



Cultural policy and management in SEA-EU cities: Malta

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Article received: 10/14/2021. Revised: 10/19/2021. Accepted: 10/28/2021

Abstract: This article looks at the recent development of cultural policy in Malta in the context of the membership of the University of Malta in the SEA-EU network. The introductory part of the narrative engages closely with preparations in joining the European Union in 2004 that included the setting up of various governance and funding institutions, those related to the European Capital of Culture in 2018, and the impact of COVID-19 on cultural practice and creative communities. This first section, which provides a critical analysis of the sector, is followed by the second, core part of the text, which reports on the various aspects of policy, higher education programmes and manifestations (through festivals, exhibitions and multi-media expressions) that relate to academics and researchers based at the University of Malta and satellite institutions. The paper concludes that while a great deal of effort has been done on many cultural fronts, and many initiatives taken, the relationship between the University of Malta, its academic and research members, and society at large, is largely loose and project-based rather than policy-oriented.

Keywords: academic; creative; global diversity; convergence; university.



General introduction to Malta

Malta has a surface area of 316 km² and a population of more than 450,000 people. This makes it one of the mostly densely populated and urbanised states in the world (Wordlometers, 2021). It lies less than a hundred kilometres south of Sicily and less than 500 kilometres south-east of Tunis. Like other small, peripheral territories, it enjoys a ‘cross-roads’ position due to geographical reasons as well as political ones (VELLA, R. ed. 2008).

This has been so historically; since European Union (EU) membership in 2004 Malta has experienced a growing number of different ethnic and cultural communities from around the Mediterranean as well as from elsewhere around the world including Asia and South America. Further connectedness has also allowed and encouraged global forms of community cultural expression to flourish, from those related to gender issues to the assertion of traditionally marginalised groups in society. In terms of economics, the booming construction, i-gaming and financial services industries, together with tourism, already reviving after the pandemic struck harshly in 2020 and 2021 (The Malta Independent, 2021), have

attracted international investment and tens of thousands of European, African and Asian people seeking work and better economic conditions.

Cultural policy background

The two decades of developments in cultural policy have been mostly due to accession to the EU. Supported by the Council of Europe (2002), preparations led to legal and institutional steps that enabled governance, including direct funding for state entities such as Public Cultural Organisations (PCOs). These entities fall under the Arts Council Malta (ACM) and can engage with private/commercial, non-governmental/not-for-profit initiatives, and professionalisation of a sector. Furthermore, the Creative Economy Working Group (2012) advocated for cultural rights and inclusivity, along with the implementation of actions for governance, finance, professionalisation, and internationalisation.

Underlying these changes was the intention to generate a Creative Cultural Industry (CCI) and provide a tangible outcome of the Cultural Policy (Parliamentary Secretariat for Tourism, Culture and the Environment, 2011)

and Create 2020 (Arts Council Malta, 2015). Heritage and film gain economic clout through their connection to tourism, and more specifically, the Foreign Direct Investment scheme for film. The performing arts, visual arts, and community-driven work developed a local and international profile as part of ACM's direction. In turn, the organisational strategy for ACM is being used as a national strategy.

Critical assessment

From a critical perspective, this process of modernisation undertaken by the Maltese state-driven cultural sector may lead one to observe causes for concern. One main such area ties local efforts with the broader European agenda for the commercial maximisation of the cultural and creative industries. Arguably, the greater diversification in influence and spread in terms of the distribution of geography, nationality and genre has been accompanied by a narrowing of focus on the economic viability of cultural initiatives, as can be witnessed by the national cultural strategy spanning 2016-2020. Indeed, in 2015, the Maltese Parliament approved a new legal structure for ACM. This law, Act 15 of 2015, shifts the mission of the Council towards one that encourages and promotes the culture and creative sectors within a wide perspective of socio-economic activity.

