

# **A Cultural Dimension to the EU's External Policies - from Policy Statements to Practice and Potential**

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**International Intelligence on Culture**

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## Preface

With the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht, 1992, endorsed by the Treaty of Amsterdam 1997, the decision-making EU Member States endowed the EU for the first time in the history of the European Community with legally binding cultural competences. These competences also apply to the relationship with Third countries. The Community should not only “contribute to the flowering of cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the cultural heritage to the fore” (§151, 1). It should also “foster cultural co-operation between Member States and Third countries and competent international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe”(§151.3). In addition it should “take cultural aspects into account in its actions under other provisions of the Treaty, in particular to respect and promote the diversity of cultures”.

The phrasing of this article is so general that the Community has enough room to support, complement and co-ordinate cultural actions of Member States not only within the EU, but also beyond it and even to take initiatives “in order to achieve these objectives” (§151), as long as it is not violating the principle of subsidiarity (§151).

By introducing this cultural component – restricted though as it is - into the EU’s internal and external policy, the Member States acknowledged that the EU is more than an economic instrument, more than a security fortress, let alone a possible threat to the world; it is also a social and cultural project in progress. This so-called “soft power” claims to embody and convey to others certain norms and values, such as the acknowledgement of cultural diversity and respect for other cultures worldwide; a liberal-democratic social order, the unrestricted rule of law, the protection of human rights; in other words a multilateral rather than a unilateral approach to the world.

Culture and the arts play an important role in this process as trust-building measures. A cultural policy for Europe, strengthening the inner EU cohesion, and a cultural component of the emerging EU foreign policy, complementing the efforts of the Member States, to pay respect and build trust worldwide, are two sides of one and the same coin.<sup>1</sup> This was demonstrated once again in dramatic fashion, by the so-called “cartoon battle”,<sup>2</sup> with negative political, economical, social and cultural consequences. This once more raised the question:

What do we know about the “others”, “ the aliens”, their code of behaviour, their unwritten laws of dealing with each other, their traditions, histories, languages, and artistic expressions?

And what do they know about “us” in all our ‘diversity in unity’? Do we think in mutuality terms (in contrast to the practice of export-oriented cultural diplomacy)?

So far, a stringent cultural component is not pursued as an integral part of the emerging foreign policy of the EU, complementing the respective efforts of the Member States. Neither did the Member States – and it is up to them to and not “Brussels” - decide on a corresponding strategic policy framework. There is, however, an increasing awareness that no Member State can survive alone in today’s borderless, digitalised, competitive and conflict-filled world.

Would the Member States agree or disagree that such a cultural component of the Union’s external relations could be a desirable added European value? Is there a political will on their part to co-operate more closely among themselves and with the Commission to further develop this intercultural dialogue with the world, step by step? Do their different priorities, geographically speaking and in terms of content, leave room enough for joint European action? In terms of preferences and priorities, where can common ground be identified?

These were the basic questions of an extensive literature and web based mapping on the EU Member States’ foreign policies<sup>3</sup> as a first step towards a feasibility study into the possible adoption of a more enhanced cultural component as an integral part of EU foreign policy. In Spring 2004 the European Cultural Foundation (in the framework of the LabforCulture project) commissioned the Boekman Foundation to undertake this survey. The relevant official policy papers of all the 25 Member States and background literature revealed that there is quite a lot of common ground between the Member States and no serious objection to this more enhanced cultural component. But neither was there a particular focus on such a potential extension of the EU’s role.

The survey suggested that the Member States would be likely to support a more co-ordinated cultural policy approach by the EU in five areas: To meet security concerns through intercultural dialogue; to enhance visibility, especially of smaller members through joint European cultural actions; to promote diversity; to stimulate economic development by developing wider markets for Member State’s cultural heritage and creative industries, and, finally, to share costs.<sup>4</sup>

These initial findings are cautiously encouraging; however, the extent to which policy statements are followed through in reality, remained to be seen. It was therefore proposed to link theory and practice in this second research step towards the already mentioned feasibility study. To do a “reality check”!

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## Introduction to and aims of this research paper

This is the second part of a preliminary examination to discover whether there is sufficient interest in Member States and if the preconditions exist for the introduction of a coherent cultural component to the external policies of the European Union, rather than the somewhat limited and ad hoc cultural actions currently in place.

The initial and thorough literature survey of Dodd, Lyklema and Van Weringh, with its factual analysis of international cultural policies in all 25 EU Member States, provided a solid and informative introduction to the nature of national approaches to cultural co-operation in and beyond the EU. However, it was recognised that the survey was based on official documentation and this would not necessarily indicate whether there were unexpressed or ‘hidden’ concerns on the part of national foreign and /or cultural ministries to a wider cultural dimension to EU external

policies. So, do the cautiously encouraging conclusions that emerged from the initial research hold true in practice? That was the basic question this follow up sought to address.

This current study – in effect a ‘reality check’ - was intended to ascertain:

- That the key priorities of each government’s policy on international cultural co-operation were those identified in the literature survey;
- Whether any changes were the result of recent policy shifts and, if so what was the nature of the changes;
- What were considered to be the key challenges to their international cultural co-operation policy;
- Whether there were any potentially conflicting priorities in the international cultural co-operation policies of foreign and cultural ministries that could suggest there would be difficulties in reaching consensus on a cultural component of EU external policies;
- Whether the apparent openness to European co-operation explicit or implicit in the official statements of policy was borne out or limited in practice;
- If there was to be a cultural dimension to the EU’s external policies, whether Member States could envisage ways this might complement (rather than compete with) their own actions and whether such an extension of the EU’s role was likely to present any challenges or difficulties for the country;
- Whether the experience of cultural practitioners of their government’s international cultural co-operation policies and actions corresponded with the declared objectives set out in such policies.
- To what extent these policies meet practitioners’ international needs and aspirations;
- Whether they have any direct experience of participating in an EU initiated or supported cultural event or programme;
- How cultural initiatives promoted by the EU with countries outside EU borders might make a difference (if any) to their practice.

Therefore, in addition to verifying the validity of the analysis contained in the literature study, it was hoped that the new research would yield criteria for the development of a ‘framework for action’ for a more integrated cultural component in external relations policies including development policy. For example, where and in what ways could the EU develop support mechanisms for cultural activities; how could the EU balance the international cultural co-operation needs of large and small, and / or financially weaker, Member States; does current practice suggests areas where an EU role would provide added value?

It is important to emphasise that this new research is intended to signpost areas of investigation for future research. It is not the feasibility study itself, for such research would be pointless if there was no practical will to at least give the concept serious consideration.

The European Cultural Foundation in the framework of the LabforCulture project commissioned me to undertake this follow-up research. It has been a fascinating exercise, but one that would not have been possible without the help and co-operation of a number of people. I should like to express my grateful thanks to Sue Harrison who undertook the UK investigation and participated with me in the interviews of European Commission officials. My thanks also to Francisco Motta Veiga, Alain Sancerni, Dr Roberts Kilis, Magda Kopczynska, Bent-Erik Rasmussen and Christian Have, all of whom undertook the national investigations within a very short timeframe of about six weeks. My appreciation is also due to the following European Commission officials who generously gave their time to see Sue Harrison and I (in some instances when they were about to relocate to offices in different buildings and were surrounded by packing cases!): Denis Baresch (DG Development), Harold Hartung (DG Education and Culture), Krzysztof Kania (DG Education and Culture), Ulrick Knueppel (DG External Relations) Abdul Aziz M’Baye (DG External Relations), Francois Nizery (DG Europe Aid), Sara Wilmet (DG

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Rod Fisher

## Methodology and limitations

`T h e m e t h o d o l o g i c a l a p p r o a c h`  
It was not possible within the timeframe and budgetary framework to examine actual practice and interrogate attitudes in all 25 EU Member States. Accordingly a decision was taken at the outset to focus on six countries that would provide as representative sample as possible in terms of geographical spread, population size, history (including the legacy of empires), length of EU membership, economic resources and attitudes towards the Union.

Two of the largest EU nations, France and the UK, were crucial to the study. Both have been colonial powers and remain important players on the world political stage. They operate, however, with rather different political vision as far as the role of the State, its language and culture are concerned, which might influence their foreign cultural policy. Each has a global network of national cultural institutes involved in cultural co-operation and both have major world languages – though, in the case of France, maintaining the international status of French is proving a struggle. Public perceptions –notwithstanding the vote in France on the EU constitution - are that the two countries stand, politically and publically, at different ends of the spectrum in terms of attitudes to the European Project.

Although considerably smaller, Portugal is also a former colonial power with a global diaspora and continuing special links to the Portuguese speaking countries including Brazil, the largest country in Latin America. The first study suggested Portugal's international cultural co-operation objectives were ambitious, but not matched by resources.

Poland is the largest of the 10 new countries that acceded to the EU in 2004 and the literature survey indicated that it seeks a more leading role in and beyond the Union.

Latvia, on the other hand, is one of the smallest of the new EU Member States, but the preceding research suggested that, in common with several other small EU nations, it finds it is difficult to commit sufficient resources to meet its international cultural aspirations and desire to build its national identity.

Finally, an older EU Member State, Denmark, was chosen in preference to other Nordic countries, because of its perceived Eurosceptical attitude and because of the antagonism generated in parts of the Muslim world as a result of the 'cartoons' saga. It was felt this episode might have a bearing on the foreign cultural policy of the Danish Government.

The research work was undertaken by national correspondents in the six chosen countries (see biographies in Annex 9) and their findings were written up in national reports (see Annexes 1-6):

The research in most countries took place between late April and the beginning of June 2006 (in the UK until the beginning of July). This tight time frame imposed certain limitations on the

depth of the research and who was available for interview. Moreover, political change and structural re-organisation in Poland and Portugal and ministerial changes in the UK posed their own difficulties. Nevertheless, a sufficient a number of key people were interviewed for readers to be reasonably confident the responses broadly reflect the reality in each country.

The work was undertaken by the national correspondents on the basis of face to face meetings, telephone or written surveys and, where appropriate, focus groups. A preliminary meeting with most of the country researchers was held in Amsterdam. Target interviewees in each country were ministers (or deputies) of foreign and cultural affairs; civil servants in foreign affairs and culture; senior staff in national cultural institutes and funding agencies where they exist, as well as practitioners and organisations involved in international cultural co-operation. Country researchers were given a framework of questions that sought to address the current policy situation on international cultural co-operation, future ambitions, the needs of the cultural sectors, and attitudes towards the EU's role in practice and its theoretical development.

