

Arts Council

2005 Annual Report

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Preface

This past year was filled with meetings. The bulk of the agenda was devoted to the Arts Flemish Parliament Act. The Council was thus able to play its role to the fullest. The Flemish Parliament Act is the result of numerous talks between the different actors. The Council considers the Minister and his Office to be privileged partners in this respect. As the drafting of the Flemish Parliament Act resulted in long, deep discussions, the outcome has been received positively by all the people in the field, especially since a broad platform was established.

The Flemish Parliament Act has been effective since last year. Since its inception, it has had to stand the test. Advisory opinions and decisions had to be given promptly. The communication with the components of the extensive advisory system did not always go as planned. As the system did not show any fundamental flaws, however, this could be due to growing pains. Sometimes complaints were made about the stiff or poor communication between the Committees and the Minister's Office. The Minister has promised to do his utmost best to have this communication pass off more smoothly in the future.

The Arts Council continues to be an excellent forum to gather all information from the different sectors and to further exchange remarks and opinions. Some uncertainty exists about the relation between the Arts Council and the new Arts Advisory Committee, which, in accordance with the Flemish Parliament Act, is to exercise supervision over the functioning of the committees. This Advisory Committee has been established within the framework of the new Arts Flemish Parliament Act in conformity with the principles of the administrative reform, also known as "Better Administrative Policy". In the context of this reform a formal distinction is intentionally made between advisory committees that are responsible for the assessment of concrete dossiers as part of policy implementation and the provision of strategic advice which can be regarded as policy preparation. The new advisory committee as such is not formally represented in the Arts Council, a Council which has been established by the 19 September 1997 Flemish Parliament Act together with the Culture Council and the Council for Adult Education and Cultural Dissemination. Yet the information which this committee has at its disposal, as part of the implementing system, is very useful to enrich the more strategic discussions in the Arts Council. In fact, during this transition period the interaction is rather inadequate. However, as we are facing a further radical change of the system, as a result of which the Arts Council as such will no longer exist, this problem is only of a temporary nature and will resolve itself. Or to use a metaphor: it will evaporate.

During this past period the Council has been holding many thorough discussions. The chairman thus wishes to thank all members for their support and commitment. The members were indeed weighed down by a very busy schedule, as many of them had a seat on one of the aforementioned assessment committees. Fortunately, this has not jeopardised the quality of the discussions nor of the advisory opinions. Everyone is well ware that these advisory opinions form a substantial part of a strategy which aims at providing cultural life in Flanders with the necessary incentives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johan Thielemans', written in a cursive style.

Johan Thielemans
Chairman of the Arts Council

I. Activities

1. Meetings

1.1 Overview of Meetings

In 2005, the Arts Council met three times.

7 February 2005 - Cultural industries, culture on the VRT and Advisory opinion K 01/05

21 April 2005 – Flanders Opera

October 2005 – Evaluation of the Arts Flemish Parliament Act

1.2 Summary of Reports

Meeting of 7 February 2005

At this meeting the report on cultural industries of the 2 December 2004 meeting is discussed in depth. Upon the request of chairman Johan Thielemans, Jan Vermassen gives a short explanation about the Reproduction Fund.

Furthermore, the contribution from the arts sector on ‘culture on the VRT’ is prepared. The recommendations given by the Culture Council and the Arts Council in September 2000 are considered the main issue in this context.

The advisory opinion on the regulation for the subsidisation of participatory, experimental, exceptional and special projects and hobby associations 2005 is discussed and agreements are made.

Finally, a few remarks are made. The Council explicitly argues in favour of the four-year allocations in the Arts Flemish Parliament Act being the rule, and the two-year allocations the exception. Budgetary tightness must not be put forward as an argument. Finally, the chairman informed before the meeting that an Arts Advisory Committee was established within the framework of the Arts Flemish Parliament Act. This Committee was put in charge of another mission than that of the Arts Council, however. The Council will continue to be operational until a Strategic Advisory Council has been established within the framework of the administrative reforms.

Meeting of 21 April 2005

There is only one item on the agenda of this meeting. It was reported through the press which activities are in the pipeline for Flanders Opera. An important element in this respect is the attitude towards advisers and the provision of advice.