The Council's objectives, as set by law, are now decidedly more tuned to economic and financial activity, than previously. They consist of efforts to 'advocate and be a strategic leader and catalyst for the cultural and creative sectors, through the implementation of strategies, with a particular focus on: (i) knowledge-based cultural and creative development; (ii) education and training; (iii) intelligence and data building; (iv) business development, funding and investment; (v) diversity and communities; and (vi) internationalisation.' The Council is also committed to: '(b) promote innovation in the sectors and stimulate a creative ecosystem for the generation of contemporary creative content; (c) initiate, develop and promote strategies, programmes and initiatives necessary to enhance the performance of the sectors; (d) act as a broker for the cultural and creative sectors and as a bridge with other sectors; (e) promote intellectual property in the sector; (f) ensure the development of a sustainable creative economy; [and] (g) facilitate and promote the sustainable development of creative individuals and organisations' (Arts Council Malta, 2015, p.4).

The same economic shift may be noted of the new cultural policy aiming to extend the operational guidelines for ACM, and related state cultural organisations, till 2025. While the results of the public consultation on the policy draft are still in the pipeline, having been disrupted by COVID-19 repercussions on society, the emphasis of many of the discussions held during the consultation phase with various sectors of society lay on the economic factors that may contribute to the financial sustainability and development of culture and the arts in Malta. General impressions about the prioritisation of quantitative measurement to achievements in the cultural sector, as opposed to, for instance, matters of governance and political interference, have been reinforced (Times of Malta, 2018).

Links between cultural policy in Malta and EU policy

Due to constraints related to the length of this contribution, readers who would like to go into some of the details of the dynamics between cultural policy and practice in Malta on the one hand, and the EU on the other, are invited to consult this paper Xuereb (2018).

Cultural policy in relation to COVID-19

In the midst of what became the second wave of contagion of COVID-19 in August 2020, Maltese news sources published data reflecting the significant and growing number of people at the risk of poverty in 2018 and 2019 (Times of Malta, 2020). Interestingly only a year earlier data showed a significantly more positive picture of the general economic climate (Borg, A. 2019). Malta had seemed to enjoy the fifth-lowest risk of in-work poverty among EU countries (including the UK); at 5.9% the risk of in-work poverty in Malta was significantly lower than the EU average (9.6%). This trend can be noted as far back as 2012, when the in-work poverty rate in Malta was 5.2%, as against 8.9% at the EU level.

From the perspective of local politics, this five-year period of economic growth is generally linked to the momentum enjoyed in local and foreign investment in Malta due to a shift from a conservative government at the end of a quarter of a century in power to a younger and more liberal and purportedly left-leaning political movement. Indeed, this period is marked by economic and financial development and growth

centred on foreign direct investment that benefited from serious financial incentives and management and regulatory mechanisms that boosted construction, international gaming based in Malta and mass tourism.

While the population grew on the basis of relatively large numbers of an incoming labour force, various sectors seemed to enjoy their own slice of the growing Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, underlying this economic growth lay severe limitations to its sustainability.

The key areas negatively affected were the environment, constantly compromised and undermined by aggressive construction actively facilitated by governing and economic forces at the expense of the conservation of public open spaces and cultural heritage; the democratic rule of law eroded, in Malta as elsewhere in the EU, once membership of the European block was secured and economic priorities superseded citizenship concerns; the diminishing of Malta's international reputation and standing encapsulated by the still unresolved murder of high-profile investigative journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia in October 2017 and leading to the greylisting of the country by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in June 2021 (Times of Malta, 2021); and a general impoverishment of the quality of life of people in Malta as well as, for common people without enough political clout or connections, from an economic perspective (CALLUS, G.L., 2019).

In this context, the beginning of the spread of COVID-19 in March 2020 seemed to further incline the apparent and existing general well-being of people in Malta, in ways that have been witnessed elsewhere in the EU as well as globally.

Cultural weaknesses: from pre-COVID-19 to the pandemic

Certain problems experienced by people and organisations that work in and earn a living and their sense of satisfaction in the areas of culture and the arts once COVID-19 pre-dated the pandemic. It may be argued that none of the problems were *created* by the virus itself; rather, some of them seem to have become worse, but clearly existed before, as illustrated by examples that follow. Others may be traced to the mismanagement of the situation induced by coronavirus, rather than simply due to it.

