



# **BUILDING THE SUM OF ALL PARTS**

The Swiss conference of  
cantonal cultural officers 1986-2020

**JASPER WALGRAVE**



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*Franz Eggenschwiler (Solothurn, 1930-2000). Atelier Karl Isele, Freiburg in Breisgau. Lebensbaum (Solothurn), 1988 Leaded stained glass, 115 x 82 cm. Vitromusée Romont, inv. VMR 176, donation from the Canton of Solothurn © Stiftung Franz Eggenschwiler-Wiggli, Eriswil ; photo : Vitromusée Romont / Yves Eigenmann, Fribourg*

To mark the 700<sup>me</sup> anniversary of the Swiss Confederation in 1991, the KBK/CDAC joined forces with the Vitromusée Romont to revive the tradition of donating stained glass windows between Swiss towns and cantons. It commissioned 27 windows from contemporary artists. Even today, the works brought together offer a striking panorama of Swiss stained glass from the late 20th century. The tree of life depicted here is part of a cycle of four seasons, symbolising summer. The red and white colours allude to the cantonal and national colours.

**Report commissioned by the Conference of Cantonal Culture Officers (KBK), a specialist conference of the EDK**

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## **Abstract**

Swiss cultural policy is a relatively recent affair, and within the federal organisation it is under the sovereignty of the cantons. In 1986, in the spirit of cooperative federalism, a specialist conference was created under tutelage of the Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK/CDIP) which allowed the cantonal culture officials to meet, exchange, discuss and support common projects and commonly defend a cantonal position in debates on cultural policy: the Conference of Culture Officials (KBK/CDAC). This study looks at the 35 years of the existence of this conference, from its founding until the challenges posed by the outbreak of the COVID pandemic in 2020. It analyses the main characteristics and evolution of the KBK and its delegates, its main achievements and its biggest challenges. Mainly, it analyses how the KBK positioned itself in a fast developing institutional field of cultural policy in Switzerland, how it related to its political conference EDK and to the key federal institutions, the Federal Office of Culture (BAK/OFC), and the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia (PH). In doing so, the study contributes to the as yet largely unexplored field of research on the history of Swiss domestic cultural policy, with an intention to contribute to the reflection on future developments.

## **About the author**

Jasper Walgrave (Belgium, 1974) is a cultural manager and researcher with professional experience in Belgium, Portugal, South Africa and Switzerland. Between 2007 and 2019 he occupied various management positions within the international section of the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. In 2024, Walgrave obtained his PhD at the University of Fribourg, in the context of an SNSF supported research project on Swiss-South African cultural relations between 1948 and 1994.



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## Abbreviations

BAK	Bundesamt für Kultur
BFS	Bundesamt für Statistik
EDA	Eidgenössisches Departement für auswärtige Angelegenheiten
EDI	Eidgenössisches Departement des Innern
EDK	Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektorinnen und -direktoren
EJPD	Konferenz der kantonalen Kulturbeauftragten
KBK	Konferenz der kantonalen Kulturbeauftragten
KdK	Konferenz der Kantonsregierungen
KFG	Kulturförderungsgesetz
KSD	Konferenz der Schweizer Denkmalpflegerinnen und Denkmalpfleger
KSK	Konferenz der Schweizer Städte für Kulturfragen
KSKA	Konferenz der Schweizer Kantonsarchäologinnen und Kantonsarchäologen
KVS	Verein Kulturvermittlung Schweiz
LA	Leitender Ausschuss (der KBK)
NKD	Nationaler Kulturdialog
PH	Pro Helvetia. Schweizer Kulturstiftung
SKK	Städtekonferenz Kultur
SSV	Schweizerischer Städteverband
CD	Comité directeur (de la CDAC)
CDAC	Conférence des déléguées et délégués cantonaux aux affaires culturelles
CdC	Conférence des gouvernements cantonaux

*Abbreviations*

CDIP	Conférence des directrices et directeurs cantonaux de l'instruction publique
CSAC	Conférence suisse des archéologues cantonales et des archéologues cantonaux
CSCM	Conférence suisse des conservatrices et des conservateurs des monuments historiques
CVC	Conférence des villes en matière culturelle
CVSC	Conférence des villes suisses en matière culturelle
DCN	Dialogue culturel national
DFAE	Département fédéral des affaires étrangères
DFI	Département fédéral de l'intérieur
DFJP	Département fédéral de justice et police
LEC	Loi sur l'encouragement de la culture
MCS	Médiation culturelle suisse
OFC	Office fédéral de la culture
OFS	Office fédéral de la statistique
PH	Pro Helvetia. Fondation suisse pour la culture
UVS	Union des villes suisses

## Foreword

Embodying the Swiss spirit and rooted in federalism, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Cultural Officers (KBK) is an important platform for dialogue and professional cooperation between the cantons in the field of culture. It ensures constructive cooperation between the cantons, whether to meet the needs of cultural professionals and partner organisations or to prepare joint cultural policy initiatives for the EDK (Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education), the political body of which the KBK is the specialist conference on cultural affairs.

For 35 years, the interaction between national cultural policy and the KBK as a transmission belt between cantonal cultural sovereignty and a nationwide perspective has been continuously adapted and refined. Its development has seen phases of change and innovation alternate with phases of consolidation and continuity. In order to better understand the KBK within its institutional framework, the conference commissioned historian Jasper Walgrave to research and present its history.

Historians work with sources. For the present study, Walgrave had access to the minutes of the KBK meetings, which he supplemented with interviews with contemporary witnesses. These are former and active members of the KBK and important stakeholders who have themselves experienced and helped shape the institutional development of the KBK in various phases. Based on these sources, it follows that the presentation primarily reflects the internal view of the KBK. It is not a complete picture. However, it does shed light on the institutional anchoring of the KBK as a specialist conference of the EDK, its relationship with partners at federal level and with higher authorities at cantonal level and within the EDK. The focus is on partnership-based cooperation. However, it also addresses institutional conflicts and political tensions that are fundamental to understanding cultural policy in the Swiss federal state.

The study on the history of the KBK aims to contribute to a more comprehensive picture of cultural promotion and cultural policy in Switzerland. To enable the study to fulfil this task, it is being published as a

historical contribution. We would like to express our sincere thanks to the General Secretariat of the EDK and our colleagues at the KBK. They have made it possible for this first history of the KBK to be written.

Changes at the top of the cantonal cultural offices have accelerated in recent years. This study is intended to contribute to the transfer of knowledge and support considerations about the future shape of inter-cantonal cooperation.

On behalf of the KBK advisory group:  
Philippe Trinchan and Fritz Rigendinger

## Introduction

Cantonal sovereignty is an essential dimension of the federal state structure of Switzerland on various levels. It is central to its historical construction, in the establishment of a shared identity within a ‘unity through diversity’ framework, and in its conception of democracy, in the sense that where possible, policy must be manifest at a level as close as possible to the citizen.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of ‘cooperative federalism’ whereby the 26 cantons coordinate, exchange and collaborate on various policy topics within their fields of competency, has expanded significantly. This practice is implemented through two main instruments: concordats and conferences. The conferences can be ministerial, governmental or administrative. It is within this context that in the middle of the 1980s the Conference of Cantonal Cultural Officers was created (KBK in German, CDAC in French and Italian). It constituted a forum where the various government officials responsible for implementing cultural policy within their cantons could meet regularly, exchange, and collaborate when and where possible. As most of the culture services in the cantons were integrated into the education departments, the KBK resorted under the Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education or EDK<sup>1</sup>. Among all directors’ conferences in this system of cooperative federalism, the EDK was and is by far the most important, in terms of the size of its secretariat, its budget and its decision-making power<sup>2</sup>.

That the cantons hold the primary sovereignty over cultural policy has not been questioned, but cultural policy itself is young, and has developed in a context of professionalisation and internationalisation, in

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<sup>1</sup> In German : die Konferenz der Kantonalen Erziehungsdirektorinnen und -direktoren (EDK); French : la Conférence des directrices et directeurs cantonaux de l’instruction publique (CDIP); Italian : Conferenza delle direttrici e dei direttori cantonali della pubblica educazione (CDPE)

<sup>2</sup> KOLLER Christophe, SCIARINI Pascal, TRAIMOND Sylvie et al., *Les cantons suisses sous la loupe: autorités, employés publics, finances*, Berne, P. Haupt, 2004., pp. 12 & 93-102

which cultural issues necessarily transgress regional boundaries at an increasing pace. Since its inception the KBK has been an invaluable forum for exchange and collaboration between those responsible within their cantons to develop and safeguard their culture through regional policy. It has done so by embracing the widening scope of the cultural field and thus by enabling supra-regional processes, and made sure that the cantons remain central in cultural policy processes, even when some of these moved unavoidably to a federal level. At the same time, the KBK has had to operate within the confines of a context where culture remains seen as non-essential, at least to the extent that it is governed mostly by education departments. The KBK is seen as a specialist forum, which can develop positions and recommendations, but which can't be an actual decisive voice and decisionmaker in cultural policy.

The study that follows explores the creation and the development of the KBK as this specialist forum. It will highlight the process of its creation in the mid-1980s and the evolution of its operations through the three subsequent decades. The study concludes at the moment of the COVID pandemic, which forced all of those involved in cultural policy, and most particularly the cantonal level in its proximity to the precarious cultural actors in the field, to rethink and strengthen the coordination of efforts.

It is a concise and limited study, but points to a number of interesting research questions that could be elaborated within future research projects. The Swiss academic literature on the development and history of its cultural policy remains limited. Important and extensive research was done at the University of Fribourg, under Prof. Claude Hauser, with a focus on the international dimension of Swiss cultural policy, and thus with the bulk of attention going to the federal level and the role of the Swiss Arts Council, Pro Helvetia, with focus on the international cultural policy<sup>3</sup>. A more

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<sup>3</sup> KADELBACH Thomas, « *Swiss Made* ». *Pro Helvetia et l'Image de la Suisse à l'Étranger*, Neuchâtel, Alphil, 2013 ; GILLABERT Matthieu, *Dans les coulisses de la diplomatie culturelle suisse. Objectifs, réseaux et réalisations (1938-1984)*, Neuchâtel, Alphil, 2013 ; MILANI Pauline, *Le diplomate et l'artiste - Construction d'une politique culturelle suisse à l'étranger (1938-1985)*, Alphil, 2013 ; HAUSER Claude, SEGER Bruno et TANNER Jakob (éd), *Entre culture et politique. Pro Helvetia de 1939 à 2009*, Payot, 2010.

inward consideration of domestic cultural policy remains largely unexplored<sup>4</sup>. The Clottu report of 1975 is often mentioned, but was never fully researched with a historiographic dimension<sup>5</sup>. The creation of the KBK happened at the end of significant changes in the domestic landscape of cultural policy, with the contestation of the mid to late 1960s, the changing role and legal framework of Pro Helvetia, the creation of the Federal Office of Culture (BAK/OFC), and the progressive building of coordination capacity on the level of cities and cantons<sup>6</sup>. The renewed contestation in the early 1980s accelerated this process. The ways in which cantonal and federal politics interacted in the realisation of these radical changes, and the role and backgrounds of different key individuals involved, would be an important area for further investigation.

This study is structured chronologically. After the treatment of the initial phase of creation and setting up of the KBK, the core analysis is divided into three main periods, which coincide largely with the three decades of the 1990s, the 2000s and the 2010s.

The first decade is marked by the culture pioneers of a number of key cantons, who guided the conference through these formative years. The

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<sup>4</sup> As observed by KELLER Rolf, « Kulturpolitik der Schweiz », in: KLEIN Armin (éd.), *Kompendium Kulturmanagement. Handbuch für Studium und Praxis*, 4th Edition, München, Verlag Franz Vahlen, 2017, pp. 119-140. One recent exception is the Master's Thesis at the University of Fribourg by Faustine Pochon, on the CDACr, the conference of cultural officers of the French speaking cantons. POCHON Faustine, *La Conférence romande des Délégué-e-s aux Affaires culturelles. Politiques culturelles intercantionales et professionnalisation des arts de la scène dans l'espace culturel romand*, Mémoire de master, Université de Fribourg, 2023.

<sup>5</sup> CLOTTU Gaston et SCHWEIZ EXPERTENKOMMISSION FÜR FRAGEN EINER SCHWEIZERISCHEN KULTURPOLITIK, *Beiträge für eine Kulturpolitik in der Schweiz: Bericht der eidgenössischen Expertenkommission für Fragen einer schweizerischen Kulturpolitik*, Bern, EMDZ, 1975.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. MOESCHLER Olivier, « La "démocratisation culturelle" : mythe ou réalité ? Les publics et leur évaluation, un nouvel enjeu des politiques de la culture en Suisse », in: MARTIN Laurent et POIRRIER Philippe (éds.), *Démocratiser la culture. Une histoire comparée des politiques culturelles*, 2013 (Territoires contemporains, nouvelle série - 5).[http://tristan.u-bourgogne.fr/CGC/publications/Democratiser\\_culture/O\\_Moeschler.html](http://tristan.u-bourgogne.fr/CGC/publications/Democratiser_culture/O_Moeschler.html).

failure of the referendum for the inclusion of culture in the Swiss constitution contributed to an uncertain role and positioning of the KBK.

The decade of the 2000s was marked by a gradual generational change in cultural officers, as well as by the adoption of new rules of procedure activating four regional conferences and allowing a more streamlined treatment of applications. Culture finally made its appearance in the federal constitution, and this completely revised constitution also offered a framework that facilitated more effective inter-cantonal cooperation<sup>7</sup>. Coordination with federal levels increased, for instance through the involvement of the KBK in the strategy for contemporary dance initiated by Pro Helvetia, and the KBK was also involved in the discussions that translated the new culture article in the constitution into the Law on the Promotion of Culture<sup>8</sup>. The Law on the Promotion of Culture was enacted at the start of the period of the first Cultural Message, from January 2012.

The third decade was marked by a further professionalisation of the cultural officers, in the sense that more of the new members were trained within the various cultural management schools. It is the first decade of operation under the policy framework of the Cultural Messages (2012-2016, 2017-2020, 2021-2024).

The decade ends with the COVID pandemic, causing the KBK to urgently rethink and reorganise its way of operating in service of a cultural sector in crisis.

This study was commissioned by the Swiss Conference of cantonal cultural officers. With the kind assistance of IDES, the documentation and information centre of the EDK and of the staff at the state archive of Luzern, I consulted the archival collections of the KBK. Due to the large volume of material, my main focus was on the minutes of the bi-yearly plenary meetings and any extraordinary meeting. These minutes were consulted for the years 1988-2020, which represents approx. 1000 pages. Other documentation, including the minutes of the Management Committee and some early meetings of the EDK directorate, were consulted in a less exhaustive manner. For the years until 2010, the

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<sup>7</sup> KOLLER et al., *Les cantons suisses sous la loupe*, op. cit., p. 93.

<sup>8</sup> DE : Kulturförderungsgesetz (KFG), FR : loi sur l'encouragement de la culture (LEC), adopted December 2009

documentation was at the time of research kept at the Staatsarchiv Luzern<sup>9</sup>, after 2010 the files are kept at the EDK offices in the Haus der Kantone in Bern<sup>10</sup>. I'm extremely grateful for the kind and generous way in which the staff at the Staatsarchiv and at the EDK have assisted me with this access, and would specifically like to extend a heartfelt 'thank you' to Michel Rohrbach and Jonas Schärer at the EDK and to Jérôme Gander and Yosvany Hernandez at the Staatsarchiv Luzern. The EDK general secretariat also assisted with forwarding a number of questions I had to the various cantons, and with the general administrative management of the research process, for which I'd like to specifically thank Jeanine Füeg.

The documents consulted were complemented with a limited analysis of some academic literature and secondary literature sources, and with a limited consultation of press articles. More importantly, however, the silent and formal documentation was brought to life through thirteen interviews of on average just less than an hour, with current and historical KBK delegates, but also with people representing the EDK, the BAK and Pro Helvetia. When the written sources give more clarity on exact dates and details, and the exact formulation of key texts, the oral feedback gives an essential subjective framing of these events, allowing for a deeper understanding of what these events actually meant and why they happened.

The difficulty with this topic from the point of view of the historian, is the capacity to take some necessary historical distance to evaluate events from a wider angle and put them in perspective. The fact that this study partly covers events that happened very recently, with the consequent risk of a lack of historical distance from these events, could in some cases lead to biases that could influence the report. By cross-referencing as far as possible the various sources collected, and bearing in mind that the historian of the present day is himself a product of the culture of his time,

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<sup>9</sup> For the years until 2003 included, all files are registered, and these are the ones with file numbers that start with the letter A (A1427..., A1453..., A1594 etc. From 2003 until 2010, the registration is not completed, and these file numbers start with the year 2021)

<sup>10</sup> Here, some files were consulted physically, under file numbers starting with 722, and for more recent files I was kindly granted access to the digital document server of the EDK. These files are not numbered and will be indicated by the name of the document (i.e. the date of the meeting).

this study is predicated on the idea that the memories of the players involved do not necessarily conflict with the historical facts established in the course of this investigation, but rather shed a more precise light on them in certain respects, and generally in a complementary way.

Finally, the process was a collaborative and consultative one, and I am very grateful for the feedback of the KBK delegates who followed the work closely, and with whom I could discuss the progress of the study: Philippe Trinchan in Fribourg and Fritz Rigendinger in Glarus, as well as to the expert advice of Prof. Claude Hauser, at the Département d'Histoire Contemporaine of the University of Fribourg.

# 1. The genesis of the KBK

## 1.1. The cultural political context leading up to the creation of the KBK

### 1.1.1. *The turbulent 1960s*

The establishment of the KBK in 1985 must be understood in the context of a changing cultural landscape in Switzerland. In the first decades after World War 2, Swiss cultural policy was aligned to a vision defended by conservative elites, and their drive to promote a consensual vision of Switzerland, within the cultural mythology of the National Spiritual Defence<sup>11</sup>. Pro Helvetia, as the federal Swiss cultural foundation, was founded within the framework of this NSD. In the 1960s, however, new voices rose and the arts professionals who questioned this archaic, harmonious and conservative vision of the Confederation increasingly claimed a space which demanded a greater degree of democratisation of the cultural field. The cultural sector became more diverse, and changed considerably in scope, size and activities in this period, which drove various actors on a national level to question the status quo of the NSD, and thus to engage in an in-depth review of the cultural policy landscape in Switzerland.

The federal department of the interior (EDI) took the concerns and urgencies from a changing cultural sector to heart and moved, with the approval of the Federal Council, to the establishment of an 'Eidgenössische Expertenkommission für Fragen der Schweizerischen Kulturpolitik' in November 1969. The Clottu Commission - named after its chairperson, the national council member Gaston Clottu from Neuchâtel - published its 500 page report as much as 6 years later, in 1975, with the title «Beiträge für eine Kulturpolitik in der Schweiz».

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<sup>11</sup> See e.g. KADELBACH, « *Swiss Made* ». *Pro Helvetia et l'Image de la Suisse à l'Étranger*, *op. cit.* p. 42-56

The commission was a federal affair and recommendations were sought to enhance cultural policy from a federal perspective. However, it also confirmed the final sovereignty of the cantons on cultural policy matters. The federal state did not have formal competencies and responsibilities when it came to cultural policy, apart from a few laws relating to nature and heritage (1986) and relating to the promotion of cinema (1962)<sup>12</sup>. The Clottu report recognized the cultural sovereignty of the cantons but recommended a greater degree of coordination and capacity to support culture on the federal level.

The strongest and most pressing developments in the cultural sector happened in the big cities, and thus some of the cantons where these big cities are located were moved quickly to create a legal framework for their policy on culture. Basel did so in 1963, the cultural department in Bern was formalised in 1969, Zürich had its Law on the Promotion of Culture in 1970, Luzern created a work group on cultural promotion in 1972. A few other cantons without major urban centres were visionary and developed cultural policy from very early on as well, such as Aargau in 1968.

Parallel with the Clottu commission, the Federal Department of Home Affairs (EDI/DFI) moved to create a federal office for culture, the BAK/OFC, which was inaugurated in 1975 as an administrative unit of the EDI charged with cultural matters. Even though the formal competencies of the BAK at this early stage were limited, and the sovereignty on cultural matters of the cantonal level was not questioned, the mere creation of the BAK was a sign that more weight was moving to the federal level. This was also a signal for cantonal authorities to create more adequate tools of coordination that would complement this development.

### *1.1.2. The Opera riots reveal a need for policy tools*

Despite these processes, the changes in the cultural landscape occurred slowly, too slowly for many, as illustrated by the severe riots of 1980, known as the ‘opera house riots’. When the city council of Zurich decided on a multi-million refurbishment of its opera house, whilst at the same time denying recognition of independent culture spaces, like the Rote

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<sup>12</sup> CLOTTU et SCHWEIZ EXPERTENKOMMISSION FÜR FRAGEN EINER SCHWEIZERISCHEN KULTURPOLITIK, *Beiträge für eine Kulturpolitik in der Schweiz*, op. cit. p. 386

Fabrik, the situation was tense. After a Bob Marley concert end May, many concert goers joined other youths in front of the opera, and violent riots broke out, which spread to various other Swiss cities where similar demands and claims for space were voiced by young people, like the movement «Lôzane bouge» in Lausanne<sup>13</sup>. It resulted in a heightened conscience among many that culture could no longer be treated as the terrain of the elites, which was illustrated for instance with a first effort to regulate the federal support for culture with the popular initiative on the cultural percent in 1986.

