cS Brief #4

culture
Solutions

The power of culture in societal change: including cultural professionals

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With an overall decrease in public funding for cultural activities, EU institutions are increasingly forced to justify the value of international cultural relations. This Brief is a toolbox for policy-makers who need to argue for the intrinsic value of cultural experience. It looks at the existing rights-based EU policy framework already acknowledging culture's contribution to well-being, democracy and positive mutual perceptions.

The unique value of culture people's well-being

Cultural work enables individual behaviour change

Cultural action (and practice) helps people to "discover new forms of social development, which prioritise interdependence over independence, participation over exclusion, and creativity over consumption"[1]. Intercultural relations as well as creative and artistic relations thereby are at the centre of global debates and cultural agents play a vital role to reinvent diverse expressions of human action toward "deep listening, humility, patience, and hospitality" and "attitudes of curiosity, creativity and care"[2]. In this promotion of alternative societal models, performing arts as live experience and experiment bear strong potential to build empathetic relations.

Culture fostering societies' resilience

Various EU policy documents on a strategic approach to international cultural relations have acknowledged the intrinsic value of culture to set the ground for resilient societies facing "rapidly changing scenarios"[3] : social and economic inequalities, climate change, violent radicalisation, fake news, the integration of newly arrived migrants, the digital technological revolution, the protection of cultural heritage in situations of natural or man-made disasters, conflict settlements challenges, to name but a few.

The EU Global Strategy (2016), Council Conclusions (2017 and 2019), the New Agenda for Culture (2018), and the "European Framework of Action on Cultural Heritage" (2018) all in their own perspective substantiate this approach in their call to seize the opportunity that culture represents to help bridge the divide of growing social inequalities and challenge populism[4].

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1. Arroyo K. (ed.), Mobile Minds: Culture, Knowledge and Change, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, March 2019, pp. 20-21
2. Arroyo K. et al., Artists, Displacement and Belonging, Surry Hills, Australia, February 2019, p.2.
3. European Council, "Draft Council Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach to International Cultural Relations", 7935/17, 5 April 2017, 5 pages, p.3, https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7749-2019-INIT/en/pdf
4. European Commission, "A New European Agenda for Culture", COM(2018) 267 final, Brussels, 22 May 2018, 11 pages, p. 1, https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/commission_communication_-_a_new_european_agenda_for_culture_2018.pdf

The Joint Communication on EU international cultural relations (2016) invites the EU to "help partner countries incorporate culture in national policies", underlining the centrality of respect for diversity and freedom of expression for their democratisation processes and socio-economic development[5].

The 2018 DG NEAR publication "Building Bridges Through Culture", identifying culture "as a generator of new ideas and imagination" presents it as a priority resource for EU's cooperation in the Southern Neighbourhood[6]. In their Manifesto "Culture4future", DEVCO (and the cultural professionals who took part in the Brussels June 2019 colloquium) regard culture as a powerful tool, helping people to "familiarise with new, unexpected and challenging ideas"[7].

Various EU policy documents have already acknowledged the intrinsic value of culture

The Council (i.e. EU Member States) encourages cultural professionals to contribute their share in resilience-building when stating that "culture is an essential part of EU's international relations"[8]. International cultural engagement relies on the participation of cultural professionals in a "bottom-up perspective" "while respecting the independence of the cultural sector".

For the Council, international cultural relations also have an internal impact inside the EU "thereby empowering citizens to broaden their cultural appreciation, stimulate their creativity and encourage mutual learning"[9].

Cultural action and democracy promotion

Cultural action contributes to democracy in various ways. First, individual and collective cultural experience is a recognised right : the EU has endorsed the cultural rights-based approach defined in the 2007 Fribourg Declaration[10] and the 2009 UN human rights Council Resolution[11]. This policy framework refers to the fundamental right of individual experience in three main areas helping to shape "reflective" and engaged individuals[12]: I) identity and heritage - participation in cultural life-, II) creativity and III) expression.