Indeed, some significant challenges faced by festivals and productions, as well as public and private institutions and organisations, from museums to cinemas, from traditional religious *festi* to indoor and outdoor productions like theatre or music, are strongly related to the contagion of the virus between people if these are close together. However, the implementation of social distancing guidelines and rules, the uneven application of regulations, information which has been at times contradictory, suppressed, censored or simply false, both from official sources as well as non-official ones, is the responsibility of society and its institutions, rather than the virus itself. The situation persists as of summer 2021, prompting the Malta Entertainment Industry and Arts Association (MEIA) for clarity and urgent action (The Malta Independent, 2021a).

The following are a few examples, hinted at above, of how the Maltese infrastructure, in similar ways to other territories, seems to have failed to plan enough ahead, and was consequently faced by serious limitations during the pandemic:

1. Over the past forty years, one of the prioritised areas for investment in the creative sector has been foreign film production (BORG & CAUCHI, 2015, p.5).¹ Between 2013 and 2019, an aggressive strategy led to more than 50 productions being filmed in Malta in excess of €200 million in foreign direct investment being injected into the economy.² However, the effects of COVID-19 highlighted the weak long-term and sustainable planning and infrastructure maintenance that has hamstrung the industry. Interestingly, the film-making sector, represented by the Malta Producers Association (MPA), had to engage in intense advocacy actions with national authorities to garner a degree of state support.³ The MPA, like others in the creative industries and elsewhere in the economy, felt left to its own devices for long stretches of time, with repeated requests for close consultations with the pertinent authorities being ignored or denied (Times of Malta, 2020a, 2020b; The Shift, 2020).
2. Unfortunately, much of cultural governance in Malta reflects the clientelist approach of managing economic and social life.⁴ Self-serving governance

systems that undercut private initiative that are not reliant on or servile to state agents and agencies are reminiscent of the description of 'state apparatus' as elaborated by Louis Althusser.⁵

3. Sufficient financial and consultative support by arts-oriented government agencies, when in existence, have also been found performing below expectations. Arts Council Malta (ACM) stepped in by re-channelling funding for the arts with a Special Fund 2020 capped at €7,500 per grant. By its own admission, ACM received an 'overwhelming response' to this fund issued specifically to support artists amidst the crisis, albeit the €75,000 made available consisted of a relocation of money, rather than new, and made accessible only to 11 applicants (Arts Council Malta, 2020).

Therefore, no special funds addressing the survival of artists and their organisations, as was the case elsewhere and as discussed above, were considered or made possible (XUEREb, 2020). In the line with the intention of this chapter to link culture and the arts to the rest of society, one may argue that, in Malta, considering that even basic support to the arts sector is denied or simply not considered to be important enough, other initiatives like a universal basic income scheme that is installed and inclusive of the cultural sector seem unlikely. Once again, the German context provides an insightful context that may still act as an inspiration should there be the political and economic will to follow up.⁶

The most national authorities seem to have been ready to concede was a press release clarifying that state vouchers issued earlier in the year to subsidise public spending could also be used for the arts. This was done in response to yet another effort by arts and entertainment sectors representatives to bring authorities to acknowledge the critical situation faced by their colleagues and members.⁷

Artists and organisations are aware of the self-sufficiency, including funding alternatives, they need to develop. This is also because, interestingly in a way that is closely related to point b. above, even a state-owned cultural organisation has benefitted from the state's own awards scheme (not for the first time, but maybe more strikingly

due to the COVID-19 context). This case belongs to what was first planned as a European Capital of Culture (held in Valletta in 2018) project, then as a legacy project, eventually opening in stages between the end of 2020 and 2021, namely the Valletta Design Cluster (SWALE, L. 2020).

Alternative funding sources to the state are not easily accessible for independent organisations as well as national ones. Tapping into EU funds remains challenging for many organisations and individual artists as shown by low participation and success rates ever since Malta joined the EU in 2004.⁸

The relevance of creativity in Malta: pre- and post-COVID-19

The role of the University of Malta (UM) in the local context is an interesting one. On the one hand the institution is visible and enjoys a privileged place in national awareness and consciousness since, with the exception of a handful of foreign international campuses hosted locally, UM is the only university in Malta. On the other, arguably UM plays a minor role in engaging with the public cultural sphere in terms of policy, governance and informing action, either of the proactive or reactive kind. That is not to say that no role is played by a small number of its academics and researchers. Indeed it is they, mostly related to the faculties addressing education and the arts, that take on that responsibility.

