

A man with a beard and a white t-shirt is performing on stage. He is holding a microphone in his right hand and a tablet in his left hand. His left hand is raised above his head. The background is a solid blue color. A large, bright light source is visible on the left side of the frame.

TELLING THE EU REGION STORY



EU EUROPE

CROATIA

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS WITH DANCE

THIS PICTURE FORMS PART OF THE '11 MILLION REASONS TO DANCE' EXHIBITION, A DISPLAY OF PHOTOGRAPHS DEPICTING ICONIC DANCE SCENES PERFORMED BY DEAF AND DISABLED ACTORS.

We worked with UK development organisation People Dancing to bring the series of images by Leicester-based photographer Sean Goldthorpe to the Dance Week Festival, Croatia's primary celebration of contemporary dance, performance and mime. Organised by our long-standing partners in Croatia, the Institute for Movement and Dance, the festival saw more than 1,000 visitors this year.

Our EU region digital team shared an Instagram gallery of the images, which had over 3,680 organic views. In amplifying the project, we have reaffirmed our commitment to organisations that promote equality, diversity and inclusion across Europe.

'The exhibit was an important complement to our festival programme... Disability arts is still rather a new concept in Croatia, and UK artists practising in this area are acknowledged as being very advanced and are all recognised for their skills and the scope of their work.'

Mirna Žagar, Dance Week Festival organiser

image credit: Photos by Sean Goldthorpe, commissioned by People Dancing



EU EUROPE FINLAND

AFTER THE EU REFERENDUM

IN THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF FINNISH INDEPENDENCE, WE JOINED A PANEL OF BRITISH AND FINNISH EXPERTS TO EXPLORE THE FUTURE OF UK-FINNISH RELATIONS 'BEYOND BREXIT'.

Broadcast live on Finland's national MTV3 channel, the debate was part of the Suomi Areena forum in the city of Pori, which draws more than 60,000 people. On the panel, the British Council's Paul Docherty joined representatives from the Finnish and British embassies, together with Member of the Finnish Parliament Elina Lepomäki and Baroness Meta Ramsey from the UK House of Lords.

Arranged by the British Embassy and covering topics from Erasmus+ to research collaboration, the debate was an important opportunity for us to push for the best possible outcome for education and cultural relations in the negotiations around the UK's departure from the European Union.

'It was really useful to air different views on the UK leaving the EU... from different actors from the UK and those from Finland. It showed the positive will that exists on both sides to identify the challenges and concerns that exist and to allow us to work towards constructive solutions for all.'

Richard Shackleton, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy Helsinki

Image credit: British Embassy Helsinki



EU EUROPE

GREECE

A FESTIVAL OF FRESH IDEAS

INNOVATION WEEK PROVIDED A SPACE FOR UK AND GREEK POLICY MAKERS AND PROFESSIONALS TO EXPLORE NEW WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER IN SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL ECONOMY.

During the four-day programme, organised by the British Council and British Embassy in Greece, partners in government, universities, entrepreneurs and businesses came together to share ideas. On Education Day, 140 people heard from Greek alumni of UK universities; Social Economy Day saw a 'fundathon' workshop on fundraising methods; and Science and Technology Day brought together experts in life sciences, transport and other fields.

Just one new venture already to result from the event is a social innovation competition with Vodafone and the Bodosakis Foundation. We celebrated successes such as these at an innovation themed Queen's Birthday Party in Athens.

'We would like to congratulate the British Embassy and the British Council in Athens on... Innovation Week and especially for selecting such important subject matters. UK-Greek relations across these areas represent a long and productive cooperation and a fruitful future.'

Dr Patricia Kyprianidou, Secretary General for Research and Technology

Image credit: British Embassy Athens / British Council



EU EUROPE

TEN EU COUNTRIES TO DATE

THE QUESTIONS OF EUROPE

THE CHALLENGES FACING THE ITALIAN STATE, THE AFTERMATH OF THE DUTCH ELECTION AND FRANCE'S PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST – WE'VE JOINED WITH BBC WORLD SERVICE TO TAKE THEIR WORLD QUESTIONS BROADCAST TO TEN EU COUNTRIES SO FAR.

