

COUNTRY PROFILES

Austria

The research into literature on Austrian approaches to international cultural policy suggests a very positive attitude towards cooperating with other European countries vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Ambassador Emil Brix, Head of the Cultural Policy Section of the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, has stated:

'Acting as a mouthpiece for a Europe of diversity, efforts in this field must concurrently aim at preventing an excessive focus on policies promoting national identity. An open-minded approach to cultural work implies creating interest groups above and beyond the issues of national identity. Much rather, we are called upon to act in accordance with the words of Stefan Zweig, who once said he loved Austria because it permitted him to be a patriot and a citizen of the world at the same time'.

M i n i s t r y f o r a r t s a n d m e d i a

Within the Ministry for Arts and Media there is a department dedicated to bilateral and multilateral cultural international affairs, medals and awards and public relations, with one of its main responsibilities being to liaise with the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the Austrian UNESCO Commission, the OSCE and other international organisations.

The State Secretary for the Arts and Media speaks of a priority to 'create a forward-looking framework for the Austrian media landscape, as well as European standards, in order to promote competition and ensure a plurality of opinions.' The State Secretary for the Arts and Culture, Franz Morak, initiated a series of conferences for Ministers of Culture from East and South East Europe in the year 2000.

F e d e r a l M i n i s t r y f o r f o r e i g n a f f a i r s

The Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs is involved in cultural cooperation. Its 2001 plan to restructure the cultural institutes and the culture departments of the Austrian Embassies, in the form of twenty-eight 'Cultural Fora' (Kulturforen) in twenty-five countries, has been widely written about and commented on (see geographical focus).

Throughout the official website of the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs there are references to European cultural cooperation in international cultural policy. Under the banner of 'International Cultural Policy' the first bullet point states:

'We want to make a contribution towards creating a more cultural Europe' and the text goes on to mention the neighbouring countries of South East Europe as a priority area.

P o l i c y f o c u s

The chief motives for developing cultural cooperation seem to be to place Austria on the map as a central and pivotal country within Europe and to emphasise Austria's strengths in creative media technology.

Support is demonstrated for 'cultural dialogue' as a means of promoting: firstly, the integration and stabilisation of neighbouring countries (by strengthening their civil society); secondly, Austria's role in Europe as well as a Europe of 'cultural diversity'; and thirdly, Austria's cultural industries.

G e o g r a p h i c a l f o c u s

According to statements provided on official websites, Austrian cultural foreign policy (beyond the EU) would seem to be geographically focused in neighbouring countries including the Balkans, South East Europe and the Southern Caucasus region; further afield, an emphasis is placed on the USA and China.

In addition to other EU countries, conventions have been signed with several neighbouring countries reflecting the policy mentioned above. These countries include Croatia, Romania, Norway, the Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, Egypt and Tunisia and further afield with China, the Republic of Guatemala, Indonesia and Mexico.

Also reflecting policy statements found on official websites, the twenty-eight 'Cultural Fora' (official overseas branches responsible for cultural cooperation and governed by the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs) are located in thirteen EU Member States, eight in neighbouring countries (Romania, Ukraine, Croatia, Serbia, Russia, Israel and two in Turkey), three in North America (two in the USA and one in Canada) and the remaining three in Iran, Japan and China.

S e l e c t e d r e a d i n g

Barbier Frinault et Associates and Ernst & Young France Consultancy, Study of the External Cooperation of the European Union and its Member States in culture and audiovisual sectors. Summary,
E-Doc Link: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/stat/2002/5770_barbier/58-02-summary_en.pdf

This study presents and analyses external cooperation in the culture and audiovisual sectors of a number of states (including Austria) and the European institutions with third countries. New Member States and candidate countries for European Union membership are excluded from the category of 'third' countries.

Federal Chancellery, (2005) Arts Department: Official website,
E-Doc Link: <http://www.bundeskanzleramt.at/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabID=3972&Alias=art>
This website includes an introduction by the State Secretary for the Arts and Media. He talks about the need to "create a forward-looking framework for the Austrian media landscape, as well as European standards, in order to promote competition and ensure a plurality of opinions". Within the Ministry there is a department II/6 for bilateral and multilateral cultural international affairs, medals and awards and public relations. It has the following responsibilities: "co-ordination of matters pertaining to the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the Austrian UNESCO Commission, the OSCE and other international organisations for Division II; national implementation of cultural agreements; representation of Division II at the Council of Cultural Cooperation (CD-CULT, Council of Europe); medals and awards in the context of Division II; public relations for Division II".

Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, (2005) European and international affairs,
E-Doc Link: http://www.bmbwk.gv.at/fremdsprachig/en/eu_int/eu_index.xml#3 □ This website lists some of the programmes of the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture under the sub-division of European and International Affairs. The fields of work cover: Research and Technological Development - Education - Culture - The European Higher Education Area - The Bologna Process - Academic Mobility - Study and Research in Austria.

Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2001) Auslandskultur Neu, Vienna, Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Austria
The main tasks of international cultural policy were outlined in this concept paper. One key element was to restructure the cultural institutes and the culture departments of the Austrian Embassies in the form of twenty-eight "Cultural Fora" (Kulturforen) in twenty-five countries. In Autumn 2004, a new cultural forum was opened in Beijing, China.

Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs, (2005) International Cultural Policy,
E-Doc Link: http://www.bmaa.gv.at/view.php3?f_id=1308&LNG=en&version=
A proactive and innovative international cultural policy is precisely formulated in the International Cultural Policy Concept, which has been in force since 2001: "We aim at creating international moments of attention for the creative side of Austria using culture as a

medium. Starting out from the premise that cultural dialogue is increasingly evolving as a decisive factor in good relations between nations and the opportunities opened up by the globalisation process, the central tasks of Austrian international cultural policy are very clear: culture is to be used as an instrument to communicate Austria's position in Europe in an understandable and perceptible manner. Narratives and stories have always been elements that contributed to the evolution of a European identity. For this reason, European integration is fundamentally a cultural task. Culture is an aspect that provides Austria with opportunities to distinguish itself at the international level. In the increasing competition for "moments of attention"... "Hence, the priorities of Austrian international cultural policy are the following: we want to make a contribution towards creating a more cultural Europe. Europe's strength lies to a great extent in its cultural diversity." ... "What we want to do ... is to gain our neighbours as allies in the realisation of the opportunities offered by the cultural area of Central Europe. We want to contribute to the full integration of South Eastern Europe into the European cultural dialogue, promoting the stabilisation of these countries by strengthening the civil society..."

F u r t h e r b a c k g r o u n d r e a d i n g

Ratzenboeck, Veronika, (2005) Compendium of cultural policies: Austria - 2.4 International cultural cooperation,
E-Doc Link: www.culturalpolicies.net

The main tasks of international cultural policy were outlined in a concept paper (Auslandskultur Neu, 2001) prepared by the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2001. One key element was to restructure the cultural institutes and the culture departments of the Austrian Embassies in the form of twenty-eight "Cultural Fora" (Kulturforen) in twenty-five countries. Amongst other priorities, it identified geographic areas of focus: "global cultural centres", like New York, London, Paris etc.; "cultural neighbours" such as Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia etc. including South East Europe; and the development of "partner-states" (e.g. in the Southern Caucasus).

Österreichische UNESCO-Kommission, (2005) Austrian Commission for UNESCO,
E-Doc Link: http://www.unesco.at/user/index_flash.htm
Official website of the Austrian Commission for UNESCO.

EFAH, Interarts, (2003) Study on cultural cooperation in Europe: Annex 1 - National reports - Austria,

E-Doc Link: http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources_info/pdf-word/annex1_national_reports1.pdf

This report has a whole section on Austria's bilateral and multilateral agreements for culture as well as giving an extensive introduction to all the key players in international cultural cooperation from Austria. Besides EU countries this report highlights Austria's relations with Israel, Croatia, Switzerland, Russia and Romania.

Bundespressdienst, (2000) Austrian Federal Constitutional Laws (selection),

E-Doc Link: http://www.ris.bka.gv.at/info/bvg_eng.pdf

Text of the Austrian federal Constitutional Law available in German, English and French.

Kulturstatistik, (2005) Statistik Austria 2003,

E-Doc Link: http://www.statistik.at/fachbereich_03/kultur_txt0.shtml

Cultural statistics related to: museums and exhibitions, architectural heritage, popular culture, archives, libraries, theatre and music, festivals, cinema and film, radio and television, visual art, books and the press, education and learning, adult education, public finances on culture and activities in the field of culture.