The tumultuous beginning of the 1980s saw an emergence of more coordinated activism towards a better legal framework for the promotion of culture. 14 organisations, representing the large Cultural associations, submitted a proposal to include culture in the federal constitution entitled the Federal Cultural Initiative in 1981. It was also known as the initiative for a 'cultural percent', since it not only aimed at including culture in the constitution as a federal field of policy, albeit explicitly maintaining that the sovereignty in culture remained with the cantons, but also included a directive that 1% of the state budget would be reserved for culture. For the political establishment and the parties of the centre, as well as for the EDK itself representing the interests of cantonal governments, the 'cultural percent' went too far in its articulation of culture in the constitution. It was felt to be an incursion on cantonal sovereignty, and parliament and the centre parties wanted the implementation of the Confederation's cultural responsibilities rather on the level of law, and not in the constitution. The Federal Council developed a counterproposal for the mere inclusion of culture in the constitution but framed primarily within the principle of subsidiarity. The EDK supported this counterproposal. Because the voting system before 1987 did not allow to vote yes on two separate proposals, neither of them received a majority at the popular initiative which took

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<sup>13</sup> On the Opera House Riots, see e.g. <https://www.srf.ch/kultur/der-archivar-der-heisse-sommer-1980-zueri-braennt>, with reference to the documentary «Züri Brännt», by Videoladen – Genossenschaft für Medienarbeit, Zürich, 1981. On «Lôzane Bouge» see e.g. <https://blog.nationalmuseum.ch/2021/10/lozane-bouge-eine-demonstration-drei-perspektiven/> or LES ARCHIVES DE LA RTS, *Lôzane bouge, le ras-le-bol des jeunes Lausannois - Podcast*, 07.10.2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptHpf15BAzU>, consulted on 07.10.2024.

place in 1986, and the federal cultural policy stayed without a legal foundation<sup>14</sup>. It was in this context, that the need was felt to have a greater coordination and representation of the cantons in the context of the national debate on cultural policy.

The Federal Councillor responsible for the EDI in the crucial period 1973-1982 was Hans Hürlimann (ZG-CVP). It's interesting to note that his background was at the Education department of the canton Zug, and that in the period 1968-1973, as State councillor for Zug, he was the president of the EDK. Hürlimann was known to be a person with a passion for and interest in the cultural field<sup>15</sup>, and at the same time was at the forefront of the process to establish the school concordat in 1970, enabling a much greater deal of coordination and harmonisation among the cantons, in the area of education<sup>16</sup>. This study could not dig deeper into his role in creating the context conducive to the formalised coordination of culture between cantons, but the topic merits further research<sup>17</sup>.

Lottery funds were for a long time the only sources of funding for the arts in the cantons. The absence of legal frameworks, prevented many cantons from spending tax payers money on cultural institutions and projects. The big cities were often the first to create the necessary legislation to allow a more formalised approach to cultural promotion. Formalising cultural policies in the cantons would help to counter some tendencies which according to the former EDK secretary general Moritz Arnet used to exist in the cantons, where the political heads responsible for education, and thus also for culture, would sometimes use the available lottery funds

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<sup>14</sup> See MENZI Brigitte, « Künstlerpech: Zwei Kulturvorlagen verhindern sich gegenseitig », in: BOLLIGER Christian, RIELLE Yvan et LINDER Wolf (éds.), *Handbuch der eidgenössischen Volksabstimmungen 1848–2007*, Bern, Haupt Verlag, 2010, pp. 440-441.

<sup>15</sup> STAUB Sylvia, Zurich 1968-1997, interview by the author, 05.04.2024.

<sup>16</sup> ARNET Moritz, Secretary General of the EDK 1986-1999, interview by the author, 26.03.2024. On Hürlimann see also ALTERMATT Urs, *Das Bundesratslexikon*, Basel, NZZ Libro, 2019. pp. 529-536

<sup>17</sup> An indication of Hurlimann's involvement e.g. in correspondence between the EDK leadership and him on 06.12.1982 in A1270/679 1) Verwaltung des Generalsekretariats 11) Korrespondenz des EDK-Sekretariats. Verschiedenes, 1982, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A1270/679.

for cultural projects of their specific choosing, and seemingly did so regularly with the evident intention of patronage for achieving electoral gains<sup>18</sup>.

## 1.2. **The creation of the KBK**

### 1.2.1. *The EDK needs to take on culture*

The need for more intensified cantonal coordination in the field of cultural policy had already been mentioned in the Clottu report in 1975. It specifically pointed to the Conference of Cantonal Education Directors (EDK) as the coordinating body that could be more involved in cultural matters<sup>19</sup>. The EDK's organisation relied for the coordination on a more regional level, on four political regional conferences: the mostly French-speaking Western conference, the North West, the central Swiss conference and the Eastern conference. We will see that this regional sub-organisation, prevalent in the structures of cooperative federalism, will persist in the KBK and gain institutional importance after 2000. The Clottu report mentioned that these four regional conferences of the EDK at times looked at coordinating cultural issues that superseded the level of individual cantons, but which were at the same time not yet on the national level.

The need to do so was again expressed a few years later in a brief reference to the conference of the cantonal governments, in the minutes of the 'Commission of general secretaries' in January 1983. The discussions referred to below, were framed into the extensive revision of the division of tasks between the Confederation and cantons, that took place between 1978 and 1991<sup>20</sup>, and were led by Stiftung für Eidgenössische Zusammenarbeit, later renamed the Stiftung ch.:

*At the meeting of the presidents of the cantonal governmental conferences, organised by the Foundation for Federal Cooperation, the question was once again put to the conference secretary as to whether*

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<sup>18</sup> ARNET, Secretary General of the EDK 1986-1999, *doc. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> CLOTTU et SCHWEIZ EXPERTENKOMMISSION FÜR FRAGEN EINER SCHWEIZERISCHEN KULTURPOLITIK, *Beiträge für eine Kulturpolitik in der Schweiz*, *op. cit.* p. 383

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. BUSSMANN Werner, « Lehren aus der Aufgabenverteilung zwischen Bund und Kantonen », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 17.09.1991. p. 23.

*the EDK would also like to deal with cultural issues (which it has deliberately not done so far). The majority of the members are in favour and instructed the chair to present the request to the board. It should then be clarified who is dealing with cultural issues in the cantons today, and how cooperation between the cantons could be organised.*<sup>21</sup>

This formulation suggests that while the EDK was not immediately demanding to engage in cultural matters, it nevertheless readily accepted to do so. Discussions had been held on the need to have a certain coordination on cultural matters, although it was perceived that the cities were the level of government mainly responsible for culture. The EDK at first saw no priority in creating a specialist forum to coordinate and exchange on cultural questions and decided it would treat cultural questions on a case by case basis. In the following year the question of creating an inter-cantonal cultural representation became more pressing; neither the meeting minutes nor the interviews reveal exactly what prompted this<sup>22</sup>. The nomination of Moritz Arnet as secretary general of the EDK in September 1984, might have had a decisive role to play in this. His focus was less exclusively on pedagogical matters as was the case for his predecessor Eugen Egger, and Arnet started by drafting a working paper on the role of the EDK in matters of culture, of adult education and of youth policy<sup>23</sup>. In any event, the idea of the KBK was then launched at a common meeting between Pro Helvetia, the BAK, the cantons and some private cultural sponsors in November 1984<sup>24</sup>.

Under Arnet, the person tasked with coordinating cultural matters in the EDK secretariat was Christian Schmid. Arnet remembers very well the passion with which Schmid held his positions: ‘...*he was, of course, to some extent the driving force behind it all at the beginning*’<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> A1271/220 Protokolle der Sitzungen der Departementssekretäre, 1983-1985, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A1271/220. Sitzung 14.01.1983

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* Sitzungen 02.09.1983, 17.02.1984, 12.04.1984

<sup>23</sup> MATT-EGLI Sylvia VON, « EDK gleicht Föderalismus aus. Moritz Arnet über die Schulkoordination », *Basler Zeitung*, 16.07.1984.

<sup>24</sup> VALAR Rico, *Entwicklung & Rolle der KBK als Koordinations- und Planungsinstrument der kantonalen und überkantonalen Kulturpolitik*, Seminararbeit - Fachbereich Kulturmanagement, Universität Basel, 2008. p. 4

<sup>25</sup> ARNET, Secretary General of the EDK 1986-1999, *doc. cit.*

According to Schmid, there was in fact a small group of four to five cultural officers, who drove the coordinating efforts in these early years of the mid-1980s. This group included Gérald Berger of Fribourg, Sylvia Staub from Zürich, Anton Ryf from Bern, André-François Moosbrugger from Aargau, whom Schmid called *a deeply passionate cultural patron*<sup>26</sup>. Some existing collaborations between cantons gave an extra stimulus to extend the platform nationally like, as was the case with Bern and Solothurn, in Schmid's recollection:

*Interestingly, one of the driving elements at the time was the discussion between Bern and Solothurn, the cantons of Bern and Solothurn and, of course, the cultural institutions of Bern and Solothurn, because they were running or supporting some kind of joint city theatre, and that was then an opportunity to expand things.*<sup>27</sup>

This dynamic reveals a need that was at the basis of many of the processes that happened within the inter-cantonal collaboration. It relates to the ways in which cultural institutions of bigger urban centres also serve an audience that comes from beyond the borders of these cantons. Hence it is logical that the surrounding areas contribute to some extent to the financial burdens of the urban centres. Conversely, within cantons with a big city, a cultural policy can enable the sharing of the financial and infrastructural strength of these urban centres with surrounding areas. This reading is confirmed by Sylvia Staub, Cultural head of the Canton Zurich over more than three decades, from the late 1960s until 1997. She refers to the creation of various cantonal laws on the promotion of culture around the early 1970s<sup>28</sup>. As a young jurist joining the education department, she 'wrote' the Zurich law which was enacted in 1970. The main concern for these laws was to create the ability to support important institutions with tax money, instead of only with the lottery funds. Without a law, such would not have been possible. But to make sure the law could pass in a popular vote, it had to be more encompassing, and also

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> About one third of the cantons created cultural promotion laws before 1980 (e.g. Solothurn 1965, Zurich 1970, Nidwalden 1971, Bern 1975), one third in the 1990s and about one third after 2000.

to be of benefit to the smaller municipalities in the canton, and thus it was made to be a broad and widely encompassing piece of legislation. Thus, with this law, Zurich could also afford to support some of the more independent and smaller initiatives, which was important in light of the social movement of the late 1960s, and the Opera riots of 1980-82. This was the context in which the bigger cantons like Zurich started feeling the need for a greater measure of coordination between cantons. It was felt that smaller, and poorer cantons, without a law on the promotion of culture could be assisted in managing their bigger institutions deemed to have a national importance, by the bigger cantons<sup>29</sup>. According to Arnet, the driving cantons within the coordination context, were those cantons of the big cities, and those that were managing expensive cultural institutions that radiated beyond their borders. Money absolutely played a role in this desire to work together<sup>30</sup>. Interestingly, this contrasts with the later experience expressed by Philippe Trinchan (FR), drawing from his experience in the 2010s. He expressed the opinion that the larger city cantons were particularly focused on the complex cultural policies within their areas, and that the drive to coordinate and develop the interactions within the KBK had come more from the smaller cantons. Roland Hofer (SH) who served on the KBK from 1999 to 2024, on the other hand did not specifically perceive that the conference was more driven by either the smaller cantons or the ones covering the big cities<sup>31</sup>.

Schmid recalls that the forum that coordinated the municipal officials responsible for culture, the KSK, was very keen on having a similar level of coordination on a cantonal level, so that there could be a better coordination between cities and cantons as well<sup>32</sup>. That the bigger cities had been better coordinated in terms of culture was also reported in the Clottu report, which made reference to the ‘Group of ten’, the predecessor of the KSK which had been founded in 1970<sup>33</sup>. The General Secretary of the EDK

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<sup>29</sup> STAUB, Zurich 1968-1997, *doc. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> ARNET, Secretary General of the EDK 1986-1999, *doc. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> TRINCHAN Philippe, Fribourg 2013-today, interview by the author, 20.03.2024.  
HOFER Roland, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, interview by the author, 12.11.2024.

<sup>32</sup> SCHMID Christian, Secretary at the EDK early1970s-2008, interview by the author, 02.04.2024.

<sup>33</sup> KELLER, « Kulturpolitik der Schweiz », *art. cit.*

Moritz Arnet, Schmid's line manager, was not a man of the arts to the same degree as Schmid, but culture was important to him and he proved to be an important advocate of the cultural sector and the consolidation of the KBK. Like Sylvia Staub, Arnet was a jurist, and like Staub he used this background to assist in creating the necessary legal groundwork in the canton of Luzern, to establish a legal foundation for its cultural policy. He experienced it to some extent as 'pioneering work'<sup>34</sup>.

### 1.2.2. The first meetings and the formalisation of the KBK (1985-1988)

The cantonal officials for culture met informally for the first time on 3 December 1985. Thereafter they would meet twice a year, in spring in Bern, and in autumn for a two-day meeting, at a different location each year, hosted by a different canton, a practice that has remained unchanged since then<sup>35</sup>.

A policy document on the role of the KBK was produced in October 1986 and stated that the priority was the *joint handling of larger projects of national importance*. Further stated aims included enabling an exchange of experiences, working towards the commitment to find a minimal consensus, increasing the knowledge of the participants in their field, and clarifying questions of competence between the different government levels. An important motivation for the creation of the KBK was the absence of a national interlocutor representing the cantons in relation to the Confederation<sup>36</sup>.

The development of the rules of procedure was complicated, mostly due to the discussions with the CDACr in the Romandie, which had been meeting more regularly and had already established a tighter model of

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<sup>34</sup> ARNET, Secretary General of the EDK 1986-1999, *doc. cit.*

<sup>35</sup> The EDK archives are kept at the state archive in Luzern. They contain all meeting minutes of the KBK plenary meetings from autumn 1988 onwards. The minutes of the first six meetings (Dec. 1985 – spring 1988) could unfortunately not be located during the research for this study.

<sup>36</sup> SCHWEIZERISCHE KONFERENZ DER KANTONALEN ERZIEHUNGSDIREKTOREN (éd.), *Stichworte zum kulturellen Engagement der EDK = Les points forts de l'engagement culturel de la CDIP*, Bern, 1986. <https://edudoc.ch/record/41222>.

coordination and obtained a greater degree of competency from its political heads to respond to applications<sup>3738</sup>. It was important for the Welsh representatives that the rules of procedure of the KBK did not overrule the CDAC procedures<sup>39</sup>.

Eventually the rules of procedure were adopted and the KBK was formalised in April 1988<sup>40</sup>.

The rules stipulated a structure that provided for one of the cultural officers to be named as president of the forum, and nine members to make up the bureau which met more regularly to handle ongoing matters and prepare the plenary meetings. These nine were comprised of two from each EDK region and one representative from Ticino. The four EDK regions were in this first decade not yet formally given a place in the procedures, but the Romandie and the Central Swiss conference were operational from an early point.

Christian Schmid was the secretary appointed to handle the administrative management from the offices of the secretariat of the EDK, until the early 2000s. His job description included mostly tasks related to education matters, and only 10% of his work time was allocated to KBK matters. He explained this to BAK representatives in 1997, when he spoke

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<sup>37</sup> The sources and interviews did not reveal exact dates of creation of the regional conferences. According to Pochon, the CDACr must have started quite informally, around 1983, whilst Schuler's memory places the first KBK Zentralschweiz meetings in 1992. They were before 2000 less formalised specialist meetings, that supported the proceedings of the political EDK regional conferences. <sup>37</sup> POCHON, *La Conférence romande des Délégué-e-s aux Affaires culturelles. Politiques culturelles intercantionales et professionnalisation des arts de la scène dans l'espace culturel romand*, op. cit. p. 12. SCHULER Josef, *Kulturbeauftragte Uri 1994-2018*, interview by the author, 25.03.2024

<sup>38</sup> As the acronym CDAC is also the French version of KBK, often the designation 'CDACr' or 'CDAC R' was used to differentiate from the regional conference of French speaking cultural officers. Up until the new Geschäftsordnung of 1999, Ticino was in fact part of this regional conference, and one would find the designation 'CDAC r/ti'. In this study, I will consistently use 'CDACr' throughout.

<sup>39</sup> A1271/221 *Protokolle der Sitzungen der Departementssekretäre*, 1988.1986, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A1271/221. Sitzungen 14.04.1988 and 10.11.1988.

<sup>40</sup> A1427/167 *Akten, nach Registraturplan: Jahrgang 1989 260: Kulturbeauftragtenkonferenz KBK. Plenarkonferenzen: Einladungen und Protokolle, 1989*, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A 1427/167. Jahresbericht 1988

about the different aspects of his job description at the EDK secretariat general:

*...and last but unfortunately often also least, I am allowed to deal with cultural issues, which would actually be closest to me in terms of my training and my inclinations, but which are treated as a luxury item in our organisation, with its all-dominant school topics.<sup>41</sup>*

Following a perceived ‘EDK-tradition’, the presidency of the KBK was meant to be rotating, and would alternate between a German speaking and a French speaking member. However, the CDACr members were never particularly keen on providing a candidate for the presidency, stating a lack of availability<sup>42</sup>. The presidents have thus invariably been from German speaking cantons<sup>43</sup>. The role of vice-presidency was only created in 2005, and it is not until the appointment of Jacques Cordonier (VS) in 2017, that it would be occupied by a French-speaking cultural officer.

### 1.3. The main traits of the KBK

In the next three chapters, the evolution of the KBK over three decades will be analysed in a concise way. However, there are certain characteristics of the conference that were at the basis of its creation, and that remain consistently valid throughout its existence. It is helpful to keep these in mind throughout.

The KBK has always been conceived as a specialist forum, without its own budget or decision making power<sup>44</sup>. Budgetary decisions on cultural matters needed both then and now to be taken by the political heads responsible for culture. These heads were in the large majority the political

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<sup>41</sup> A1453/1717, 1997, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. SCHMID, Christian. ‘Kurzreferat gehalten anlässlich der Amtstagung des Bundesamtes für Kultur am 19. September 1997 in Winterthur’

<sup>42</sup> Plenarsitzung 08.11.1990

<sup>43</sup> Hans Reinhard NW 1986-1991, André-François Moosbrugger AG 1991-1998, Regula Koch ZG 1999-2003, François Wasserfallen BE 2004-2008, Roland Hofer SH 2009-2016, Philippe Bischof BS 2017, Aldo Caviezel ZG 2017-today

<sup>44</sup> The KBK has a small administrative budget provided by the EDK’s general secretariat

heads of the cantonal education departments, and thus also constituted the EDK, which is the directors' conference that can voice a political position. However, it was not the case in all cantons that culture was part of the education department. This means that in some cantons the director of education, who is part of the EDK under which the KBK resorts, would not be the superior of the official representing the canton in the KBK. This obviously complicates any efforts to try and increase the competency and impact that the KBK can have.

Although a number of bigger cities and cantons with bigger cities had been developing and implementing a consistent cultural policy since the late 1960s, the whole field of cultural policy was still in a very nascent state. This meant that there were huge differences between various cantons, in terms of the legal framework and budgets available for the promotion of culture, and in terms of what cultural policy really meant and encompassed for the various government levels involved, and for their constituencies. Some cantons had been working with a legal framework for almost 20 years, in other cantons there was no law on the promotion of culture, and the work remained dependent on the usage of lottery funds. In some cantons the focus was on the promotion of cultural production, and the big arts institutions, in others heritage, archives and libraries took a very prominent role.

## **2. 1990s: the KBK searches for its place in an uncertain institutional context**

### **2.1. Context**

The failure of the initiative of 1986 coincided with the creation of the KBK. For some policy areas, like heritage protection for instance, the cantons were to a large degree dependent on the financially more powerful Confederation. Without a legal basis for the cultural action of the federal level, there was insecurity, which also meant a level of distrust between the different levels of government. The BAK was still a young agency of the federal government, under the tutelage of the Home Affairs Department, and was the first institution affected by the absence of a legal framework. It was thus also the BAK that led the campaign for a new referendum with the aim to include culture in the constitution.

The next referendum was held on 1 June 1994. This time there was only one proposal, and it seemed in the media that there was hardly any opposition against it. Everyone in government and in the cultural institutional sphere was acutely aware of the need to have it approved. The text of the referendum was deemed very safe, as it included a ‘can’ formulation (it didn’t oblige the Confederation to manage cultural affairs), and it explicitly maintained the cantonal sovereignty in culture. Nonetheless, some segments of society continued to express resistance against it, especially coming from the right conservative SVP and liberal FDP parties. They exploited the fear that the artists would become expensive to the Swiss taxpayer, and that the federal role would endanger cantonal sovereignty and overlook local specificities. To the surprise of almost everyone involved, the referendum failed. Even though it received a majority of citizens voting in favour, the smallest possible majority of cantons received a ‘no’-majority. A referendum needed both the popular and the cantonal majority to be accepted. This failure caused consternation

and insecurity among those involved in the governance of culture, not least among the cantons<sup>45</sup>.

One must also keep in mind that throughout the 1990s, the message from federal government was that there was a financial and budgetary crisis, and that government expenses needed to be adapted to that. Without a legal mandate, it would be even less likely to obtain support from federal government for expensive processes, like the management of heritage, and the risk was that the federal government would transfer some of these responsibilities to the cantons.