For instance, the topic of the relevance of creativity to society at large has been discussed long before the onset of COVID-19. Below are two instances of this.

Prof Raphael Vella, associate professor at the Faculty of Education at UM has been responsible for enabling many creative collaborations in between the field of education and the arts. He is an internationally recognised visual artist who represented Malta at the Venice Biennale (2015), and has actively expressed concern about the relevance of the arts in Maltese society.

He has noted the seemingly lack of awareness of artistic and cultural values in many areas of society, manifesting serious gaps at various levels. As an educator he witnesses this gap at early and advanced stages of the education cycle, which emerges clearly in adult society. Over time this defect seems to become institutionalised, with educational and cultural institutions themselves now displaying low levels

of understanding and sensitivity towards the arts and people who work in the sector.⁹

From the perspective of social enterprise, this area of economic activity that strives to assert its practice in community-oriented outcomes was not spared challenging times before the pandemic. A European conference (COST) on the topic in November 2019 and convened by Dr Ċensu Caruana, an environmental educator and practitioner at the UM, exposed these difficulties by bringing together various creative entrepreneurs working closely with social and cultural partners.¹⁰

The individual role of UM resident and visiting academics may also be observed in the context of other endeavours such as the following ones. Since the spread of COVID-19, many encounters and working groups involving creatives have developed online platforms hosting discussions that reflect similar points of view to those expressed before March 2020, albeit with the added difficulties faced since. Such conversations suggest a global diversity of experience as well as a convergence of efforts towards seeking the better ways forward. Locally led initiatives have been rapidly active, such as those initiated by ARC Research Consultancy for the Arts Council Malta Labs led by Davinia Galea who lectures at the School of Performing Arts, Culture Venture directed by Toni Attard who lectures at the Faculty for Built Environment and the Faculty of Education, and the Meetings of Minds series by Experience Design involving various contributors.

In general, varying degrees of scepticism are expressed and temper the ever-present hope and ambition also manifested by creatives and artists. During one such session hosted by the informal female-led arts group YCI on 20 August 2020, theatre and music educator and practitioner Rosetta Debattista spoke eloquently about the importance of keeping the arts relevant to society. In a comment I asked her to provide in order to represent her thoughts on the matter as faithfully as possible, Rosetta wrote to me saying:

‘The Arts in their very essence are about expression and connection. During such testing times, there is much to be expressed and every opportunity for connection would only be of benefit to the human soul. Humanity is resilient and part of that resilience is due to our very nature, one that seeks to release and receive emotions. The Arts can allow this exchange so

beautifully. This global pandemic needs a universal language - the Arts.’¹¹

From a practical perspective, creative professionals and practitioners in Malta are not being able to plan much ahead in a sound or stable manner. With regard to state support measures, it is worth noting that wage supplements do apply to the creative sector although literally featured as the last category in the last list. Nevertheless, the possibility of applying for a subsidy that provides a monthly support of circa EUR600 for full-timers and EUR375 for part-timers exists and is literally better than nothing. It will be interesting to wait for the possibility of accessing the official statistics regarding the rate of take-up of this source of minimal funding for survival in the short term.¹²

The bleak outlook for the arts in Malta is well captured by an editorial in the leading English language newspaper in Malta, namely *Times of Malta*.¹³ This perspective is elaborated on well by Pamela Kerr, dance educator and member of the Malta Entertainment Industry and Art Association (MEIA), hinted at earlier, and representing dance within the organisation. Writing on 12 September 2020, she said:

‘MEIA president Howard Keith believes that the dance sector is one of the pillars of the creative sector. He recently said that everyone is eager to work and although everyone understands the restrictions imposed due to COVID-19, everyone in the industry expects significant action to be taken. “It’s already six months too late,” Keith noted. “Unfortunately, currently not only is our effort and contribution not being recognised but we are being devalued and left to fend for ourselves,” they lamented’ (KERR, 2020).