The idea is to discuss the issue of advisory committees and to take a stand in this matter. The substantial issue whether or not Flanders Opera is to continue to exist or not does not come up for discussion.

A number of people involved in the committees concerned give a detailed explanation and the Head of the Minister's Office, Stefaan De Ruyck, gives a reaction.

Meeting of 4 October 2005

At this meeting an initial evaluation is made of the Arts Flemish Parliament Act¹ on the basis of what is going on in the sectors. The question is whether we wish to continue to use this Flemish Parliament Act as Council. Chairman Johan Thielemans wants to know whether or not the Arts Flemish Parliament Act may be having growing pains. The Arts Council consists of experienced members and is thus very qualified to reveal both good and bad points, to be critical and to express doubts. What is good and what can be adjusted?

Today, we can sit down and listen to the experiences of the committee members with the assessment process. It must be noted, however, that some assessment committees are yet to start their activities, whereas others have already (partially) completed the process. Subsidies for individual artists and projects are yet to be discussed. The committees are working at different speeds and going through different processes at the same time. It is thus extremely difficult to already start evaluating and comparing them. As it is still too early to make a real assessment, we can only exchange experiences.

1.3 Experiences of the Assessment Committees with the Implementation of the Arts Flemish Parliament Act

1.3.1 In General

It is seen as a positive thing that **a legal basis** is currently available, as this was not the case up till now. The Arts Flemish Parliament Act has come about after a period of inequality between certain sectors; now, advice can be provided on the basis of the dossiers themselves – with increased resources.

Most of the committees performed **a great deal of work**. Conceptually speaking, the Arts Flemish Parliament Act is all right, but in practice it was hard work for the government, the sector as well as the members of the assessment committees. More freedom was given to all parties involved, which did not benefit a smooth functioning.

Maybe the Council should consider the form of the dossiers: they contain too much text for the moment. The **amount of paperwork** must be reduced. The disadvantage today is that organisations are kind of bidding up against one another as far as the number of pages per dossier is concerned. The question is, however, which formal requirements can be imposed. A good dossier should be both concise and orderly without losing quality; however, a fixed form is also warned for, as a dull dossier is boring to read and more can be learnt about an organisation from the way in which its dossier has been compiled. Moreover, the drafting of a dossier is a way for the organisation to reflect about matters.

¹ A summary of the Arts Flemish Parliament Act is to be found in appendix.

Being member of an assessment committee requires great commitment: one should therefore ask himself which is the most efficient way to assess an organisation. A proposal of regulation is carefully suggested, making the task of the assessment committees easier. However, an on-site visit is not included in the Flemish Parliament Act, which only provides for an evaluation of the dossier. Neither does the Flemish Parliament Act mention the number of hours which committee members ought to spend on this job. Maybe an allocation of tasks could be introduced: a limited number of members would then deal with a specific dossier and report on it.

Apart from the enormous amount of paperwork, the **timing** is also a source of great concern to some. There are hardly any breaks and there is too little time for consultation. In addition, the committees were composed at a rather late stage.

Finally, more **consultation** is needed between the different actors. The role of the Arts Advisory Committee is very vague. It is also a *must* to thoroughly consult with both the Minister's Office and the administration and to make clear arrangements with them about views and work methods. Should, for instance, younger artists receive support rather than established artists? What is the administration's role in some dossiers? How are the sectors defined?

1.3.2. Relation between the administration and the committees

Several common issues as well as sector-specific issues are pointed out here.

As far as the **budget model** is concerned, it is remarked that the obligatory model is fine, but that the committees also require a more detailed budget from the organisations. In some cases, dossiers did not include a concise financial overview with a link to the artistic component – the distinction was too strict. The business side is more than merely figures, it is also about the organisation itself (management, staff, public activities,...).

Currently, the applicant chooses the window through which to apply. As a result, there is **no overview**. For the moment, it is very unclear what the administration wants. An 'option' model would be very useful, and so would a transparent (for instance, different chapters for the different specific committees) dossier. For the moment one merely has to tick an option on the form, which is no longer visible when going through the dossiers. This should actually be one of the **Arts Advisory Committee's tasks**. This committee should monitor the dossiers and take decisions in terms of content as a type of professional body which organisations can turn to in case of doubt.