It is within this context of uncertainty, that culture was also looked at in the overall process of the clearer definition of the roles of different spheres of government, and that culture became part of the process of the equalisation of finances. This was a policy process whereby the income and expenses of the various cantons were compared. When the divergence between cantons prejudiced the capacity to maintain a similar level of service delivery, the Confederation would transfer budget to the cantons with higher expenses, and from the richer cantons to the poorer cantons. This process was thoroughly discussed in the field of culture in the years after the failed referendum of 1994. It was only in 2003, and then more definitively in 2008, that a new Law on Financial Equalisation was approved<sup>46</sup>. These processes hung over the proceedings of the KBK, and influenced the context in which it worked greatly.

Eventually, in 1999, the Federal Council managed to table a proposal for a referendum on the complete revision of the constitution, which was deemed outdated, both in terms of wording and in terms of some of the provisions. The new proposed constitution would include a section on the division of tasks between the Confederation and the cantons. Less publicised, the new text also contained an almost identical formulation on culture as the one that was rejected in 1994. The new constitution received

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<sup>45</sup> On the 1994 referendum see e.g. GUETG Marco, « Ein Defizit: Die Kultur und ihre Förderung sind in der Bundesverfassung noch verankert », *Basler Zeitung*, 25.05.1994, p. 2. RICCI LEMPEN Silvia, « L'État au service de la culture », *Journal de Genève*, 07.05.1994, p. 21; NIEDERHAUSER Brigitta, « Der lange Marsch der Kulturvorlage », *der Bund*, 16.04.1994, p. 13. And many other articles in the press file contained in A1453/297, 1994, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2005/225/de>

a clear approval, and was enacted from 2000 onwards. A new way of organising Swiss cultural policy became possible<sup>47</sup>.

## 2.2. Pioneer personalities operate within the initial framework

### 2.2.1. *The founding members*

The composition of the early KBK was diverse. On the one hand there were people who had been occupying cultural offices of cantons with a well-established and defined cultural policy, often people coming from the cultural field and who acted as driving forces, and to some extent as cultural activists in making the KBK a functional platform. They were mostly cultural officers of the cantons with important cities, and in many cases they occupied their positions for a very long period. This was an era when job rotation was significantly lower than today. Sylvia Staub of Zürich had been with the department since the late 1960s until 1997. Gérald Berger led the Service de la culture in Fribourg from 1983 until his retirement in 2013. He had founded a film screening programme called Cinéplus in Fribourg. Berger was also the driving force behind the creation of the law on the promotion of culture in Fribourg, which was adopted in 1991<sup>48</sup>. Other members of this early period include the teacher and theatre director Niggi Ullrich from Basel-Landschaft. Ullrich started his career in 1988 at the Amt für Kultur and stayed until his retirement in 2014. He was very active in the discussions on the role and the pertinence of the KBK. Brigitte Waridel, coming from the library context, led the Service des Affaires Culturelles (SERAC) in Vaud for 20 years, from 1995 until 2015. In these early years of the KBK many cantons didn't have their own cultural office. The 'standard' institutional format was to have a cultural office as part of the

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<sup>47</sup> See e.g. SINGER Otto, Kulturpolitik in der Schweiz: Der neue Kulturartikel und die Neugestaltung der bundesstaatlichen Kulturförderung, Wissenschaftliche Dienste des deutschen Bundestages, 24.11.2005.

<https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/513446/1ddd8684b34dc6799f86f064f866a55/Kulturpolitik-in-der-Schweiz.pdf>, consulted on 19.04.2024.

<sup>48</sup> «Gérald Berger, trente ans au service de la culture. Beau vers l'œil», <http://www.bloglagruyere.ch/2013/09/17/gerald-berger-trente-ans-au-service-de-la-culture>.

cantonal education department, and to have the head of this cultural office to represent the canton in the KBK. As long as cantons didn't have such a cultural office yet, either a department head of the education department, or another education official was seconded to participate in the meetings, as was the case for instance with Hans Steinegger in Schwyz (at KBK meetings from 1986 until 2004) and Kurt Künzler in Thurgau (from 1988 until 2002).

These delegates represented cantons with varying areas of competency. As mentioned earlier, in some cantons heritage was the responsibility of the department of public works, whilst in others it would resort under culture, and therefore in turn mostly under education. This could result in strongly diverging financial obligations. According to Sylvia Staub, André-François Moosbrugger of Aargau complained that there were too many castles in his canton, and the maintenance of these consumed a great deal of his budget. In her own canton, Staub felt the budgetary impact of the transfer of the Zürich Opera from the city to the Canton, and she compared the impact of the Zürich Opera somewhat to that of the Aargau castles<sup>49</sup>.

### 2.2.2. *The functioning of the early KBK*

#### **Recommendations**

A large part of the focus of the KBK plenary meetings in the first decade went to the treatment of the so-called 'recommendations'. Cultural actors of a very varied nature could submit project proposals to their cantonal cultural services. If these were deemed to have a wider Swiss significance, they would be discussed in the plenary, and the cultural officers would decide in principle that they would share the support. In some cases the projects had a stronger local importance, but were expensive and were deemed essential, and then contributions could be recommended by other cantons on the basis of a solidarity principle. In the first case, and this was increasingly the majority of cases, a distribution formula was used on the basis of the number of inhabitants per canton. In the case of solidarity contributions, the requesting canton would pay a higher amount.

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<sup>49</sup> STAUB, Zurich 1968-1997, *doc. cit.*

By the end of the millennium almost 50 recommendations had passed through the plenary meetings. These projects were extremely diverse and apart from the fact that these were projects in which the cultural delegates saw pertinence and merit and in which they understood the supra-regional importance, there were not many limiting criteria or policy formulations that would define priorities. This spoke naturally to the diversity of cultural policies and focus points in the different cantons. A significant number of the projects were dedicated to research and publications that would document artistic creation in Switzerland in an encompassing way. Examples of these included the publication series 'Ars Helvetica' - a Pro Helvetia initiative and a film about the history of the Swiss film by Freddy Buache, founder of the Swiss Film Archive in Lausanne, both in 1989; a handbook on Swiss folklore in 1990, a lexicon on Swiss architects of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in 1992, a lexicon on Swiss art by the Swiss Institute for Art Research in 1996, etc. Other recommendations foresaw a support, without clear definition of the duration of this support, for existing organisations that were deemed to be of importance in the Swiss cultural landscape, or new organisations which were deemed pertinent. Examples of these are the foundation Trigon Film, for the distribution of films from the '3<sup>rd</sup> world' from 1989, the Stiftung Weiterbildung Film und Audiovision from 1991, NIKE - Nationale Informationsstelle für Kulturgütererhaltung from 1993 or the youth film organisation die Zauberlande / la Lanterne Magique from 1996. Yet other recommendations were aimed at addressing costs for the maintenance of heritage sites, like the restoration of the Bourbaki panorama in Luzern, a recommendation from 1995. The amounts of the recommendations could differ greatly, from as little as 10'000 to 600'000 CHF, in the latter case for the Verkehrshaus in Lucerne in 1997<sup>50</sup>.

The system of recommendations has been a viable tool in the hands of the cultural officers, and has managed to assure the realisation of multiple important and impactful projects, through a spirit of inter-cantonal cooperation and solidarity. Nonetheless, it also had its flaws. The recommendations are dependent on the decisions within the cantons, and

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<sup>50</sup> A complete list of recommendations from 1986 until 2011 is held in: 722.21/36/2011 Entscheidungen der KBK zu Finanzierungsversuchen (1986 bis heute), 2011, EDK Archiv, Haus der Kantone, Bern.

the entities managing the budgets in each canton could still refuse (that is still the case today). Even if they generally followed the indications of the cultural officers, the processes were often long and cumbersome.

### **An opportunity for informal professional exchange**

Back then, just like today, the cultural officers appreciated the existence of the KBK mostly for the possibility to meet colleagues in similar positions from different cantons, and to exchange with them. Thus common problems could be discussed, best practices shared, and where possible, also often outside of the formal discussions within the conference, collaborations and common projects between two or more cantons could emerge. Below are some testimonies from representatives of these early days, and how they valued above all this opportunity to meet and exchange.

The general secretary of the EDK, Moritz Arnet, found that this possibility to exchange informally led to a very pragmatic approach to dealing with the institutional context in which the KBK operated. The consensus, and finding a way around potential differences of opinions, was more important than adhering strictly to rules and laws, according to Arnet. He added:

*From my point of view, it was definitely the direct exchange of experiences and the agreements that were made at the professional level, where the cantonal cultural officers were often somewhat alone even in their own cantons.*

*Promoting culture is not, let me put it this way, a central state function that is then regulated by law and subject to directives and so on, which means that the informal aspect plays a major role. And that was the central function of this conference.<sup>51</sup>*

Sylvia Staub concurs with this focus on the informal exchanges as an essential function of the KBK gatherings:

*Above all, it was the exchange and the personal contacts that (made it possible) to quickly call (a colleague) and say 'do you know this person, he comes from your canton, wants to do this and that with us, does it*

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<sup>51</sup> ARNET, Secretary General of the EDK 1986-1999, *doc. cit.*

*make sense, is it serious?’ or something like that, or the other way around. So that was really very good.*<sup>52</sup>

### **Work groups allow for deeper reflection**

Another important operational aspect of the KBK work, was the establishment of and participation in work groups on a variety of wider ranging themes. This was the main ‘formal’ tool for addressing policy tools, and it allowed some time in the plenary meetings for feedback and focus on topics of importance in the framework of cultural policy, in addition to the discussions on the individual recommendations. These work groups were often initiated by other partners: by the EDK initially, and gradually more by the BAK and PH (e.g. on film promotion in 1995, or on author’s rights and cultural promotion in 1998); or together with e.g. the KSK (e.g. on legal foundations of cultural promotion, led by Jean-Pierre Hoby of the city of Zurich in 1992). In certain cases the work groups were internal to the KBK. The format of work groups would be a very frequent and efficient tool in the internal operations of the KBK, and within Swiss institutional contexts more generally, up until today.

### **Future strategies of the KBK**

The main focus of these internal work groups was the reflection on the role, position and future of the KBK itself. It started already during the discussions leading up to the 1994 referendum on the culture article in the federal constitution.

The first work group was led by Jürg Davatz (GL) and dealt with issues of extra- and supra-cantonal engagement of the KBK. It looked at boundaries between federal and cantonal competencies, in a context where the federal government seemed to gradually withdraw from cultural engagements due to the financial and budgetary crisis of the early 1990s<sup>53</sup>. This work group was replaced by various iterations that further developed the discussions of the Davatz group. After the 1994 referendum it became the work group on the ‘task division between the Confederation and the

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<sup>52</sup> STAUB, Zurich 1968-1997, *doc. cit.*

<sup>53</sup> A1427/2026, 1993, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A1427/2026. Bürositzung 19.04.1993

cantons', and at the presentation of some of its preliminary findings, it was decided to continue the group under the title 'inter-cantonal solidarity'. Both groups were led by Niggi Ullrich (BL), who was in these years a driving force behind the efforts to restructure the KBK. The group's activities took a second breath with the creation of a work group on 'future strategies' of the KBK. It was launched at the plenary conference in Zug in 1997, and aimed not only at optimising the existing functioning of the KBK and having fewer discussions on applications, but also at clarifying the definition of roles between the KBK, the BAK and Pro Helvetia<sup>54</sup>.

The KBK members wanted more than merely the possibility to recommend commonly supported projects, and to exchange informally. Within a cultural sector in full development the need was felt to establish a more recognised position for the cantons in the national cultural debate. Implicitly, in doing so, they also hoped to obtain a more recognised position for culture within the sphere of cantonal politics, where it was overshadowed by the much bigger questions on education.

In the discussions of the work group 'future strategies', the wish was formulated as follows:

*The group was particularly concerned with a guiding principle formulated by the French-speaking colleagues: The national Conference should be a strong, permanent and recognised interlocutor with the BAK and Pro Helvetia.*<sup>55</sup>

The focus lay not on defining new tasks for the KBK, but on the better execution and coordination of the existing ones. The members wanted fewer applications and a better allocation and distribution of inter-cantonal funds through the creation of a common fund. The funding practice on applications needed to focus less on helping organisations who had an urgent need for financial support, and more on new projects. Finally, the members wished for more clarity on the task division between the BAK, Pro Helvetia and the KBK.

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<sup>54</sup> A1453/1729, 1997, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. Plenary meeting 06.11.1997

<sup>55</sup> A1453/1729 Plenary meeting 06.11.1997

These discussions culminated in a few significant decisions being taken at the KBK conference in Lausanne in October 1998. First, there was the adoption of the new rules of procedure. This implied formalising the role of the regional conferences in the decision making process, which allowed a closer proximity to the people in the cultural field and at the same time it allowed for the majority of discussions on recommendations to take place within the regional conferences thus freeing up space in plenary meetings for more important business. The presidents of each of the four regional conferences, plus the cultural head of Ticino, would automatically make up the newly conceived Management Committee, a leaner version of what used to be the 'bureau' which had consisted of nine members. Applicants would send their proposals to the regional conferences only, where they would be discussed. Any majority decision between the four regions would be automatically applied, only in case of two regions being in favour of a project, and two regions against, would the project be discussed at the plenary meeting.

At the same conference in Lausanne, there was a decision to create a special fund for common projects. This would allow for initiatives from the KBK rather than for external applications, to be supported without always having to go back to the cantonal political heads for the approval of budgets. For this 'provisional credit' a pot of 100'000 CHF was created, and the contributions for this pot were expected through the prevailing distribution formula and would of course need to be approved by the political heads<sup>56</sup>.

### 2.2.3. *The KBK and the CDACr*

The discussions during the years that led to the establishment of the new KBK structure reveal a zone of tension in the Röstigraben, the German-French language barrier within the organisation. Among the four regions, especially the French speaking west region, organised in the CDACr, and also the Central Swiss region had developed already a more consistent approach to regional collaboration. Contrary to the other regional conferences, the CDACr had a very specific separate structure: it

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<sup>56</sup> The provisional credit is called 'Eventualkredit' in German and 'Crédit Prévisionnel' in French

was dependent on the CIIP, the regional conference of the EDK for French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino. The level of coordination in the CDACr allowed for synergies that were, and to some extent still are, more difficult to implement on a national level or in the German speaking region as a whole. One example was for instance the creation of the CORODIS in 1993, the ‘Commission Romande de diffusion de spectacles’, which aimed at promoting the touring of theatre and dance shows from French-speaking Switzerland at home and abroad. It is cited by many as a defining achievement of the CDACr, and something that gave true legitimacy to the regional conference<sup>57</sup>. It is just one example of how the CDACr in fact operated within its own logic, and the national KBK was sometimes perceived as not very useful or pertinent by the CDACr members. Especially for some of the earlier members, the efforts toward a fuller integration into the national KBK seemed like a burden on their regional autonomy, perceived as well functioning<sup>58</sup>. Despite some reservations, eventually the new rules of procedure were gladly accepted by the CDACr, which meant the green light for their adoption<sup>59</sup>.

The relationship between the CDACr and the KBK remained a sensitive topic throughout the 35 years of this period<sup>60</sup>. It is indeed a fact that the French-speaking cantons have, from their minority perspective, a larger degree of identification as a culturally homogenous region, despite the important and celebrated differences between the various cantons. The demographically more dominant German speaking part of the KBK has generally been more in tune with its internal differences and specificities, than with what unites it<sup>61</sup>. A similar strength emanating from operating from a minority position might be at the basis of the more established cooperation in the Central Swiss region, which, apart from its lead canton Lucerne, consists of smaller and more rural cantons, without the

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<sup>57</sup> POCHON, *La Conférence romande des Délégué-es aux Affaires culturelles Politiques culturelles intercantionales et professionnalisation des arts de la scène dans l'espace culturel romand*, op. cit. 87-89

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* p. 38

<sup>59</sup> A1453/2300, 1998, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. Letter M. Ramuz to AF Moosbrugger, 27.10.1998

<sup>60</sup> MEIER Katrin, St. Gallen 2007-2021, interview by the author, 21.03.2024.

<sup>61</sup> E.g. TANNER Susanna, Zurich 1997-2014, interview by the author, 15.03.2024 & HOFER, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, *doc. cit.*

institutional and financial power of the big cities like Zürich, Basel or Bern. It might be that this sense of cohesion on the side of the Romandie also had deeper cultural roots, and that the proximity of the centralised French model provided a model for a different political culture. On the other hand, this common cultural identity at the basis of what is called an ‘Espace Culturel Romand’, can equally be understood as emanating from a bottom-up dynamic, and from a consciousness of diversity among the French-speaking cantons, rather than from a centralist reflex<sup>62</sup>.

Philippe Trinchon (FR) agrees that the differences between the regions remain significant and that the Romandie is ahead in terms of the establishment of common projects and structures. He does perceive that the differences between the language region are changing for the better. One element is for instance the better command of the national languages by the new generation of KBK delegates. If among the pioneer generation described above, there were still many French speaking delegates who did not speak German, by the end of the 2010s one saw that all of them would be able to communicate in both languages.

### 2.3. A new institutional framework of cultural policy

#### 2.3.1. *The EDK and the relation of tutelage*

The relation between the KBK and its political conference, the EDK, has been the cause of enduring polemics. At times, the understanding between both sets of representatives was difficult, as the KBK pioneers desired to be heard and recognised as representatives for culture, whilst the EDK needed to preserve its political authority and competency and needed to keep the KBK members to some extent in check.

Added to this was the fact that for the EDK and its education officers, culture remained a rather insignificant fragment of the area they covered, and was pushed to the back of an agenda filled with much larger and more

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<sup>62</sup> TRINCHAN, Fribourg 2013-today, *doc. cit.* POCHON, *La Conférence romande des Délégués aux Affaires culturelles Politiques culturelles intercantionales et professionnalisation des arts de la scène dans l'espace culturel romand*, *op. cit.* pp. 55-77

pressing education issues. The EDK is not only the largest political conference in the Swiss system of cooperative federalism, it is also the most powerful in terms of decision making, and this is due to the concordats in education. Concordats are binding legal agreements between cantons, and represent a common legal framework between two or more cantons for specific issues. The large majority of concordats are concluded between two or a few cantons. Education, however, is the field with the most important concordats binding (almost) all cantons in a single legislative framework, the starting point of which was the school concordat of 1970<sup>63</sup>. This required a great deal of preparatory negotiation and an alignment between the political heads for education in all cantons. As no concordat existed for culture, the EDK and by consequence the KBK could not wield real decision-making power on cultural matters - decisions had to be validated by each canton's own political authority, and processes could take very long.

From the very beginning, the KBK encountered issues with its subordinate position to the EDK. In 1989 there were various issues regarding projects the KBK felt were in its field of competency, but which the EDK Management Committee treated in its meetings, without consulting the KBK, like the 'Lexicon Suisse 1991' by the publisher Mengis & Zier, a project on the Théâtre Populaire Romand by the Schweizer Bühnenverband and the association on 3<sup>rd</sup> world films Trigon, which was treated separately at the KBK and at the EDK<sup>64</sup>.

The collegial culture specialists seating in the KBK felt from early on that they had something to contribute in the national debate on cultural policy. In 1990 the Home Affairs department (EDI) listed and contacted a set of institutional and organisational actors to provide a position in the draft of the articles on culture to be included in the constitution. In this

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<sup>63</sup> This was updated and revised with the HarmoS concordat in 2007, and further extended with the special education concordat and the concordat on study grants, both in 2009. <https://www.cdep.ch/de/dokumentation/rechtstexte-beschluesse/konkordate-im-ueberblick>

<sup>64</sup> A1427/166 Akten, nach Registraturplan: Jahrgang 1989 260: Kulturbeauftragtenkonferenz KBK. Einladungen und Protokolle Büro. Allgemeine Korrespondenz, 1989, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A 1427/166.

list, the KBK figured separately from the EDK, and higher on the list. The EDK, however, prohibited the KBK to communicate its position on the constitutional articles directly to the EDI, stating that this exceeded the merely technical role of the specialist conference. At a special meeting in Romont in March 1991, on the occasion of the opening of the exhibition of Swiss stained-glass windows, the KBK delegates voted overwhelmingly against this veto by the EDK. It amounted to a mutiny by the cultural officers against the political conference. They insisted that the KBK, having been approached directly by the EDI, had every right to voice its own opinion. The delegates also felt that there would inevitably be a divergence between the legal positioning of the EDK and the positioning of the KBK based on considerations of its content and practical know-how of the field under consideration. EDK general secretary Moritz Arnet reacted that cantonal governments and the EDK would not be able to leave this situation without consequence and that the approach adopted by the KBK could prompt considerable reputational damage<sup>65</sup>. This prompted Moosbrugger to call together an urgent extra meeting, on 22 April 1991, in the presence of Arnet. Richard Kunz (AR) found it all a bit preposterous and took offence to the reference to possible consequences and remained absent from the extra meeting. Daniel Huber (LU) was equally unimpressed by the thought of having to meet again with the intention to turn back a decision that was democratically taken. Only half of the cantonal cultural delegates met on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of April in the presence of Moritz Arnet. The discussions were heated and even within the KBK the opinions diverged on whether to maintain the mutiny position, or whether to abide by the rules laid out by the EDK general secretary. Eventually, Sylvia Staub (ZH) came with a compromise solution to agree to transmit the KBK position internally to the EDK directorate, rather than straight to the Home Affairs department, on the condition that the EDK directorate agreed to include this position verbatim in its communication to the EDI as the position of its primary and relevant specialist conference. This proposal was almost unanimously agreed to, and the crisis was neutralised<sup>66</sup>.