Following the completion of the national reports, a series of meetings was arranged in Brussels in early July with European Commission officials in the Directorates of Education & Culture, Development, External Relations and Europe Aid to verify the extent to which culture/cultural co-operation is employed as an instrument of EU external policies and their attitude to an enhanced cultural component of co-ordinated EU relations with so-called Third countries in the future.

#### D e f i n i n g   t e r m s

Before the study commenced, the territory to be researched was variously described as an "EU foreign cultural policy" and an "EU cultural foreign policy". The former suggests an international (i.e. beyond the EU) cultural policy; the meaning of the latter could be construed as a culturally influenced EU foreign policy. Although no doubt attractive to many in the cultural sector, the latter may be contentious, not least because Member States have yet to agree a common foreign policy. However, while the notion of a foreign cultural policy seemed more appropriate, it did imply the exclusion of cultural actions that were a tool to meet non-cultural objectives, e.g. when applied in development processes. Consequently, the focus of this study has been on the potential and environment for a cultural dimension to EU external policies, to embrace the areas of foreign affairs, security, development support and other relations with countries outside the Union.

## International cultural co-operation politics and priorities in six EU states

### R e c e n t   p o l i c y   s h i f t s   a n d   s t r u c t u r a l c h a n g e s

There have been policy and/or structural changes in the area of foreign cultural policy and international co-operation in five of the six countries surveyed since the information conveyed in the first research phase survey conducted early in 2005. Only in Denmark has there been no material change. The most significant policy developments have occurred in the UK and Latvia. It is too early to say what their impact will be. However, neither here nor in the other countries, do the changes imply negative reactions to the basic question of this follow-up study: Are these Member States in practice opposed to the adoption of a more enhanced cultural component in the EU's external policies, including the emerging foreign and security policy?

#### United Kingdom

A major review of cultural diplomacy was chaired by Lord Carter of Coles in the UK on behalf of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office and reported in 2005. It is evident that cultural diplomacy actions will continue to be part of the Government's international agenda and, in their delivery, will be obliged to support government foreign policy objectives. This is clear from the draft International Strategy produced by the Government's Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) due for publication before the end of 2006. This indicates how DCMS will seek, through the work of the agencies and organisations it funds, to meet the Government's new foreign policy priorities.<sup>1</sup> The strategy has five international goals: excellence, opportunity, economy, diversity and sustainability.

Arts Council England launched its own International Policy in June 2005 and an interim review will be conducted in Autumn 2006.<sup>2</sup> Internationalism is one of the Council's six priorities for the period 2006 – 2008. A new international strategy has also been announced by the Scottish Arts Council, in conjunction with British Council Scotland.

#### Latvia

The New Strategic Guidelines of Cultural Policy –entitled National State and adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers in April 2006 – include the objective to facilitate dialogue and understanding among cultures and nations and enrich the cultural life of Latvia by actively participating in international cultural processes and co-operation networks. The document indicates key problems with Latvia's external cultural policy and proposes directions for future actions. The document also sets specific ambitions for the recognition of Latvia's cultural products and services, and suggests an increase of State funds for external cultural activities. Priorities implicit in the Guidelines are: the need to evaluate the effectiveness of existing bilateral cultural agreements (a concern shared by several EU states as witnessed in the first study); offering the expertise of Latvia's cultural practitioners to non – EU countries; and paying particular attention to collaboration in the Baltic Sea region. The division of responsibilities between the Ministries of Culture and of Foreign Affairs are set out in the Guidelines, including the joint development of an External Cultural Relations programme.

Another strategic policy document, Latvia's Participation in the EU – key principles, goals, priorities and actions for the period 2007-2013, was issued in draft form in June 2006 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On the use of culture as a tool in foreign relations, the key direction is to be creating and managing the State image. This emphasis on the 'branding' of a nation is shared by other EU Member States, as the previous research revealed and is especially strong in the ex-communist states that joined the Union in 2004.

## Poland

Poland is also a country where the issue of international branding is important. A report, *Marka dla Polski* (Brand for Poland) was published in May 2006 suggesting potential opportunities to promote Poland through, among other things, its artistic achievements.

Its origins are the appointment of a Government team for the Promotion of the Republic of Poland, established to achieve better co-ordination of international cultural co-operation. A strategy will follow in the second half of 2006 focussed on the period 2007-2013 to coincide, no doubt, with the revision of the EU's new funding programme cycle. An imminent structural change of note is the proposal to shift part of the responsibilities hitherto administered by the Adam Mickiewicz Institute to other organisations. Legislation is in preparation to transform the Institute from one responsible for artistic co-operation into an agency responsible for cultural diplomacy in conjunction with the Polish Institutes abroad.

## France

The principal change in France has been the creation in May 2006 of *CulturesFrance*, as a result of the merger of L'AFAA (the French Association of Artistic Action) with the much smaller ADPF (The Association of the Dissemination of French Thought). This new agency brings together artistic co-operation and distribution, the book and audiovisual sectors to form a single body for international cultural co-operation. Its aims are: encouraging reciprocity of exchanges in France and in international networks; developing a European dimension to exchanges; and solidarity with other world cultures to contribute to their development. The regrouping does not fundamentally change the capacity of L'AFAA, but should enable it to develop its actions in areas where it was not active before. The new body is in line with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' recent policy direction of outsourcing its actions, by using external players. The Ministry hopes a single operator will provide greater visibility and be more effective while, at the same time, reducing costs.

## Portugal

In Portugal, structural changes were announced in 2006 that confirm the trend of closer co-operation between the actors in international co-operation. The previously separate Office of International Cultural Relations of the Ministry of Culture has been integrated into the Office of Planning Strategy, Evaluation and International Relations, and the Ministry itself will share responsibility in future with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the Instituto Camões. Within Foreign Affairs, the Institute for Development Support recently announced "A Strategic Vision for Portuguese Co-operation" embedding cultural exchange, cultural diversity and multiculturalism within objectives to foster sustainable development – a preoccupation currently.

## G e o g r a p h i c a l P r i o r i t i e s

Cultural relations with other EU States was seen as a priority in all of the six countries examined, which was in line with the findings of the first study - though the Polish response was somewhat equivocal on this, suggesting that as the goal of co-operation had now been largely achieved within EU Europe, more attention could be paid to the wider world. In addition, the six countries also indicate that at least some of the neighbouring countries to the North, East or South of the EU boundaries are important. Neighbouring states to the East of the EU are priority areas for cultural relations: for Latvia and Poland (for fairly obvious geo-strategic reasons) and for France. Both Latvia and Poland mention relations with the Ukraine. In addition, Moldova and the Caucasus are identified by Latvia as important culturally, while Poland specifically refers to

Belarus and to Romania, which, of course, will join the EU in 2007. Currently, both Latvia and Poland seem to have certain difficulties in their cultural relations with Russia, influenced, no doubt, by their recent past. However, Russia is seen by the UK, Portugal, France, and Denmark as a priority country for building cultural relations (as it is for some countries surveyed in the first phase research, e.g. Finland, Germany and Austria).

Denmark's interest in Iceland and Norway is not only historical, but because they are partners in cultural co-operation within the Nordic Council.

France and Portugal specifically indicate that cultural relations with Mediterranean Rim countries have some importance, though in the case of Portugal such relations are described as 'timid' and principally focussed on Morocco. The Polish response suggests that it considers itself a potential broker in EU relations with Turkey and Arabic States because of its lack of colonial baggage, and it also indicates that cultural relations with Israel are important. The "ring of friends" that border the EU to the East and South are also important to the UK, which is the only country in the Union that maintains cultural institutes in all the neighbouring nations.<sup>3</sup> As the countries surveyed are in agreement with the EU's Neighbourhood Policy, there appear to be no obstacles for joint actions between the Commission and the respective countries.

Economic and trade interests are clearly a key driver in the building of cultural relations with China (cited by all the countries), Japan (cited by all countries except Denmark) and India (cited by the UK, France, Poland and Latvia). However, it is necessary to insert a caveat at this juncture, because Latvia's cultural interests in India and China appears more aspirational than a reality, as is Portugal's cultural relations with China. Moreover, Latvia's cultural engagement with Japan has been driven primarily by the City Council of its capital, Riga. The relationship with another economic powerhouse, the USA was also cited as a priority by all the countries, though resources to pursue cultural (as opposed to political and trade) engagement are not always evident, and it is interesting that France does not maintain offices of the Institut Français there.

The potential of new market opportunities for the cultural industries are a factor in the French and UK's interest in Brazil, whereas Portugal's cultural relationship with that country is obviously related to its colonial past. Such historical legacies clearly influence Portugal's relationship with its other ex colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia, and France's continuing cultural interests in its former Francophonie empire in Africa, West Indies and Asia. In the main, the UK does not privilege cultural relations with its former empire in this way, except in relation to South Africa and in the case already cited of India (where there are obvious trade interests) as well as other countries with UK significant resident /descended population, such as the West Indies, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The UK's Department of Culture, Media & Sport identifies a range of geographical priorities including states optimistically described as "post conflict" (Iraq, Afghanistan and Angola), key Islamic nations (Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Iran, in addition to Pakistan already mentioned) and Sub-Saharan Africa. Of course, the importance of deepening intercultural dialogue with the Arabic world is shared by many EU countries that were not interrogated in this new research phase.

Other countries beyond the EU known to be given some priority include Canada, cited by both Latvia and France (whose relationship is especially focused on Quebec for obvious linguistic and historic reasons), and Korea, which was mentioned by Poland. Only Poland specifically mentioned the Community of South East Asian nations (ASEAN).

Finally, the Portuguese response points out that although, the first research was correct in identifying the countries with which Portugal has cultural relations, the reality is that in many instances, the bilateral cultural agreements are not acted on in practice (an issue inferred in some of the other reports).

Geographical priorities of member states surveyed

	P O L A N D	D E N M A R K	F R A N C E	P O R T U G A L	L A T V I A	U K
Other EU States	√	√	√	√	√	√
EU neighbouring countries:						
1. Eastern Europe		√	√ (1)	√ (2)		√
2. Mediterranean Rim		√		See 'other countries'	√ (3)	√
3. Nordic (Non EU)	√					
USA	√	√	√	√	√	√
JAPAN		√	√ (4)	√	√	√
CHINA	√	√	√ (5)	√	√ (5)	√
INDIA	√		√ (5)	√		√
BRAZIL		√			√	√
RUSSIA		√			√	√
Former colonies (other than those already mentioned)		√			√	√ (6)
Other countries		Canada	Canada S.E. Asia (5) Central Asia(5)	Turkey Israel Korea		Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia,Iraq, Afghanistan, Angola (7)

Notes:

- (1) Especially Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia.
- (2) Especially Ukraine and Belarus.
- (3) In principle more than practice, though Morocco is cited.
- (4) Relations led by Riga City Council with the city of Kobe.
- (5) Aspirational more than actual.
- (6) South Africa, West Indies, Pakistan, Bangladesh specifically, and Arts Council England also mentions Singapore.
- (7) Scottish Arts Council country priorities include Malawi. Although Iran and Egypt historically have been at some stage under British control, they are not regarded as former colonies.

