,

socially marginalised groups in the labour market, alienated and excluded young people and VET for employees of the private or public sector.

Fundacja ARTERIA, Poland

<http://www.fundacja-arteria.org>

The Arteria Foundation is a non-governmental organization and cultural association which aims to promote, propagate and develop culture and art in a spirit of intellectual dialogue. It does this not only through a variety of forms of artistic expressions but also through new trends and phenomena and an encounter of avant-garde and tradition and a clash of attitudes and a search for common features.

Associazione Culturale MuLab, Italy

<http://mulab.it>

MuLab Cultural Association is a not for profit organisation working for the promotion, consulting and education within the independent 'cultural industry' field. MuLab operates in the fields of promotion, management and organisation of cultural and artistic event; technical consulting and audio, video services; professional training in the framework of the cultural sector.

New Arts College, Netherlands

<http://www.newartsarnhem.nl>

New Arts College offers a project based learning environment where young people are given personal training in different art forms, career development and personal development. The young people who participate in the project become role models for other young people who are marginalised by society. New Arts College focuses on the disadvantaged, but also talented teenagers and young people, and provides the community based arts activities to give them new opportunities and raise aspirations.

Mitra, Slovenia

<http://www.mitra.si>

Mitra is non-profit association working for the development of audio-visual culture and intercultural dialogue. Mitra was formally established in July 2009 and supports the use of digital visual language in order to prevent social exclusion and create space for creative expression by people from different backgrounds.

Association Prostor Plus, Croatia

<http://www.prostorplus.hr>

Association Prostor Plus has over ten years of experience of performing arts education and site specific productions in Rijeka, Croatia. Prostor Plus meets a critical regional need by supplying professional training and performance opportunities to dance and physical theatre artists, site-specific productions, lectures and film screenings to local audiences

Kau Academy, Estonia

<http://kauacademy.com>

Kau Academy was founded in 2011 as an organization dedicated to local and international interdisciplinary co-operation between different forms of art, knowledge and culture. One of its aims is to promote initiatives and activities of lifelong learning

and educate Estonian audiences by bringing academics and cultural professionals from abroad to share their knowledge at different events in Kau Academy.

Hope for Children, Cyprus

<http://www.uncrcpc.org>

Hope for Children (HFC) was established in 2008 (Reg. No: 243637) and it's an independent non-profit organization aiming at protecting and promoting children's rights and supporting the active participation of young people in society. In this respect, it encompasses cultural learning as an approach to support conflict resolution and the building of understanding between both communities in Nicosia and Cyprus

ASSOCIACIÓ PER A LA CREACIÓ D'ESTUDIS I PROJECTES SOCIALS (CEPS)

<http://asceps.org/en>

CEPS is responsible for the management and implementation of socio-educational programmes for children, young people and adults, and further training for professionals in the field of culture and social inclusion, innovative research and development in new practices.

The consortium of Network partners has been built to ensure synergy across the whole spectrum of stakeholder perspectives. The Cultural Learning sector crosses terrains and different types of organisations and it is critical to ensure that the Network reflects this, encouraging diverse input and viewpoint.

The composition of our Network partners and associate partners is strongly multiplayer in composition, incorporating the full range of stakeholders that are capable of contributing to its objectives. They include VET institutions, NGOs, enterprises, artists' networks and associations, sector employer associations (Sector Skills Councils), qualification and curriculum authorities, local authorities, companies, and research centres, including universities.

## 5. Plans for the Future

### Testing of the ECLN Curriculum Menus and approaches to Content

The next stage of the development work in the ECLN project is to test the Curriculum in each of the Partner countries. Curriculum items will be tested in a range of Cultural Learning Contexts in the following sub-groups:

**Sub-group 1** (*Italy, Croatia, and Slovenia*) selected curriculum items: *Teamwork, Communication and Creative Process;*

**Sub-group 2** (*Cyprus, Greece, Estonia and Spain*) selected curriculum items: *Teamwork, Communication, Creative Process;*

**Sub-group 3** (*Poland, Netherlands and UK*) selected curriculum items: *Communication, Coaching, and Self-awareness;*

Additionally, Partners will test the following items of the ECLN Curriculum:

**Cyprus:** *Mentoring*

**Greece:** *Training*

**Estonia:** *Mentoring*

**Italy:** *Self-awareness*

**Croatia:** *Coaching*

**Slovenia:** *Mentoring*

**Poland:** *Cultural Contexts*

**Netherlands:** *Creative Processes*

**UK:** *Teamwork*

**Spain:** *Self-awareness*

### New Qualifications for the Cultural Learning Sector

Following this testing phase, the Curriculum Menus and content will be consolidated, the qualifications developed and the business case made for these. The process of achieving Certification and Validation for the qualifications will then be managed.