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<sup>65</sup> A1427/1142, 1991, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A1427/1142. Letter of 02.04.1991

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

### 2.3.2. *The road to the constitutional article on culture*

Thanks to this compromise, the EDK and the KBK could complete the consultation process, and added their position to the drafting of the proposed constitutional article for the referendum of 1994. The wording was to be kept minimal to have the best chance to have the proposal adopted. The adopted wording was a cautious ‘can’ formulation, granting the Confederation the possibility to act in the promotion of culture, without submitting it to a legal obligation, and within the parameters of cantonal sovereignty and subsidiarity mentioned above. Although the leadership of the process was located with the BAK, the KBK and its members were very actively involved in the campaign to have the proposal accepted. The process was thoroughly discussed at various subsequent plenary meetings, where also external guests were invited to present their thoughts, such as the president of Pro Helvetia Rosemarie Simmen, the film director and politician Peter von Gunten and Cyrill Häring representing the private Christoph Merian Stiftung<sup>67</sup>.

As mentioned above, the referendum of 12 June 1994 failed, to the surprise of almost all involved. Many of the KBK delegates, and also particularly the EDK secretary Christian Schmid, had been actively campaigning for a ‘yes’-vote, mainly as part of the campaign ‘Komitee für eine kreative Schweiz. Ja zum Kulturförderungsartikel’ which joined people from various political parties and from the institutional field. SVP General Secretary Myrtha Welti coordinated the campaign and the SVP headquarters in Bern was a regular meeting venue. It is striking that it was exactly the SVP who decided against support for the article.

After the referendum, the various players had to rethink the future of cultural policy in Switzerland and their position in it, and at the same time efforts were again initiated to have the article included in the constitution. The new discussions on the article involved the KBK less, but the wording that was proposed in this process driven by the BAK was very similar to that of the 1994 referendum. In 1999, the Federal Council submitted a referendum to the Swiss population for an overall revision of the text of the

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<sup>67</sup> A1427/670 Akten, nach Registraturplan: Jahrgang 1990 260: Kulturbeauftragtenkonferenz KBK. KBK: Plenarkonferenz in Liestal vom 8./9. November 1990, 1990, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A 1427/670.

constitution, which was deemed to be an outdated text. The proposed renewed constitution included references to the division of competencies between the cantons and the Confederation, which would be important for the further discussions on the financial equalisation between the different spheres of government, also in the field of culture. In addition, the constitutional article on culture was included. This meant that a long process, that started at the beginning of the 1980s, finally culminated in a legal basis for federal Swiss cultural policy. It would take another nine years, however, before this article would be translated into a law on the promotion of culture, and another three years before that law was finally implemented.

During the decade of the 1990s the KBK was constantly informed about and involved in the discussions about the future legislation on an arms-length consultative basis. The process was federal, and thus driven by the BAK, and was political, which meant the decisive input came from the EDK. This despite the cantonal delegates feeling very directly invested in and impacted by these processes.

### *2.3.3. The BAK and Pro Helvetia*

One of the main tasks of the KBK was to maintain a dialogue with the principal representatives of cultural policy active on the other government levels. This meant a regular exchange and working relationship with the BAK and Pro Helvetia on the federal level, and with the KSK representing the cities (SKK from 2009 onwards).

Throughout the history of these three decades, one can generally state that the relations with the KSK were extremely cordial and constructive, that Pro Helvetia was seen as a potential ally in various processes and the relationship was generally positive, but that the relationship with the BAK was often marked by mistrust.

The BAK and Pro Helvetia were consistently invited to almost all plenary meetings of the KBK, apart from certain ‘extraordinary’ meetings, where important items for discussion were sometimes debated among the KBK members. In the 1990s, it was the deputy director Rolf Keller who attended consistently, from the late 1980s (when he was still Secretary to the directorate) until 1999. Directors Luc Boissonnas (1959-91), Urs Frauchiger (1992-97) and Bernard Cathomas (1998-2001) attended rarely.

Starting with the directorship of David Streiff (1994-2005) the BAK directors were regularly present at the KBK plenary meetings, and before Streiff it was Pro Helvetia's deputy director Hans-Rudolf Dörig. During the longer plenary sessions, BAK and Pro Helvetia deputies would be invited to attend during a defined time slot to present the news from their organisations. With regard to the discussions on the constitutional article, they would be invited for more in-depth discussions on the topic, to try and reach a common position.

The BAK was seen with some mistrust throughout the period, as on the one hand it existed without a proper legal basis for its operations, but mostly because under pressure of the financial constraints of the 1990s, it was seen to be at risk of abandoning a number of its responsibilities. This dynamic started already early, as illustrated by the discussion in 1990 on the support for the creation of a museum for Swiss Popular Culture in the Kornhaus in Burgdorf (BE). When a large demand was made to the cantons to make this museum a viable project, it was seen as a striking example of the *'problem of cultural institutions of national importance that are insufficiently supported by the Confederation'*<sup>68</sup>.

The same fear, that the BAK and the Confederation would withdraw from its responsibilities and thus push the burden on the cantons, was expressed repeatedly throughout the decade, and more urgently so after the negative result of the referendum of 1994. On the other hand, the positive nature of collaboration was also dependent on personalities. David Streiff, who took up the position of BAK director in the beginning of 1994 was extremely active and engaged in the campaign for the June 1994 referendum on the constitutional article, and in doing so had collaborated positively with the KBK members who were also campaigning<sup>69</sup>. His habit of attending the KBK plenary was also appreciated.

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<sup>68</sup> A1427/668 Akten, nach Registraturplan: Jahrgang 1990 260: Kulturbeauftragtenkonferenz KBK Groupe de concertation des délégués aux affaires culturelles des cantons romands et du Tessin. Mitgliederverzeichnisse: Plenum und Büro, 1990, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, A 1427/668. Protocol CDACr/ti 24.01.1990.

<sup>69</sup> See e.g. REDERLECHNER Hanspeter, « Ein Nein am 12. Juni wäre verheerend. Gespräch mit David Streiff, Direktor des Bundesamtes für Kultur, über den Kulturförderungsartikel. », *Solothurner Zeitung*, 11.05.1993, p. 3. In: A1453/297, *cit.*

The relationship with Pro Helvetia was more positive and constructive. It was not seen as a threat, but rather as a potential source of additional funding for projects that happened in or even with the cantons. Hence a series of discussions were held specifically on the treatment of applications for support, and the ways in which a complementarity between the capacity of Pro Helvetia to support projects and the cantons' capacity to do so could be found.

In 1999 a common work group was set up to improve the collaboration with Pro Helvetia . The cantons were interested in being better informed and clarifying the terms of engagement with Pro Helvetia on the division of tasks to support projects. The other clear result from a questionnaire among the cultural officers was that the cantons perceived the support of Pro Helvetia as a mark of quality and validation<sup>70</sup>. When in 1999 the increase of the Pro Helvetia budget was to be debated in parliament, the KBK president Regula Koch organised a meeting with Pro Helvetia to prepare the strategy to defend this increase with the cantonal politicians that served in parliament. Thus, the different culture delegates were able to lobby with their political representatives in favour of this proposed increase<sup>71</sup>.

Finally it must be mentioned that the relationship with the KSK remained very positive and constructive throughout. There was a lot of exchange of experiences between the two forums, and the relationships were consistently positive. Representatives of the KSK would generally sit in at the KBK meetings, and would give feedback on the proceedings in their committee.

## 2.4. **Projects**

The cultural officers were and are busy and highly solicited individuals. Often they had only a partial percentage of their job description allocated to culture, and as people responsible for culture within their cantons, their main focus was there, more than on a forum of

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<sup>70</sup> A1594/461, 1999, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. Plenary 4&5.11.1999

<sup>71</sup> A1594/471, 1999, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. Letter of 24.06.1999.

peers that met only twice a year, or a few times more for those who served in the bureau.

The mandate of the KBK, and its lack of budget and decision-making power, also did not give it the flexibility to initiate its own common projects. Some of the time available in the plenary meetings was spent on presentations, exchange and discussions regarding strategic topics, a lot of it on recommendations. In a number of cases, the applicants were invited to the plenary sessions to present their proposals, and to discuss these with the delegates.

Some cultural officers wanted to do more and to develop common projects driven out of the KBK's own initiative. Due to the KBK's formal structure, this impulse will probably always remain a marginal part of the KBK's activities. Nonetheless, during the 1990s, the KBK managed to implement and develop two projects on its own initiative.

The first one was a project involving stained glass artists from all 26 cantons, and resulted in the exhibition «26 fois le vitrail Suisse», which was opened at the Musée du Vitrail in Romont (FR) in March 1991<sup>72</sup>. The project represented the contribution of the cantonal culture authorities to the controversial celebrations of the 700 years of the Swiss Confederation<sup>73</sup>.

The project was well received by the cantonal representatives and was deemed to be a success. It looked at the old traditional custom of having a coat of arms for each canton and invited contemporary artists to reinvent this principle in a more playful way, with attention to the artistic creation. For the creation of the catalogue for this exhibition, the KBK partnered with Pro Helvetia.

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<sup>72</sup> Plenarsitzung 8.11.1990: 'our' 700 years project is the project on 26 times 'le vitrail suisse'. A1427/670

<sup>73</sup> KELLER, « Kulturpolitik der Schweiz », *art. cit.* p. 126. The beginning of the 90s was not only marked by the boycott of large part of the Swiss artistic community of the 700 year jubilee of the confederation, but also by the interesting polemic and critique by the conservative establishment on the exhibition 'La Suiza no existe' (Switzerland doesn't exist) during the world expo in Sevilla in 1992. NW, « «Die Schweiz gibt es nicht» Kultur statt Klischees an der Weltausstellung in Sevilla », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23.05.1992, p. 11. A. B., « «Ja, die Schweiz existiert!» Bundesrat Ogi am Schweizer Tag der Expo in Sevilla », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 03.08.1992, p. 13. WECKERLE Christoph et KÄGI A., « «Suiza existe» - ein Augenschein an der Expo 92 », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 15.09.1992, p. 63.

The other project was only realised in 2002, as it was the cantons' contribution to the big national exhibition EXPO '02, though the discussions on this project dated from before the end of the 1990s. The Expo was originally planned for 2001 but had to be postponed due to the budgetary excesses of its original planning. Here, the KBK decided on a project proposal with a pavilion and exhibition dedicated to the culture of the 'travellers', an ethnic minority group of Yenish, Sinti and Roma with prevalence in Switzerland. The project was entitled «Fekker-Chilbi» and was proposed and implemented by the Stiftung Zukunft für Schweizer Fahrende. It was budgeted at 500'000 CHF, of which the KBK through the cantons would secure 50%. The project went ahead, and happened in the weekend of 6 September 2002 in Murten, in the presence of many KBK delegates<sup>74</sup>.

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<sup>74</sup> A1594/1439, 2001, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. Plenar 16.11.2001. « Fahrende, Sinti und Roma an der Expo », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 09.09.2002. <https://www.nzz.ch/article8DKFX-ld.223898>.



## **3. The 2000s: a transitional decade of consolidation**

### **3.1. The context**

The article 69 in the new constitution finally allowed a more formal legislative approach for the federal role in cultural policy, but it needed to be translated into a law that would create a framework for this cultural policy. Even when this was a federal process, and the lead was with the BAK, the process would significantly impact the position and role of the cantons and the KBK. The process included research, consultation and drafting of this new legislative framework, which would also include a new law regulating the role and functioning of Pro Helvetia. The cantons were involved in these consultations, and through the lead of the EDK, a formal position could be drafted and presented.

This happened within the context of the consolidation of the KBK and its standing within the cultural policy field. With its stronger establishment through the regionalisation of its functioning, and with the general conviction that a ‘voice of the cantons’ would be essential within the new and future institutional approach to cultural policy under the Law on the Promotion of Culture (Kulturförderungsgesetz – KFG), the organisation strengthened. Also, since the founding of the KBK, more cantons had created their own laws on the promotion of culture, and had formalised their cultural services, whether they were under the education department or not<sup>75</sup>. The delegates participating in the KBK thus generally had a stronger and more consolidated position within their cantons.

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<sup>75</sup> E.g. Appenzell Innerrhoden 1999, Nidwalden 2004, Appenzell Ausserrhoden 2005, Schaffhausen 2006

The KFG was finally approved in parliament in December 2009<sup>76</sup>. The law foresaw the elaboration of four-year plans, the Cultural Messages, that would give a framework of priorities and goals for the cultural policy of that period. Yet again, the elaboration of such a framework required previous discussions, research, drafting and consultations, which included the cantons. This meant that the actual enactment of the new KFG would not happen until January 2012, when the period of the first Cultural Message (2012-2016) started.

## 3.2. The KBK, renewed and renewing

### 3.2.1. *A mix of personalities*

The beginning of the period in this chapter is thus marked by two big novelties that impacted the way in which the KBK operated. On the one hand there were the new rules of procedure and on the other the new federal constitution.

Generally, in the beginning years of this decade, the already diverse profile of the cultural officers didn't change drastically. Many of the old pioneers who defended cantonal cultural policy from the very beginning of the existence of the KBK (and even before) continued in their positions: Gerald Berger (FR), Brigitte Waridel (VD), Daniel Huber (LU), Niggi Ullrich (BL) all continued well into the 2010s. But gradually there was the appearance of a generation that one would call a 'transitional' generation<sup>77</sup>. It was a type of 'middle generation' between the pioneers, the administrators who had over the many years learnt to become cultural promoters, and a newer generation that had specialised and been formally trained in cultural management. Hans Ulrich Glarner, for instance, had been an activist in the arts scene, and had been engaged in an initiative like the Aktion Begegnung 1991, a large scale networking programme for various cultural organisations in the context of the 700 year jubilee in 1991,

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<sup>76</sup> SR 442.1 Bundesgesetz vom 11. Dezember 2009 über die Kulturförderung (Kulturförderungsgesetz, KFG). <https://www.fedlex.admin.ch/eli/cc/2011/854/de>, consulted on 15.05.2024.

<sup>77</sup> BISCHOF Philippe, Basel Stadt 2011-2017 and Pro Helvetia director 2017-2025, interview by the author, 06.03.2024.

and then spent 10 years at the Stapferhaus Lenzburg as director. Between 2002 and 2013 he was cultural officer in Aargau, and from 2014 until 2024 in Bern. Philippe Bischof (BS), who started in 2011, came from a theatre background, but very quickly turned to cultural policy and management on the institutional level. One could also consider the former teacher Josef Schuler (UR), 1994-2022 as belonging to this category, and during his tenure the cultural outlook of his rural and relatively poor canton changed with the consolidation of a few significant institutions and the establishment of a legal framework<sup>78</sup>. Susanna Tanner (ZH) took over from Sylvia Staub in 1997, coming from a background of organising jazz concerts and other music events. Generally, despite the presidency being with Regula Koch (ZG) until 2006, the composition of the KBK was overwhelmingly male.

According to Glarner, the cultural officers coming from the cultural field needed to adapt their vantage point, and that sometimes led to differences: they could not just be arts professionals working for their trade, they had to shift to being cantonal representatives, hence they had to consider not only the interests of the arts field, but also that of the general population.

He experienced the functioning of the KBK in the beginning period of his tenure as still somewhat fragmented. The discussions were divisive, and there were certain personalities with a very strong wish to profile themselves. The discussions remained friendly, and as a platform for exchange of knowledge it was very valuable, but from a decision-making point of view it was not productive, in Glarner's opinion<sup>79</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> LIN., « Kulturoffensive am Gotthard. Kulturelle Investitionen in Uri für 8 Millionen Franken », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 04.04.1997, p. 13.

<sup>79</sup> GLARNER Hans-Ulrich, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, interview by the author, 18.03.2024.

### 3.2.2. *The new rules of procedure: regionalisation and some streamlining*

The new rules of procedure changed the functioning of the KBK significantly, and made processes leaner than they were before. The change was perceived as a first positive step: a more streamlined way of dealing with applications for recommendations, a leaner and more efficient Management Committee and the possibility to tap into a common provisional fund for small projects that were initiatives of the KBK itself. This new organisation was specifically welcomed by the CDACr. Concerned with maintaining its regional autonomy, it saw in the regionalisation of the new structure the ideal response to the needs it had felt over the years for a reorganisation. Michel Ramuz (GE) specifically highlighted the solution for Ticino<sup>80</sup>. The Italophone canton had been added to the Francophone CDACr on the assumption that there would be common themes among roman languages. It was also part of the CIIP, the west-Swiss regional conference of the EDK. However, the Romandie proved to have a strong logic of its own and the addition of Ticino did not always prove to make much sense. Hence in the new regional structure the CDACr would no longer include Ticino, which would also send its head of the cultural services to the Management Committee, in addition to the four presidents of the regional councils<sup>81</sup>.

Depending on the topics being discussed, Ticino could then participate in the regional meetings of any region, but most frequently the Central Swiss region. In fact, the regions were often fluid and adapted to the requirements of the moment. Zurich thus participated consistently in the eastern regional conference, though it was formally part of the north-west, due to its importance as a cultural hub for a large region, encompassing various cities like Aarau, Lucerne and St Gallen, and the territory in between. One effect of the regionalisation was that the intellectual preparatory work that was done in the regional meetings improved the quality of the plenary meetings.

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<sup>80</sup> A1453/2300, *cit.* letter 27.10.1998 Michel Ramuz (GE) to AF Moosbrugger (AG).

<sup>81</sup> For a historical look at the cultural policies of Ticino, see; PETER Sébastien, « Cultural Policies in Ticino », 18.01.2024, <https://creativeeconomies.com/cultural-policies-in-ticino>, consulted on 19.04.2024.

Throughout the decade the KBK members continued to question their positioning and operations, as the new procedures were felt to be an improvement, but not a fully satisfactory one. The processes did remain cumbersome, and the dependence on the decisive power of the EDK remained a constraint. At the same time the provisional fund was underutilised, due to a lack of capacity to develop adequate projects for this tool.

In 2008, with the text of the future Law on the Promotion of Culture (KFG) known, the KBK Management Committee embarked on a new process of questioning the future positioning and workings of the KBK, and with specific attention to its relation to the EDK, the BAK and Pro Helvetia<sup>82</sup>. The president Roland Hofer (SH) presented a paper with a ‘situation analysis’ at the November plenary. It included the proposal to create a common funding pool which would allow the KBK to run more activities on its own initiative.

Further discussions on the creation of thematic focus points and tools to achieve a more mid to long term planning framework for the KBK’s activities were pushed forward until after the enactment of the KFG, which would oblige the KBK members to engage in such processes in the context of the four-year plans of the Cultural Messages, that would emanate from the law<sup>83</sup>.

### **3.3. The institutional context**

#### *3.3.1. The EDK: an improved relationship, but frustrations remain*

The KBK remained, as it still is today, a specialist conference under the umbrella of the EDK, the conference of its political directors. We have seen that this caused some moments of friction since the very beginning of the KBK’s existence, and this did not change much in the 2000s.

The two main frustrations remained the same: on the one hand the fact that the KBK was not permitted to speak politically with its own voice.

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<sup>82</sup> 2021/36/897, 2008, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, 2021/36/897.

<sup>83</sup> Plenarsitzung 14.05.2009. Protokoll, 14.05.2009.

It had to provide its specialist positions to the EDK which would then table them at its own discretion in federal policy processes or in the public domain. On the other hand it was felt that the EDK did not care sufficiently about culture, and that culture would remain to be a small and weak point on the agenda, which was dominated by the massive education issues.

At the EDK, Hans Ambühl succeeded Moritz Arnet as general secretary in 1999, a position he would keep until 2016. Ambühl was felt to be slightly more distant from cultural matters than Arnet, and under him the extremely present and proactive role of Christian Schmid, who maintained the responsibility to manage KBK affairs from the EDK general secretariat, diminished. If in the 1990s there was a very active mentoring - including on questions of content - from the side of Schmid, in the 2000s this role was more in the background, and administrative<sup>84</sup>.

Under the umbrella of the EDK a large number of specialist conferences were and are operational, which increasingly came to look like a labyrinth of acronyms on paper. In 2002, the EDK proceeded with an in-depth evaluation of its 'tools' with the intention to redefine the objectives and direction of the conference. In this process the EDK also developed a programme of activities for the decade 2000. The activity of the KBK was only reflected in a minimal mention at the very end of the document, subsection 2 of point nr. 21 out of 22, which referred to the participation in the process of transforming the constitutional articles into a law<sup>85</sup>. It illustrates the extent to which cultural affairs were of marginal importance to the education directors.

In a reaction to the 2002 evaluation, and through a questionnaire that the KBK delegates answer in the frame of it, Michel Hauser (JU) concludes: *'It is a criticism that the KBK is not given enough attention in the EDK'*. This

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<sup>84</sup> ARNET, Secretary General of the EDK 1986-1999, *doc. cit.* mentioned about Schmid's perception of this change: *bei meinen Nachfolgern, er hat mir gesagt, es sei nicht so gut ausgekommen mit ihm, weil er für diese Belange wenig Verständnis hatte, ich kann das nicht überprüfen*; SCHMID, The experience of the KBK seen by its former secretary at the EDK, *doc. cit.* Also mentions his unhappiness of feeling somewhat sidelined under Ambühl.

<sup>85</sup> A1664/409, 2002, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. Leitlinien und Tätigkeitsprogram der EDK, 02.08.2001

theme of an excessive control and at the same time lack of interest continues throughout the decade.