C o n t e n t P r i o r i t i e s

Surprisingly, content and sectoral priorities were little mentioned in most of the reports. Generally speaking, no country surveyed, except France, indicated there were cultural sectors or issues that were considered as exclusively national "territory" or sacrosanct. This is consistent with the first research phase and suggests there is an opportunity for closer co-operation between Member States and the EU. The only sectors which the French Government would not wish to share with Brussels were language and broadcasting (see key research findings, p.43-4), though it was not averse to a role for the EU in translation and wider distribution of TV and radio programmes of French origin.

K e y c h a l l e n g e s a n d o b s t a c l e s

Introduction

Interviewees in all the countries surveyed were honest enough to admit they faced challenges in the pursuit of their international cultural relations. Whether these represent real obstacles to the inclusion of a cultural component in the EU's external policies seems unlikely, though the absence of clear policies does not help. Key issues are summarised here.

#### Absence of clear policies

Both the Latvian and Portuguese reports refer to the lack of clearly formulated policies for external cultural relations. In Latvia, it was recognised that it was impossible to plan to maximise the cultural input to foreign policies without a strategy. At the same time, the New Strategic Guidelines of Cultural Policy (National State) at least has set a direction for action in foreign relations.

#### Resource constraints

Portugal, France and Latvia cited cutbacks in financial and/or human resources as causing difficulties in realising policies – a concern echoed in many of the EU countries in the first research phase. Budget cutbacks had resulted in substantial reductions in Portuguese Embassy staff, and was identified as a significant contributing factor in limiting Portugal's international strategy. Although the French Ministry of Culture has access to considerable expertise and technical resources, it has insufficient financial means to maximise their deployment at an international level in a systematic way. In the case of Latvia, the Ministry of Culture has had difficulty in convincing the Finance Ministry to allocate additional resources to enable cultural programmes to be an integral part of the State's foreign policy.

#### Lack of recognition

One cause of insufficient resources is likely to be the result of a failure to fully recognise the value of culture as an instrument in fostering foreign relations, as is the case in Latvia. The Latvian Ministry of Culture conceded that without the support of top political figures, such as the President or Prime Minister, it was difficult to implement major international cultural initiatives.

#### Inappropriate instruments and failures in co-ordination

A lack of 'joined up' thinking and co-ordination between government departments and between government, and the cultural sector was seen as an issue in several of the countries surveyed, especially Portugal. This confirms the findings in many EU countries in the previous research. In some instances, as in Poland, it was suggested that the tools for delivering international cultural co-operation were weak and / or needed re-examination to ensure they were fit for purpose. Even where the instruments have been adapted and refined, they may still not be adequate to meet new challenges in transnational engagement. At least that appears to be the case in France, where the concentration of instruments through the merger of institutions and positions had not prevented the fragmentation of services and actions between and within ministries. There was a lack of communication between services, between sectors and between actions. A competition over territory had occurred as a consequence, and there was little opportunity for developing cross-sectoral synergies. Problems of co-operation in the development of external cultural policies were clearly revealed in Latvia. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture appear to blame each other for lack of guidance on geographical priorities. The inability of the Ministries of Culture, Education, Foreign Affairs and Finance to agree a co-ordinated position with regard to inter-state agreements is seen as a weakness.

#### The need to 'mend fences'

It was hardly surprising that Denmark and especially the UK should refer to the role of culture in repairing diplomatic relations and rebuilding trust. The UK Government's foreign policy has been redefined in the light of its role in Iraq and Afghanistan and the terrorist attacks on public transport in London in 2005. Given the political and public backlash that ensued in the Moslem world following the publication by the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten of the cartoons of the prophet Mohamed, it was logical that the report from Denmark should note a desire to intensify international cultural collaboration, though this does not appear to have translated into foreign cultural policy measures yet.

#### Safeguarding national identity

Given the inexorable growth of globalisation processes and the international competition for profile, it might have been imagined that several of the smaller countries surveyed would have drawn attention to this as a key policy issue. In fact, in only one report –that of Latvia- was the issue referred to specifically. A particularly interesting point made in the Latvian report is that its Baltic neighbours, Estonia and Lithuania, are seen as Latvia's main competitors. It was suggested that this reality affected pan-Baltic cultural co-operation.

#### Do policies meet their objectives and the needs of practitioners?

Establishing whether the declared international cultural co-operation policies of governments or their agencies meet their objectives (and whether this has any bearing on EU cultural action in the wider world) in such a short research time frame, and on the basis of interrogating some of these responsible for implementing such policies, was always going to be problematic, inviting as it does, self-criticism. Nevertheless, a few national reports are refreshingly frank on their problems. The French report, for example, suggests that despite its resources and ambitions, it is under-achieving in the implementation of its international policy, except in relation to language and the cultural industries.

How are the current international cultural co-operation policies of governments or their agencies perceived by practitioners? The reports from Portugal, Poland and Latvia were more forthcoming on this than the others. Practitioners in Portugal appear very critical of the absence of coherent Government strategies relevant to their aspirations. Better articulation between departments, good communication and advance planning by government to enable cultural organisations in turn to plan ahead, were regarded as more significant issues even than money. Government communication with the sector was regarded as inadequate – a complaint which surfaced in the Polish, Latvian and, to some extent, French reports as well.

There was also criticism in Latvia of the lack of a consistent policy on financing cultural operators to network internationally – a complaint made by practitioners in many European countries and so it was surprising that it was not raised more often in this study. This suggests there could be space for more joint actions between the EU, Member States and civil society.

## Strengthening culture in EU external policies: the commission view

### I n t r o d u c t i o n

To determine whether the climate of opinion is conducive to an expanded cultural dimension in EU external policies, it was obviously desirable to take account of the views of European Commission officials. But first, it might be useful to summarise and update the current scope of EU relations with Third countries outlined in more depth in the first research phase.

## T h e c u l t u r a l d i m e n s i o n o f c u r r e n t E U g l o b a l r e l a t i o n s

EU bilateral relations with countries beyond its borders often include a cultural dimension, albeit a modest one. Relationships with non-EU countries in geographical proximity are developed through action plans for the European Neighbourhood Policy for countries on its Eastern borders and associated agreements with Mediterranean Rim nations in North Africa and the Middle East.

However, neighbours in the West Balkans do not currently enjoy a cultural dimension in their EU relations and there is increasing recognition in the Commission and in some Member States (e.g. Austria) that this should be addressed. The new Culture 2007 programme should provide a modest platform for the participation of West Balkans countries and, by the time of the mid term review, culture may have a higher profile in EU relations with that part of Europe, subject to ratification of Association and Stabilisation Agreements. The present situation is illogical.

Cultural co-operation with Russia - regarded as a priority by several countries in the initial research and confirmed in this current study - may be enhanced as the result of the Finnish Presidency of the EU giving priority to strengthening EU-Russia relations. Road maps, including one for culture, have been developed and were discussed by ministers in Karelia in September 2006. Partnership and co-operation agreements exist with Russia's Central Asia neighbours (including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan), but the cultural dimension is very limited.

Article 27 of the Cotonou Agreement governing EU actions in ACP (African, Caribbean & Pacific) nations provides a mandate for support for "national heritage conservation and development" projects, including the organisation of festivals and other cultural events. Calls for proposals are also invited in the audio-visual sector and cultural industries. The preservation of Africa's cultural and linguistic heritage and the integration of the cultural dimension in development are written into the EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development.<sup>4</sup>

Cultural co-operation is also incorporated within the framework for ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting), whose Ministers of Culture met for the second time in Paris in 2005.<sup>5</sup> ASEM also supports the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) to promote dialogue through cultural, intellectual and people to people exchanges and ASEF is developing an online portal, Culture 360, to facilitate cultural co-operation between Asian and European cultural practitioners.<sup>6</sup> ASEM Member States reaffirmed their support for ASEF at the ASEM Summit in Helsinki in September 2006 but, in an implied criticism, they emphasised the importance of ASEF flagship programmes being further aligned with ASEM priorities. A Memorandum of understanding between the EU and India is in preparation and the Commission is endeavouring to include a cultural dimension. India, along with Pakistan and Mongolia, will be joining the ASEM family of nations in 2008.

There is a cultural dimension to EU relations with Latin America, but some Commission officials and practitioners from South and Central America have suggested during this research that more would happen if Spain, in particular, adopted a more relaxed attitude to its continuing desire to be a gatekeeper.

## C o m p l e x o r g a n i s a t i o n a l a r r a n g e m e n t s

The initial research indicated the responsibilities the various European Commission Directorates have for culture in the EU's external relations. This current study questioned Commission officials about how the functions operated in practice.

Prime responsibilities for maintaining EU relations with the wider world falls to the DG for External Relations (or RELEX, as it is more familiarly known). Its role is to pursue "an effective and coherent external relations policy for the European Union so as to enable the EU to assert its

identity on the international scene” (my emphasis). So, while this role involves building and maintaining political, diplomatic, economic and social relations, it is also very much about positioning the EU in the global arena. Culture is a component of such relations and is used both in terms of cultural relations and as an information tool or a way of ‘branding’ the EU. However, RELEX’s mandate does not extend to the 77 ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) countries and the 20 overseas countries and territories of the UK, France and the Netherlands. These are the remit of the DG for Development, which employs culture as a tool to improve the economic conditions and lives of people in the poorest regions of the world.

Differences of opinion are evident in relation to the purposes of culture in development, both within the Commission and some Member States. So, although the cultural industries might be supported as part of economic development, there is a view within the Commission that this is a means, not the objective – the principal aim is to support human development. This reinforces a perception that sometimes there is confusion between objectives and means.

The DG for Education and Culture (DG EAC) has responsibility for cultural co-operation directly, but this is primarily focussed on Europe. It is RELEX that has specific budgetary envelopes for cultural relations beyond the EU, and DG EAC is required to work with and advise it in relation to cultural co-operation. The latter readily admits that it sometimes ‘piggy-backs’ on RELEX initiatives, e.g. the Japan Year of People to People Exchange. The EU Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 is a priority within DG EAC, which is endeavouring to bring in countries from the EU’s Neighbourhood Policy to engage with the initiative. It has also been working with RELEX and DG Development to promote the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity at the ASEM VI Summit and with ACP countries respectively.