Each show is recorded in front of a live audience allowing members of the public to put questions to a panel made up of figures shaping local, European and international policy, under the expert chairmanship of BBC interviewers Jonathan Dimbleby and Jonny Dymond. Recent panellists have included MEP and En Marche member Sylvie Goulard; Leo Varadkar, now Ireland's Prime Minister; and Polish film director Agnieszka Holland.

More than 2,600 people have attended the debates, and the show is broadcast three times on BBC World Service English radio, reaching a weekly audience of 75 million around the globe.

'We couldn't do this without our partnership with you. Working together on the quality of the panels, securing great venues, bringing in strong audiences – these are all essential ingredients to making these important programmes.'

Mary Hockaday, BBC World Service Controller



EU EUROPE PORTUGAL

A NIGHT OF PERFORMANCE, POETRY AND PROSE

FROM HISTORIC BARRACKS TO THE TOWERING GOTHIC ARCHES OF CARMO ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM, ICONIC LOCATIONS IN PORTUGAL WERE FILLED WITH STORIES DURING EUROPEAN LITERATURE NIGHTS.

Members of the public turned out to hear writers from across Europe read from their works, and to watch dramatic and musical adaptations of books and poems. Many events were held in locations not normally open to the public – giving people the unique chance to discover hidden secrets right on their doorstep.

The European Literature Nights programme has run since 2012. Numbers have been rising from year to year, with close to 4,400 people participating in 2017. As well as facilitating the participation of UK authors, the British Council supports the event along with partners from 11 EU countries as a way of sharing the best of UK and European creativity across the world.

'You continue to raise the quality of this event and we, the readers, are only too thankful for that.'
Cris Rodrigues, author of blog 'Deus Me Livro'

CULTURAL RESPONSES TO GLOBAL CHALLENGES

MORE THAN 8,000 PARTICIPANTS REPRESENTING OVER 154 COUNTRIES GATHERED IN BRUSSELS FOR EUROPE'S LEADING DEVELOPMENT FORUM.

Led by the European Commission, European Development Days brings together 1,200 organisations to discuss and devise solutions to international development challenges. The British Council hosted more events than ever this year, including talks, workshops and performances that addressed issues facing countries around the world.

We joined our ten EUNIC partners in organising a panel on investment in creativity – one example of the fact that, as well as being a key occasion for our global development work, the conference is an essential part of our engagement within the EU.

'Preserving heritage is the best way to ensure social, cultural and economic development. In conflict, protecting culture contributes to building more resilient communities, ensuring that a society will get a chance at thriving again... It was important that we had a platform to share this message at European Development Days.'

France Desmarais, Director of Programmes and Partnerships, International Council of Museums

ANTI-BULLYING CAMPAIGN WINS DOUBLE AWARD

THE BRITISH COUNCIL SCHOOL SCOOPED TWO TOP PRIZES AT EDUCAFESTIVAL, A PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD FOR CREATIVITY IN EDUCATION MARKETING.

Our Stop Cyberbullying Hackathon received the titles of Best Branded Content and Best School Event, beating a total of 117 entrants – among them Samsung, Vodafone Spain, Spanish universities and top-performing schools. The Hackathon was held in September last year (see Telling Our Story 2) and saw more than 240 students between eight and 17 years old create anti-bullying mobile apps, with one winning design chosen to be developed by a professional digital agency and published in English and Spanish as part of the global online campaign, stopcyberbullying.org.

The award helped us highlight our efforts to protect children and work with families. In doing so, we aim to become part of a worldwide fight against bullying.

'(We saw) the children's enormous effort and creativity, not just in supporting their individual projects, but also their levels of imagination in developing the mobile apps.'

Parry Aftab, founder of stopcyberbullying.org

DIGBOOK FESTIVAL



POWRÓT DO POCZĄTKU

BACK TO BEGINNING

25.10.17
WAWA



EU EUROPE
POLAND

THE BRITISH BOOK SCENE

10,000 READERS, 100 WRITERS, 15 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED AND THREE DAYS DEDICATED TO THE WRITTEN WORD – THE BIG BOOK FESTIVAL IS POLAND'S MOST DARING LITERARY EVENT.

We partnered with organisers for a special 2017 focus on the British book scene. UK writers including Guardian journalist Claire Armitstead and authors Simon Beckett, Inua Ellams, Matthew Kneale and Laurie Penny took part in our programme of discussions, workshops, games, multimedia screenings and exclusive 'meet the author' events, while 100 George Michael fans also joined us for a special musical farewell party, where we delved into the meaning behind Michael's lyrics.