Another tricky problem is the way in which the members of the assessment committees have received the advisory opinions from the administration. This only happened **orally**, which was not practical at all. Was this due to lack of time? The administration points out that its structures were not tailored to the Arts Flemish Parliament Act. This will be the case, however, in 2006.

Once again there are apparent differences between the committees. Can artistic advice not be provided without business advice? These two types of advice are sometimes very

close to one another; at times the administration went too far by incorporating content elements into the business advice. It is a difficult **division**, but the distinction must be kept more strictly. The way in which business advice is given is important: the administration evaluates the reality of the business advice (makes some sort of analysis of the accounts), not the reality of the amount applied for.

Furthermore, an organisation's subsidy **history** is considered important. What progress are they making? Although this does not (always) reveal itself in the dossiers, it is certainly interesting information. Should those who provide business advice also take this into account then? They can in any case consider it, even if it is only for their information.

What was liked about this round was the clarity about the "what and how"? A good **division** was made between business, content and strategy, which is an enormous improvement. In this way the people in the field know better where they stand, which results in less discussion. Nevertheless, the fear still exists that decisions are taken more 'frivolously'. Political decisions are taken more lightly: because of the multitude of advisory opinions there is greater freedom. In addition, the deadline was too short and the committees were not informed about the available funds.

There thus continues to be much uncertainty about the available funds and the **breakdown** of it. No formal instrument has been provided, although this is important in discussions. Although the business side of the dossier is a good instrument, there continues to be some confusion in this respect. It was annoying that no figures were expected; informally, however, the evaluation committees did exert quite some pressure to give figures, which may create an ambiguous situation.

The last **consultation** during which the advisory opinions were geared to one another is considered positive. Discussing and checking things with one another is a good thing, as certain matters need to be talked about. It could have been agreed, for instance, to favourably evaluate projects of musicals. However, in the end everyone has to be able to reach a decision in all conscience. However strongly objectivity is aimed at, a **subjective** element will inevitably also play a part, as each committee has its own character.

The Council wonders what is to be done when **fewer subsidies** are granted than applied for. Which next step is the organisation to take then? Should a new, adjusted policy plan be drawn up? There is a difference between an *adjusted* and an *updated* policy plan. An adjusted policy plan is to be submitted within three months after the decision has been taken and limits the budget to the available budget leeway. Which role do the committees play in this: will there be a third assessment round in this case? An updated policy plan, on the other hand, is refined and adjusted each year. Will an organisation be penalised for this? It will not, as this goes against the principles of the Flemish Parliament Act. The administration believes that an adjustment can best be checked when the policy plan is updated. Nevertheless, there are still questions regarding this matter. It is clear that this should also be discussed with the people working in the field.

The Publications Committee points out that they may have to deal with several issues and sectors. It then happens, for instance, that the Language and Literature Committee gives business advice, and the Plastic Arts and Museums Division gives the opposite

advice on the same topic. Such problems slow down the decision-making process in the committees: sometimes there is not enough specialised in-house **expertise** available to evaluate, for instance, magazines that are highly specialised in terms of topics. It is argued in favour of having sector-related publications evaluated in the sector committees. The Publications Committee would then only deal with the extensive, transversal publications. One has to be careful, however, not to make the work of the other committees more arduous.

Finally, it was agreed with the Arts Education Committee that the disciplinary committees would first deal with the dossiers, which requires excellent **timing**. There was some confusion this time, because several advisory opinions were given about one and the same issue: the administration should keep a close eye on this and make sure that deadlines are respected. This is not the responsibility of the committees themselves.

1.3.3. The System with Distinction between two-year Allocations and four-year Allocations

So as to leave no doubt, the chairman will once again explain exactly why this measure was taken. The reason is two-fold: 1) Young artists are encouraged to develop their initiative in an interim phase. 2) Older organisations that receive a negative assessment are given another two years to cut back their activities (or are given a warning). The minister did request to give as many evaluations as possible over 2 years, as there will be more money available after that.