Second, the implementation of cultural rights broadens individuals' desire to access knowledge and to personal reinterpretation hence increasing their participation to the public space (a central factor in democratic practice[13]. See our Focus below on culture as a long-term investment).

Third, by linking internal and external cultural policies, the EU promotes inclusive participation to cultural life to foster "individual empowerment, democratic consciousness and social cohesion through exchanges with other people and civic engagement" on the local, national, European and global levels. A culturally sensitive strategic and transversal approach to external action therefore encourages citizens' participation in tackling common global challenges[14] which in return contributes to the implemen-

5. European Commission & High Representative, "Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations", JOIN(2016) 29 final, Brussels, 8 June 2016, 16 pages, p. 6, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN
6. European Commission, "EU Engagement in the Southern Neighbourhood, Building Bridges Through Culture", DG NEAR, Brussels, 2018, p. 4.
7. European Commission, Culture For Future Manifesto, European Commission, Directorate General, DEVCO, Culture4Future Website, August 2019, https://culture4future.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/CoC-ManifestoEN-20190821.pdf
8. European Council, "Draft Council Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach to International Cultural Relations", op. cit.
9. Ibid.
10. Fribourg Declaration, Cultural Rights, 2007, 12 pages, http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/instree/Fribourg%20Declaration.pdf.
11. UN Human Rights Council, Resolution 10/23, Independent expert on cultural rights, 26 March 2009. Report of the independent expert in the field of cultural rights, Ms. Farida Shaheed, submitted pursuant to resolution 10/23 of the Human Rights Council, 22 March 2010.
12. Crossick G., Kaszynska P., Understanding the value of arts and culture, Cultural Value Project, Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2016, https://ahrc.ukri.org/documents/publications/cultural-value-project-final-report/.
13. Meyer-Bisch P., "Pour une vraie démocratie culturelle" (Revue Projet n° 372, La culture, c'est pas du luxe!), November 2019, pp. 67-75.
14. Council of the EU, "Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022" 2018/C460/10, Brussels, 21 December 2018, op. cit.

The EU still has a long way to go to become "loved" (if not ignored) by the world and by European citizens themselves

tation of cultural rights: by (re)connecting distinct and scattered political and social movements addressing common challenges (e.g. ecological transition, inclusive education, social entrepreneurship, freedom of expression, digital divides) international cultural relations allow them to build more coherent and potentially more influential coalitions[15].

Culture enables positive mutual perceptions beyond a technocratic EU

As a technocratic giant usually associated with regulatory standards in trade, finance, agriculture and other technically complex policies, the EU still has a long way to go to become "loved" (if not ignored) by the world and by European citizens themselves[16]. The proclamation of the EU as a cultural superpower by former High Representative Federica Mogherini was probably wishful thinking and it was criticised as such, yet it had the advantage of flagging out the cultural deficit in the EU's external image.

Cultural action, when it helps people to discover, interact and understand other worldviews and ways of life, contributes to mutual understanding and therefore to potentially more positive mutual perceptions.

When culture is seen as artistic and creative expressions, "empathy, imagination and beauty are mobilised" through external cultural action in a joint reflection on the future of society. Culture and the arts have the value to positively influence perceptions of the EU, internally and among external audiences, by reconciling "the creation of wealth with sustainability and transcend[ing] purely economic or utilitarian constraints" as noted by KEA on the next Creative Europe Programme[17].

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Culture: a long-term investment for the European Parliament

More than an idealistic move, supporting the positive power of emotions in culture and the arts to draw attention on global and domestic challenges is a long-term investment. It is a serious alternative to remobilise European publics on the four freedoms of the European common space in times of crisis of the EU integration project[18].

While awarding the 2019 LUX film Prize, European Parliament President Sassoli highlighted that this prize allowed MEPs to escape from the technicalities of their daily activities by addressing emotions: "We must seize the opportunity to examine issues such as immigration, the right to healthcare, feminism and political ethics through the films showcased by the LUX Prize"[19]. For MEP Julie Ward, integrating the cultural perspective within the Parliament's new mandate is imperative: "We know it can help resolve and prevent conflict, bring people together for dialogue and create the space where we meet the 'other' and challenge xenophobia, racism and other negative traits."[20].

