

EU funding: *what's the story?*



AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR

About a month ago I was casually asked a rather curious question: 'What', someone enquired 'do people ask you most about the European Union Youth Orchestra these days?' Normally that would get me thinking about conductors, projects, fundraising and talented young EU performers, with quite a variety of possible answers. For 2016 that might have encompassed something about our new Chief Conductor Vasily Petrenko, the return of our Conductor Laureate Bernard Haitink, or the Orchestra's just completed 40th anniversary.

But in fact the events of last year evoked quite a different set of thoughts. The second most asked question concerned Brexit. And when it comes to the period after May 2016, when the issue of EU funding for the EUYO hit the news, the top question was definitely more along the lines of, 'What is the status of EU funding for the EUYO?' The whole world seemed to know that the EUYO had some big challenges with EU funding in 2016, big enough to call into question our continued existence, but less clear to many, perhaps, was how this had all turned out.

WITH THANKS TO ...

So for our first newsletter of 2017 a clear statement of the facts would seem a good idea. The short answer is that the EU Commission has successfully followed up on Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's statement issued on 1 June that *"Today, I am happy to announce that we have found a solution which will allow the European Union Youth Orchestra to continue in 2016 and 2017 and even beyond."*

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**Jean-Claude Juncker,
European Commission
President and EUYO Head
of Honorary Patrons "I
believe that the European
Youth Orchestra is in fact
the best possible
ambassador for the
European Union"**

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After going through a formal EU application process in July and August, by September the EUYO had signed an Agreement with the European Commission to cover funding for 2016. Now we are well into the application process for 2017 and expect that an Agreement for 2017 will get to contract stage before the end of the first quarter of 2017. During 2017 we also hope to agree the funding process for future years.



Tibor Navracsics, European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport.

Throughout all of this procedure we have been extremely appreciative of the efforts of Commissioner Tibor Navracsics' Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Commission to seek out a solution, and to help us negotiate through the accompanying complexities.

Without the help of the Commission, and particularly the committed work of the Creative Europe Programme staff and everyone at the Directorate General for Culture and Education with whom we have regularly been liaising, this whole situation would have been far more difficult to resolve, perhaps even impossible.

Significant thanks should also go to the Parliament's Culture and Budget Committees, which were then under the Chairmanships, respectively, of Silvia Costa and José Manuel Fernandez, as well as the key decision makers that compose the Council of Ministers. Now our job is to repay the trust shown to us by continuing the Orchestra's role as a cultural ambassador for the highest ideals of the EU, particularly during these challenging times for Europe.

A FAMILY OF SUPPORTERS

Of course it is also important to point out that funding from the EU - now that it has been restored - remains only one part of the Orchestra's income. A recruitment, training and performance programme for hundreds of talented young EU musicians chosen annually from (literally) thousands of hopeful applicants in 28 countries is a costly business. So we rely heavily on areas besides direct EU funding including contributions from EU member states, residency support, concert fees, ticket income, donations, trust and foundation support, and sponsorship (including particularly our Principal Corporate Partner, UTC). And as we move forward our aim is to diversify that funding yet further (please note the [Support Us](#) button at the bottom of the Newsletter!). Yet the support of the EU is financially - and also philosophically - the most important single contribution; we are, after all, the *EU's* youth orchestra.

AND NOW FOR THE FUTURE

As for question number two, Brexit, well as we all know, when it comes to the finer details, the fog is only just beginning to lift. For now we are patiently watching and listening, as well as planning. By our next Newsletter, I expect that some of that fog will have lifted further, perhaps with more news to follow. Meanwhile, we can now get back to those conductors, projects, fundraising and talented young EU performers that are at the heart of our daily work in the EUYO office, as we continue our efforts to bring together the EU's most talented young musicians in an orchestra fit for the 21st century.