At meeting in Lavin in 2008, EDK general secretary Hans Ambühl confirmed the EDK position at the plenary meeting. He stated that the role of the KBK is reactive, rather than proactive, that it is a specialist forum, which can support the EDK in political matters. This led to irritation with the cultural officers. Susanna Tanner (ZH) expressed that she was ‘*astonished that the KBK was perceived by the EDK as doubting itself, as it is not the case*’. The discussion led to the position that for the KBK to be able to play a more active and innovative role, also in policy discussions, and in support of the EDK, additional human resources would be needed<sup>86</sup>. Roland Hofer, however, stresses the positive way in which he as president of the KBK from 2009 collaborated with Ambühl in the first half of the 2010s. Through this strengthening understanding with the general secretariat of the EDK, the KBK improved its capacity to put topics of cultural policy on the agenda of the EDK<sup>87</sup>.

### 3.3.2. *Pro Helvetia and the BAK: from collaboration to mistrust*

Despite the inclusion of the cultural article in the new constitution, it can be said that the 2000s heralded a period of heightened mistrust and tensions between the cantonal cultural officers and the Federal Office for Culture. The constitutional article gave the Confederation a legal basis, and it was mostly from the Confederation, and from the BAK, that the initiative came to develop the texts for the Law on the Promotion of Culture. The cantons’ involvement in this process was minimal. The succession of David Streiff, who came from the cultural sector and was perceived as having great affinity for it, by Jean-Frédéric Jauslin as BAK director in 2005, who was perceived to be more technocratic and distant, could have affected the institutional relationship somewhat<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Plenarsitzung Lavin 13&14.11.2008. Protokoll, 13.11.2008.

<sup>87</sup> HOFER, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, *doc. cit.*

<sup>88</sup> Cf. FISCHER Yves, deputy director of the BAK 2008-today, interview by the author, 21.03.2024.

One of the main fears and frustrations, however, was the continued tendency of the BAK to abandon certain responsibilities, seemingly transferring these duties, and their financial implications, to the cantons. This was illustrated by the discussion on the Swiss national sound archives (Fonoteca Nazionale) in June 2007. The Fonoteca, now part of the National Library, was before 2014 still a foundation under private law. Jauslin came to defend the view held by the BAK that the cantons should participate in its financing. The meeting report says:

*The cantons are decidedly of a different opinion here and consider the tasks of the Fonoteca Nazionale, as the name itself makes abundantly clear, to be a clear federal task. It is not acceptable for the federal government to evade its responsibility again here (!).*<sup>89</sup>

The negative vote in June for a recommendation by the KBK is seen as a clear vote of mistrust toward the BAK. The discussion continued in November 2007, and again the Confederation was condemned for failing to adequately fulfil its cultural responsibilities. Eventually the recommendation was approved with the slightest of majorities, out of solidarity with the canton Ticino, for whom this was an essential project. The plenary decided however, to send a letter to Jean-Frédéric Jauslin that stated that this approval was in no sense a sign of approval of the inadequate federal policy<sup>90</sup>. At the same meeting, a similar irritation surfaced with a demand for the support of the Instituto Svizzera in Rome<sup>91</sup>.

The withdrawal from confederal responsibilities had the largest financial impact in the field of heritage, where it significantly cut its budgets repeatedly in the 2000s. In this field the discussions were equally passionate, and the EDK was supportive in representing the position of the KBK that the agreements about the responsibility of the Confederation in this regard needed to be respected<sup>92</sup>. The mistrust between both organisations

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<sup>89</sup> 2021/36/891, 2007, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, 2021/36/891. Plenary meeting 21.06.2007.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.* Plenary meeting 8&9.11.2009.

<sup>91</sup> On the ISR see: PERRET Noëlle-Laetitia, *L'Institut suisse de Rome: entre culture, politique et diplomatie*, Neuchâtel, Éditions Alphil - Presses universitaires suisses, 2014 (Politique et échanges culturels).

<sup>92</sup> 2021/36/891, *cit.* Plenary meeting 21.06.2007

remained a constant thread in these years leading up to the establishment of the Law on the Promotion of Culture, the Cultural Messages and the National Cultural Dialogue<sup>93</sup>.

This mistrust was also evident in the experience and expressed perspective of the BAK. Its deputy director Yves Fischer explained how the participation of the federal organisations in the KBK meetings was frustrating. They were invited to give a presentation of their activities, and immediately after were asked by the KBK to leave the room when these presentations were discussed. Sometimes a BAK director or representative had to travel across the country, just to present a paper, and then leave again. There was no participation in the discussions. Fischer felt that there was a great potential for meaningful exchange that remained unrealised. He mentioned the example of the project on living traditions, an initiative that came from UNESCO and that the BAK brought to the meeting. At first the cantons were vexed, the discussions were imposed or 'muscled' and they found that the BAK had no right to come tell them what to do. Once the project was eventually realised, with the assistance of the cantons who provided living traditions from their regions to be included in this UNESCO endorsed list, and with an internet portal to gain more information about them, according to Fischer everyone was happy about the result<sup>94</sup>.

More examples of these tensions can be found, and it shows that the institutions had difficulties finding the right balance in the federal system of subsidiarity, causing the KBK to be regularly on the defensive. According to Hofer, the absence of a real culture of dialogue with the BAK emanated from the federalist system in Switzerland: there was a high degree of autonomy of the different spheres of government. Hofer opines that there was an impression among the cantonal delegates that the BAK would anyway do what it wants to do<sup>95</sup>.

In contrast, the relationship with Pro Helvetia seemed to be more positive, though also not without its problems. When Pius Knüsel took up

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<sup>93</sup> For the Cultural Messages and the National Cultural Dialogue, see 4.3.1. and 4.3.3.

<sup>94</sup> FISCHER Yves, deputy director of the BAK 2008-today, *doc. cit.* for a reflection of the discussions during the meeting: Plenarsitzung 14.05.2009. Protokoll, *cit.*

<sup>95</sup> HOFER, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, *doc. cit.*

the foundation's directorship in 2002, the presence of the director and the involvement in the plenary meetings significantly increased. Important collaborations were set up under the impulse of a foundation that was keen to extend its reach, and to make the best use of the programmatic liberty of its autonomous status. In the eyes of some, Pro Helvetia at times had the tendency to overplay its hand. Knüsel was accused of coming to the KBK meetings with pre-defined plans for the co-financing of projects that the cantons were to take or to leave, without creating much opportunity for discussion and exchange for common conceptualisation of the projects and programmes<sup>96</sup>. The end result was however generally positive. The most visible of these was probably the coordinated promotion of dance, a project that was launched in a collaboration between the BAK and Pro Helvetia in 2002, and which was further developed by Pro Helvetia (the Dance Project). It envisaged, as Knüsel mentioned in one of the presentations, an experiment for a new and more integrated way of collaboration between the various levels of government. Dance was seen as a precarious artistic discipline, and lacked an institutional framework. The dance project looked at approaching policy from a holistic level, including issues of formal training, employment in dance, creation and distribution, documentation and archiving, and considerations for the development of professional careers after the dance activity. An important aspect of the project was the creation of a representative national platform for dance called RESO. For realising this, as with all other collaborative processes, work groups were set up, which included members from the KBK.

The Dance Project was successful and was throughout positively received with the active involvement of all partners. As with the other spheres of government, the KBK decided on a regular contribution for RESO, in the beginning out of its provisional credit budget.

In 2005, Pro Helvetia approached the KBK with another project, this time on folk culture. It was baptised «Echos», and allowed the financing of a variety of projects that were proposed through local actors that would document and creatively engage with practices of folk culture. It was very well received in rural cantons like Uri, though had less resonance in big city cantons where the focus was more on promoting contemporary arts<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> E.g. TANNER, Zurich 1997-2014, *doc. cit.*

<sup>97</sup> SCHULER, Uri 1994-2018, *doc. cit.*

The approach of Pro Helvetia was however not experienced as very participatory. It was found that the foundation came with its proposals, for the cantons to take or not, but that little input was possible from the KBK. Susanna Tanner (ZH) concluded: *They came as guests and said we want that. Do this and contribute this... And then they left again*<sup>98</sup>. When Pro Helvetia presented the first thought processes on a similar integrated approach in the field of theatre in 2007, the minutes of the plenary KBK meeting reflected the way it was received:

*The cantons generally feel that Pro Helvetia's involvement in the area of (coordinated) theatre funding is once again imposing unwanted constraints on them. Coordinated theatre funding is not Pro Helvetia's business.*<sup>99</sup>

### **KSK / SKK**

The third level of government implicated in cultural policy was the municipal level, and there mostly through the big cities. The KSK (rebaptised in 2009 as the SKK) was the growing union of cultural officers from the cities. Throughout, a member of the KSK would attend the KBK plenary meetings. Conversely, it was often a collaborator of the EDK who would also attend the KSK plenary meetings. By 2010 this changed, and the collaboration was more formally anchored. A SKK member would now become a non-voting member of the KBK plenary, and a KBK member would henceforth attend the SKK plenary meetings<sup>100</sup>.

All interviewees for this research have qualified the collaboration between the KBK and the SKK as extremely collegial and constructive. According to Glarner this was also very much a function of the particular persons occupying the positions. He observed a gradual strengthening of the SKK as an institutional body. In Bern, he explained, the cultural policy was in any case based on subsidiarity: *That is the basic principle: the municipality pays and the canton doubles it. Therefore, of course, one is already dependent on each other*<sup>101</sup>. Philippe Bischof (BS) did point to the

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<sup>98</sup> TANNER, Zurich 1997-2014, *doc. cit.*

<sup>99</sup> 2021/36/891, *cit.*

<sup>100</sup> Plenarsitzung 02.06.2010. Protokoll, 02.06.2010, EDK Plattform digital.

<sup>101</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

fact that the cities could work with much less constraints and administratively heavy processes than the KBK, and that in the end, the KSK / SKK was and is a voluntary association of cities<sup>102</sup>. Katrin Meier (SG) confirmed the constructive and positive collaboration between the two fora, though also acknowledged that this did not always equate to a real collaboration on common projects<sup>103</sup>.

### 3.3.3. *Discussions on the Law on the Promotion of Culture*

The central focus of Swiss cultural policy in the 2000s was on the creation of a law that would translate the inclusion of culture in article 69 of the new federal constitution of 2000 into a Law on the Promotion of Culture. This was a federal law defining federal cultural policy and it did not change the legal framework of cultural promotion on a cantonal level. Nonetheless, the definition of the division of tasks between the different levels of government was decisive for the cultural policy of the cantons and therefore a new federal framework automatically impacted the cantons.

The process of consultation and the drafting of the Law on the Promotion of Culture, was managed by the BAK, and it involved a very wide range of consultations, not only with the different levels of government, but also with a range of key organisations in the Swiss cultural field (such as for example Suisse Culture which represents all organisations that defend the labour interests of professionals in various fields of culture). These discussions touched on a multitude of topics, which often addressed the extent to which the Confederation would be engaged in supporting certain areas of expenditure that would otherwise be assigned to the cantons.

Hence there was hope that the regulation of the framework for social security for culture professionals would be included in the KFG, which ended up not being the case. Also, there was a whole process to define ‘flagship’ institutions, with the intention that the Confederation could contribute to a selection of big important institutions, which were supposed to have a national importance, in ways that would also alleviate

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<sup>102</sup> BISCHOF, Basel Stadt 2011-2017 and Pro Helvetia director 2017-2025, *doc. cit.*

<sup>103</sup> MEIER, St. Gallen 2007-2021, *doc. cit.*

the pressure on cantonal budgets. This study returns to these flagships later, but here one can note that also this topic was not included in the KFG<sup>104</sup>.

Yves Fischer of the BAK acknowledges that during the whole process of drafting the KFG, the involvement of the cantons was quite minimal<sup>105</sup>. Hans Ambühl, the Secretary general of the EDK, stated at the KBK plenary meeting that in the EDK's view, the cantons had been clearly insufficiently heard and consulted in the KFG process, and the issue of collaboration with the cantons was largely neglected in the KFG text<sup>106</sup>. Nonetheless, the KBK was consulted and developed a position on the drafted law, which it saw generally in positive terms. This position was then integrated into the broader EDK position, where the EDK's input focused on education issues linked to the KFG. Eventually the law was approved in parliament in December 2009. It foresaw the establishment of strategic plans that would define priorities for policy periods of four years. Thus, after the approval of the law, the whole process of drafting a policy text and consulting stakeholders started again, driven by the BAK, this time to establish the first so-called Cultural Message for the period 2012-2016. 1 January 2012 was therefore the date the law was finally actually enacted.

These processes are complex, as the message must also be presented in the different chambers of parliament. This meant that the consultation process with the cantons, foreseen in late summer 2010, could only be very short. This was too short, according to some in the KBK, who perceived this process as a largely cosmetic involvement of the cantons to give their opinions, rather than a serious effort to take their positions in consideration<sup>107</sup>.

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<sup>104</sup> BENINI Francisco, « Couchepin gegen Millionen für grosse Kulturinstitute. Keine Unterstützung des Bundes für Einrichtungen mit nationaler Ausstrahlung – harsche Kritik aus den Kantonen », *NZZ am Sonntag*, 06.02.2005, p. 13.

<sup>105</sup> FISCHER, deputy director of the BAK 2008-today, *doc. cit.*

<sup>106</sup> 2021/36/892, 2008, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, 2021/36/892. Plenar 13&14.11.2008

<sup>107</sup> Plenarsitzung 02.06.2010. Protokoll, *cit.*

### 3.4. Projects and focal points

#### 3.4.1. Recommendations remain, but occupy less space

With the new rules of procedure, the KBK managed to eliminate most of the discussions on recommendations from the plenary discussions. Instead, they still discussed these proposals in their regional conferences. The approved recommendations were fewer in number – between January 2000 and December 2009 there were 30 recommendations, but the projects and the recommended amounts were significantly bigger<sup>108</sup>. The fact that recommendations remained optional made coordination sometimes difficult, and mostly, it made the procedures long and complicated. Susanna Tanner says that in her canton Zurich, she could more or less decide herself from which pot she took a certain contribution, whilst in other cantons the cultural officer had to go to the highest level just to decide on 5'000 CHF. The challenge was thus to build some type of obligation into the decisions<sup>109</sup>.

Certain projects caused polemics, and would be more amply discussed in the plenary meeting. One such discussion on a recommendation was about the restoration of the Benedictine abbey St. Andreas in Sarnen, at the 2006 autumn meeting<sup>110</sup>.

In 2009 the KBK decided on a further streamlining of the process of deciding applications, with the intention to free up more time for the plenary meetings to discuss more important (policy) questions<sup>111</sup>. At this meeting the possibility of creating a funding pool was also discussed, conceived as a common account that could have a budget of 500'000 CHF,

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<sup>108</sup> See overview of recommendations in: 722.21/36/2011 Entscheidungen der KBK zu Finanzierungsversuchen (1986 bis heute), 2013.

<sup>109</sup> TANNER, Zurich 1997-2014, *doc. cit.*

<sup>110</sup> Hans Ulrich Glarner AG remembers the irritation among various KBK members as they felt they were being forced to approve this financing by the somewhat manipulative insistence of the Abbey and two nuns. The abbey was damaged by flooding in 2005, and the requested support through a solidarity contribution from the cantons was valued at 700'000 CHF: GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.* 2021/36/890, 2006, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, 2021/36/890. Plenar 9&10.11.2006. 2021/36/895, 2006, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, 2021/36/895. LA Sitzung 14.12.2006

<sup>111</sup> 2021/36/893, 2009, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, 2021/36/893. Plenar 14.05.2009

which all cantons would pay into, and which would substitute the recommendations. Thus, the Cantons would be able to plan their finances better and projects wouldn't have to be approved 26 times. The idea of the funding pool was ultimately not pursued, despite the very positive stance of many KBK members. On the one hand it proved difficult to obtain approval for this kind of measure in certain cantons, in the absence of a concordat that regulated it. Mostly, the idea was put on hold due to the scepticism of the French speaking cantons, who saw in it a threat to the established autonomy and working procedures in which they already operated regionally<sup>112</sup>.

Apart from these external applications, however, the KBK now managed to enter more fully into the field of policy discussion, and this resulted in work being done in a number of different policy areas. Some of these had already been tabled in the earlier years, but never to the systematic extent that they were now. These themes that were now strongly established on the KBK's agenda, would continue to be discussed well into the decade of the 2010s. One of these approaches was in the frame of the dance project, and the establishment of RESO, as explained above. In what follows consideration is given to a few of these important recurring topics.

#### *3.4.2. The Dance promotion as a terrain of experiment of institutional collaboration*

The dance project referred to already in 3.3.2. was launched by Andrew Holland, who was then still at the BAK, together with Pro Helvetia director Knüsel in 2003. The first reaction of the KBK was rather negative, as the Management Committee found that it was not the task of the BAK and Pro Helvetia to do the general promotion of an artistic discipline<sup>113</sup>. The project was however subsequently positively received by the plenary meeting, and successfully implemented. In 2007 a 'permanent conference on dance' was created, to continue the shaping of the project, and to provide policy indications for RESO. It included representatives from all three levels of government, and from the organisations RESO and

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<sup>112</sup> Plenarsitzung 02.06.2010. Protokoll, *cit.*; Plenarsitzung Genève 19&20.11.2009. Protokoll.

<sup>113</sup> A1664/986, 2003, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv. LA sitzung 23.10.2003

Dance Suisse. The collaboration within this forum was seen as exemplary, and a positive experiment as to what the collaborative work between the different spheres of government could look like. In fact, it was called a source of inspiration for the creation of the National Cultural Dialogue in 2011<sup>114</sup>.

By 2016 the BAK insisted on dissolving the permanent conference on dance and proposed to create a work group within the NKD that focused on matters related to dance. Despite the BAK withdrawing from the dance policy, the KBK wanted to continue with supporting dance<sup>115</sup>. The National Cultural Dialogue work group on dance ended in 2019, with a study and publication called ‘Panorama Dance’, which provided a picture of the exact state of the dance scene and the policy measures to support it.

#### *3.4.3. The policy of financial equalisation and discussion on the flagship institutions*

In the passage of this present study on the decade of the 1990s, the policy of the financial equalisation was already briefly explained. This concerns the financial regulations whereby richer cantons can support the financial burdens of poorer ones, or whereby neighbouring cantons can contribute to public services of a canton where the benefits generated extend beyond its boundaries. It also refers to transfers from the Confederation to the cantonal level. Thus, in the case of big cultural institutions, if inhabitants of surrounding cantons regularly visited the big museums in Zurich, it was deemed logical that these cantons contributed to the cost of these institutions. After the failed referendum of 1994, the parliamentary group on cultural matters of the National Council observed that those cantons that had voted in favour of the constitutional article, were also those with big expensive cultural institutions which drew audiences from well beyond the boundaries of their cantons or even had national significance<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>114</sup> Plenarsitzung 23&24.11.2017. Protokoll.Trakt07.6.2\_NKD\_Statusbericht\_AG\_Tan  
zfoerderung\_Beilage\_Bilanz\_SKT.pdf

<sup>115</sup> Plenarsitzung 24&25.11.2016. Protokoll, 24.11.2016.

<sup>116</sup> A1453/300, 1994, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv.

A federal working group on financial equalisation, which included representatives of the BAK, approached the cantons and the KBK in 2002. The KBK, however, was not involved in the details of the financial discussions. In the context of the preparation of the KFG, the BAK aimed to make the connection with the work on the Law on Financial Equalisation through the concept of ‘flagship institutions’. The cantons were tasked with establishing a shortlist of big cultural institutions with a ‘supra-regional’ significance, as it could not be a federal competency to define such. The KBK members were thus asked to go back to their cantons and establish such lists for their cantons. The result was a chaotic, overly extensive list of institutions selected on the basis of highly divergent criteria. There was a confusion about the term ‘supra-regional’, which was not equated with being as ‘of national importance’. Despite a few years of discussions and various efforts to establish a list, the flagships never gained shape and were not included in the KFG. According to Faustine Pochon, the project of the flagships failed: choosing for one flagship institution required choosing against others, and it implied a certain competition between cantons. In fact, it was felt to be against the federal spirit of the cantonal coordination<sup>117</sup>. This is also reflected in the divergent views of two of the interviewees. Susanna Tanner (ZH) experienced the search for a stronger positioning and a voice for the KBK as a lot of effort for very little result. Tanner found that the Confederation decided on everything anyway, and that the cantons didn’t really have much to say in it. The example she mentions was the discussion on the flagship institutions and the financing of the opera in Zurich in the frame of this. She found the net result of these discussions to be zero, and everything stayed the same:

*...that was such a lost labour of love. I mean, opera in the canton costs around 80 million, and we had this flagship discussion, which was really quite exhausting and yielded nothing at all.*<sup>118</sup>

On the other hand, Hans Ueli Glarner (AG/BE) found that a certain crisis of confidence he noticed within the KBK in the 2000s was partly a

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<sup>117</sup> POCHON, *La Conférence romande des Délégué-es aux Affaires culturelles Politiques culturelles intercantionales et professionnalisation des arts de la scène dans l’espace culturel romand*, op. cit. p. 62

<sup>118</sup> TANNER, Zurich 1997-2014, doc. cit.

product of the difficult discussions on the equalisation of cultural expenses. For example, he found the pressure exerted by the Canton of Zurich on the surrounding cantons to contribute to their costly cultural institutions to be problematic.<sup>119</sup> Around 2010, a few regions established agreements among themselves, aimed at sharing costs of expensive cultural institutions with surrounding cantons, with Zurich, Lucerne, Basel Stadt and St Gallen being the receiving cantons. The topic was no longer on the records of the KBK meetings, until its resurfacing again in 2017, as explained in section 4.4.1.