This is generally regarded as a **good instrument**. The question is raised, however, whether it would not be better to have everything submitted on the same day and it is argued in favour of doing so. It would give the organisations sufficient time, which is currently not the case, and would provide the committee members with a better insight into the entire landscape. The option of 2 years may also serve as a clear signal that adjustments are to be made.

On the other hand, the feeling is ambiguous. In **practice** there seems to be a hidden agenda, a kind of political strategy. Afterwards, this system was shifted all the time, which is not in line with the spirit of the Arts Flemish Parliament Act.

1.3.4. Relation of the Committees with the Final Decision

The Plastic Arts Committee is curious to see whether the sector can live up to the expectations. The Arts Centres and Workshops Committee, amongst others, has a **sour feeling** about the final outcome of the figures: the reality does not tally with the decisions of the assessment committees. This is a pretty general feeling. The impression is created that large categories have been defined in a very simplistic way; one speaks of a rough political decision. There is a feeling of disappointment, despite all of the recognition and despite the large amounts.

Dossiers need to be transferred and advisory opinions **explained**. Sharp choices have to be made, for the simple reason that this is the reality. Much can be solved through human contact and debate, or a consultation. This is to be requested by the Minister's

Office. Whereas the members of the assessment committees are specialised in one sector, the minister and his office must keep an eye on the whole picture.

There is also a need for **better communication** with the minister's advisers. A short survey reveals that the communication passed of very differently, ranging from a very good contact between the Minister's Office and some committees to no contact at all with other committees. The minister used certain criteria without communicating them on beforehand to the field: as a result, the committees are put in a difficult position as intermediaries between the minister and the people working in the field. Only the chairmen of the committees were informed. It is also important for the legal certainty of the applicants that the rules of play are known before the round begins. A clause has been entered in the Arts Flemish Parliament Act that permits adding additional criteria; this is the road to be followed.

1.3.5. Support Centres

There should be a support centre for education and culture.

Applicants first contact the administration and support centres before submitting a file. However, there is a feeling that the support centres cannot satisfy the hunger for information. That is why consultation should be organised, so as to ensure that the correct information is given and all parties are on the same wavelength. The sector has the feeling that a great deal of resources is drained off to intermediary structures instead of to artists. It may be useful to carry out a critical audit or case analysis of the support centres.

For the moment applicants themselves decide where they submit their dossier (cf 'film festivals': festival or film? This was now the case in several committees). Counters should be established for this. The Advisory Committee should monitor this – there is no time for feedback from the assessment committees. More **direction** is required, as the members of the committees do not have a complete overview. Yet, an overview of all dossiers could be useful for the evaluation. It is also suggested to work on a more virtual basis: a website for committee members where all information can be found.

2. Advisory Opinion on the draft Regulation for the Subsidisation of participatory, experimental, exceptional and special Projects, and Hobby Associations (23 February 2005)

- In general, the Arts Council considers the regulation to be quite messy and complex.
- This regulation provides for the so-called lotto monies to be spent in an objective and transparent way, so as to realise the objectives made explicit by the minister in Chapter I. However, the Arts Council regards this regulation as a sort of safety net for projects that cannot receive any subsidies through other channels. The Council regrets that in this way a type of separate circuit is created, apart from the structurally subsidised initiatives.

- The Arts Council wants clarity about the scope of the last sentence of point 3, subsidies for amateur productions in Chapter II, special cultural initiatives, which reads as follows: "The organisation shall demonstrate that in its activities with regard to this production it has made the transition from a purely amateur approach to a semi-professional one." The Council asks itself whether the idea is to use lotto monies for the policy regarding the semi-professional sector which was announced by the minister. The Council is of the opinion that the relevant policy must not become a safety net for 'unsuccessful' professionals.
- The Arts Council proposes that communication about the regulation with the people in the field be dealt with more efficiently. It is also important to reach the right target groups, which is not always the case today.

3. Reactions and Response

3.1 Press excerpts

De Standaard 14.01.2005 – Anciaux calls for strict Selection

"The budgetary growth in 2006 will not meet every need of the cultural sector. Choices will therefore have to be made." This is what Bert Anciaux, the Flemish minister of Culture, told the newly appointed presidents of the assessment committees. The minister expects his advisers more than ever to work in a selective way. During the coming weeks 128 experts will start to work on 13 committees. They will advise the minister on which organisations should be recognised under the new Arts Flemish Parliament Act as of 2006.