As other DGs, e.g. Trade, Enlargement, EuropeAid etc, have roles in policies that involve culture or culture in development, it will be evident that the organisational arrangements within the Commission are somewhat complex. Policy development, implementation and administration of external relations are dealt with by different departments. The need for internal co-ordination is obvious. Fortunately, there appears to have been improvements in recent years as a result of the creation of inter-service groups. Thus, the evolution of a strategy for culture in development policy (see next paragraph) has been led by DG Development and includes DG RELEX, DG Education and Culture, DG Trade, DG Information Society and EuropeAid. The Year of Intercultural Dialogue is led by DG Education and Culture and involves DG RELEX, DG Development and DG Justice and Law, etc. Despite this, there are tensions and overlaps in the RELEX ‘family’ and policy lines and responsibilities are not always clear.

#### A s t r a t e g y f o r c u l t u r e i n E u r o p e a n l e d d e v e l o p m e n t p o l i c y ?

While there is increasing agreement at international level on the importance of integrating culture in development strategies and in aid programmes, what the EU has not had hitherto is an overall policy framework for cultural actions in developing countries. It was, therefore, encouraging to note that the Commission had issued a Draft Strategy on Culture in the European Development Policy in 2006 that sets out guiding principles and priorities for EU cultural action to ensure culture is ‘mainstreamed’ in all aspects of development co-operation – not an easy task at this time given the fact that developing countries may have other priorities. The Commission has been engaged in a consultative process with Member States and with a range of stakeholders on the content of the draft.

Key actions foreseen in the document are preserving, stimulating and promoting cultural diversity, promoting intercultural dialogue, supporting cultural industries, and developing a solid local market for cultural activities, goods and services. In the case of the latter, the document recognises that access to culture depends on education and the development of the cultural

infrastructure, including facilities and financially viable intermediaries in the production chain. Promoting access to foreign markets for cultural goods and services through trade co-operation instruments is also envisaged.

The strategy sets out a number of principles for EU cultural action. The first of these - the need for countries to take ownership of their culture - proved to be contentious at a consultative stakeholders' workshop, held in Brussels on 30 May 2006. The Commission document emphasises that the object of EU action was to support the cultural activities, goods and services of the developing countries themselves, not those of EU Member States. This is not always appreciated in the latter.

The principal areas for co-operation in cultural action programming at national and regional levels in developing countries are set out in the Commission document (reprinted in Annex 8 of this study). The appearance of the document is a positive sign for our research, though whether the core messages will be picked up by the DG External Relations and Member States remains to be seen.

#### A d d e d v a l u e ? E U D e l e g a t i o n s a n d c u l t u r a l a c t i o n

EU Delegations currently initiate or co-ordinate, on an ad hoc basis, a range of European cultural events in Third countries, most commonly European film festivals, but also theatre or dance festivals, the occasional exhibition or promotional events with some cultural content. Such events may be organised with the best of intentions to promote the diversity of Europe's cultures and, by association, the image of the EU itself, but the approach does not appear to be underpinned by any strategic policy. They may be held to commemorate an anniversary (e.g. the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of EU-China relations) or to celebrate Europe Day on 9<sup>th</sup> May, for which Delegations have small budgets for cultural activity. At other times they give the impression of being entirely random, originating either from an idea or enthusiasm within the Delegation office (e.g. a Dance Festival in Madagascar), or in response to a proposal put to it by the host country or by one or more of the national cultural institutes of Member States. The Commission DG for Education & Culture has no direct involvement with the Delegations, which are the responsibility of the DG for External Relations.

The nature of these events was criticised in this research by the UK and French responses in particular. The latter says that French cultural institutes do not work often or systematically with EU Delegations. Citing the Director of the British Council in Bangkok, which has the largest representation of the national cultural institutes in Thailand, the UK report suggests current arrangements for EU cultural events are unsustainable, based as they frequently are on EU Delegations making project proposals and asking EU Member States, through their cultural institutes or embassies, to contribute financially to them. One difficulty EU Delegations face is that, unlike national cultural institutes, the policy line is they are not allowed to raise business sponsorship for events. In some instances when Commission Delegations have no budgetary provision, it is sometimes left entirely to the cultural institutes or host country to cover the costs - money they feel is not always wisely spent. Certainly there are often complaints about the absence of clear objectives, the lack of targeted promotion, and the confused messages which the EU seems to be conveying in the events it organises.

During the UK Presidency in 2005, 16 EU Member States represented in Thailand drew up a strategy for enhancing the profile of the EU and Member States in that country and establishing the EU as a leading cultural relations provider.

This set out the following key aims:

- To celebrate the cultural diversity, common values and unity of the EU;
- To showcase innovation, imagination and talent within the EU to promote cultural understanding, tolerance and collaboration with Thailand;
- To demonstrate flexible and sensitive approaches towards co-operation between the EU and Thailand that builds sustainable cultural developments;
- To broaden awareness and understanding of the cultural background, achievements and skill of EU Member States and Thailand;
- To showcase the EU as a contemporary and vibrant community of arts;
- To achieve greater impact and influence through the collaborative actions of Member States;
- To achieve a high degree of reciprocity and cultural interchange.

An event in China is illustrative both of the potential for raising the profile of the EU and Member States through cultural activities and of the problems associated with such initiatives. Europe Street was the culminating event in a series of activities to mark 30 years of EU-China diplomatic relations. It was initiated by the EU Delegation in Beijing and held in that city's largest park over two days in September 2005. The event was devised to promote interest in the EU and awareness of its cultural diversity and indirectly to promote Europe as a destination for travel, education and business. The budget totalled Euros 145,000, including an enhanced component specially obtained from Brussels to complement the modest resources of the Delegation. This was used for the infrastructure costs, while Member States were expected to provide the content according to their judgement and means. To deliver the project, the Delegation co-operated with the British Council in Beijing under the umbrella of the UK Presidency.

The event comprised three elements: information booths, which each Member State was invited to decorate to promote their culture, education, tourism and trade/technology; music, dance and street theatre performances; and a series of national food booths reflecting the diversity of Europe's cuisine. The EU had its own information booth. All six countries in our survey actively participated, with Denmark sharing an information booth with Sweden. More than 33,000 visitors attended, quite a lot of media coverage was obtained and audience feedback was generally positive. However, a number of areas for improvement were noted for the future. The scale had been underestimated from a human resource and planning perspective. It was recognised there was a need for: greater consideration at an early stage of what facets of Europe should be represented; a larger budget was needed for promotion; more coherence and quality control of the cultural events was called for; earlier notification of the cultural input was necessary for promotional purposes; and greater involvement required of the host authorities.

#### T h e v i e w f r o m B r u s s e l s

Asked for their opinions on the potential for a more extensive cultural component in EU external policies, the reactions of European Commission officials were positive, but tempered with realism. There was general agreement that the EU had a strong message to convey and that culture was an appropriate instrument to disseminate it. The way the EU had managed reconciliation in Europe for example, was admired by countries such as Japan and Korea and it was suggested that this might be a theme that the cultural sector could take up.

That culture was an important tool to underpin EU social and economic relations with other countries was increasingly recognised. One official considered culture could be useful in building subtle political linkages but, on the other hand, he thought it may not be easy for the EU to communicate core principles through it.

There was a general recognition of the need for a more strategic approach on the part of the Commission. The key here was the attitude of Member States. Smaller nations could appreciate

EU actions more readily than larger countries. There was a need for coherence between what Member States do, what the EU does and what the latter wants to do. The Commission was ready to act if it had the resources.

The absence of sufficient tools for international cultural co-operation was recognised. Brazil, India and China for instance are requesting opportunities to culturally engage with the EU, but the Commission does not have the instruments with which to respond (this should not be confused with instruments for promoting culture in development).

It was suggested that the difficulty with Treaty of Amsterdam Article 151 was that it promoted culture primarily inside the EU and encouraged 'Eurocentrism'. It was necessary to persuade EU Member States to be more open to other cultures. Moreover, politicians in the EU have tended to concentrate on Western culture, forgetting that culture crosses frontiers. Culture and memory were key issues in cultural development and it was important not to overlook the effect of Arabic and Muslim cultures on memory and identity in the West.

Internal co-operation between Directorates had improved, but the difficulty, politically, of achieving integrated EU policies in areas of public sector governance such as security, demonstrates that culture will not achieve this overnight.

## Are governments ready for European cultural co-operation actions beyond EU borders?

### I n t r o d u c t i o n

In the main, attitudes to an extension of the role of culture in EU External policies were much more positive than negative. At the same time, support was frequently tempered with caveats or pre-conditions.

When reservations were expressed, especially on the part of politicians and civil servants, they often stemmed from a lack of perceivable advantages to the Member States themselves. When asked to consider the concept of a policy-led cultural dimension to EU external relations, almost invariably politicians and civil servants thought of it first in terms of the benefits to their own nation and its culture; only subsequently (if at all) did they think in terms of the wider European advantages. Practitioners, on the other hand, thought of the idea more in terms of their practice and the financial, partnership and other opportunities that might accrue. In itself, this is hardly surprising. Altruism is not at the top of most political agendas and cultural actors are primarily concerned with developing their work in the most favourable environment. What is significant is that quite a lot of interviewees could imagine broader European benefits as a result of EU external policies having a cultural component (despite the admission by interviewees in some countries that this was the first time that any thought had been given to the concept). Indeed the research revealed gaps in awareness of the EU's role in culture beyond knowledge of the Culture 2000 programme, or except in relation to intra-European co-operation. A general lack of interest in the European Commission on the part of some actors involved in international cultural co-operation was also noted.

### P o s i t i v e a t t i t u d e s t o a c u l t u r a l d i m e n s i o n t o E U e x t e r n a l p o l i c i e s

#### Advantages for Member States

On the basis of the research findings the main benefits that a cultural dimension to EU external policies would bring to Member States can be broadly categorised as: better visibility internationally; sharing the workload and expenditure of governments; sustainability; and creating

a stronger case for culture in the hierarchy of domestic financial commitments. Some of these are in line with the first study, but some are new.