The event had an impressive online reach: live streamed talks with Claire Armitstead and Laurie Penny reached more than 1.1k people each online. The Big Book Festival was an opportunity for British authors and journalists to reach a Polish audience, and an example of how we work with partners to widen the readership of new UK writing in the rest of Europe.

'The British scene [focus] has been in my view a thrilling success!'

Paulina Wilk, Big Book Festival

Image credit: Big Book Festival



EU EUROPE

16 EU COUNTRIES

SCIENCE IN 180 SECONDS

FROM THE RESONANCE PHENOMENON TO THE WORMS THAT CURE BRAIN DISEASE, YOUNG SCIENTISTS ACROSS THE EU TACKLED THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE IN THE FAMELAB INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION.

Working with Cheltenham Festivals, the British Council has managed FameLab International for 11 years, with 31 countries involved worldwide. The challenge: explain a scientific concept in under three minutes to a lay audience. Finalists receive media training and attend the Cheltenham Science Festival.

With the UK being a leader in science communication, FameLab draws significant local attention. The Queen of Spain attended our Madrid final, and EU Commissioner for Science and Research Carlos Moedas gave a video speech in Portugal. A 'Hall of FameLab' will feature at European Researchers Night in London in September, a testimony to how the contest puts the case for continued international opportunities for the next generation of scientists.

'I hope that with the help of initiatives such as FameLab, we will be better able to communicate the science we produce in Europe... Scientists are the heroes of our future.'

Carlos Moedas, EU Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation

Image credit: FECYT Barcelona

THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE POWER OF THE SEA

WE BROUGHT SCIENTISTS FROM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON (UCL) TO GERMANY TO DELIVER WORKSHOPS ON TSUNAMI DEFENCE TO MORE THAN 100 STUDENTS.

Two schools in Stuttgart that specialise in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) gained the valuable opportunity to learn about the latest in oceanography from UK experts. The workshops form part of a series that British Council Germany has organised with MINT-EC, the German network of STEM schools.

Further workshops are planned in Bavaria and Saxony, tying in with the 'UK country focus' of the German Year of Science on Seas and Oceans 2017. These will continue to build the UK's reputation for excellence in science and give students a taste of the high quality teaching and international outlook of UK universities, contributing to a positive impression of the UK at a time of political change.

'Our pupils and I were very impressed with the high quality of the workshops. The content was well presented and really enriched our programme for the STEM day.'

Friedrich Fuss, Stuttgart teacher

SCHOOLS TAKE UP THE CODING CHALLENGE

GREEK SCHOOLS WENT HEAD TO HEAD IN THE BRITISH COUNCIL AND SAMSUNG'S CODING COMPETITION, DESIGNING APPS AND WEBSITES TO SOLVE EVERYDAY CLASSROOM PROBLEMS.

With a prize of €3,000 worth of digital equipment up for grabs, 23 schools entered the competition, and ten were selected for the final. The judges gave the top award to the school that designed 'Help Friend', an app that allows students to record worries and feelings on an anonymous platform. This enables pupils to give feedback to teachers and tackle bullying, with Arabic and Kurdish options opening it up to the school's 35 refugee students.

Our partnership with Samsung in Greece began with the 2012 Olympics and has been expanding ever since. The competition was just one part of our Creative Classrooms programme, which provides digital literacy workshops for students and teachers, building skills and positioning the UK as a leader in science and technology.

'The competition gave us a chance to work as a team and use technology to create something beneficial for all of us!'

Sixth grade student (age 10-11)