A week later, on 20 September, Toni Attard, vice president of MEIA, kept up the tempo by commenting at length on the limited timeline many creatives and professionals in the arts were facing unless consequential policies and measures were taken to provide finance support before monetary commitments and burdens forced them to give up their careers and pursuits and seek to earn a living elsewhere. The figures for people employed in the sector, 4,924, and the self-employed, 414, may appear small in general terms, but relative to Malta, they are significant and reflective of a diverse and resourceful community that however urgently needs a rethink, and recalibration, of state support systems (VASSALLO, 2020).



What to expect post-COVID-19

At the time of writing (September 2021) not much has been planned or implemented in Malta beyond the piecemeal and minimal efforts described above. Arts Council Malta regularly sets out series of online meetings with people and organisations from the sector to provide a platform of advice and consultation on how to mitigate the efforts of COVID-19 on practitioners of the arts sector. While well-intentioned, the efforts seem to fulfil the adage of too little, too late.¹⁴ On a more tangible and financial level, preparatory documents for the national financial budget for 2021 generated by the ministry for economic development show an intention to prolong measures to sustain artists through the minimum wage supplement and promote its category from the lowest to the highest; in practice this may mean an increase from an average of EUR400 per month to EUR650 per month.¹⁵

Where does this leave people and organisations outside government in the practice of their skills and the earning of their livelihood? It may be argued that it is the individual artist-entrepreneur who is again left to their own devices to find a way forward. Fortunately, there seem to be occurrences of individuals and small companies coming together in order to engage in joint-up thinking and run advocacy and lobbying campaigns, addressed at the state and the private sector, as indicated by the newly formed MEIA, referred to above (Times of Malta, 2020c).

In concluding this section on cultural policy in Malta in relation to the challenges extenuated by COVID-19, one may note that traditional ways of coming together and engaging in the arts seem to be undergoing a process of revival and are being rediscovered in practice as well as research. A recent report by Dr Ed Duca and Daniela Quacinella of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Business Administration at UM, and Nika Levikova of the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) notes how the value of extending, maintaining and sustaining networks is accompanied by a renewed realisation of the importance of recognising recovery of the arts sector as a fundamental matter of diversity, since society and the economy are made of different contributors and participants (LEVIKOV, QUACINELLA, DUCA, 2020). The outlook for Malta, as is the case elsewhere, is nevertheless challenging,

even though within the services sector, culture and the arts have a direct economic role, as well as many indirect ones (ZAMMIT, 2020).

A focus on the contribution of the University of Malta (UM) to cultural policy and practice in Malta

As noted earlier, academics and researchers at the UM generally participate in public cultural policy matters and related actions on an individual basis that reflects their personal development and professional trajectories. However, the connection between UM and cultural life becomes more systematic when the institutional role of managing the higher education process is evident. This is particularly evident in the design and delivery of a variety of courses addressing cultural management that sometimes also overlap and double one another.

Below is a detailed look at those UM faculties, departments and institutes that engage in this activity at undergraduate and postgraduate level. This dimension of formal education is however accompanied by a few activities that the UM has in the past or still organises as part of its interaction with societal cultural life, especially in the field of events and communications; these are also referred to below. Online details described are available in the URLs immediately below each item.

A Master of Science in Cultural Heritage Management is delivered by the Faculty for the Built Environment coordinated by Deputy Dean Prof JoAnn Cassar.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/overview/PMSCCHMFTR8-2020-1-F>

An undergraduate course in Arts & Cultural Management is delivered by the Department of Theatre Studies within the School of Performing Arts (SPA) with lectures by Davinia Galea.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/studyunit/THS2107>

In terms of physical resources, the SPA manages the Valletta Theatre, based in the seventeenth-century historic building of the UM in the capital city. Throughout the years this space has provided the possibility for at least two generations of theatre makers, dance students and

professionals and other creatives to collaborate in a place conducive to experimental work and dynamic encounters.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/performingarts/theatre>

<https://www.um.edu.mt/performingarts/facilities/vct>

Another undergraduate course in Arts Management is available at the Department of Digital Arts within the Faculty of Media & Knowledge Sciences with lectures delivered by Toni Attard. The same Faculty provides a very hands-on education and enables its students to exhibit their works annually through various physical and digital means in collaboration with external partners.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/studyunit/DGA3007>

