# EU – Russia: Contemporary Dance Co-productions Experiences from the INTRADANCE Project – Challenges for European Cultural Cooperation

**Dominique Jambon**

Director of the French Cultural Centre in Moscow

**Johannes Ebert**

Director of the Goethe-Institut Moscow

Head of the EUNIC Cluster, Moscow

## What is INTRADANCE?

INTRADANCE is a wide-ranging project in the field of contemporary dance to be carried out in the years 2009 and 2010. European choreographers from seven different EU-countries and Russian contemporary dance theatres from different cities will create productions at the home premises of the Russian companies in the period between June 2009 and April 2010. Workshops, seminars and discussions with the participants will offer access to a wider public. In May 2010 all productions will be presented in Moscow at especially dedicated INTRADANCE-Festival.

INTRADANCE is organized within the framework of the „European National Institutes for Culture“ (EUNIC) and is managed by the “Centre Culturel Francais” in cooperation with the German Goethe-Institut, the British Council, the Istituto Italiano di Cultura and the Portuguese Instituto Camoes. The project is funded by the European Union.

## Aims of INTRADANCE

* To foster European – Russian exchange in the field of contemporary dance;
* To support contemporary dance in Russia;
* To enhance public appreciation for contemporary dance as an important and internationally acknowledged form of art;
* To raise awareness for the importance of contemporary dance amongst local and regional decision-makers.

## Background

INTRADANCE was launched in February 2009 with a call for applications in the EU and in Russia. More than 100 choreographers of 18 EU countries and 33 Russian dance ensembles applied to take part in the project. The selected participants come from Portugal, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and France on the European side; from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Kirow, Kostroma, Ekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk from the Russian side. The local production process which has already begun includes a four to eight weeks stay of each choreographer in Russia. The first local premiere successfully took place in Ekaterinburg in December 2009. In May 2010 the INTRADANCE-festival will unite all co-productions in Moscow. Further information is available on the project´s web-site: www.intradance.ru.

## Experiences from the project and recommendations for the EU-Russian Conference on Culture

Already at this stage of the project realization experiences have been made, which can be fruitful for Russian-European cultural cooperation in general, as well as for the improvement of the situation of contemporary dance in Russia.

### Challenge I: Legislation

Today visas even in the field of cultural exchange can only be obtained for a period of three months. To enhance and deepen the cultural exchange between Russia and the countries of the European Union exchange for longer periods gets more important – residencies of dancers and choreographers, but also of artists or writers, as well as the cooperation of volunteers from the European countries.

Therefore, it is recommended that visa in these cases be obtained for a period of at least one year.

### Challenge II: Cultural policy

During the organisation of the INTRADANCE project it became clear that innovative and contemporary art initiatives are not always sufficiently supported by local and regional administrations. The awareness for the manifold chances that these kinds of activities and projects bring seems to be not always fully developed by decision makers. Cultural support traditionally focuses mainly on established and official cultural institutions.

Therefore, it is recommended that within the state system for the support of culture new instruments should be developed, which also take into consideration needs of new and innovative initiatives and institutions in the field of contemporary culture.

### Challenge III: Fostering and financing common EU - Russia projects

In the last three years the Commission of the European Union in Russia was very active in financing common Russia - EU projects in the field of culture. This policy gave a strong and positive impulse to European-Russian cultural cooperation.

It is, therefore, recommended that the European Union would continue and enlarge its support to common initiatives aimed at the support of Russian and European cultural exchange and strengthen cultural institution and initiatives on both sides. Creation of common instruments for the further enhancement of joint cultural projects should be also taken into consideration by the EU and Russia.