Enhanced visibility for Member States' culture and presence in the international arena was seen as a potential outcome by several Member States confirming the findings in the first phase research. In the case of Portugal, the possibility of linking the image (especially a more contemporary one) of that country with Europe was seen as very positive and likely to facilitate new market opportunities. No fears were expressed that this might lead to Portuguese culture and identity being 'submerged'. In almost all the countries surveyed there were interviewees who considered that their country could play an important role in a cultural policy for EU external relations, bringing to the table their nation's specific areas of expertise (e.g. Poland and its relations with neighbouring Eastern European countries and its potential as a cultural mediator with Russia and as an initiator of co-operation with Turkey or, in the case of Portugal, its special cultural relations with Brazil and nations in Africa and the Mediterranean).

The French and Portuguese responses both note the potential for Member States to reduce costs and personnel time through the co-ordination of joint programmes at EU level and also, where appropriate, the sharing of overseas premises by national cultural institutes when a presence is required. These are findings with which the UK is also known to be sympathetic and were identified as such in the first study.

It was considered that the EU could facilitate sustainable relations and partnership building with cultural bodies outside the Union, especially if the European Commission enlarged and simplified its programmes to ease the involvement of non-EU organisations. The failure of European Commission programmes to support long term commitments was criticised by practitioners explicitly (e.g. Portugal) or implicitly in some reports.

There was also a belief, registered in the Latvian report in particular, that a cultural component in EU external policies complementing national policy would make domestic civil servants more attentive to the need to financially support culture by emphasising its importance in the hierarchy of government concerns. However, it was recognised that strong statements or other inducements must come from Brussels to underpin the significance which the EU attaches to the issue and encourage civil servants to accept culture as part of "serious policymaking". The French response considered the European Parliament should have a role in legitimising such a policy.

There were other advantages specific to individual Member States. An EU external cultural policy was seen as providing new development opportunities for Poland, which, in turn, would strengthen civil society and Polish democracy and legitimise Poland's European credentials. These are strong assertions as the Polish report seems to acknowledge by drawing attention to how Polish beliefs were actually shaped in recent times by grass roots social movements.

One somewhat intriguing benefit – referred to this time in the French response – was that a cultural component of European external policy would have the effect of enabling the Nation to act more as a European player in a new European reality of 25 States. It wanted to maintain its current international cultural relationships, but also to be integrated into European co-operation inside and outside the EU. This would be of benefit to both Europe and France, as the French report rightly points out, even if the impression given is that Europe might benefit more!

#### Advantages for Europe

Is Europe greater than the sum of its parts? That question, posed in the UK response, seems particularly apposite in the context of the advantages a cultural dimension to EU external policies might bring to Europe as a whole. The perceived benefits can be broadly defined as: reinforcing

cultural dialogue with the outside world; spreading European values; enhancing capacity; strengthening European integration and cohesion; promoting and defending the diversity of Europe's cultural economy; providing critical mass and presenting an image or label that was an assurance of quality.

The role that the EU could play in developing cultural relations through dialogue with Third countries was referred to in several country reports. It could reinforce cultural or intercultural dialogue, counteract the negative images certain European Member States have in the wider world for reason of history or recent circumstances (as suggested in the French report) or to overcome alleged national 'particularisms' or biases in the EU's ad-hoc approaches hitherto (a Polish view) or be an instrument in conflict resolution. The UK report notes that the EU is a strong advocate of human rights and culture could play a role in addressing border conflicts or post war situations and, by way of example, the French report cites Israel and Palestine.

The need for Europe to have a stronger presence in the world through the dissemination of its cultures and common value systems (such as respect for freedom and diversity and acceptance of other cultures) was specifically mentioned in the UK, Portuguese, French and Danish reports and inferred in others. Cultural action was said to be a crucial part of the EU's security policy by promoting peace, harmony and co-existence on the basis of cultural values, thus endorsing the findings of the first study.

The potential for strengthening cultural capacity figured prominently in the Portuguese, French and Polish reports. Interviewees in Portugal thought an extended EU role could provide added value by building a space for creativity, networking and new partnerships with Third countries. Such countries, as noted in the Polish report, often demonstrated high levels of commitment to international engagement, but lacked cultural co-operation experience, technical wherewithal, infrastructure and resources. The French report reflected widely held views about the importance which the EU should attach to the mobility of artists and practitioners, not only in EU Europe, but in neighbouring countries and beyond. The aim, as the Portuguese response noted, should be the sharing of experiences and knowledge and the enlargement of goals and horizons. It was suggested that the EU could have a central role in opening up contacts and supporting European cultural networks as instruments for information dissemination. Networks were considered in the French report, to be "driving forces of decisive communication and integration and factors of sustainable development", and their importance in cultural co-operation at intra and extra European level was noted in other reports.

A cultural dimension to the EU's external relations was seen in the French response as a potentially important factor in building European cohesion and the integration of Member States, especially the newer ones. The Danish reply emphasised the importance not only for the European project, but also for the EU's global profile. Indeed it went further, suggesting that in the wider world the EU should be seen culturally as a coherent region, and as Danish culture is increasingly a product of European cultural collaboration, Europe is the basis for Danish culture. Cultural co-operation was also said by one Polish interviewee to be of "unprecedented importance" in respect of countries that aspire to future EU membership, but for whom political integration with the EU is currently out of the question.

A case for the EU to lead in its external policies on the promotion of Europe's cultural industries was made in the French, Portuguese and UK responses. A number of interviewees in the latter considered there should be a consensus on economic policies for all areas of culture, in recognition of the importance of this evolving area of the economy of many Member States. The EU, it was felt, could establish some broad policies and principles and guidance on impact measures to ensure the diversity of Europe's cultural products is protected. According to the French reply, intervention by the EU could come 'upstream' in the capacities and methods of production, and 'downstream' on promotion, distribution and sale. Such initiatives could be

strengthened if the EU installed a network of cultural (trade) attachés and promotion offices in Delegations in key target countries. Moreover, the Portuguese response suggests that EU initiatives to support European co-productions in the audiovisual and performing arts sectors would not only benefit Europe's cultural industries, but could help to strengthen cultural structures in partner countries outside the EU, thus contributing to sustainable relations. According to the Danish response, the development by the EU of a policy in this area should also define the borders between commercial sectors where Member State assistance is inadmissible and public provision where state aid is vital.

This issue of the cultural economy, which was also noted in the first study, does raise questions about the ability of some Member States' cultural industries to compete in a global environment. The EU could provide the critical mass to tap new emerging markets such as China and India – countries who may consider their interests are better served in many instances by dealing at European rather than national level. Indeed, as both the Polish and French replies point out, the involvement of the EU could be of particular benefit in relation to countries such as China, with whom cultural co-operation can be complex, and it could assist Member States who, for reasons of size, capacity or history, may encounter difficulties in bilateral relations with such countries. The consensus reached by Member States on a common position towards the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions demonstrates that the EU can have more influence by its Members working collectively.

What the EU can also provide – at least symbolically - through its support mechanisms, allied to agreed standards, is a 'European' label which endows projects with quality assurance recognised inside Europe and in the wider world. The French reply thought this was especially important in the context of the global heritage where European skills in restoration and preservation techniques could make, or continue to make, a major contribution to the built heritage of developing countries and, in the process, promote cultural dialogue, enhance cultural tourism, and strengthen positive images of both Europe and the recipient countries. Such heritage sites – presumably if suitably managed – could also be the meeting ground for young European volunteers and platforms for a range of other cultural activities according to some French interviewees. The Portuguese response also favoured EU action on heritage as strengthening the intra and extra European initiatives of Member States.

The French Ministry of Culture was also attracted to the idea of more systematic and strategic EU support for major platforms for European culture, such as festivals and book fora at intra and extra European level.

Finally, the Danish report takes the pragmatic view that, as the EU is a fact, the only realistic response is to include a cultural dimension as the Institution grows in significance. While this may not be described as whole-hearted endorsement, it reflects a noticeable attitudinal change from a decade ago.

#### C o n d i t i o n a l   s u p p o r t

Although the majority view in all the countries surveyed was to endorse, in principle, the concept of culture being firmly embedded in EU external policies, a number of pre-conditions were expressed.

It was considered in the UK response that the EU needed to be clear why it should embark upon developing a cultural dimension to its external relations and what it will endeavour to promote about the culture and values of Member States. But, as inferred in the first research study, it is important that the EU sees itself primarily as a facilitator, not an organiser.

The need for clarity was also called for in the French response which, reflecting the views of government services, insisted that any cultural dimension to external policies developed by the EU must be distinguished from support programmes for culture within EU external development

aid, which are part of the European Commission's bilateral policies and, therefore, the responsibility of the partner states involved, not an aspect of EU foreign relations. This is an important point, which needs further examination. As indicated in Chapter 5, the European Commission initiated a process of discussions with Member States on a strategic policy framework for culture in European development policy<sup>7</sup> but, at the same time, has accepted the importance of integrating culture in the "full range" of EU external policies. This suggests that some synergy between the two areas – culture in development aid and in external foreign relations – must at least be considered.

The need for any EU external cultural policy to respect the principle of subsidiarity was explicit in the Danish, French and UK responses and implicit in the others. EU actions should complement and supplement Member States' endeavours (though it has to be said that cultural practitioners in the UK questioned the relevance of subsidiarity, seeing it merely as an obstacle to European cultural co-operation).

Respect and understanding of the individual cultures of each Member State, and the need to reflect the mosaic of European culture was seen as a *sine qua non*. EU external cultural policy should reflect, in the words of the French response, "the capacity of harmonising... differences without erasing them...". In the views of the Danish response, the EU would need to draw on the rich pluralistic basis of European Culture and have its roots in Member State's own cultural environments. A single European hegemony in culture had to be avoided, as the UK report notes.

The French and Portuguese responses were adamant that there should be no hierarchies based on population, size, culture or language in the representation by the EU of European culture. The European 'message' in policy terms should treat all States equally. Indeed, France and Latvia saw an external cultural policy as an opportunity to better integrate new EU Members and smaller EU States' European cultural actions and the European 'brand'.

No doubt reflecting the different interests of interviewees, the Polish response relays contradictory concerns about how policy is devised, on the one hand suggesting that decisions should reflect the equal contribution of all Member States and not be weighted in favour of the larger ones (a view shared with Portugal) but, on the other hand, expressing some anxiety that the need for European consensus could delay the implementation of policy.

For France it was of importance to clarify the functional relations between the EU and Member States. The EU should not attempt in its actions to substitute its understanding of European values for those of individual Member States, even if they are shared values. In other words, the EU should not presume to speak for Member States. A formula needs to be found to enable each Member State to continue to promote their own cultural foreign policy interests that is complemented by the European Commission representing common European values. Not an easy task in itself and certainly a factor that would circumscribe EU action.