Undergrad and postgrad courses with elements of cultural management linked to tourism and tourism marketing are delivered by the Institute for Tourism, Travel & Culture (ITTC) with a number of tourism and interpretation heritage lecturers contributing.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/studyunit/TTC5003>

<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/overview/PMATCUPET8-2021-2-O>

The same institute has been active in providing further practice-based experience and online instruction by participating in a small number of EU-funded projects namely the Erasmus+ projects Bluesprout addressing blue economy tourism management in coastal areas, EU Heritage focusing on cultural heritage management skills in central and southern Europe, 3Economy+ providing training and job placements in cultural tourism in peripheral territories, and the rolling Erasmus Mundus Tour DC in collaboration with four European universities.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/ittc/ourprojects>

One other European dimension the ITTC oversees is the membership of the UM in the Universities Network of European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC), in collaboration with the Institute of Maltese Studies.

<https://uneecc.org/>

In relation to the topic of European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) held in Malta in 2018, between 2014 and

2018, individual academics from UM were engaged in their own personal capacity on commission by the coordinating body of the ECOC in Malta to contribute, by carrying out research, to the evaluation process required by the European Commission. A similar non-institutional engagement of a group of academics, this time through an open call, featured in the coordination of the online public consultation for an updated cultural strategy, aiming towards 2025, on behalf of ACM.

<https://valletta2018.org/evaluation-monitoring/>

<https://acmstrategy2025.mt/>

The Department of Art and History of Art provide training job shadowing opportunities for students at undergrad level, particularly with short placements with the national agency for cultural heritage, Heritage Malta, other public and private institutions like heritage foundations and NGOs

<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/programme/UBAHARTFT-2020-1-O>

The department is also active in the field of archaeology with a number of projects. One of the most recent ones is the ongoing exploration of a Phoenician shipwreck and its site off the island of Gozo.

<https://phoenicianshipwreck.org/>

Members of the department are actively involved in producing and curating events related to the visual arts and the history of art in the public sphere. A recent feather in the cap of the department is the participation of Prof Keith Sciberras, Prof Giuseppe Schembri Bonaci and Dr Nikki Petroni at the Venice Biennale of 2021 representing Malta.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/2021/06/biennale-venezia-diplomazija-astuta>

The Department of Classics and Archaeology provides prospective professionals with training and placement opportunities in various disciplines thanks to ongoing collaboration with state, private and civil society organisations.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/arts/classics-archaeo>

The Department of Library Information and Archive Services has recently relaunched its undergraduate course while developing further its postgraduate offer in archives, records and library management.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/maks/las>

The Department of Maltese (*Id-Dipartiment tal-Malti*) runs an exciting project on the oral traditions in the Maltese language (*Tradizzjoni Orali*) that has reached out to language students and professionals as well as society at large.

<https://tradizzjoniorali.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/um.tradizzjoniorali>

The Arts, Open Communities and Adult Education unit within the Faculty of Education is very active in provided a holistic experience to students preparing to teach art education and engage with social and community arts in particular.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/courses/overview/PMASPEPET8-2021-2-O>

The unit enables its members to make use of studios and other physical as well as digital resources. It also opens them up for use by non-members in the case of local or EU-funded projects that involve various communities, such as the Horizon 2020 project Acting on the Margins: Arts as Social Sculpture (AMASS) led by Prof Raphael Vella and a team of artists, curators, project managers and researchers.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/educ/ourresearch/amass>

The Centre for Environmental Education & Research supports researchers and students to engage in public debate and action as part of its course work as well as outside it.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/ccer>

It is active on a European level, is part of the COST Association addressing European Cooperation in Science and Technology, based in Brussels, and collaborates with the EMES Research Network for Social Enterprise based at the University of Liege.

<https://www.cost.eu/>

<https://emes.net/>

This overview of the contributions of UM and relations to the rest of society concludes with a

brief reference to two elements. The first is the series of annual cultural events that ran for more than two decades, called Evenings on Campus, that especially in the first years offered an original space for creative collaboration and expression.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/marketingcommunications/eveningsoncampus>

More recently, a festival of the sciences has established itself on an annual basis. The original and core driving force of many fundamental aspects of the content of the festival may be traced directly to UM academics; however, as with other instances noted in this chapter, UM does not act as, and subsequently feature, as an organiser or coordinator of events.