#### *3.4.4. Intangible cultural heritage and living traditions*

The BAK approached the KBK to participate in a project focusing on intangible cultural heritage and living traditions in the period 2008-2010, informed by the BAK's participation in UNESCO processes in this field. It engaged the cantons to create an inventory of intangible culture in their regions, and of living cultural traditions. This process was complex, because the list couldn't possibly be 'complete'. It was felt that it would rather have to be concise (circa 250 entries), but at the same time representative. Hence a number of sensitive questions were raised on how to communicate around this, who to include and who not. The cantons here felt that they were put under time pressure by the BAK to complete these lists in 2010 and 2011, in the context of a project that had been imposed on them, and which they were not in fact immediately interested in. Zsuzsanna Béri (NE) was part of the steering group for this project, and reported on its progress. Gradually, the cantons became more engaged in the process. The end result of the process was an internet portal which remained regularly updated and which can still be consulted today<sup>120</sup>. The end result of this collaboration with the BAK could finally be assessed as generally positive.

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<sup>119</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.lebendige-traditionen.ch/>

## **4. 2010s: life under the KFG**

### **4.1. The context**

Finally, after a process of recognition that started in the early 1980s with the first campaigns in favour of a constitutional article, there was a proper legal framework enacted for the elaboration of cultural policy. With the subsequent Cultural Messages of 2012-2015, 2016-2020 and the discussions for 2021-2024, a formalised structure of consultation and dialogue between the different governmental levels was established. The National Cultural Dialogue (NKD) was created in which the cities, the cantons and the Confederation met a few times per year, to discuss the strategic lines of the Cultural Messages and the implementation of their directives. The KBK played an essential role in the NKD.

With the processes of the recommendations now even more delegated to the regional conferences, the national KBK could now focus systematically and in a much more engaged and thorough manner with these policy issues. This was also a result of the cohesive and positive work that the conference had developed over the years, despite the complications of its institutional position. This role was now clearly more recognised by the federal institutions, that actively sought the input of the KBK, especially in the context of the NKD work groups and in the context of the consultation processes of the various Cultural Messages. In various fields like the social working conditions of arts professionals, and in the area of cultural mediation and participation, concrete results were being gradually accumulated of a more integrated collaboration between government levels, under a legal framework provided by the Cultural Messages that facilitated these processes. Essential challenges persisted, however: the KBK did remain a subsidiary structure to the political leadership of the EDK, for which culture remained a marginal aspect of its activities and focus. It also remained without a legal basis, a concordat, that would allow it to act more efficiently, without always needing to seek the approval of 26 cantonal political structures for its decisions and recommendations.

## 4.2. Professionalisation and institutionalisation

### 4.2.1. *The renewal of the KBK in the era of the Law on the Promotion of Culture*

By the end of the 2010s, all ‘original’ members of the KBK had retired. Some of the transitional generation ensured continuity, and a number of younger people came into view, making an impression. This meant that more of the cultural delegates came from a formal cultural management training, and thus processes became more formalised and professionalised. There were also more women than before among the new KBK delegates. The turnover of these positions was faster than before. The era of the cultural chefs of a canton remaining in position for 20 or 30 years seemed largely over, and it was more common to see someone moving on after three, four, five years. KBK members observed that some of the representatives of the old and middle generation made place for a newer generation of more proactive professional culture managers, and the urge to profile themselves made way for a greater capacity to collaborate constructively. The different regions had different characteristics. The central Swiss cantons had always had a greater cohesion. There was no real competition there, there was one lead canton, Lucerne, with 5 smaller cantons and their cohesion from that position was natural. Glarner found their approach to collaboration to be exemplary. The collaboration in the North West region improved towards the end of the decade, which is partly due to personnel changes in Basel Stadt and Zurich<sup>121</sup>.

### 4.2.2. *The KBK continues to pursue a position of strength and relevance*

In 2012 there was again a discussion on the strengthening of the role of the KBK. This happened in work groups during a two-day plenary, after a discussion led by Hans Ambühl about the role of the cantonal level in the cultural policy under the KFG. The discussion focused largely on whether and how the KBK should profile itself more, take positions and communicate on the large political themes of cultural policy (digitalization,

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<sup>121</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

participation etc). Also, there was a focus on common projects that the KBK could initiate, through the definition of key topics<sup>122</sup>. The intention of this was to allow the KBK to become more proactive and thus to gain a stronger profile.

This discussion about the role of the KBK and the boundaries of its competencies, nestled within a fragile balanced relationship with the cantons, the Confederation and its political mothership, the EDK, remained on the agenda throughout the decade and after.

In 2020 there was a discussion on a proposal by CDACr delegates for an amendment to the rules of procedure<sup>123</sup>. The Romands wanted first to decide on a principle of unanimity for proposals to be accepted around project recommendations. The statutes foresaw that when three regions were for a recommendation and one against, the proposal was adopted, even though it was assessed as not being pertinent in one of the regions. The other problem the CDACr members had observed, was that these recommendations were not obligatory, and in many cases were not granted and applied by certain cantons. They refer to two examples where the funds agreed upon in the recommendation by the KBK were finally only very partially (less than 50%) approved by the cantons. These matters were discussed in the plenary, and the three regions with a majority of German speakers insisted that unanimity was not a workable principle within the KBK context. They agreed to analyse why some of the proposals were not applied by the cantons as per the recommendations.

The other proposal the CDACr submitted at the same time was for the KBK to be able to act more proactively regarding policy recommendations. This would mean that it could play a more defining role in the Swiss landscape of cultural policy. Again, in this case, the German speaking regions differed in opinion, and found that for the KBK to become proactive, it would act against its nature of being representative of

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<sup>122</sup> Plenarsitzung Fribourg 22&23.11.2012. Protokoll, 22.11.2012.

<sup>123</sup> Propositions de modifications du « Règlement de la Conférence des délégués cantonaux aux affaires culturelles (CDAC) » du 25 janvier 2009 (CDIP) et des « Directives relatives au traitement des demandes de financement de projets et d'institutions culturelles par la Conférence des délégués culturels (CDAC) » du 20 novembre 2009 (CDIP). Trinchon, Philippe. 02.12.2019. Part of the documents for the Plenarsitzung 28.05.2020. Protokoll, 28.05.2020.

autonomous cantons with their own policy directions. The conclusion was formulated as follows:

*Positioning the KBK as an instrument of cultural policy is perceived as rather difficult. Priorities can be set through the programme of activities.*<sup>124</sup>

Here, one observes that the more unified and streamlined way of working of the French speaking cantons continued to be at the basis of a fundamental difference of vision of the purpose and role of the KBK by comparison with the German speaking cantons. This is a continuous dynamic in the history of the KBK. Nonetheless, the regions overall strengthened their operations in this period, and in doing so, they strengthened the whole KBK<sup>125</sup>. The potential for regional collaboration improved. It meant that there was more trust, and that some projects could be discussed with variable geometries, since cantons wishing to collaborate on specific projects did not necessarily have to come from the same region, and these collaborations could be carried out on an ad hoc basis<sup>126</sup>.

One challenge that the KBK was faced with within this new institutional context was the significant increase in the volume and complexity of its processes and workload. The agenda of the plenary meetings grew exponentially in this decade, and the additional work with the work groups in the NKD put a heavy burden on many KBK delegates participating in them, whose core responsibilities remain the management of cultural matters within their own cantons. The administrative capacity of the KBK secretariat at the GS EDK had not increased significantly in the last 20 years. Roland Hofer identifies this as a necessity for the future<sup>127</sup>.

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<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>125</sup> MEIER, St. Gallen 2007-2021, *doc. cit.*

<sup>126</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

<sup>127</sup> HOFER, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, *doc. cit.*

### 4.2.3. *The quest for the concordat*

The search for a stronger positioning and more political pertinence of the KBK naturally involved looking for ways to emancipate itself to some extent from the political conference of the EDK. But this would essentially also require the legal framework to do so. Within the context of cooperative federalism, such a legal framework would have the shape of a concordat. The EDK functioned with concordats for many years, most importantly the school concordat of 1970, and also the HarmoS concordat of 2007. After the KFG took effect in 2012, it seemed various elements indicated that the time might have been ripe to work on a concordat for culture as well. The collaboration in the dance project had been successful and consensual, providing a precedent for binding constructive collaboration. The process of equalisation of cultural expenses had seen regional concordats being concluded with cantons around Zurich and Lucerne, and another one in east Switzerland, around St. Gallen. The recognition of the role of the KBK within the policy framework of the National Cultural Dialogue provided an extra stimulus to have a stronger legal basis for collaboration. It was discussed in the 2013 plenary meetings. Hans Ambühl, the general secretary of the EDK was in favour of such a concordat and KBK president Roland Hofer was tasked to draft a proposal in collaboration with the general secretariat. The KBK members concluded however that culture was a more diverse and complex field to harmonise than education, and that efforts to reach a concordat would definitely meet with resistance<sup>128</sup>. Subsequently, a concrete discussion on reaching a concordat was never repeated. Regularly the delegates would make the comment that a proposed procedure would not be possible, because ‘for such we would need a concordat, and we don’t have it’, but there was also the understanding that it was not realistic to reach the concordat. Katrin Meier (SG) concludes that it is more efficient and useful to concentrate on developing and implementing projects, than to invest much effort in achieving a higher degree of autonomy from the EDK and the political heads, through tools like a concordat:

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<sup>128</sup> Plenarsitzung Altdorf 28&29.11.2013. Protokoll, 28.11.2013.

*I think it's an illusion. It's a wasted effort. We develop more strength by doing things than by trying to become stronger on this political level.*<sup>129</sup>

### 4.3. The KFG provides a new institutional framework

As mentioned higher, two essential novelties were established with the enactment of the KFG. On the one hand the federal cultural policy was strategized through four-year plans, the Cultural Messages. The cantons were involved in the process of drafting, consulting and approving these messages and the KBK was and is always asked to formulate a position that is then communicated through the EDK. The other novelty was the establishment of a long awaited common platform, where representatives of the three government levels involved in the realisation of cultural policy would meet regularly and exchange their views, and research priorities and strategies together. This was done through the establishment of the National Cultural Dialogue in 2011.

#### 4.3.1. *The Cultural Messages*

The first Cultural Message was enacted for the period 2012-2015, and was to some extent the fledgling, with all of the inevitable shortcomings of being the first one. As mentioned before, the cantons were only very minimally involved in establishing it and complained about the lack of time they had to discuss and formulate their position. The first Cultural Message was therefore essentially a federal affair, and allowed the BAK and Pro Helvetia to settle into the new framework. It was through the National Cultural Dialogue that other government levels could then start to get more involved, and this impacted the Cultural Messages of 2017 and of 2021, even when these processes did not yet reach the same level of cantonal involvement that was achieved for the 2025 message.

The Cultural Messages established thematic focus points. For the 2012 message this was a focus on digital culture and on living traditions. The focus points of the 2017 message – social cohesion, cultural participation and creation and innovation – were kept in the 2021 message

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<sup>129</sup> MEIER, St. Gallen 2007-2021, *doc. cit.*

for the sake of continuity. These focus points were essential also for the agenda-setting of the discussions in the National Cultural Dialogue, where the KBK members served in the various working groups.

The framework of the Cultural Messages was essential to the process of strengthening the position of the KBK. Katrin Meier (SG), who started attending the KBK meetings in 2007, found them at the beginning rather confusing. She also observed that a lot of the discussions were about how the KBK could be strengthened. In her view, the Cultural Message did allow the KBK to gain strength and political relevance. It allowed the KBK to genuinely participate in the process of agenda setting. To be at the forefront of this process was difficult with 26 cantons all needing to tow the same line, and Pro Helvetia was according to Meier still the first initiator of new themes, even if the KBK *'would have wanted to be that'*. One other interesting result was that after a few years, the KBK started to also adopt the tool of the 4 year plans as an internal planning framework. These would provide a strategic framework for the conference and assisted further in solidifying its strategic position<sup>130</sup>. Philippe Trinchan (FR) turns the logic somewhat around, and argues that the Cultural Messages provided the Confederation with a leadership position in the political agenda setting, which in turn obliged and allowed the cantons to adopt a more concerted position in reaction, and thus strengthened their position as well:

*I think the great advantage of the Cultural Message is that it sets the themes somewhere. It defines policy orientations. And in fact, it pushed the cantons which, it has to be said, were in fact in an attitude, which I still find today, a little too reactive and not yet proactive enough in relation to the mission they fulfil. The Confederation had the space to take a leadership role, because the cantons didn't take it. And this space, by proposing a message and policy guidelines, enabled the KBK to take ownership of the matter.*

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<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

### 4.3.2. *The National Cultural Dialogue (NKD)*

Article 5 of the KFG stipulates that the Confederation has the obligation to consult and collaborate with cities and cantons, whilst it uses the less binding ‘can’ formulation for the involvement of non-governmental actors. The establishment of a system for this concertation between government levels was a topic of debate. The BAK director Jean-Frédéric Jauslin insisted on a non-binding and informal format of exchange, as had been happening with the presentations of the BAK at the KBK and SKK plenary meetings for years. The BAK did thus not immediately see the need to change anything within the existing practice. The idea of a more formal and systematic mode of exchange had however been discussed at a much earlier point. In 1998 Gérald Berger (FR) developed a model in which he envisaged a regular meeting called the ‘forum’, which would have representatives of the BAK, Pro Helvetia and the KBK<sup>131</sup>. Pro Helvetia and its director Pius Knüsel also motivated for such formats in the mid-2000s<sup>132</sup>.

In the wake of the enactment of the first Cultural Message, the National Cultural Dialogue (NKD) was launched in November 2011. It consisted of two separate sets of meetings. First, there were the specialist meetings, which would be convened at least twice a year. They would in turn inform the political meetings, which would happen once or twice per year. On the specialist level, the BAK, the KBK and the SKK would be represented. In the political meetings the Home Affairs department EDI, the EDK and the Association of Swiss Cities SSV would be present. The contents presented in the full meetings of the specialist level, are prepared and discussed in a series of work groups. Usually, two members of the KBK would be designated to participate in these work groups. They would then also report back to the KBK plenary on the proceedings in their work groups. For example, Stefan Zollinger and Jacques Cordonnier were part of the work group on museum policy. Other work groups that operated in the years 2012-2019 and where different KBK members participated, addressed various topics: literature promotion, international cultural policy,

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<sup>131</sup> A1453/2303, 1998, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv.

<sup>132</sup> 2021/36/891, *cit.* Plenar 21.06.2007

mediation and participation, social security for artists, heritage, youth and music, collaboration in the library sector, statistics, the promotion of dance and that of film.

The NKD was a positive process, but it gradually also became evident that the legal basis for a federal cultural policy, and the tools created in this context, naturally strengthened the role of the Confederation. Hans Ulrich Glarner observed that in earlier times, the Confederation used to be something like a 27th canton, but that over the years it has increased significantly its weight and influence<sup>133</sup>. Susanne Hardmeier, secretary general of the EDK agreed with this observation<sup>134</sup>. In the second half of the decade, the KBK started working with multi-year programmes of activity. This allowed a deeper focus on the future development of the KBK and its positioning within the changing institutional context. For the programme discussed for 2018-2020 the need was expressed to pursue more strongly a common policy and common positions, under the observation that the agenda setting in culture happens too much on the initiative of the Confederation<sup>135</sup>.

In 2018, the KBK did an evaluation of its role in the NKD processes, and of their relevance. The general feeling was that the NKD structure was a positive evolution, but that it remained 'insufficient' and more geared for the purposes of the Confederation, which was overrepresented in it<sup>136</sup>. A lack of clarity still existed on the extent to which the NKD actually served the interests and agenda of the cantons and the KBK. Aldo Caviezel recalls that the multitude of the work groups in the NKD posed a problem of capacity and resources for the KBK members, and thus also a challenge for the quality of the work involved. In subsequent years the number of work groups was reduced from around five or six, to around three. This allowed KBK members to regain a sense of momentum around and enthusiasm for the NKD processes<sup>137</sup>.

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<sup>133</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

<sup>134</sup> Plenarsitzung 15&16.11.2018. Protokoll, 15.11.2018.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>136</sup> Plenarsitzung 26.06.2018. Protokoll, 26.06.2018.

<sup>137</sup> CAVIEZEL Aldo, Zug 2013-today, KBK Präsident 2017-today, interview by author, 11.11.2024.

### 4.3.3. *The EDK's perception of culture grows but remains low*

The National Cultural Dialogue thus provided a structure in which the KBK served in the specialist meetings, together with the BAK, whilst the EDK was represented in the political meetings with the Home Affairs Department. There was now a forum where the KBK could directly voice its position in a policy process that engaged with the federal level: this can be understood to be an improvement. It was also testimony to the fact that culture had grown in importance, and that the work the KBK had invested over the years, with a clear focus on improving its position, had paid off and resulted in a perception of relevance on the part of the federal partners, but also to some extent by the EDK.

The beginning of the decade was marked by a relative shift in the attitude of the EDK towards the KBK. In the 2010 meetings, reference was made to the plenary meeting in Lavin in 2008, where the general secretary Hans Ambühl had come to discuss the position and vision of the EDK towards the KBK. In that meeting, he confirmed the old positions of a specialist conference, without a political voice, and he responded somewhat laconically to suggestions that the KBK was hardly acknowledged by the EDK<sup>138</sup>. This meeting was seen as a low point in the KBK-EDK relations. In the previous chapter, it was mentioned how Roland Hofer, president of the KBK from 2009 to 2016, asserted the importance of the role of the KBK leadership in improving relations with the EDK through maintaining the flow of information, and involving Hans Ambühl actively in the policy processes on culture. Two years later, at the November meeting 2010 in Baden Isabelle Chassot, the president of the EDK and state councillor for the canton Fribourg was present at the meetings<sup>139</sup>. By now, the frustration of the KBK delegates was more directed towards the BAK. The BAK director Jauslin had presented earlier at the meeting, and the KBK members were dismayed that the BAK seemed to withdraw further from its financial obligations (e.g. in the field of heritage, but also the further support for the dance platform RESO), and had not shown much openness to dialogue around the preparation of the first Cultural Message. Chassot, however,

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<sup>138</sup> Plenarsitzung Lavin 13&14.11.2008. Protokoll, *cit.*

<sup>139</sup> Plenarsitzung Baden 18&19.11.2010. Protokoll, 18.11.2010.

committed the EDK to act in defence of the KBK expectations. She proposed a strategy to formulate a position that would be supported by all 26 cantons, and then engage with federal councillor Didier Burkhalter, responsible for home affairs, and thus also for the BAK. She thought that if all cantons supported a position, the federal councillor couldn't ignore it.

The role that Chassot defined for the KBK, also significantly enhanced the rather minimal interpretation of the KBK's technical role that Ambühl had given two years earlier. She located the KBK as an essential organ in support of the EDK in three specific areas: a. the lobbying of the cantonal political heads, b. the identification of best practice models and c. technical input and assistance to the political deliberations of the EDK.

Chassot concluded that in the event that she would be re-elected as State councillor in Fribourg, she would wish to invite the two-day plenary KBK meeting to Fribourg and continue the constructive discussion that still needed clarification on the relation between the EDK and the KBK. In 2012 the plenary meeting did happen in Fribourg. Isabelle Chassot succeeded Jean-Frédéric Jauslin as the director of the BAK in November 2013.

The National Cultural Dialogue cemented a role for the KBK within the cultural institutional field, enabling direct engagement with federal partners. The relationship between the EDK and the KBK improved in this period. The NKD process and the complex of issues discussed in the KBK, required strong support from the GS EDK, which its secretariat provided. This support was decisive, and was recognised as such by Roland Hofer and Aldo Caviezel. The supporting work of the managing officers for the KBK in the GS EDK, Rahel Frey and her successor Jeanine Füeg, was qualified as excellent and indispensable<sup>140</sup>. The fact remained that the KBK could not voice its own political position in the public domain, and that it was insufficiently recognised by education directors who had other priorities. All interviewees who were active in the 2010s regarded this as a less than

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<sup>140</sup> HOFER, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, *doc. cit.* ; CAVIEZEL, Zug 2013-today, KBK Präsident 2017-today, *doc. cit.*

ideal situation<sup>141</sup>. Hans Ueli Glarner specifically expressed the view that the KBK had the capacity to do lobbying in the Council of States, which he regarded as the designated political forum where the KBK could voice its position<sup>142</sup>. It shows again the importance of the guidance that that KBK presidency and Management Committee provided to the EDK leadership. In the eyes of Caviezel, there was also an improvement in the appreciation of cultural matters with the arrival of Susanne Hardmeier as EDK General Secretary in 2016. He stressed the importance that the ‘training’ of the EDK leadership in cultural matters has had, which is an important aspect of the tasks of the Management Committee. The perception of cultural matters in the perspective of the EDK was seen as having significantly improved in this recent period, due to these training efforts<sup>143</sup>.

Under the direction of Hardmeier, the EDK set up the Conference of directors of culture, in an attempt to improve the situation by bringing all the cultural departments together once a year, regardless of their institutional affiliation.