15. Meyer-Bisch P., "Pour une vraie démocratie culturelle" (Revue Projet n° 372, La culture, c'est pas du luxe!), November 2019, pp. 67-75.
16. Delors J., "Speech at the European Parliament", Strasbourg, 17 January 1989.
17. Kern P., Le Gall A., Pletosu T., "Research for CULT Committee - Creative Europe: Towards the Next Programme Generation", KEA, Brussels, June 2018, p. 8.
18. Interview with a high-level Polish cultural diplomat, Warsaw, 27 November 2019.. European Cultural Foundation, Democracy Needs Imagination, campaign on the 2019 European elections. https://www.culturalfoundation.eu/democracy-action-grants-european-elections
19. News European Parliament, "God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya" wins the Parliament's 2019 Lux Film Prize", 27 November 2019, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20191121IPR67112/god-exists-her-name-is-petrunya-wins-the-parliament-s-2019-lux-film-prize
20. Interview with Julie Ward, Member of the European Parliament (ALDE), Brussels, 29 November 2019.

EU international cultural relations: time to include cultural professionals

Implementation beyond "usual suspects"

The Joint Communication and 2017 European Council Conclusions have encouraged a bottom-up approach in EU international cultural relations, acknowledging that local citizens and cultural professionals largely hold relevant expertise to address local and global challenges. So far, the results are mixed. Gottfried Wagner considers that cultural actors are under represented in EU external relations in comparison with their crucial and strategic role in negotiating the future of the world and serving peoples' well-being[21]. Participants to the first 2019 culture Solutions workshop addressing ways to bridge the gap between cultural practitioners and EU international cultural relations expressed a similar feeling of participation deficit at all levels[22]. They stressed the need to open new participation channels other than national traditional EU stop shops that sometimes play more of a filtering role than a supportive one.

The EU politically stated objective of inclusive participation in cultural relations seems particularly well applied to cultural heritage with the choice of an "integrated and participatory approach" and the set-up of "the Cultural Heritage Forum" for consultation with local stakeholders[23]. Cultural heritage, thanks to the organisation of the 2018 European Year for Cultural Heritage, is most probably the cultural sub-sector in which inclusive and bottom-up participation in international cultural relations has been the most developed.

However, the same cannot be said as for other sub-sectors on which more detailed research should be carried out. For instance Anita Debaere, Director at the Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (PEARLE*), has not perceived any significant direct impact of the new EU international cultural relations policy framework on the performing arts sector that would share any similarities with the experience of the cultural heritage sector[24].

In the EEAS, a clear priority has been given to EUNIC as the partner of choice. Since EUNIC is primarily the network of Member States' cultural agencies (that have a varying degree of autonomy from government), its members' practice is usually more the result of administrative and hierarchical decisions in partnership with the cultural organisations they fund than of systematic bottom-up and inclusive participatory policy-making processes.

In the first three years of the Cultural Diplomacy Platform, the design of the projects was largely kept in the hands of EU institutions and the Goethe Institute with little room for bottom-up strategy-making processes involving cultural networks. Yet a few attempts (such as conferences with participatory workshops and collaboration initiatives, Global Cultural Leaders training) have been made to involve networks more deeply. In 2019, new consortiums were formed to reply to the FPI call for tenders aimed at renewing the Cultural Diplomacy Platform after 3 years of existence. This time, the Goethe Institute partnered with IETM, one of the major and most influential performing arts European cultural networks. The consortium won the Cultural Relations Platform contract (the Cultural Diplomacy Platform was renamed on this occasion to reflect the focus on relations rather than on diplomacy), and one could expect the development

21. Interview with Gottfried Wagner, Freelance Cultural Consultant for public and civil cultural organisations, via telephone, 12 November 2019.
22. culture Solutions Workshop at the European Lab, Lyon, 30 May 2019, https://www.culturesolutions.eu/events/bottom-up_workshop_lyon/
23. European Commission, "European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage", SWD(2018) 491 final, Brussels, 5 December 2018, p. 1, https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/library/documents/staff-working-document-european-agenda-culture-2018.pdf
24. Interview with Anita Debaere, Director of the Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (PEARLE*), Interview via Skype, 14 November 2019.

of new working methods in the field of international cultural relations, due to the participation of IETM.