<https://scienceinthecity.org.mt/>

The second is the radio station of UM, Campus FM, previously *Ir-Radju tal-Università* (University Radio), that has produced and broadcast quality cultural and educational programmes since 1995.

<https://www.um.edu.mt/services/campusfm>

Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of, accompanied by a reflection on, the relationship between UM and the cultural life of Maltese society. It has argued that while UM's cultural role is largely restricted to the formal education sphere, there are a small number of instances where members of staff, and particular units within the institution, that are more actively engaged. These comments were made in the wider context of the relationship between national and EU cultural policy, with special attention paid to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on cultural policy and expression.

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Notes

1. *Gladiator* (1999) is identified as the catalyst for novel investment in the industry.

2. <https://maltafilmcommission.com/about-us/>

3. <http://mediterranee-audiovisuelle.com/malta-the-malta-producers-association-mpa-makes-its-point/?lang=en>

4. This comment by former Prime Minister and current MEP Alfred Sant goes to the heart of the matter: <https://www.independent.com.mt/articles/2020-08-31/blogs-opinions/Clientelism-6736226526>.

5. This report illustrates the point with reference to Malta: <https://theshiftnews.com/2020/06/13/government-accused-of-monopolising-culture/>

6. Insights are provided by these reports: https://www.businessinsider.com/germany-begins-universal-basic-income-trial-three-years-2020-8?utm_source=facebook.com&utm_campaign=sf-bi-main&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR3QHq58wsLfQm15lWxTYZcdjlg6NFTbm2c6ecDUtGru8mvtEYwVg5WQMc; <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/world/germans-sign-up-for-universal-basic-income-5qng9bdkj?fbclid=IwAR0ki9VZooDRgMVoo9817HYQ4O5MN9tDMu7d-iIrpkiRRy0sc2m9YR4TI>

7. Further context is provided by these sources: <https://lovinmalta.com/news/give-people-in-malta-e20-vouchers-to-spend-on-the-arts-entertainment-group-says/>; <https://www.gov.mt/en/Government/DOI/Press%20Releases/Pages/2020/September/17/pr201753en.aspx>

8. <https://www.i-portunus.eu/about-the-programme/i-portunus-statistics/third-call-2019/>; <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/sites/creative-europe/files/library/creative-europe-monitoring-report-2018.pdf>

9. These reports illustrate Prof. Vella's views in greater detail: <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/in-malta-arts-are-a-means-to-a-commercial-end-raphael-vella.722095>;

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/news/interview/101641/home-is-where-the-art-is__raphael_vella#.X0D8nMgzZPY;

<https://www.um.edu.mt/newspoint/news/features/2020/04/art-new-path-raphael-vella>;

<https://lovinmalta.com/opinion/guest-commentary-the-conspicuous-absence-of-the-arts-in-maltas-proposed-sixth-form-syllabus-reform/>

10. <http://www.empowerse.eu/events/3rd-wg-2-research-workshop-on-unlocking-the-transformative-potential-of-culture-and-the-arts/?fbclid=IwAR1WFE-MLKiOSBTv4rdihBx056MnUeagQOTGpNh8n51nSvnrlVBFAfz0OkU8>

11. From private email dated 24 September 2020. An early overview of the challenges facing artists and expressed across different media was put together by writer and scriptwriter Teo Reljic:

https://www.maltatoday.com.mt/arts/cultural_diary/101371/can_our_cultural_sector_survive_the_pandemic#.X0D_b8gzZPY

12. For further information refer to: Wage Supplement — July – December – Malta Enterprise Regeneration Business Assistance Information Portal

13. <https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/second-wave-struggles-in-arts.816057>

14. <https://www.covid19transitionarts.mt/?fbclid=IwAR07b3nP4ITqrQIX3x1jK1sJYn3N9p3STzng0aVB-P1IxXqWRbe2oa43H92A>; the reports of the meetings held are accessible here: <https://www.covid19transitionarts.mt/meetings>

15. Information was shared informally with the author at the time of writing.