Image credit: Alexandros Merkouris





EU EUROPE BULGARIA

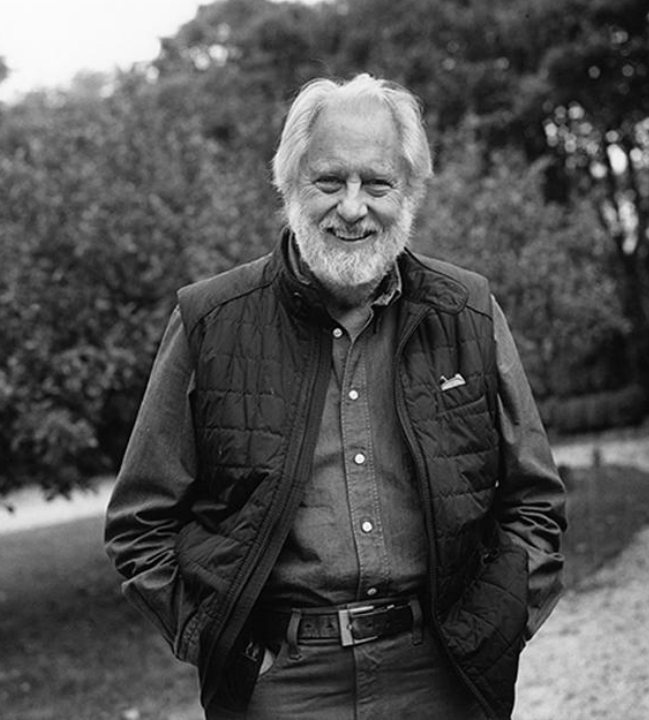
AWARDING EXCELLENCE IN ENGLISH EXAMS

100 PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS FROM SCHOOLS ACROSS BULGARIA WERE HONOURED FOR THEIR WORK IN EXAMINATIONS IN OUR ANNUAL 'ADVANTAGE' AWARDS CEREMONY.

In addition to receiving gold, silver and bronze accreditation, English language schools enjoyed exclusive learning opportunities at the prize giving, including presentations on 'Shakespeare in Science' by winners of Bulgaria's FameLab science communication competition and an expert talk on child protection.

The Addvantage programme enables us to build lasting relationships with local education institutions engaged in English language teaching. By celebrating their success and offering them value-added services from all fields of our work, we share the UK's full cultural offer as well as promoting high standards of teaching.

'This year's Addvantage ceremony was by far the most impressive. Just like a student mesmerised by an interesting lesson, I did not even notice when it was time for me to go on stage for my award.'
Zlatina Petkova-Hagel, manager of the British Cultural Centre Language Centre



EU EUROPE
IRELAND

MEMORIES THAT UNITE US

RENOWNED DIRECTOR DAVID PUTTNAM AND AWARD-WINNING WRITER EIMEAR MCBRIDE ARE AMONG THE SEVEN ARTISTS SHARING THEIR EXPERIENCES OF IRELAND AS PART OF OUR DIGITAL 'AFFINITIES' PROJECT.

Continuing the Decade of Commemorations programme that marks 100 years since the foundation of the Irish Free State, each artist paints a picture of the moments in their lives when they felt 'most Irish'. Poet Bernard O'Donoghue remembers meeting Seamus Heaney at Cambridge University; BAFTA Cymru-winning actor and singer-songwriter Ryland Teifi recounts his memories as a Welsh musician who moved to Ireland; and Sarah Glennie describes her experiences as the English director of the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

Cultural ties between Ireland and the UK underpin the project – and with the question of the Irish border in the spotlight following the EU referendum, these messages are as important as ever.

'At the end of the day, we're people of the world... There's a place for everyone – our similarities and our differences – and that's what makes it interesting.'

Ryland Teifi, actor, musician and Affinities interviewee



EU EUROPE

GERMANY, IRELAND AND THE
NETHERLANDS (WITH SCOTLAND)

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITIES, INNOVATIVE CITIES

CITIES AND THEIR EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS SHOULD WORK TOGETHER ON JOINT STRATEGIES TO DRIVE GROWTH AND SUPPORT MARGINALISED COMMUNITIES – SO SAYS OUR REPORT INTO UNIVERSITY-CITY INTERNATIONALISATION.

Commissioned by the British Council and carried out by James Ransom of UCL, the ‘Mutual Influence?’ paper analysed models of internationalisation in Amsterdam, Dublin, Glasgow and Hannover, recommending strategic, marketing-led and place-focussed cooperation rather than a simple focus on increasing student numbers.

The report was presented to education leaders at the British Council’s Going Global conference. Follow-up activities are planned in the four cities as the report provides evidence of the economic, social and cultural benefits of an international outlook.

‘Our urban-global age provides tertiary education institutions with unprecedented opportunities to mobilise their expertise, prepare young people for the future and drive forward research and policy agendas at an urban, national and global level.’