While the Creative Europe programme strives to fund bottom-up heritage projects, its mid-term evaluation also established that future success would, to a large extent, be based on its capacity to connect culturally diverse contents with audiences[25]. To apply this condition, the programme will have to find ways to facilitate or transform application procedures so as to contract larger sets of cultural operators.

So far, the complexity of the EU financial and administrative machine and its high-level eligibility criteria have prevented smaller scale local actors from accessing EU's support. From the civil society perspective, Relja Bobić observes (co-financing) capacity issues for small organisations to apply while "many organisations that are not directly involved in the ecosystem and do not do much groundwork, are very often having access to large grants and project funding opportunities"[26]. Although there is awareness among DGs of this situation, Cristina Farinha speaks of their difficulty to identify the right partners for certain projects "because they really need the trust and guarantee for the services that only the well established ones can actually grant"[27]. Such situation has led a number of civil society organisations and private companies to call EU institutions for more "transparency, fairness and solidarity" in the allocation of funds for EU inter-

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national cultural relations[28]. The 2018 European Dancehouse Network reviewing Creative Europe invited the Commission to "introduce a special strand for smaller organisations and a two-stage application process" in order to "valu[e] research, experimentation, innovation and risk-taking"[29]. Favouring them for sub-granting would involve a wider spectrum of cultural organisations as well as broader audiences among remote areas and marginalised groups.

Opening up the EU external cultural policy-making kitchen

For EU international cultural relations to succeed and become legitimate in the eyes of the cultural sector, it will be essential to ensure increased transparency and inclusiveness in policy design and programming, the selection of implementing partners and implementation monitoring. To be more credible, Brussels headquarters and Member States agencies will have to cooperate more openly and engage more collaboratively with cultural professionals, while respecting their independence[30].

The Council has acknowledged the need for a specific attention to female artists and cultural professionals who "are under-represented in leadership and other decision-making positions as well as on the art market"[31]. In her cultural advocacy toward the Parliament, MEP Julie Ward's confirms the importance of getting the women's perspective, rare in this space[32].

25. European Commission, "Mid-term evaluation of the Creative Europe programme (2014-2020)" SWD(2018) 159 final, Brussels, 30 April 2018, p. 8, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2018%3A248%3AFIN
26. Interview with Relja Bobić, Co-founder of the architect and design coworking space Nova Iskra in Belgrade, via Skype, 8 November 2019.
27. Interview with Cristina Farinha, Independent cultural policy expert, via Skype, 25 November 2019.
28. Exchange of emails and interviews with a civil society organisation representative, March 2019.
29. IETM and European Dancehouse Network, "Position paper on the mid-term evaluation of Creative Europe and recommendations regarding its post-2020 successor", Brussels, July 2017, p.6, https://www.ietm.org/sites/default/files/attachements/news/position_paper_eu_final_with_edn.pdf
30. This is in line with the 2017 Council conclusions on EU international cultural relations and the results of the EU preparatory action on culture in external relations. It also echoes the views of several interviewees working for cultural networks (Culture Action Europe, IETM) and met in 2018 and 2019.
31. European Commission, "Draft Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022", op. cit.
32. Interview with Julie Ward, op. cit.