A number of responses (e.g. France and Latvia) considered that any new EU external cultural strategy needed underpinning with appropriate financial resources. The response from practitioners in the UK, while hesitant about the benefits any EU policy might bring to cultural organisations, also agreed the importance of proper budgetary commitments.

Serious concerns were expressed about the capacity of EU officials to implement any new policy, something which the French considered to be a crippling disadvantage. Both it and the Polish response thought that their might be a role for the cultural attachés of Member States to help bridge the expertise gap, providing they had sufficient knowledge of Europe and, as far as the French reply was concerned, they were not based in those countries deemed as priorities in French external cultural policy. The French and UK responses foresaw a possible role for national cultural institutes – not, it should be emphasised, by transforming them into European cultural centres, for which they are not equipped, but by enabling them to become supporters or partners

in European projects. A new network of such institutes may strengthen this argument (see 'A new mechanism for European co-operation?'-next page).

There was a suggestion in the UK response that an independent body could be mandated by the EU to manage a budget for cultural actions beyond the EU within agreed policy guidelines to avoid central bureaucracy. However, the French response was forthright in stating that no new structures should be set up and, echoing the findings of the first study, it is likely that governments in most of the countries surveyed would have similar reservations.

There was a call in the Portuguese report – no doubt shared by practitioners in the other countries – that cultural actors should be closely involved in the decision-making process.

Although supportive of a European foreign cultural initiative, the French report did not consider it was possible to achieve it without 'transforming' the operating modes of institutions, both in its country and in other Member States, as well as the EU itself.

Finally, it is clear that there are sensitivities to address before any cultural component to EU external policies could be developed. For example, the Polish response said there is a need for a broad European debate on the Continent's heritage and the history of individual Member States. Understanding the goals of Member States' foreign policies and the context that determines their actions was considered an essential precursor to planning joint projects acceptable to all partners. This was important in the Polish view, not least so that the EU (and presumably other Member States) could understand the aims of Polish foreign policy and the factors that govern it. Prevailing attitudes to relationships with Russia were cited as an illustration of how the Polish (and to some extent Latvian) position differs from that of the EU in general and that of individual states, such as France, in particular. There are concerns in Poland that it is unjustly stereotyped as a consequence of misunderstanding of the orientation of its foreign policies. Although not so explicit in the reports of the other countries surveyed, it is conceivable that sensitivities of a different nature underlie their foreign policy relations as well. The key issue is to what extent these will inhibit the elaboration by the EU of an external cultural dimension.

#### R e s e r v a t i o n s

It is plain that the attitudes of some Member States and practitioners towards the EU have been coloured to some extent by negative experiences of the Culture 2000 programme and by what some regard as the contradictions between EU goals and the real efficacy of such programmes. It was suggested that financial and geographical problems had led to inequalities in the operation of this and other programmes. For instance, a Polish interviewee noted that because the programme regulations in Culture 2000 rules as inadmissible the costs of cultural organisations participating from countries outside the 30 or so agreed European nations, this discouraged such partnerships with Third countries. As another illustration, the geographical position of peripheral countries such as Portugal inevitably increased the costs of their organisations participating in European projects and, in the view of some Portuguese practitioners, made a case for positive discrimination to stimulate greater interest. There were some concerns that any wider EU role would not change these realities.

However, the concern that was echoed most in the countries examined was that EU actions in culture, were already prone to bureaucracy, bottlenecks and unwieldiness and the danger was this would simply be repeated in activities beyond the EU. Scepticism was expressed in both the Latvian and UK reports about EU delegations in Third countries possessing the requisite skills to administer new cultural actions successfully. The experience of at least one interviewee was that good ideas lead to poor policies and worse practical actions. In relation to such actions, the point was made that European film festivals do not, in themselves, contribute to sustainable cultural dialogue with Third countries. However, organising associated seminars and education programmes as part of such events could do so.

Doubts were expressed in Portugal about the EU's ability to reflect the considerable diversity of Europe's cultures in a European external policy. Indeed, it was noted in several of the country reports, that rather than present a uniform image of Europe, any external policy must reflect the mosaic of different cultures. In part, such reservations stemmed from concerns among practitioners that EU officials were too remote from culture and, therefore, not in the best position to determine what actions were appropriate of the local circumstances.

Concerns were registered in Latvia that in a joint enterprise to promote cultural actions in EU external policies, there was a danger that the contribution of smaller Member States would go unnoticed. Only the larger States would benefit.

Some interviewees (e.g. in the UK) were concerned that the EU would use culture as a simplistic public relations tool for the Union, using the very limited Commission budgets for education and culture in the process.

#### A n e w m e c h a n i s m f o r E u r o p e a n c o - o p e r a t i o n ?

In recent years, there has been evidence of changes in the policies and operations of some of the institutes that promote their nation's culture and languages internationally – not large seismic changes it should be underlined – but shifts that are discernible nonetheless. So, while their principal objectives remain the promotion of cultural and intellectual exchange and language, there has been greater willingness among a number of the national institutes to collaborate rather than compete with each other where common ground can be found. This co-operation has been most evident on issues such as cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue, immigrant communities, young people and other projects that have a European dimension.<sup>8</sup> Collaboration also extends to the sharing of premises. The motivation for such modest, but nonetheless symbolically significant, co-operation has been both force of circumstances with reductions in budgets, but also, in some instances, a wish to demonstrate their 'European credentials'.

At the same time, there is also evidence of multinational co-operation that is driven less by an interest in promoting Europe than in assisting the cultural operators of the host country. An illustration of this is the collaboration between the British Council, Goethe Institut and Alliance Francaise in the Thailand New Media Art Festival, which assisted local artists in an area where there is little support from the Thai Government. Another interesting illustration of cultural co-operation in international relations is that between the British Council and the Ministries of Culture and of Foreign Affairs in France, who signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2004 agreeing to co-operate on building cultural capacity in Third countries.

In 1997, seven national cultural institutes with offices in Brussels established CICEB (Consociato Institutorium Culturalium Europaeorum inter Belgas), a network for co-operation on issues of shared interest, involving collaboration on joint projects and tenders for European Commission funds. By 2006 this had grown to 12 members.

On the initiative of some of the larger cultural institutes, such as the British Council and Goethe Institut, a more extensive mechanism for co-operation between the national institutes was conceived in 2005. This new network, known as the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) was being formally established during the course of this study. Its mission is to create effective partnerships between the cultural institutes with the objective of improving and promoting cultural diversity and understanding within European societies and strengthening international dialogue and cultural co-operation beyond Europe (see Annex 7 for more details).

At the time of writing, EUNIC has a membership of 19 institutes or agencies based in EU Member States and engaged in international activities. It has ambitions to have representation from all EU States, including those countries without a cultural institute, In May 2006, the heads

of many of the founding members met in Prague to agree the constitutional, organisational and administrative arrangements for the new network.

EUNIC was conceived as a reaction to the rejection of the proposed EU Convention on the Future of Europe by voters in France and the Netherlands, and the lack of support for a common EU foreign policy by the UK and some other Member States. It was considered that at least the national cultural institutes could advance European cultural co-operation through partnerships including, for example, mobilising national networks of European cultural institutions.

The intention of EUNIC is to provide a forum to discuss issues of common interest. It will seek to share best practice and disseminate information through a dedicated website, and an e-zine. It will work on delivering joint projects, whether initiated and financed by EUNIC members themselves or on behalf of the European Commission (i.e. it will tender for EU contracts). The benefit of transnational collaboration will be demonstrated, for example, by support for initiatives of the EUNIC Member State holding the EU Presidency. Staff exchanges between EUNIC members will be encouraged. A key dimension will be advocacy on behalf of the EU national cultural institutes to the European Commission and systematic engagement as a consulting partner to the Commission: CICEB in Brussels, is to become EUNIC Brussels and have the task of liaising with the Commission and disseminating information to EUNIC members on new EU policies and strategies related to culture.

There is no question that EUNIC has the potential to be an important player, both in the European arena and in countries beyond. It appears supportive of the strengthening of the EU's cultural role, providing the European Commission works with Member States and existing cultural co-operation instruments and does not seek to lead on its own initiatives.

A s u c c e s s f u l e x t e r n a l p o l i c y  
r e q u i r e s a s t r o n g i n t e r n a l o n e

Finally, in relation to the attitudinal environment for a cultural dimension to EU external policies, the French and Portuguese reports explicitly, and the Danish response implicitly make the valid point that for the EU to develop an effective cultural policy externally, it needs to have more coherent cultural actions internally. This view is also expressed in the first study. So, for the successful mobility of European based artists beyond the EU a precondition is extensive mobility within the 25 States, 27 States from January 2007 on. Similarly, networks cannot be strengthened to engage beyond the EU if their work is not consolidated within the Union. As the French reply memorably expresses it: "a Europe of the outside has no meaning and no foundation without (a) Europe of the inside".

## Towards a framework for EU action on culture in its external policies

A s o l i d m e s s a g e t o c o n v e y

" ... g l o b a l i s a t i o n a f f e c t s m o r e t h a n  
j u s t t r a d e d g o o d s a n d s e r v i c e s . I t  
a l s o a f f e c t s o u r s e n s e o f w h o w e  
a r e . Q u e s t i o n s o f i d e n t i t y u n d e r l i e  
m a n y o f t h e c o n t e m p o r a r y i s s u e s  
a f f e c t i n g t h e l e g i t i m a c y o f t h e E U .  
T h e E u r o p e a n U n i o n p r o v i d e s a n e w  
f r a m e w o r k i n w h i c h t o u p h o l d n a t i o n  
s t a t e s a n d n a t i o n a l i d e n t i t i e s w h i l e  
a t t h e s a m e t i m e s y m b o l i s i n g a n d

e n c o m p a s s i n g   c o m m o n   E u r o p e a n  
i d e a s   a n d   v a l u e s . . .   S o   i n   t h e  
m o n t h s   a n d   y e a r s   a h e a d   t h e   E U   m u s t  
c o n f i d e n t l y   a s s e r t   i t s   o w n   i d e n t i t y  
a s   n e i t h e r   a   n a t i o n   s t a t e   n o r   a  
s u p e r - s t a t e   b u t   a   d i s t i n c t i v e  
i n s t i t u t i o n   t h a t   a d d s   v a l u e   t o   t h e  
l i v e s   o f   i t s   c i t i z e n s " <sup>9</sup>

This observation in Europe in a Global Age, made by Douglas Alexander, then Minister for Europe at the UK's Foreign & Commonwealth Office at the time of its publication in 2005, encapsulates an increasingly held view in Europe today that the EU has a good story to tell and needs to assert it more forcefully. Culture could be an integral dimension of that story. Its gratifying that there is increased recognition politically of the potential of culture to advance EU external policies in intercultural dialogue, the creative industries, cultural diversity and identity. Notwithstanding this increasing recognition of its value, currently the cultural dimension is only implemented via limited and closed EU programmes, or ad hoc actions that are often of questionable impact. A number of major countries are keen to engage in cultural co-operation with the EU, but the European Commission does not have the instruments to respond.

