



WHAT?

On one hand, there is a great difference among the European cultural observatories. Many of them have a regional scope and mission, and their context is very different (budgets, laws, priority cultural fields, typologies, etc.). This fact complicates the common work among cultural observatories.

And on the other hand, the current economic crisis is a significant threat to cultural observatories due to politicians who do not see the intangible benefits of culture, and they tend to reduce the budget of this sector.

The cultural observatories are mainly focused on collecting quantitative data. This information is related to the people who enjoy the culture, but ignores those who are not interested and the reasons of their indifference. In fact, there are public organisations that collect statistical data and it is not necessary to repeat the work. So, it could be more interesting for the observatories to exploit the information and to develop knowledge, than to collect data.

Nowadays, an important shift has occurred in how a cultural product is perceived and how the current consumers try to find experiences. Because of this it is also important to analyze the qualitative data, which is related to *what* people experienced. In this way, it will be possible to show the social benefits of culture, and it will be easier to try to recover the missing audience and to obtain finance from politicians.

In this context, we challenge you to consider and debate these statements:

- » Is it necessary to develop a common framework and methodology between European observatories or does each one have to focus on its region?
- » Cultural observatories function has to be directed towards generating knowledge to improve cultural policies.
- » Should cultural observatories have to measure subjective features of the cultural experiences or only the statistical data?
- » Culture must be related to social benefits. Not to profitability.
- » Is it important to try to recover (or create) the missing audience or should cultural observatories just focus on existing demand?
- » Should cultural observatories try to find new funding forms or only obtain public financing?