Bianka Stege, Director Education and Society, British Council EU Region

Image credit: James Ransom



MAKING THE BUSINESS CASE FOR DIVERSITY

LEADERS OF INTERNATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND ENTREPRENEURS MET EXPERTS IN DIVERSITY AT THE PALAZZO MARINO IN MILAN TO DISCUSS HOW INCLUSION CAN LEAD TO BUSINESS SUCCESS.

As partners of the Diversity is Key conference, organised by the British Chamber of Commerce for Italy, British Council representatives took part in panels and workshops alongside companies including Barclays, the Professional Women's Network, UPS and Volvo. These explored ways in which inclusive employment practices can boost business productivity.

With an audience drawn from local authorities, business, media and universities, and wide coverage through English speaking publication Easy Milano and professional blogs, the conference positioned the UK as a champion of inclusive working practices and promoted a diversity agenda in Italy and beyond.

'I'm proud of being a part of such an ambitious project that will allow us to share insight and best practice models of inclusion, empowering managers to unleash new resources for growth.'
Donatella Cungi, lawyer and councillor at British Council Chamber of Commerce Italy

REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

PUPILS FROM UNDERPRIVILEGED BACKGROUNDS IN NICOSIA BECAME ENVIRONMENTAL PIONEERS DURING 'GREEN WEEK' WORKSHOPS LED BY BRITISH COUNCIL CYPRUS.

At the school where the workshop took place, pupils are predominantly from refugee or low-income immigrant backgrounds. The children aged 11 and 12 and their teachers spent the day with a representative of Cyprus's main recycling company, learning how to recycle at home and protect the environment in their day to day lives. Members of British Council Cyprus furnished the school with teaching materials to help deliver lessons on the environment, including pencil cases made from recycled British Council banners.

This small step enabled us to make a real difference to an audience we had not approached before, and promote sustainability through our work. We plan to cooperate with this community in other areas including child protection and inclusivity.

'We thank the British Council for this event which has given us the opportunity to learn about the organisation and develop a relationship which will help our schoolchildren to expand their horizons.'
Chara Makriyianni, teacher at Faneromeni Elementary School, Nicosia

ALL SET FOR AN ENGLISH ADVENTURE

WITH OVER SEVEN YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, OUR 'BRITTEEN' SUMMER CAMPS GIVE STUDENTS A UNIQUE WAY TO LEARN ENGLISH ON THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME IN THE ROMANIAN MOUNTAINS.

Almost 700 children have taken part in BritTeen camps so far, enjoying outward bound activities while practising their English, developing life skills and improving their general knowledge. Among the programmes on offer are themed workshops, group activities, sports and hikes, all facilitated by experienced BritTeen trainers.

In coming years, the summer programme is set to expand to include themed camps and debating workshops. BritTeen brings together both the cultural and the English language sides of the British Council's portfolio, inspiring participants to share the values of the UK as they broaden their own horizons and create lasting memories.

'I felt very good on the camp... We had great outdoor places for playing, and very friendly staff. The workshops were creative and useful for making friends. They offered me a unique experience, and I would have loved to stay longer.'
Mateea, age 13, BritTeen participant



EU EUROPE DENMARK

ARTS AND CULTURE IN A CHANGING EUROPE

OUR EU REGIONAL DIRECTOR REBECCA WALTON CHAIRED A PANEL OF DANISH AND UK CULTURAL EXPERTS EXPLORING THE CHALLENGES FACING THEIR ORGANISATIONS TODAY.

Hosted by the Danish Embassy in London, the debate was a preamble to Denmark's Kulturmødet political summit in August. Kulturmødet's Peter Hanke joined the panel, with Juliana Engberg from Aarhus, this year's European Capital of Culture, Lise Autogena of Sheffield Hallam University, and Ted Hodgkinson from Southbank Centre.

Our Facebook live stream had over 2,000 organic views, while audience questions from museum professionals, publishers, journalists and students delved into the positives and negatives of EU membership, arts funding, and the role of the arts. With Rebecca Walton due to attend Kulturmødet later this year, we continue to advocate for stronger cultural relations between the UK and the rest of Europe for years to come.

'Initiatives such as an international festival are important for allowing cross pollination and the creation of cultural compost.'

Juliana Engberg, Programme Director, Aarhus 2017

Image credit: Embassy of Denmark in the UK