Despite the legitimisation granted by the Maastricht/Amsterdam Treaty for EU action on culture to complement the actions of Member States, culture remains a sensitive area and has yet to find a significant place on the political agenda at European level. However, without some common efforts at cultural underpinning inside Europe, it is difficult to see how the positive messages of the 'European Project' can be disseminated convincingly outside. And surely our cultural aspirations for EU Europe and its place in the world go beyond the financing of a modest programme for cultural co-operation – Culture 2000 and its successor – or soft loans for Europe's audiovisual sector? The fact is the EU is unloved, and its role in the Member States is widely misunderstood. But misconceptions are not confined to Europe. In the global arena, the role and achievements of the Union in a continent previously so often at war with itself are also frequently not understood or appreciated. The EU needs to elaborate some core messages that will not only explain what it is, why it does what it does, in the way that it does it, but also what values this unique collection of States represents.

#### K e y   r e s e a r c h   f i n d i n g s

So, what does this study reveal? The first thing to emphasise is that in the six countries surveyed there was no outright antagonism towards the idea of the EU having a cultural dimension in its external policies. Neither was their universal enthusiasm. However, there was evidence of genuine interest and, in several instances (e.g. Portugal and France), real support for the idea. True, support was sometimes qualified, but this was only to be expected. Even in what is acknowledged by the Danes themselves to be one of the most sceptical of EU Member States, positions seem to be shifting from negative to more accepting. This was summed up very aptly by the observation in the Danish report that prevailing attitudes to the EU and its cultural role might not be classified as a 'love affair', but "more of a practical attitude" - given that the EU is here to stay, culture must not be overlooked.

Where there was some indifference (whether on the part of public officials or cultural practitioners), it was often because the issue was being considered for the first time. Indeed, it was evident, in a number of instances, that neither the concept nor the consequences had been sufficiently thought through. Another factor which clearly influenced some interviewees' apparent

indifference was the association (especially in the minds of cultural practitioners) of the EU with excessive bureaucracy.

Another important finding that emerged from the study was that, on the whole, few territories were “off limits” to possible EU action. There seems to be room for the EU to have a presence in relations with most of the world, although several of the surveyed countries suggested where priorities might lie, e.g. the Neighbourhood Policy countries of Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean rim and Asia. In this connection, it was striking how most of the surveyed Member States indicated that their geographical priorities for culture were those countries with the fastest growing markets for trade, China and India, as well as the economic powerhouse of Japan. In the case of Latin America, Brazil was cited most frequently as a priority, which in each instance (except most obviously Portugal) was connected, presumably, to its emerging economic potential. For the smaller countries in our survey, whose cultural relations with such nations was more aspirational than firmly established, the idea of an EU presence was regarded as potentially helpful for their own visibility, thus reinforcing the conclusions of the first study. Even the larger EU countries examined did not see EU activity as particularly threatening to their own interests, though France seems to have reservations about EU initiatives in its key target countries. Similar reservations of course may exist in some of the 19 EU States we did not question in this exercise – the example of Spain and its relations with Latin America springs to mind. Perhaps a point to emphasise is that several Member States are already competing with one another in their cultural relations beyond the EU, so providing the European Union has a distinctive and complementary message, there need not be too much anxiety about its wider cultural role.

When it came to content priorities, only the French response indicated sectors (language and broadcasting) that were considered to be “out of bounds” to EU action. The French response was also the only one that indicated in any depth those sectors which the EU could prioritise.

Since the information gathered in the first study, there had been policy or structural developments in all the countries except one. For example, a new agency to deliver international cultural co-operation has emerged in France. The most significant changes though were in the UK and Latvia, where new policies and objectives have been developed. In the case of the UK, they appear to reinforce the message that cultural relations’ actions should accord with Foreign Office priorities. Political changes in Poland and Portugal have also produced some uncertainties. Nevertheless, none of the changes in themselves suggest a greater reluctance of these Member States to entertain the idea of an enhanced cultural role in the EU’s relations with the wider world.

Given the global media and political impact of the ‘cartoons’ episode, perhaps it is surprising that no policy shifts were evident in Denmark. The demonstrations, whether spontaneous or manufactured, against Denmark became, in several instances, antagonism towards the West in general and Europe in particular. The need for a co-ordinated cultural response by the EU to counter and even help prevent similar incidents in the future could hardly seem clearer.

The question of ‘damage limitation’ is not confined to Denmark of course. The sensitive issue of repairing relations with countries or communities outside the EU is a challenge recognised by the foreign and international cultural policies of the UK. Other challenges that were most evident from the surveyed countries were cultural identity in the face of globalisation, insufficient financial resources, reductions in staff levels, a lack of appropriate instruments and the absence of clear policies. Although these factors may have an adverse impact in the effective implementation of international cultural co-operation actions, they need to be addressed nationally. At the same time, some problems, such as the absence of coherent policies or strategies, are not a conducive environment for collective action on culture at European level, as any EU role needs the co-operation and input of Member States.

Conflicting agendas or at least misunderstandings between foreign and cultural ministries were most evident in Latvia and, to some extent, France. On the whole though, such differences were less conspicuous than might have been expected, which suggests there are now more attempts at co-ordination and communication between these government departments than in the past. It is also conceivable of course that tensions remain that have not been articulated.

Finally, it is encouraging that Member States – at least the ones surveyed – appear more open today to cultural co-operation with other EU countries in the delivery of their international objectives. This may simply be driven by the need to share costs, but evidence suggests other factors, such as the potential for greater impact, may also be justifications. This is particularly evident at the level of national cultural institutes, as also indicated by other studies.<sup>10</sup> Of course, cultural actors readily engage with their counterparts in other countries where their artistic ambitions converge and resources allow.

Overall then, this new research ‘on the ground’ has broadly endorsed the findings of the first study and expands it with some insights of its own about attitudes to, and the potential for, a cultural dimension to the EU’s external policies.

#### G u i d i n g   p r i n c i p l e s   f o r   c u l t u r a l a c t i o n   i n   E U   e x t e r n a l   p o l i c i e s

On the presumption that there is sufficient political will to facilitate the elaboration of a cultural dimension in EU external relations, what guiding principles might be appropriate in any framework policy? The following seem especially relevant.

The over-riding principle is that EU action should complement the actions of Member States and not seek to compete with them or duplicate their efforts. There has to be mutual benefit both to the EU and to the cultural, foreign, or trade interests of Member States.

The logical consequence of this, and our second principle, is that EU action should provide ‘added value’. This is somewhat of a slippery term and needs further examination, but for the purposes of this report ‘added value’ is considered to be actions that can most appropriately be carried out at European level, i.e. when there is a European or EU message that needs to be presented. Such initiatives should represent the collective action or involvement of several Member States and their cultural actors.

Thirdly, actions while seeking to present the unity of purpose of the EU must also reflect and embrace its rich cultural diversity. A single European hegemony in culture should be avoided.

Similarly, it is important to reflect the totality of EU Member States and, thus, policy should treat all countries equally, even if, for practical reasons, the contribution of larger states to cultural action at European level is likely to be greater. There should be no hierarchies related to population size, culture or language.

The fifth principle is that actions should be targeted with a light touch. It is important to avoid the creation of new structures and heavy bureaucracy to implement cultural actions in external policies. Wherever possible, existing institutions and organisations should be employed.

At the same time, it is crucial to recognise the current limitations in the expertise of EU delegations, and so another important principle is the need for capacity building so that European Commission delegations have sufficient skills to co-operate with other public or private sector players, and to call on professional advice when appropriate.

Of course, this will have inevitable consequences for the human resources of the EU and a crucial principle in the development of any policy is that it is underpinned with adequate funds. Frankly, there is no point implementing a policy, that will be completely dependent on financial inputs of Member States’ national cultural institutes or embassies.

The next principle is that the EU should see its role primarily as a facilitator or initiator, calling on the cultural expertise of governments and, especially, the cultural sector itself. It should not regard itself as an organiser of cultural action.

The ninth principle is the need for quality control. This extends from the cultural input that could be presented under the EU banner, to the evaluation mechanisms that should be built into EU actions so that their impact can be measured.

Tenth, in actions to encourage culture in development it should be accepted that the primary objective is to work with local people to explore their own cultures and develop markets for their cultural goods, rather than for EU Member States to promote their culture.

The penultimate principle is that it is essential for any extension of the EU's cultural role in its external relations to be framed in a coherent and integrated policy, to avoid the shortcomings evident in the current ad hoc actions.

The twelfth and final governing principle is the necessity for Member States or their representative agencies and Europe's cultural sector to be engaged in a consultation process to enable the EU to devise the most appropriate policy and strategy for its relations, - be they cultural, foreign, trade or promotional - with the wider world.

#### A p r e l i m i n a r y l o o k a t a f u t u r e a c t i o n a g e n d a

What actions might be foreseen if the EU is to develop a policy? This will depend, of course, on what purposes cultural actions are intended to serve, as well as more detailed research. Nevertheless, we can signpost some areas that deserve examination.

The research to date suggests at least six areas where collective and co-ordinated cultural action by the EU, Member States and the cultural sector could have beneficial impacts on the global presence of the EU.