### The Observatory and the European Association for Cultural Learning

The Observatory will be established alongside the Pilot testing phase providing a wider forum to discuss and consolidate the Curriculum, Content and the Qualifications. The data from Research Charts 3 and Chart 6 will be analysed to form parts of a feasibility study to help with the formulation and the orientation of the European Association of Cultural Learning,

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

ECLN was conceived and designed at the transnational level, specifically to contribute to a number of critical policies of the European Union, including:

- *Sectoral* – the emerging Creative and Cultural Industries policy and programme framework of the European Union
- *Strategic* – Lisbon, ET2020, New Skills for New Jobs
- *Learning* – the Lifelong Learning and VET dimension

In *sectoral* terms, for instance, in 2010, the European Commission published its 2010 Green Paper *Unlocking the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)*. This key development– for the first time at the European policy level – highlighted the value of the creative and cultural industries to Europe’s economic and social well-being - “*Through partnerships with education, CCIs can also play a major role in equipping European citizens with the creative, entrepreneurial and intercultural skills they need ... Through these spill-over effects, Europe’s CCIs offer a path towards a more imaginative, more cohesive, greener and more prosperous future.*” The contribution of Creative Learning Practitioners in ECLN is a significant area of enquiry and development in the project

Furthermore, since ECLN has been launched the Commission’s ‘*Creative Europe*’ programme has been launched. Creative Europe is the European Commission’s framework programme for support to the culture and media sectors and noted at its launch that “*Thousands working in cinema, TV, culture, music, performing arts, heritage and related areas would benefit from increased EU support ... the cultural and creative industries, which are a major source of jobs and growth in Europe ... representing around 4.5% of European GDP and account for some 3.8% of the EU workforce (8.5 million people).*”

The Council of the European Union adopted(2011) its “*Conclusions on cultural and creative competences and their role in building intellectual capital of Europe*”, stating that these competences are critical to “*creativity and innovation, which in turn boosts smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*” and which invited the EC to support:

- Creative partnerships designed to boost cultural and creative competences
- The specific needs of cultural & creative small businesses
- Mobility and cross-border training and co-operation
- Dissemination of information relevant to European cooperation in the field of culture.

In *strategic* terms, ECLN incorporates all of these elements, and in particular contributes to the wider adoption and understanding of the critical importance of the Creative and Cultural Industries – as *both* a major and growing employment sector in itself, *and* one where cultural learning generates the transferable ‘new skills for new jobs’ that is so vital to fostering the ‘spill over’ effects (in terms of Lisbon calling for

Innovation, Creativity, the Learning Economy and Social Renewal) is therefore increasingly and urgently recognised by the EU and its Institutions as a major priority.

ECLN is being enabled to directly respond to the priorities set out by agendas including the EU's *New Skills for New Jobs* and the *Europe 2020 Strategy*. This notes that to 2020, "*Across sectors, transversal and generic skills will be increasingly valued on the labour market: problem-solving and analytical skills, self-management and communication skills, and the ability to work in a team.*" – all of which are explored in the core competencies development of ECLN.

In *Learning* terms, ECLN aligns itself to the objectives of 'A New Impetus for European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training' (June 2010), to support the 2020 strategy, stated that VET must:

- create flexible systems based on recognition of learning outcomes
- develop adequate support for those at a disadvantage and play a major role in addressing Europe's high youth unemployment
- promote social inclusion through accessible learning and support cross border mobility

The work of ECLN in building the knowledge base concerning Cultural learning practitioners is highlighted the interface between the worlds of work and training, promotes skills based qualifications, responds directly to employers' requirements, brings together stakeholders and thrives on flexibility and innovation.

The Lifelong Learning Programme priorities and the Copenhagen Declaration on developing common European principles for identification and validation of non-formal learning are clear all embedded in EXLB as is the 2008 call of the EU Ministers of Education and Training for the development of "*a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal learning with the aim of ensuring greater compatibility between approaches in different countries and at different levels*". This is exactly what we are seeking to do – but by building the European dimension 'at the outset'.