De Standaard 16.04.2005 – Flanders Opera dispenses with Orchestra

"Other solutions could have been found", says Herman Baeten, chairman of Anciaux' advisory committee for music. Baeten is amazed that the reform is taking place without any form of consultation. "Who has suggested it? Who will benefit from it?", he wonders.

De Tijd 22.04.2005 – Row about Opera

The tensions that arose between the different cultural assessment committees and the Flemish Minister for Culture, Bert Anciaux, around the dossier of Flanders Opera, have partially subsided.

3.2. Other

In 2005, the Memorandum which the Arts Council presented to the minister in 2004 was ordered 19 times. The *2004 Annual Report* was applied for 16 times.

II. Administrative Framework and Composition

4. Legal Framework

The Arts Council has been established by the 19 December 1997 Flemish Parliament Act (Belgian Official Gazette of 11 April 1998), modified by the Flemish Parliament Acts of 30 March 1999 (Belgian Official Gazette of 27 August 1999), 18 May 1999 (Belgian Official Gazette of 15 July 1999), 2 April 2004 (Belgian Official Gazette of 6 July 2004) and 7 May 2004 (Belgian Official Gazette of 9 July 2004).

Flemish Government Decree of 5 May 1998 (Belgian Official Gazette of 25 June 1998), modified by the Flemish Government Decrees of 20 October 1998 (Belgian Official Gazette of 5 December 1998) and of 15 December 2000 (Belgian Official Gazette of 1 February 2001).

4.1. Mission

The Arts Council is responsible for all matters relating to the arts policy and the impact of the broader policy on these matters.

4.2. Advisory Deadline

If the Flemish Government asks for advice, the Arts Council is to provide advice within the deadline set by the Government.

4.3. Public Nature

Five days after the advisory opinions and reports have been submitted to the Flemish Government or the Flemish Parliament, they shall be made public.

4.4. Rules of Procedure

The Arts Council submitted a proposal for rules of procedure to the Flemish Government. It was adopted by the Flemish Government on 12 March 2004.

5. Constitution

On Friday 12 December 2003, the Flemish Government appointed the members of the Arts Council (Belgian Official Gazette of 14 January 2004 – Ed. 2).

The Arts Council is composed of a chairman and committee members, namely the Performing Arts Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 5 members), the Language and Literature Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members), the Music Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members), the Plastic Arts Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members), the Museums Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3

members) and the Architecture and Design Committee (chairman, vice-chairman + 3 members).

The current members are in alphabetical order:

1. Mr Patrick Allegaert, Curator for temporary exhibitions at the Dr. Guislain Museum, Ghent, in charge of communication
2. Mr Herman Baeten, Director of Musica vzw, Impulscentrum voor Muziek
3. Mr Paul Buekenhout, Director of Het Beschrijf
4. Mr Rik Bevernage, Director of De Werf
5. Mrs Moniek Bucquoye, exhibition maker, author Design en Architectuur
6. Mr Piet De Gryse, Curator of the Royal Army and Military History Museum, Brussels
7. Mrs Chantal De Smet, Head of Culture Department, Hogeschool Gent
8. Mrs Ida De Vos, dancer; resignating on 28 November 2005
9. Mrs Daniëlle Gielen, Vegas communication bureau
10. Mr Johan Lagae, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Ghent
11. Mrs Leen Lever, Marketing Director, Standaard Uitgeverij, Meulenhoff/Manteau
12. Mr Frank Loosveldt, President of Passacaille record label, Chairman of Flavio vzw (centre for creation, presentation and consultation), Director of “Uitblazen” Coastal Festival
13. Mrs Anna Luyten, journalist with De Standaard
14. Mr Jacques Morrens, notary
15. Mr Johan Pas, curator
16. Mr Gustaaf Pelckmans, Director of De Warande, Chairman of the Arts Centres and Workshops Assessment Committee
17. Mr Harold Polis, Publishing Editor with Meulenhoff/Manteau
18. Mr Jan Rispens, Head of Department of the Conservatorium Hogeschool Gent, Government Commissioner VRO-VRK, deFilharmonie
19. Mrs Els Roelandt, Editor-in-Chief with A Prior Magazine
20. Mrs Christel Stalpaert, lecturer in theatre sciences, Department of Art Sciences, University of Ghent
21. Mr Wim Supply, architect
22. Mrs Hilde Teuchies, project development and distribution Het Muziek Lod, freelance expert in cultural affairs
23. Mr Johan Thielemans, Chairman of the Arts Council, lecturer at Hogeschool Gent
24. Mr Steven Thielemans, General Director for Museums, Conservation Libraries and Heritage, City of Antwerp
25. Mrs Kristel Van Ael, designer
26. Mrs Veronique Vandekerchove, Curator of Urban Museums, Louvain
27. Mrs Elisabeth Van der Elst, Head of Department KMKKG, Brussels, Curator of Hallepoort
28. Mrs Lucienne Van Deyck, Royal Music College, Antwerp
29. Mrs Leen van Dijck, Director of AVMC-Letterenhuis, Antwerp
30. Mrs Adinda Van Geystelen, architect
31. Mr Jan Vermassen, Director of Flanders Reproduction Fund

6. Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Arts Council is held by the Unit for Strategic Advisory Councils of the Directorate-General of the Culture Administration of the Ministry of the Flemish Community.

This Unit supports as well as provides a framework for the activities of the Culture Council and the Advisory Expert Committee on Cultural Matters.

Composition of the Unit for Strategic Advisory Councils:

Iris Van Riet, as of 1 January 2004, Secretary of the Arts Council

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(in substitution for Isabel Paeme, Policy Assistant)

Viviane Petré, as of 1 March 2004, Executive Secretary

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Grieta De Ruyter, as of 28 September 2005, Assistant

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(in substitution of Myriame Debroeck, Administrative Secretary)

The aforementioned staff members are employed as Director, Assistant to the Director, Expert and Administrative Assistant to the Directorate-General respectively.

The Secretariat has many tasks. In this respect we refer to the mission of the Arts Council as described in Article 8 of the 19 December 1997 Flemish Parliament Act. It concerns more specifically: co-ordinating activities, preparing discussion notes and (draft) advisory opinions, following the progress of projects and work groups, carrying out limited study contracts, monitoring the field, establishing contacts, taking care of external communication, reporting and all related administrative tasks,...

7. Information about the Arts Council

Information about the mission, composition and activities of the Arts Council can be found at www.raadvoordekunsten.be (in Dutch only). All reports, advisory opinions, viewpoints and publications of the Arts Council are available here as well.

The publications of the Arts Council are also available through the electronic order template at the portal site www.vlaanderen.be / www.flanders.be or on working days from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the free telephone number of the Flemish Infoline 0800/3 02 01.

Colophon

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Appendix: Summary of the Arts Flemish Parliament Act

The Arts Flemish Parliament Act: an integrated arts policy

The Arts Flemish Parliament Act aims at an integrated approach for all professional artistic expressions. Apart from the creation and presentation of the arts, the Flemish Parliament Act also pays attention to the framework aspects that contribute to a better understanding and greater publicity of the arts/artists.

1. General principle

An integrated arts policy aims to achieve the flexible and sustainable development of all arts whilst considering the various aspects of the arts business in a coherent way.

1.1 *All arts*

The Arts Flemish Parliament Act provides an open and coherent framework for all art forms: performing arts, music, plastic and audio-visual arts, language and literature, architecture, design, new media, and hybrid forms thereof.

1.2 *The different aspects of the arts*

The Flemish Parliament Act lays emphasis on a development policy, of which the attention to the creation process and its presentation as well as the participation of the public are essential and equivalent elements. In this way, framework functions such as education, reflection, publications, international activities...are also placed in the forefront.

1.3 *A transversal Flemish Parliament Act*

A similar procedure is developed for all artistic disciplines, with regard to the multi-annual or project-based subsidisation of organisations and the subsidisation of artists as well as the framework aspects. The idea is to meet in this way the growing multidisciplinary and multifunctional approach in the arts practice and to achieve greater uniformity and transparency in the line of decision from the submission, via the assessment to the Ministerial Order².