This meeting has happened yearly since 2016. According to Hofer, the fact that this step was taken demonstrates that the EDK was starting to take culture more seriously<sup>144</sup>. To what extent this new conference can be considered to be a viable tool to improve processes of cultural policy in the future can’t yet be established. That there has been a gradual improvement in the perception of culture within the education departments and the EDK seems clear. This is also reflected in the context of the Romandie, where Faustine Pochon has come to the conclusion that: *It seems clear that over a period of thirty years, things are changing and culture is increasingly recognised and considered within the CIIP*<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> BISCHOF, Basel Stadt 2011-2017 and Pro Helvetia director 2017-2025, *doc. cit.*; TRINCHAN, Fribourg 2013-today, *doc. cit.*; MEIER, St. Gallen 2007-2021, *doc. cit.*; SUTERMEISTER Anne Catherine, Bern (fr) 2003-2007 and Valais 2020-2022, interview by the author, 12.04.2024; GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

<sup>142</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

<sup>143</sup> CAVIEZEL, Zug 2013-today, KBK Präsident 2017-today, *doc. cit.*

<sup>144</sup> HOFER, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, *doc. cit.*

<sup>145</sup> POCHON, *La Conférence romande des Délégué-es aux Affaires culturelles Politiques culturelles intercantionales et professionnalisation des arts de la scène dans l’espace culturel romand*, *op. cit.* p. 41

#### *4.3.4. An improved relationship with the BAK and continued alignment with Pro Helvetia*

As described above, the process of drafting the Law on the Promotion of Culture and establishing the National Cultural Dialogue was marked by a continued sense of distrust between the cantons and the BAK. The new policy framework was located at a federal level, and this provided opportunities, but also risks.

On the one hand there was the sense that the Confederation could encroach on responsibilities which were essentially with the cantons, on the other hand the legal framework could also allow the BAK to delineate more precisely its responsibilities and decide to pull away from certain areas, obliging the cantons to fill the gap.

On the positive side, the cantons needed the confederation to intervene in the policy for a growing cultural sector. The national Law on the Promotion of Culture and the Cultural Messages provided a legal basis for the confederation to do so. In the course of the decade, the trust between the two organisations grew, which laid the groundwork for a better understanding that would prove to be crucial during the Covid crisis in 2020.

The beginning of the decade was characterised by a greater degree of friction between the KBK and the BAK than the latter part. For instance, when the BAK engaged with the European Union in 2011 on the European programme for the promotion of culture 2014-2020, the KBK reacted with dismay that it had not been consulted, even though it considered this policy to be a cantonal responsibility in the first place. In the view of the KBK, the act of representation in the cultural sphere within Europe, could not be allowed to erase cantonal sovereignty and diversity<sup>146</sup>. This struggle for equality in the exchanges between the two spheres of government remained. The perceived tendency of the Confederation to be an overarching authority that could represent the other spheres was deemed incorrect. According to Glarner:

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<sup>146</sup> Plenarsitzung Heiden 17&18.11.2011. Protokoll, 17.11.2011.

*The image of the pyramid that the BAK uses to develop cultural policy in Switzerland, and in which it sees itself at the top, is inaccurate...*<sup>147</sup>

According to Hauser (and others), in that sense the federal organisations, and here specifically Pro Helvetia, came not to be seen as a ‘27<sup>th</sup> canton’ or as the top of a pyramid, but rather as a tool that also works in support of the cantons:

*...such as Pro Helvetia, are designed to function as crossroads, centres of coordination and reflection between more local entities.*<sup>148</sup>

Just like with the EDK, represented in the political meetings of the National Cultural Dialogue, the new framework obliged the KBK and the BAK, as well as Pro Helvetia, to collaborate in a more systematic and frequent way. Before this period, the federal organisations came to present their updates and projects at almost all plenary meetings of the KBK, and representatives from these organisations and the KBK regularly joined forces in specific work groups. Now, they met at least twice a year in the meetings of the National Cultural Dialogue, and in that context the work groups were institutionalised and worked in a significantly more intensive manner. This meant also that the personalities representing the different government levels started to know each other better, and that assisted in building confidence. According to Yves Fischer at the BAK, after 2012 the mood changed from what appeared to be two totally parallel worlds, to a relation of exchange, discussion and collaboration<sup>149</sup>. Also, certain key figures ‘changed sides’, and took some of the affinity with the cantonal position with them to their new influential federal positions. We already saw that Isabelle Chassot, president of the EDK as State councillor for Fribourg, became director of the BAK in 2013. It is significant also, that in this period at the start of the first Cultural Message, somebody with a

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<sup>147</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.* Amended by e-mail to the author 02.12.2024

<sup>148</sup> HAUSER Claude, GILLABERT Matthieu, MILANI Pauline et al., « La culture comme politique publique : le cas de la Suisse », in: POIRRIER Philippe (éd.), *Pour une histoire des politiques culturelles dans le monde, 1945-2011*, La Documentation française, 2016, pp. 447-463. p. 454

<sup>149</sup> FISCHER, deputy director of the BAK 2008-today, *doc. cit.*

strong profile in cantonal politics, perceived as a ‘cantonal champion’, was appointed to this position by the Federal Council. According to Fischer, who remained deputy director under Chassot, the new director’s experience and professional connections made her understand better the prerogatives and ways of functioning of the cantons, and this significantly changed the perception of the BAK on the part of the KBK delegates<sup>150</sup>. Similarly, Philippe Bischof (BS), who had just been elected president of the KBK in 2017, left the KBK that same year to become director of Pro Helvetia.

### **Pro Helvetia**

The collaboration between the KBK (and the SKK) and Pro Helvetia throughout the period of the Cultural Messages was a direct consequence of the positive connections created through processes like the dance project, and the ongoing exchanges in the field of mediation and participation. Pro Helvetia was and is less constrained by the political powers that manage it, as opposed to cantonal cultural services and the BAK, and is an institution that is staffed with arts specialists<sup>151</sup>. The consequence of this is that it can develop its own projects and focus points, and engage with the other governmental actors to participate and contribute. Increasingly, the practice of setting up such projects happened with the engagement of the cantonal and city authorities, in terms of giving feedback and consulting on the development of the projects on the basis of their experiences on the ground. From 2013 – 2014 for instance, Pro Helvetia started presenting a project on cultural diversity to the KBK<sup>152</sup>. This diversity was primarily understood in the distinction between the traditional and the contemporary and the divergences in cultural practice between for instance cities and non-urban contexts. Later in the decade, in 2018, a project was launched on what was called ‘interculturality’, looking at the ways in which the migration background of citizens played a role in cultural participation, and how participation in this dimension could be

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<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>151</sup> BISCHOF, Basel Stadt 2011-2017 and Pro Helvetia director 2017-2025, *doc. cit.*

<sup>152</sup> Plenarsitzung Basel 27&28.11.2014. Protokoll, 27.11.2014 ; Plenarsitzung Altdorf 28&29.11.2013. Protokoll, *cit.*

enhanced<sup>153</sup>. In both cases, the cantons were actively asked to report back on the needs and situation from their regions, in ways that informed the formulation of the project. These projects were then constructed on the basis of open calls, where cultural partners in Switzerland could respond with projects to these thematically framed calls. This was a common process, and the cantons and the KBK were instrumental in facilitating the call and assuring that the right people knew about the opportunities these programmes offered.

#### **4.4. Projects become construction sites: focus on policy**

##### *4.4.1. Financial equalisation in the institutional agreements*

Almost a decade after the discussions on the flagship institutions, in the context of the KFG, the topic and procedure of the financial equalisation raised its head again. The new constitution of 2000 had foreseen a chapter on inter-cantonal financial equalisation (art. 48a), in which the cultural institutions of supra-regional importance were explicitly mentioned. This article was translated in the new law on the financial equalisation, which stipulated that cantons were obliged to participate in this process, and that the Confederation could be made to oblige specific cantons to do so, although to date the Confederation has not taken such a step. It was in this framework that around 2010 a few regional concordats came into being, most importantly the ILV, the Interkantonaler Kulturlastenausgleich (Inter-cantonal cultural equalisation) involving Aargau, Zurich and the central-Swiss cantons, and another one in east Switzerland, with St. Gallen, the Appenzells and Thurgau. This meant that for instance Aargau and the central-Swiss cantons contributed yearly to the Zurich Opera house, the Schauspielhaus, the Kunsthau and the Tonhalle, and to the Kultur- and Congress centre, the Luzerner Theater and the symphonic orchestra in Luzern. The mid-2010s once again represented a period of financial crisis and thus brought cantons like Schwyz and Zug to decide to stop the contributions to the ILV from their own budgets in 2017, and instead pay them from their lottery funds, causing more uncertainty in the long term. Schwyz did this with a popular vote, which

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<sup>153</sup> Plenarsitzung 15&16.11.2018. Protokoll, *cit.*

also implied a formal exit of the concordat, whilst Zug remained in the concordat.

This was obviously cause for alarm on the side of the receiving cantons Zurich and Lucerne, which insisted that the matter should be discussed more broadly, with the intention to create a concordat for the whole of German speaking Switzerland. Hence when the efforts to create a general approach to the financial equalisation in the late 2000s failed, due to the scepticism of the French speaking cantons, the strategy shifted to now concentrate on the German speaking part. Jacquelin Fehr, the government councillor heading the Zurich department of Justice and Home Affairs under which the cultural service (Fachstelle Kultur) resorts, took this topic to the conference of culture directors, which tasked the KBK to do the research and work out a proposal<sup>154</sup>. Thus, from November 2017, this topic was tabled again at the KBK plenary meetings, under the guidance of the EDK general secretariat. It tasked the external evaluator Felix Walter from the company Ecoplan in Bern to draft a report on the status quo of inter-cantonal collaborations, drawing on proceedings from a group of experts that was constituted for this purpose<sup>155</sup>. The group included two KBK members – Katrin Meier (SG) and Jacques Cordonier (VS), but also representatives of the Conference of Cantonal finance directors, and the Conference of cantonal governments. Again, there was some friction concerning the way the EDK mis-or underrepresented positions formulated by the KBK in its position paper<sup>156</sup>.

In the last plenary meeting before COVID disrupted everything and shifted the priorities temporarily, the report was discussed and the KBK recommendations were formulated. A national Swiss solution remained difficult, partly due to the existing cooperative practice on the side of the

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<sup>154</sup> ASCHWANDEN Erich, « Deutschschweiz soll ans Opernhaus zahlen », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 22.06.2017, p. 13. ASCHWANDEN Erich, « Schwyz will nur noch freiwillig zahlen », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23.09.2017, p. 17; HOTZ Stefan, « Der Kulturlastenausgleich ist keine Lotterie », *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 26.09.2017, p. 19.

<sup>155</sup> GROUPE D'EXPERTS COMPENSATION INTERCANTONALE DES CHARGES CULTURELLES (éd.), *Interkantonaler Kulturlastenausgleich: Auslegeordnung: Bericht der Expertinnen- und Experten-Gruppe im Auftrag der Schweizerischen Konferenz der kantonalen Erziehungsdirektoren (EDK)*, Berne, CDIP. <https://edudoc.ch/record/210705>

<sup>156</sup> Plenarsitzung 15&16.11.2018. Protokoll, *cit.*

Romandie. A solution on the basis of language regions was deemed possible, but the fear was that it would cement language divisions rather than stimulate cooperation across the language regions. Eventually the proposed recommendation was to review the status quo, and to encourage those cantons who were not yet (or no longer) part of an agreement, to explore the possibility to do so. These processes would be focused within the discussions of the regional conferences<sup>157</sup>. It is interesting to note here that these processes also required a very decisive role and involvement of other departments, most notably the departments of finance, both at a federal and cantonal level.

#### 4.4.2. *Social security for artists*

Social security for arts professionals was a clear concern for the cultural officers in the cantons. They were closest to the professionals from the sector, and thus were most immediately confronted with the concerns about their social and economic situation. In fact, the very first recommendation the KBK ever approved, in May 1986, was a contribution for a support fund for visual artists. Over the years to come, and mostly from the decade 2000 onwards, all aspects relating to the working conditions of artists were discussed in an increasingly well researched and constructive manner: the questions of social security, the remuneration of artists, the legal framework on which the arts professionals can fall back etc. In 1998, on the initiative of the BAK, the KBK participated in a study on the ‘social situation of arts professionals’<sup>158</sup>. In 2002, the KBK decided to launch a project called «Kultur hat Recht» (Culture is right / has a legal basis), which involved the collaboration of some KBK members in a work group. The group was comprised of Rolf Keller, who had previously been the representative of Pro Helvetia in many KBK meetings but was now leading the cultural management studies programme at the University of Basel, and two legal specialists<sup>159</sup>. In 2007 this resulted in the publication of

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<sup>157</sup> Plenarsitzung 14&15.11.2019. Protokoll, 14.11.2019., LA Sitzung 17.12.2019. Protokoll.

<sup>158</sup> A1453/2300, *cit.* Plenar 19.06.1998

<sup>159</sup> A1664/409, *cit.* Plenar 21.03.2002 & 27.06.2002

a comprehensive legal handbook for cultural professionals, be it artists, organisers or promoters<sup>160</sup>.

In the context of the discussions around the KFG, the issue of social security was also discussed. In the first draft of the KFG text of 2003, the topic of social security was included. In subsequent versions it was no longer mentioned. The Confederation assessed that this topic needed to be addressed elsewhere, and that it should not be separated from the general legal context of social security. This was a disappointment to both the KBK and the KSK, who opined that the situation was increasingly precarious for arts professionals, and that there was an urgent need to address this from a federal policy perspective<sup>161</sup>.

The disillusion with the omission of social security in the proposed KFG text led the KBK and SKK in 2007 to consider taking an initiative, and to propose a model which was based on the German 'Künstlersozialkasse', which envisaged that artists and commissioners would set aside 12% of any fee/earnings of 5'000 CHF or more, to contribute to a social security fund<sup>162</sup>. It was hoped that such a proposal could still flow into the KFG discussions. Eventually, one observes that provision for social security contributions did make it into art. 9 of the cultural promotion law, without much detail.

The topic disappeared from the debates, however, and only resurfaced in 2013. The BAK and Pro Helvetia had started to pay social security contributions with their payments to arts professionals, but such a framework was only existing in a very limited number of cantons. The process was a political one, and to achieve one approach that was binding for all cantons, would have required a concordat. For the cities, such a common position was easier to achieve. The cities and cantons collaborated

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<sup>160</sup> BÜHLER Rolf juriste et UNIVERSITÄT BASEL STUDIENZENTRUM KULTURMANAGEMENT, *Kultur hat Recht: ein Leitfaden zu Rechtsfragen im Schweizer Kulturleben*, Baden, Hier + jetzt Verl. für Kultur und Geschichte, 2007 (Schriften zum Kulturmanagement und zur Kulturpolitik Bd. 2).

<sup>161</sup> 2021/36/889, 2005, Kanton Luzern. Staatsarchiv, 2021/36/889. Consultation sur le projet de Loi fédérale sur l'encouragement de la culture et sur la proposition de révision de la Loi fédérale concernant la fondation Pro Helvetia, KSK, 31.10.2005. EDK: Loi fédérale sur l'encouragement de la culture. Discussion sur l'état actuel du projet de loi. 06.09.2007.

<sup>162</sup> 2021/36/891, *cit.* Plénar 21.06.2007

in developing a study, and as a result they developed a recommendation to support a voluntary scheme, and the possibility to contribute to social security from a threshold of 10'000 CHF per year. In 2016, the professional umbrella organisation Suisseculture ran its own research and elaborated its own set of recommendations. The cantons maintained that they did not have the legal framework or competence to adopt a mandatory system, and that without a concordat, achieving such a legal framework would be impossible. The BAK disagreed and wanted a mandatory scheme without a threshold. The KBK members were wary of setting up a workgroup with the BAK, because they thought they would be forced to adopt the federal position:

*For the federal government, harmonising the different practices of the federal government, cantons and cities means aligning or adopting the federal solution.*<sup>163</sup>

Eventually, a common position was developed and most cantons actively engaged in setting up a non-obligatory system of social security contributions, but not all. In most cases, such systems were implemented from 2017 onwards. The results were monitored, and in 2018 a work group was established in the NKD that evaluated the different systems and formats.

Another aspect of the social working conditions of artists related to the remuneration of their activities. This was in response to the reality that there would frequently be huge discrepancies between what artists would be paid for a certain activity or presentation by different organisers. Often organisers justified low pay with the argument that their events 'promoted' the career of the artists, and that they stood to gain in that way. It was at the initiative of Pro Helvetia again, that in 2019 this topic was tabled for discussion<sup>164</sup>. Once again, for the KBK delegates the topic was of great interest, and the conference enthusiastically chose to participate in this project, collecting data from the cantons in order to establish an evidence base for future measures and legislation.

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<sup>163</sup> Plenarsitzung 24&25.11.2016. Protokoll, *cit.*

<sup>164</sup> Plenarsitzung 28.05.2019. Protokoll, 28.05.2019.

#### 4.4.3. From mediation to participation

Not only was the KBK a specialist subsidiary meeting of the conference of education directors, where most cantonal cultural services formed part of their education departments, many KBK members had also been teachers in previous positions<sup>165</sup>. Culture was perceived by many members as not just institutionally linked, but also more intrinsically linked to the education field. Glarner considers that cultural mediation and the connection between culture and schools was strongly evident in the 1970s and 80s, but that in the later 1980s and 1990s there was a position among many cultural officers that culture had to be in and of itself, and that education was not their field. He was part of a tendency in the 2000s to bring cultural mediation back to the fore<sup>166</sup>. Under his initiative, the KBK launched a project under the title «Kultur und Schule» (Art and Schools) in 2006<sup>167</sup>. Again, a work group was created, which developed a report in 2009. The KBK wanted to be more proactive in the field of cultural mediation in schools, but this would require an approval from the EDK, and would also require a clearer understanding of the roles of the cantons in relation to the federal institutions<sup>168</sup>. In the end «Kultur und Schule» was a positively received project, that obtained the active collaboration of almost all cantons. It focused mostly on mapping and documenting the existing offerings in the arts education field across almost all cantons, so that project formats and best practices could be shared, and a knowledge base could be created that would inform future policy discussions<sup>169</sup>.

KBK president Roland Hofer stated in that meeting that through the project «Kultur und Schule», the KBK could also gain visibility for cultural matters in the EDK, and thus achieve more recognition for the role of culture in the political conference:

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<sup>165</sup> Some examples: Daniel Huber LU, Josef Schuler UR, Jürg Davatz GL, René Munz TG, Karl Salzgeber VS.

<sup>166</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

<sup>167</sup> From a translation perspective, the notion of 'culture' in French and German is often narrowed so it used interchangeably with 'art', while in English the meaning is kept quite distinct. Cf in the byline for Pro Helvetia, 'Schweizer Kulturstiftung' / 'Fondation Suisse pour la Culture' is translated as 'Swiss Arts Council'

<sup>168</sup> Plenarsitzung Genève 19&20.11.2009. Protokoll, *cit.*

<sup>169</sup> Plenarsitzung Baden 18&19.11.2010. Protokoll, *cit.*

*The declared aim is to make culture a visible part of the EDK's programme of activities and to be perceived as such within the EDK. For this reason, the KBK has sought an issue that is also perceived as an important and interesting topic for the EDK. The KBK has therefore decided to take up this topic.*<sup>170</sup>

In 2008, it was clear that the KFG would define cultural mediation as one of the new designated responsibilities of Pro Helvetia. Thus, the foundation, aware that activities in that field were taking place at the level of cities and cantons, declared that it would actively pursue a research and development role in support of the mediation activities of cities and cantons. Therefore, it proposed to launch a common work group.

In 2012, as a product of the Pro Helvetia focus on mediation, the organisation Kulturvermittlung Schweiz (KVS) was created, which immediately engaged with the KBK to pick up the findings of the «Kultur und Schule» project and work together on how to develop these processes further. To this day, almost all cantons are still supporting and collaborating with Kulturvermittlung Schweiz. Under the initiative of KVS, KBK members were again invited to provide information on best-practice projects in their cantons, to bring the existing knowledge base up to date. The intention of this new study was also to provide tools for a new process that was launched through a work group of the National Cultural Dialogue focusing on mediation and cultural participation.

Participation thus became the new buzzword, and it became one of the main thematic focus points of the Cultural Messages of 2017 and of 2021. The focus shifted from concentrating on school contexts, to mediation and participation in the context of audiences more broadly<sup>171</sup>. The KVS produced a further study on participation, which appeared in 2017, and the BAK published a call for applications for projects in this field, which the cantonal cultural officers could share with their constituencies<sup>172</sup>.

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<sup>170</sup> Plenarsitzung Genève 19&20.11.2009. Protokoll, *cit.*

<sup>171</sup> Plenarsitzung Basel 27&28.11.2014. Protokoll, *cit.*

<sup>172</sup> For this domain Hans Ulrich Glarner BE and Philippe Trinchan FR were the KBK representatives in the active work group of the National Cultural Dialogue.

The discussions on cultural participation led to the publication of a comprehensive report on the topic, by the National Cultural Dialogue, with contributions from various cultural officers<sup>173</sup>.

Since the launch of the original «Kultur and Schule» project in 2006 until the end of the 2010s – and obviously thanks to the focus in the Cultural Message - mediation and cultural participation were firmly established within the different echelons of Swiss cultural policy. Various cultural delegates interviewed for this study point to the discussions on participation as one of the most important projects in which the KBK played a leading role<sup>174</sup>.

