

SUMMARY (CONCLUSIONS)

The goal of this survey has been to collect and examine documents on the external cooperation policies of the European Union and its Member States with third countries in the field of culture. This has been done in order to assess the degree to which EU Member States support the strengthening of the cultural components of the EU's external relations and foreign policy.

The review of hundreds of policy documents, reports, statements on official websites, and other studies has indicated that **there is an openness expressed by EU Member States to cooperate in external cultural policy, especially where the EU might support and complement initiatives of the Member States.** Support is clearly visible in policy statements of all EU countries and in the fact that they all signed the Maastricht Treaty and subsequent amendments (Amsterdam Treaty). This now declares that the EU Member States will "foster cultural cooperation between Member States with third countries and competent international organisations".¹

The research also identified evidence of existing cooperation between Member States with third countries in key policy areas. **Many initiatives clearly demonstrate support for intercultural and multicultural cooperation; for example, the broad participation of Member States in inter-regional cooperation activities.**² Furthermore, in many cases, there is an openness to build upon these existing inter-governmental activities within the framework of EU policy.

The research revealed that the **geographical priorities of Member States in external cultural policy are mirrored in the geographical priorities of the EU's current external programmes which have a cultural component.** For example, it is clear that fellow EU Member States and neighbouring countries are of highest priority to the EU Member States and this is in keeping with the EU's actual policy for developing neighbourhood relations. By supporting or introducing more cultural components in this area, the EU would probably be supported by the Member States.

Geographical similarities in policy between Member States extend beyond support for the EU's immediate Eastern and Southern neighbours. Both old and new EU Member States strive to maintain a balance in their relations with Russia and the United States. In contrast, the EU has no explicit cultural relations beyond certain educational programmes.

Some larger, formerly colonial powers (e.g. France and the UK) for various reasons maintain close relations with their former areas of interest in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle and the Far East. These relations correlate directly with the EU APC programmes and the ASEAN initiative of

¹ European Union (1999), **Selected instruments taken from the treaties**, E-Doc Link: http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/treaties/dat/treaties_en.pdf Europe

Book 1, Volume, 1 Page 219 gives the full extract of Article 151 relating to the cultural provisions of the EU.

² See Analysis of country profiles (Part 3) and Annex II

the EU and its members. Some smaller EU Member States also have local interests in these geographical regions, e.g. the Netherlands in Indonesia, Surinam and South Africa, and Portugal in some of its former colonies. Many other EU nations, large and small, see opportunities for cooperation in Far Eastern countries such as China and India, in addition to the already strong relations enjoyed with Japan (based significantly on trade opportunities). While the reasons for cooperation may vary, the similarity between EU Member States' interests stands out, providing an opening for multilateral initiatives.

Some EU Member States have very particular geographical interests which are barely reflected in current EU programmes, such as Spain's interest in Latin America and Latvia's interest in its émigré communities in various third countries.

Certainly, this study did not identify any major conflicts of interest which could infringe or prevent future coordinated actions.

THREE KEY OBJECTIVES

Three key objectives of coordinated external cultural policy emerged in this study:

Security

The European Union would undoubtedly be supported in coordinating cultural external policy with the aim of promoting intercultural dialogue and diminishing prejudice and intolerance which might otherwise provoke conflict. The EU could be projected as a force able to help develop mutual understanding and resolve conflicts.

New trends can be seen in the external policies of all EU Member States, which suggest a two-way approach to international cultural policy – based on acceptance and positive attitudes to the multicultural nature of European societies and the artistic/economic enrichment that immigrants can bring.

Visibility

The EU would undoubtedly be supported in building cultural components of external policy that would project a strong, unified image of countries working together in an ambience of respect and cultural diversity. The EU would be seen as a positive and forward-thinking entity within the global community.

Economic development

The EU would undoubtedly be supported in developing cultural components of foreign policy in order to promote cultural and economic exchanges. The EU could aim to develop wider markets for Europe's vast cultural heritage and cultural industries and also support logistical cooperation which would benefit all EU Member States.

One of the strongest arguments for a more enhanced coordinating and stimulating EU action is based on the discrepancy between widely shared

interests and intentions and the means to implement them, given the capacities of larger and smaller EU Member States.

Many agree that a major challenge for the EU lies in balancing these interests and capacities in order to share a European vision abroad and, at the same time, to strengthen internal European cohesion. According to the survey of Member States' policies and the less official statements behind those, many "EU supporters" seem to shy away from the consequences of coordinated policy through fear of budgetary impositions and the criticism which developing additional "bureaucratic structures" can attract.

RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

A subsequent phase of research is therefore proposed, one which will look into selected practice and conduct a "reality check". The results found here need to be tested against evidence of real programmes, budget commitments and so on. The aim would be to determine the extent to which the policies identified in this report are followed through in reality; where current national debates on the subject are leading to and what level of cooperation actually already exists. Interviews with Ministers and key players in each country would assist a clearer analysis of whether the policy statements made by Member States are true and backed up by affirmative programmes. It would also be useful to gauge the success of cooperative multilateral cultural actions in comparison with bilateral cultural actions.

Further research is also needed into the role that arm's length institutions, non-governmental organisations and even private sector organisations play in multilateral cooperation. While governments are the primary authority in deciding whether or not to develop coordinated European policies, evidence of possible avenues of cooperation which the EU could forge might make future coordinated external cultural policy (e.g. the concept of creating 'partnerships' with other stakeholders) more attractive.

Above all, the research would explore "lean" (i.e. not requiring great investment) possibilities of achieving synergies, coordination and incentives for joint action.