2. Support of arts organisations and of the framework

2.1. *Support of arts organisations*

Arts organisations are organisations that are directly involved in the creative process. This includes the creation as well as the presentation and distribution. In brief: the key task of arts organisations is to create and present artistic products³. Mind, an arts

² On the other hand, account is taken of the differences in the various art practices by laying down specific conditions and criteria, either in the Flemish Parliament Act itself or in the implementing orders, and by composing sectoral assessment committees (comprised of experts and organisers of arts activities), who are responsible for giving expert and balanced advice. Organisations of an explicitly multidisciplinary nature will be evaluated by transversal assessment committees (for instance, arts centres, arts education organisations, festivals).

³ Whereas in the past it was mainly results-oriented organisations that were eligible for subsidies, this Flemish Parliament Act also considers more process-oriented organisations, which it refers to as

organisation can also apply for funds in its applications for the framework functions it carries out.

2.2. Support of the framework

The support of organisations or projects that have a framework function in the field of education, socioartistic activities, publication and reflection. In other words, the core task of these organisations is not the creation of artistic products, but the guidance towards and the reflection about the arts through education or publications. The explicit mention of these framework functions in the arts policy is an important added value of this Flemish Parliament Act.

2.3 Types of support

2.3.1 Subsidisation by means of four-yearly envelopes and two-yearly envelopes

Experience with previous Flemish Parliament Acts revealed that subsidisation by means of multi-annual envelopes is an efficient instrument to support organisations that have already sufficiently demonstrated their quality and position in the arts landscape. It allows them to develop prospective activities and naturally also provides the necessary guarantees for the artistic and other collaborators involved.

However, the four-yearly subsidy periods that had been applied so far did not provide for the entry of any newcomers other than through project subsidies (see below). Practice showed that there is a need for an interim entry regulation for new organisations that are well on their way to developing continuous activities. In order to cater for this need, the possibility of subsidisation through bi-annual envelopes was incorporated, with a multiple function⁴, in addition to the subsidisation through four-yearly envelopes.

2.3.2 Project support

The aim of project subsidisation is to give organisations that do not receive any structural support the chance to realise one project in terms of both time and objective. Project subsidies are intended for trying out all kinds of initiatives and experiments outside the existing structures. Individuals too can apply for support to realise a project, but this is met by means of a project grant.

3. Support of artists

Support given to the individual artist for his artistic activities. By giving the support of individual artists a prominent place in the Arts Flemish Parliament Act, the Flemish

'workshops'. It concerns workshops where artists are given the opportunity to experiment without having to deliver a 'product'. Workshops are also understood to mean organisations that have a mediating function (the so-called alternative management offices) with respect to artists, organisations that perform all tasks (business and financial management, distribution, technical and possibly artistic guidance) for one or more artists. Given the experimental and guiding nature of the workshops, the Flemish Government has laid down adjusted requirements.

⁴ Multiple function: on the one hand it gives organisations the opportunity to set up annual activities (autonomously or as a step towards a four-yearly subsidy), which is not merely project-linked. On the other hand, this two-yearly subsidisation can also be used by organisations that are no longer satisfactory in order to continue to be eligible for a four-yearly envelope to re-orientate themselves or even to opt out.

Government recognises the individual's autonomous power and significance in the creative process. Individual artists are mainly supported through the award of grants and creative commissions.

4. International projects

Apart from the incorporation of international activities into the subsidisation through multi-annual envelopes, a project-based support of international projects continues to be important and possible, more in particular for (foreign) organisations that do not apply for structural support, or for organisations that have a merely international core task, such as international networks. Furthermore, individuals are also eligible for acquiring international experiences.

5. Quality assessment

The qualitative assessment of the content and business aspects is the responsibility of the assessment committees and the administration respectively. Separate assessment committees have been established for each sector: arts centres and workshops, festivals, arts education, socio-artistic activities, publications, music, theatre, music theatre, dance, plastic arts, architecture and design, audio-visual arts and the Arts Advisory Committee. The Flemish Government takes its decisions on the basis of the advisory opinions of the assessment committees and the administration.