The younger generation has so far been poorly addressed in EU efforts to increase cultural participation according to Lorena Aldana, heritage professional who was involved in the design and implementation of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018[33]. Recent efforts (especially in the Mediterranean region under the leadership of Federica Mogherini but also under the Romanian Presidency) have been made in EU programming to address the Youth and young creatives[34]. Aldana-Ortega views the Cultural Diplomacy Platform's Global Cultural Leadership Programme as a successful initiative training and launching a community of cultural leaders from the EU and from strategic partner countries. She suggests replicating this to put International cultural relations into practice via other existing strands such as the European Solidarity Corps. Digital culture (see culture Solutions Brief #5 2019/2020 on digital challenges and opportunities) is a crucial medium "arousing keen interest among young people and engaging them as active audiences"[35].

> The challenge now lies with implementation and the inclusion of independent cultural professionals in the design of EU international cultural projects

Cultural mobility in times of migratory restrictions

Mobility is a central vehicle for cultural participation, creation and audience development. Yet, it is a challenge constantly mentioned in international cultural gatherings and fora, which shows that it largely remains an unsolved issue that contradict the very logics of cultural rights[36]. Cultural mobility from developing and conflict-prone countries is increasingly under the pressure of EU and Member States' migration policies. Mobility from and to middle-income and industrialised countries is much less of an issue.

EU institutions are working on the pilot phase of a cultural Erasmus Programme, "i-portunus", that provides mobility grants for artists and culture professionals. So far, it has allowed few mobility opportunities (350 to 500 in 2019) with more than half concentrated in five to eight countries due to a capacity gap among Creative Europe countries[37]. The first evaluations recommend a new operational and more decentralised framework with a selection process imposing quota per region. The beneficiaries scheme should also be more encompassing granting support for all creative and cultural sub-sectors and allowing self-initiated forms of mobility[38]. Such forms of mobility exist as pointed out by MEP Julie Ward, like "Musicians without Borders" who promote singing and music for peacebuilding and social change, and who run a rock festival in divided cities of Northern Kosovo. "I am not even sure if they have EU money, they are just doing it"[39].

An official from the EEAS identifies opportunities in programmes such as Erasmus+ or Horizon 2020 to foster cultural mobility[40]. Attention should also be drawn on helping displaced and/or migrant artists in migration sustain their practice. Agencies responsible for economic and social services should be enticed to work with cultural partners in co-creating integrated solutions together with displaced artists who are at the vanguard of integration narratives[41].

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33. Interview with Lorena Aldana-Ortega, European Policy Coordinator at Europa Nostra, Brussels, 26 November 2019..
34. culture Solutions presentation at the Romanian Presidency conference on European belonging among young people, Brussels, 26 April 2019.
35. European Commission, "Draft Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022", op. cit.
36. Arroyo K. et al., op. cit.
37. On the Move, "Operational study Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries" (Executive Summary), 31 March 2019, p. 7.
38. Ibid., p. 8.
39. Interview with Julie Ward, op. cit.
40. Interview with an EEAS Advisor, Brussels, 12 November 2019.
41. Arroyo K. et al., op. cit.

Conclusion

Culture is not only a tool for socio-economic development. It has its own intrinsic value: it triggers emotion through aesthetical impact, it feeds a virtuous democratic participation circle, it strengthens individual and societal resilience and enhances positive mutual perceptions.

EU official policy documents on EU international cultural relations have already partly acknowledged culture's added value and 'value for money'. Now that a policy framework is in place, the challenge lies with implementation and the direct inclusion of independent cultural professionals and artists in EU international cultural relations programmes and projects. Various evaluation toolkits and methodologies "captur[ing] the audience's feelings and reflections" have been developed to measure this impact of exposure and participation to arts and culture[42]. More work on impact measurement methods is necessary to produce evidence on the intrinsic value of EU external cultural action[43].

This will contribute to the improvement of EU-Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks in international cultural relations. (see culture Solutions Brief #9 2019/2020 with a box on M&E).

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42. Carnwath J.D., Brown A.S., Understanding the value and impacts of cultural experience – A literature review, Arts Council England/The Hive, 2014. http://gesculcyl.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Understanding.pdf
43. The UK has created the Policy and Evidence Centre on creative industries. https://pec.ac.uk/

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