Katrin Meier (SG) also refers to this as an essential process. According to her this focus on participation was also about promoting the legitimacy of investing in culture more generally. When more people participate, and culture stops being the preserve of the urban elites and intellectual middle classes, then the argument for investing in it strengthens<sup>175</sup>.

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<sup>173</sup> NATIONALER KULTURDIALOG, *Kulturelle Teilhabe - ein Handbuch*, Zürich, Seismo Verlag, 2019.

<sup>174</sup> TRINCHAN, Fribourg 2013-today, *doc. cit.*

<sup>175</sup> MEIER, St. Gallen 2007-2021, *doc. cit.*



## 5. 2020: the KBK and Covid: strengthened collaboration builds a future model

Towards the end of the 2010s, the model of collaboration between the different cantons grew in significance, but was nevertheless still perceived as insufficiently developed, and lacking a clear scope of action and decision making power. It would be significantly tested with the sudden outbreak of the COVID pandemic in March 2020. As everywhere, the pandemic posed a threat to the subsistence of the professionals of the cultural sector, who were dependent on the organisation of public events and gatherings, which were no longer possible. The cantons, being first in line when it came to service delivery for culture professionals, had to react immediately.

It was on 13 March 2020 that the Federal Council implemented crisis measures and ordered the closure of all public places that were not of essential importance, including cultural events and venues. An emergency law was introduced on 20 March under the exceptional powers attributed to the Federal Council at the time. This law anticipated the compensation for loss of income for cultural organisations and cultural professionals, and was aimed at ‘safeguarding the cultural diversity’ of the country<sup>176</sup>. The driving force here was the BAK but the law followed the principle of subsidiarity, in that it explicitly referred applicants for support and compensation under the law to address themselves to their cantonal governments. The KBK was thus designated as the enforcement body of the COVID 19 cultural ordinance, and tasked with ensuring its implementation. The Confederation would then intervene to cover 50% of the compensations granted by the cantonal governments (art. 9). It was enacted immediately and was originally foreseen for a period of two months. When in May the general measures regarding public gatherings

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<sup>176</sup> Verordnung über die Abfederung der wirtschaftlichen Auswirkungen des Coronavirus (COVID-19) im Kultursektor, 20.03.2020. Online: <<https://www.news.admin.ch/newsd/message/attachments/60870.pdf>>.

were extended, the BAK and the KBK decided to prolong the special measures for support of the sector through to September 2020<sup>177</sup>.

As soon as the law was enacted, the cantonal cultural services had to react immediately. A regular recurring plenary video-conference meeting was organised, and the first one took place on 23 March 2020. Especially in the first months - March, April, May – the KBK members met very regularly online, and afterwards once a month. The focus of these first meetings was on how the different cantons would implement the law of 20 March, where the funds would come from (some cantons referred to lottery funds, others thought that was a bad idea) and which office would be responsible for the payouts: the culture office or the office for public economy. In most cases this was the culture office. The applicants ranged from small individual cases to big festivals who reported losses running into the millions as a result of their cancellation. An endless list of questions arose: as to what could be considered eligible costs, how to prioritise, which procedures would apply for which types of support, the ways in which cantonal efforts could to some extent be streamlined, as well as to how to most effectively communicate these measures. A common manual was developed, so as to avoid a situation in which each canton would have to invent its own procedure. Discussion also addressed the inevitable question of the covering of expenses for institutions supported by more than one canton, which would eventually also inform the process of the equalisation of cultural expenses.

The KBK established a delegation of three members which functioned as the liaison between the conference and the BAK and any other national actors<sup>178</sup>. Having this delegation in charge of liaising with all the regions created a very effective internal dynamic for rapidly reaching consensus between all the cantons in times of crisis, and being able to represent their position to the BAK. In this phase the role of the KBK was central and essential in the conceptualisation of strategies to support artists with very diverse professional contexts, who had lost their income temporarily, and also for the transformation projects that were conceived

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<sup>177</sup> Plenarsitzung 05.05.2020. Protokoll, 05.05.2020.

<sup>178</sup> Hans Ulrich Glarner BE, Katrin Meier SG, Jacques Cordonier VS, and later also Roland Hofer SH and Philippe Trinchan FR

for the period immediately post-COVID<sup>179</sup>. The regional conferences were also extremely important in this period, and through them a very immediate liaison could be assured with the cultural actors in the field<sup>180</sup>.

Various interviewees designate this period as a whole new phase of the working of the KBK: *'Suddenly the entire KBK was completely united'*<sup>181</sup>. Caviezel describes it as period when everyone worked together incessantly, often until the early hours, to realise this hugely complex task, resulting in a spirit of togetherness<sup>182</sup>. This also had the consequence that the perception of the KBK as a central and important partner in the national cultural policy debate improved significantly during the COVID period. Hofer stated that *'if the KBK hadn't existed, it would have had to be invented'* for managing this process during the pandemic. The processes were in his view also very well implemented, as witnessed by the very low number of appeals to the decisions made on the compensation for loss of income, and later on the transformation projects<sup>183</sup>. Fischer agrees that the pandemic was a moment of consolidation of methods of collaboration which had grown in trust and confidence over the years<sup>184</sup>. Katrin Meier (SG) concurs that the foundation established through the work of the National Cultural Dialogue was of enormous importance to create the basis for the extraordinary level of collaboration that was possible during the pandemic<sup>185</sup>.

The impressive capacity to fast-track processes during this period was naturally due to the fact that the legal framework was a crisis framework, which went beyond the usual issues of mutual understanding, governance and distribution of powers. Afterwards the processes went to some extent back to the old way of doing things. Nonetheless, the KBK did manage to reorient itself during this period, and a sense of trust and collaboration is

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<sup>179</sup> TRINCHAN, Fribourg 2013-today, *doc. cit.*

<sup>180</sup> MEIER, St. Gallen 2007-2021, *doc. cit.*

<sup>181</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

<sup>182</sup> CAVIEZEL, Zug 2013-today, KBK Präsident 2017-today, *doc. cit.*

<sup>183</sup> HOFER, Schaffhausen 1999-2024, KBK Präsident 2009-2016, *doc. cit.*

<sup>184</sup> FISCHER, deputy director of the BAK 2008-today, *doc. cit.*

<sup>185</sup> MEIER, St. Gallen 2007-2021, *doc. cit.*

evidently much more present now in the conscience of the KBK members. Several of its members plan to retain some of the management learnings from this period for the future smooth running of the conference. Moreover, its role appears to be better defined and more important in the processes for consulting on and drawing up the new Cultural Message announced for the period 2025-2028.

## **Conclusion – looking at the KBK future**

If Switzerland doesn't have a strong, singular unifying cultural identity, in the way that France, Germany or Italy would appear to, its cultural identity and strength has often been framed in terms of the quality of its diversity, predicated on its four language regions and 26 cantons. With that as a foundational principle, culture is understood to be driven and promoted from the bottom up. It exemplifies the differences that all parts can have in relation to each other, and it is through these differences that cohesion is created, a cohesion which is deemed essential for the symbolic value of this national identity under constant negotiation and construction.

It is within the balancing act of these sometimes seemingly contradictory principles, diversity and cohesion, that the Conference of Cantonal Cultural Officers was created as part of a system of cooperative federalism, now 40 years ago. As culture is at the same time seen as a less essential service and as the service that thrives most strongly on symbolic value, this contradiction is largely inherent and unresolved in the way the KBK has operated and developed over these four decades. There has been a positive evolution, mostly due to the constructive dialectical work of the KBK delegates among themselves, and with the other actors within the Swiss institutional landscape of cultural policy. In the case of the KBK, this 'constructive contradiction' can be analysed to be more concretely exemplified in three dimensions.

The first contradiction lies in the fact that the KBK operates on a national level to represent regional interests. In a country where the sovereignty of the cantons is cast in stone, the advancing professionalisation and internationalisation of the arts sector places strain on the principle of cantonal autonomy. The changing nature of the sector has demanded an increasing degree of intervention and participation at the federal level, and the seemingly ever-present threat that federal institutions would encroach on cantonal responsibilities. The BAK was created in 1975, Pro Helvetia

grew continuously in capacity and in 2000 the revised constitution foresaw for the first time explicitly a role for the Confederation in cultural policy, albeit confirming the principle of subsidiarity. This role was further solidified through the regulatory framework with the introduction of the Law on the Promotion of Culture. The people responsible for culture in the cantons were to a large extent keen on these changes, as they defended the cultural sectors of their cantons, which they perceived as being in need of a policy framework that could cater for a larger scale. Culture didn't happen within the boundaries of a canton, it transgressed these boundaries, regionally, nationally and internationally, and the KBK members have always been well aware of this dynamic. This has had the consequence of drawing them towards one another, with increased tendencies to coordinate, to make common projects and take common measures, preferentially measures that could be binding, and that thus would take the de facto shape of federal regulations on culture. One could state that in this process the cantons sought to a significant extent to manifest a parallel federal policy, instead of defending a regionalist cantonal policy, but one that emanated 'bottom up' from the cantons and their officials that operated close to the ground, rather than one designed at a desk of the BAK in Bern or of Pro Helvetia in Zurich.

The second contradiction is situated around the KBK's capacity to act, especially in terms of deciding on finances for projects and new measures. The KBK never had its own budget apart from a small operational budget. It consisted of cultural officers that were tasked with spending budgets of their cantonal culture desks and in extremely varying ways they were required to seek approval from their political heads. Generally, and with the notable exception of the pandemic period, this made acting promptly and decisively difficult. Processes could take a long time, and the result of a decision-making process was often not binding. Thus, with all the best will in the world, these same KBK members who so often demonstrated a remarkable capacity to reach aligned positions within a forum of 26 very diverse contexts for supporting culture, were at the same time hampered in getting budgets approved because of their institutional architecture and the fact that each canton could have its say over its own budget. Efforts to circumvent these complexities, like the discussions on a

funding pool in 2009 or on the conclusion of a concordat in 2013 were never finally resolved. This lack of capacity to act autonomously as a conference, seems to be embedded in the fact that the KBK represents by nature very diverse interests, and thus efforts to unify them are to some extent by definition implausible or even impossible.

The third contradiction contributes to this limitation in the capacity to act, and is linked to the double hierarchy that governs the KBK delegates. Each delegate had her or his political boss in her or his respective cantonal government. On the level of inter-cantonal organisation, the Conference of Education Directors EDK was another political authority. The KBK was created as a specialist group, within the EDK, and the political heads of the cantons were the State Councillors responsible for culture. This meant that the KBK remained an advisory body to the EDK, and could not act independently in formulating and communicating its position on cultural policy. As the EDK consisted of education specialists, often with little professional experience in culture, and for whom culture was but a very marginal concern in the huge portfolio that is education, the KBK positions were regularly weakened or omitted, disempowering the KBK further as a decisive forum for participating in debates and influencing cultural policy.

Despite these limitations, the KBK has over the years developed a remarkable capacity and position of relevance in the Swiss cultural policy landscape. It has done so mostly by 'doing' rather than by claiming its position. The continuous work in various work groups on essential topics of cultural policy, where the KBK members were important because they, together with their colleagues from the city governments, were so close to the pulse of the cultural field, created that reputation. The preparatory work in the 1990s and more so in the 2000s, paved the way for the KBK to play this role within the advisory structures of the National Cultural Dialogue under the KFG. The growth in capacity of the organisation prepared it in turn to effectively and successfully implement the crisis measures for the Swiss cultural sector during the COVID pandemic of 2020. In the end, the KBK made essential contributions to a number of very impactful processes and projects, and cemented its place in the

institutional landscape. Having said that, the capacity to act on the part of the KBK seems weaker due to its institutional context, than is the case for the cities through the SKK, which can act more swiftly<sup>186</sup>. The work of information, training and guidance that the KBK management has done, especially since the approval of the KFG, has increased significantly its capacity to have its voice heard through an improved relationship with the EDK, which is now more able to represent the KBK's positions and concerns<sup>187</sup>.

One observation that should be kept in mind, and that was confirmed by all interviewees for this study, was the importance of the KBK also as an informal meeting place for the exchange of knowledge and experiences. The delegates feel increasingly supported in their own work by the existence of this well-established network of peers, and things that used to seem impossible due to the complexity of dealing with 26 different realities, are now often approached as possibilities<sup>188</sup>. During breaks between sessions, during the cultural programmes and at the meals that were part of such plenary meetings, sometimes the most interesting projects were conceived, and the most enriching exchanges were possible:

*The social programme, or these fringe programmes of the annual KBKs, should not be neglected. You got to know Switzerland, you also respected each other. All the talks alongside the meeting also revolved around cultural issues. I found that unique, because you are not just the head of the same office in another canton, but rather you are dealing with people who have made a name for themselves in the cultural field. And you always noticed that.*<sup>189</sup>

All through these processes, despite the common goals achieved, there were vigorous debates and instances of disagreement and distrust, that found their basis in the defining differences that the multitude of cantons had among them. Policy perspectives are necessarily different, whether one comes from an urban or more rural canton, whether the canton has a

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<sup>186</sup> BISCHOF, Basel Stadt 2011-2017 and Pro Helvetia director 2017-2025, *doc. cit.*

<sup>187</sup> CAVIEZEL, Zug 2013-today, KBK Präsident 2017-today, *doc. cit.*

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> GLARNER, Aargau 2002-2013 and Bern 2013-2024, *doc. cit.*

‘centre’ function and contains a bigger city or not, or depending on the demographic weight or cultural profile of a canton. These perspectives furthermore depend on whether a cultural officer needs to focus mainly on the promotion of the arts (Kulturförderung), or whether heritage, archives and libraries are also part of the competencies.

Generational differences also play a role in this diversity of perspectives, where the older and more pioneering KBK members had a more radical and principled stance on cantonal autonomy and tended to refuse any pragmatic national solutions that could be perceived as top down whereas some of the newer delegates would find that in the contemporary context, a stronger facilitating role of the Confederation would be seen as being indispensable.

One of the strongest and most persistent areas of tension throughout these years has been the fundamentally different way of managing the project of inter-cantonal cultural coordination in French-speaking Switzerland as opposed to the German-speaking cantons. The idea of the ‘Espace culturel Romand’ brought a high degree of coordination, creating common projects and common structures that could not (yet) be imagined across the Röstigraben. At the same time, this position is not centralist, but emerges out of the diversity of the French speaking cantons, that didn’t always find their place within the national framework. With the professionalisation of the structures in more recent years, however, the pertinence of the national scope seems to be more evident also on the French-speaking side. After the pandemic, a common strategy was implemented within the Romandie. In 2023, a plenary meeting of state councillors responsible for culture was installed, as a political meeting within the CIIP, the regional conference of the EDK for the French speaking cantons. This bolstered the connection between the CDACr and the level of political decision making in the Romandie, to a degree not reached at the national level.

One should also mention Ticino here, which has had to juggle its interests as the smallest cultural space in the country, with the institutional connections it had to the West, and the more geographic connections to the German speaking cantons.

The sources used for this study end in 2020. At the time of writing, the Cultural Message for the period 2025-2028 is being decided. Since the pandemic a new type of political culture settled in the KBK and in the Swiss institutional context. One interviewee feels that in earlier years, the culture of collaboration and concerted action was being pursued without really being installed, whilst since COVID this culture of concerted action has really settled in the consciousness of the actors. Things were realised in the space of a few months during COVID, that otherwise would have taken 15 years, and that has positively influenced the capacity for collaboration greatly<sup>190</sup>. This is also translated in the preparatory work on the new Cultural Message. In this process, for the first time, the cantons were fully involved in all discussions, and for the first time this Cultural Message is designed to be an integrated document involving all government levels, rather than an essentially federal policy document which the other levels could comment and give input on.

As its recent history demonstrates, the subsidised cultural sector is under intense pressure from a variety of political and economic forces. In this context, the bottom-up approach of a cooperative forum such as the KBK can prove invaluable in the process of reflection and construction of new and adapted means to preserve the capacity to experience culture fully and to maintain the creation and consumption of art. Therein lies the importance for the KBK to continue the work of ‘building the sum of its parts’ that has been developed over the last four decades.

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<sup>190</sup> TRINCHAN, Fribourg 2013-today, *doc. cit.*

## **Timeline of the KBK members, presidencies and important dates**



CONFÉRENCE DES DÉLÉGUÉES ET DÉLÉGUÉS CANTONAUX AUX AFFAIRES CULTURELLES 1986-2024

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Hans-Ulrich Glarner																				
									Thomas Pauli-Gabi											
																Georg Matter				
Marcel Zünd																				
Margrit Bürer										Ursula Steinhauser										
Roland Inauen										Ortilia Dörig-Heim										
																		Rebekka Dörig Sutter		
Niggi Ullrich												Esther Roth								
Michael Köchlin										Philippe Bischof (Prés. 2017)										
												Katrin Grögel & Sonja Kuhn (Co-Leitung)					Katrin Grögel			
François Wasserfallen (Prés. 2004-2008)										Anita Bernhard										
										Hans-Ulrich Glarner										
																		Sibylle Birrer		
Anne-Catherine Sutermeister										Aline Delacrétaz										
												Jérôme Benoit					Mélanie Cornu			
Gérald Berger										Philippe Trinchan (vice-prés. 2020-2024)										
Michel Ramuz										Jean-Pierre Balenegger										
			Joëlle Comé																	
												Pierre-Alain Hug					André Klopmann			
																Cléa Redalié				
Jürg Davatz										Fritz Rigendinger										
Havia Kippele										Barbara Gabrielli										
																		Ursin Widmer		
Jean-Marc Voisard												Christine Salvadé								
																Élodie Paupe & Valentin Zuber (co-direction)				

Timeline

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Luzern			Josef Zihlmann															
				Daniel Huber														
Neuchâtel			Daniel Ruedin															
Nidwalden			Hans Reinhard (Präs. 1986-1990)															
				Thomas Trüssel										Lukas Vogel				
Obwalden			Beatrice Stadelmann															
													Christian Sidler Giannini					
Schaffhausen			Eduard Schmid															
Schwyz			Hans Steinegger															
Solothurn			Urs Müller															
						Thomas Bürgi								Cäsar Eberlin				
St. Gallen			Walter Lendi															
Thurgau			Kurt Künzler															
																	René Munz	
Ticino			Armando Giacardi															
				Dino Jauch														
Uri			Rolf Aebersold / Robert Füh															
													Josef Schuler					
Valais / Wallis			Michel Veuthey															
													Karl Salzgeber					
Vaud			Laurette Wettstein															
													Brigitte Waridel					
Zug			Claudio Hüppi															
														Regula Koch (Präs. 1999-2003)				
Zürich			Silvia Staub															
														Susanna Tanner				

2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Daniel Huber																				
									Nathalie Unternährer											
											Martin Jann									
											Stefan Sägger									
																	Marco Castellana			
Daniel Raedin																				
Zsuzsanna Béri (vice-prés. 2009-2011)																				
																	Marie-Thérèse Bonadonna (vice-prés. 2024-)			
Lukas Vogel																				
								Nathalie Unternährer												
											Stefan Zollinger									
Christian Sidler Giannini																				
													Marius Risi							
Roland E. Hofer (Vizepräsident 2005-2008, Präs. 2009-2016)																				
																	Serge Brian Honegger			
Hans Steingger																				
Rebekka Fässler									Franz-Xaver Risi											
Cäsar Eberlin																				
															Eva Inversini					
Walter Lendi																				
Hans Schmid			Katrin Meier																	
																	Tanja Scartazzini			
																	Sabina Brunnschweiler & Christopher Rähle (Co-Leitung)			
René Munz																				
											Martha Monstein									
																	Phillipp Kuhn			
Lorenzo Sganzini																				
Sandro Rusconi (vice pres, 2012-2016)											Raffaella Castagnola Rossini									
Josef Schuler																				
													Ralph Aschwanden							
Karl Salzgeber																				
											Jacques Cordonier (vice-prés. 2017-2020)									
																	Anne Catherine Sutermeister			
																	Alain Dubois			
Brigitte Waridel																				
													Nicole Minder							
																	Michel Vust			
Regula Koch																				
Prisca Passigatti									Aldo Caviezel (Präs. 2017-)											
Susanna Tanner																				
											Madeleine Herzog									
																	Seraina Rohrer			

Timeline

	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Präsident / Président	Hans Reinhard NW						André François Moosbrugger AG						Regula Koch ZG					
Vize Präsident / Vice Président																		
<b>wichtige Daten - dates importantes</b>																		
05.12.1985	Erste Sitzung der Kantonalen Kulturbeauftragten Première réunion des délégués cantonaux aux affaires culturelles																	
28.09.1986	Abgelehnte Abstimmung über das Kulturprozent Votation rejetée sur le Pour-cent culturel																	
28.05.1988	Verabschiedung 1. Geschäftsordnung der KBK Adoption du 1er règlement interne de la CDAC																	
12.06.1994	Abgelehnte Abstimmung über den Kulturförderungsartikel Votation rejetée sur l'article relatif à l'encouragement de la culture																	
01.01.1999	Inkrafttreten 2. Geschäftsordnung der KBK Entrée en vigueur du 2e règlement interne de la CDAC																	
01.01.2000	Inkrafttreten der neuen Bundesverfassung, inkl. Art. 69 Entrée en vigueur de la nouvelle Constitution fédérale, incl. art. 69																	
11.12.2009																		
21.01.2010																		
01.10.2010 & 16.09.2011																		
25.10.2011																		
01.01.2012																		
17.03.2016																		
01.01.2017																		
13.03.2020																		
01.01.2021																		
01.01.2025																		





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