Building sustainable cultural co-operation with countries beyond the EU  
The need for sustainability in projects that seek to build or cement cultural relations was underlined on numerous occasions during this research. The cultural sector, through trial and error, understands that partnerships evolve; they don't happen overnight. Unfortunately, one-off project funding, inadequate resources, a lack of appropriate skills and short-term political expediency can adversely impact on such partnerships at an early stage, when they are most vulnerable. The EU is its Member States, but smaller nations often find it difficult to maintain an external profile in the inevitable competition with dominant larger states. They need more visibility. Moreover, opportunities are not always taken by the EU to develop cultural co-operation with Third countries because of a lack of instruments. These issues might be addressed by:

- | Objective  | Action  |
|--|---|
| • Capacity building  | > Support for training for cultural sector, especially newer Member States  |
| • Balancing needs of small EU states ones                          | > Introduction of an adjustment fund with larger to assist and support the participation in EU initiatives of smaller nations |
| • Responding to countries eager to engage in cultural co-operation | > Introduction of new instruments to facilitate engagement  |

with the EU

#### Strengthening understanding between peoples through intercultural dialogue

Europe's security appears threatened from without and within, but the nature of this threat is new and calls for imaginative responses. The EU can be a force for good in the world, but relations with Third countries are not always harmonious. Trade or economic relations with other countries do not, on their own, build confidence and understanding between peoples. 'Soft' power, as Joseph Nye and others have pointed out, can be an effective instrument in dispelling ignorance and restoring trust<sup>11</sup>. The importance of intercultural dialogue is recognised by the EU in as much as 2008 has been designated Year of Intercultural Dialogue, but while this may be symbolically important it is questionable whether that a single year focus will have a lasting impact. Intercultural measures need to be supported more systematically as a dimension of the external relations of the EU and its Member States. One measure that might be considered is:

- | Objective  | Action |
|--|--------|
| • Build trust in the EU's relations with the rest of the world | >      |

#### Disseminating information and promoting EU visibility

Commissioner Wallström has acknowledged that the EU faces many problems internally in legitimising its governance in the eyes of its citizens and is focussing more on communicating with them<sup>12</sup>. However, it is not only internal images of the EU that need to be addressed. The EU remains profoundly misunderstood beyond its borders as others have noted<sup>13</sup>. The need seems obvious for the EU to turn its attention to developing effective communication strategies to address its image – not for superficial public relations purposes, but to convey clearer impressions of what lies at the heart of the 'European Project'. If, as many believe, the EU is more than a major trading bloc; if it represents a certain value system, then serious attempts should be made to demystify the Institution. At the same time, it needs to recognise this value system as multi-layered and avoid the temptation to reduce its great diversity to a set of basic principles that are allegedly common to us all as Europeans. Culture has an integral role in this process. The EU could:

- | Objective  | Action   |
|--|--|
| • Convey information about the EU system and its Members           | >  |
| • Promote the democratic and other values that underpin EU nations |  |
| • Promote the EU as a contemporary and dynamic cultural community  | > Showcasing the artistic and creative talent of Member States |

- Capacity building > Build capacity of EU delegations through appropriate cultural training.

#### Promoting trade in Europe's cultural industries

There has been acknowledgement by the EU and Member States that the cultural and creative industries represent an important sector for employment growth and knowledge development and thus contribute to the Lisbon agenda. This recognition of the value of the sector is also evident from the EU support for the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. In the production chain, EU support could come 'upstream' in the capacities and methods of production and 'downstream' in promotion and sale. Trade is one of the pillars of the EU's existence and the cultural dimension of this needs to be reflected in an external relations' agenda. One area that might be considered for EU action is:

- | Objective  | Action |
|--|--------|
| • Promoting international trade in the cultural industries of EU Member States | >      |

#### Promoting Europe's expertise in heritage

The cultural heritage is a key component of the multiple identities that shape Europe. Intra-European co-operation has helped promote awareness of the vast heritage - built and moveable - of our continent. Specialists in European countries have developed particular skills in the protection, conservation, restoration and development of this heritage. Some Member States are active in promoting this expertise world-wide, but not all. There is a need for this expertise internationally, especially in developing countries and this is an area where the EU could be more active. Drawing on such technical assistance collectively might build intercultural dialogue and help demonstrate to other nations that Europe's interest in their heritage is not confined to its museum collections!

- | Objective                            | Action  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| • European expertise in the heritage | > Develop assistance programmes to provide European expertise to countries that cannot sustain their heritage unaided |

#### Embedding culture in development

The preparation of a Draft Strategy on Culture in the European Development Policy was interesting in indicating how culture and development can be addressed as a transversal issue involving co-operation between a number of Commission Directorates. This area is also one which can sometimes lead to confusion if Member States forget that the emphasis must be on supporting the culture of the developing country concerned, not that of the Member State. Culture here is both an instrument and an end product. It is likely to be some time before culture can be 'mainstreamed' into development policy as the paper suggests it should be, but areas for action (or continuation of existing actions through frameworks such as the ACP programme) might include.

- | Objective   | Action |
|---|--------|
| • Build capacity  | >      |
| • Support cultural industries in the developing country | >      |
| • Promote cultural diversity                            | >      |
- P o s s i b l e i n s t r u m e n t s t o i m p l e m e n t  
E U a c t i o n s

If we accept that the EU's role in external cultural actions should be primarily that of a facilitator rather than a direct organiser, what instruments might it call on to help it implement cultural initiatives? This will be dependent, of course, on the nature of the activity – for example intercultural and trade initiatives may require different skills. Nevertheless, the following organisations and areas (listed in random order) are potentially key players.

The fledgling EUNIC, with a mandate to stimulate co-operation between national cultural institutes on projects and the promotion and strengthening of intra and extra European dialogue, seems an obvious candidate. Commission officials have been in discussions with directors of the national cultural institutes (as well as civil servants responsible for international cultural co-operation in ministries of foreign affairs) for some time on how to take collaboration forward. EUNIC and Commission staff representatives met in Berlin in June 2006 and agreed to put 'bones on the flesh' of their relationship. Commission staff from DG Education & Culture appear enthusiastic about the emergence of the EUNIC platform and see a promising future in their relationship.

Europe's cultural networks are also instruments that could help deliver EU external cultural objectives. They have extensive experience in bringing actors from the cultural sector together and several of them are already active beyond EU borders, e.g. the Informal European Theatre Meeting in Asia. They also have the advantage of having the possibility of circumventing any difficulties that might be encountered at national level in foreign relations with particular countries.

A third instrument that could be employed by the Commission to assist the delivery of EU objectives are foundations. A number of these are very active at European level (including the European Cultural Foundation itself of course) and support co-operation with Neighbourhood Policy and Mediterranean Rim countries. Such expertise will be invaluable. Some are members of NEF (the Network of European Foundations for innovation) which might provide a co-ordinating mechanism for joint initiatives.

In the field of development, there are a raft of European agencies already working internationally, such as SIDA. Similarly, there are specialist trade bodies. Then, of course, there is the cultural sector itself and the many organisations engaged internationally, and the government ministries with responsibilities for external development, trade, culture and foreign affairs. Partnerships such as these will be key to the effective delivery of EU external policies with a cultural component.

#### T h e n e e d f o r f u r t h e r r e s e a r c h

What this study has endeavoured to do is verify the findings of the literature survey and analysis, and establish whether the environment at national level is sufficiently fertile for the EU to develop

more of a cultural dimension to its external policies. The need for further detailed research was foreseen at the outset, for it would have been pointless to have commissioned such a study in advance of being reasonably confident that there are no significant obstacles likely to prevent EU action.

Of course those of us in the cultural sector may be convinced that a cultural dimension should be integral to the EU's external relations, but we need to know more concretely how culture can make a difference to the EU achieving its goals internationally, and what added value it can bring to the EU's agenda. Culture's potential contribution to the EU's security, trade, global relations and development interests need investigation. We need to know what the potential consequences – social, political and economic – are likely to be of the development of cultural components in EU external policies and how such components can be elaborated. Further examination needs to be given to the role of culture in presenting images (positive where possible, but also truthful) of the EU family of States; and in developing relations that are built on trust. It is necessary to establish the most effective ways of achieving coherence in EU action and greater co-operation with Member States. These and other areas for investigation suggest the need to identify good practice where it exists, whether at European or national levels, and examine how they might be developed. These and several other areas revealed in this study deserve more extensive consideration. So, if there is to be a Phase Two of this enquiry it should build on the evidence provided in these first two studies.

The initiative "A Soul for Europe" reminds us of the importance of applying culture as a strategic factor in Europe's development. Culture, it notes, "is becoming increasingly more important as a means of bringing Europeans together while determining to an even greater degree the ability of the EU to act in its dealings with neighbouring states and the rest of the world".<sup>14</sup> Of course, it may still take time before national pride yields to a more pragmatic approach to culture on the part of Member States. There may be need for prudence and patience. Nevertheless, at this stage, the signs are more encouraging than some of us might have expected for the EU to develop a framework for the strategic deployment of culture in its external policies. Indeed as the Portugal report puts it: "...the greatest concern is that it might not happen".

#### Notes

- 1 DCMS Draft International Strategy 2006, London
- 2 Arts Council England, 2005, International Policy, London;
- 3 Arts Council England, 2006, Internationalism: from policy to delivery, London
- 4 The 'ring of friends' was the term used by Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission.
- 5 European Commission Communication COM (2005) 489.
- 6 ASEM comprises the 25 EU states, the 10 ASEAN nations plus China, Japan and Korea. At the ASEM VI Summit held in Helsinki in September 2006, Member States agreed to admit five more countries – Bulgaria, Romania, India, Pakistan and Mongolia, plus the ASEAN Secretariat.
- 7 Cultural Partnership Mapping exercises were conducted in Europe (by Rod Fisher) and Asia (by Consuelo V. Zapata) in 2005, that revealed a significant information imbalance between the two regions. Since then a co-ordinated audit of Asian cultural resources has been conducted as part of the content development strategy of the proposed Culture 360 web portal. The Informal European Theatre Meeting and Visiting Arts have been among the European advisers.
- 8 Draft Strategy on Culture in the European Development Policy, unpublished working paper 2006.
- 9 More information on this can be found in Fisher, Rod (2005) *La Co-operazione Culturale in un' Europa in transizione* (Cultural Co-operation in a Europe in Transition), Bologna, 'Economia della Cultura', Vol. 15, No. 1 /2005, Il Mulino. A section on cultural co-operation in Europe involving national cultural institutes also written by Rod Fisher can be found in EFAH/Interarts (2003), *Study on Cultural Co-operation in Europe for the European Commission*, [http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources\\_info/pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources_info/pdf)
- 10 Europe in a Global Age, Foreign Policy Centre, London 2005
- 11 See Fisher, Rod (2005), *La Co-operazione Culturale in un' Europa in transizione*, and EFAH/Interarts (2003), *op cit*.
- 12 See for example Nye, Joseph (2004), *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, The Perseus Press.

- 12 Wallström, M (2005), Slow progress on Communication Strategy due to Commission's internal problems. Interview see <http://www.euroactive.com/Article?tcaturi=tcu:29-137597-16&type=Interview>.
- 13 See for example de Gouveia, Ph.F & Plumridge, H. (2005), European Infopolitik: Developing EU Public Strategy, London, Foreign Policy Centre.
- 14 'A Soul of Europe' (Europa eine Seele geben). See website: [www.berlinerkonferenz.net](http://www.berlinerkonferenz.net).