



# CS Brief #7



## EU Delegations and international cultural relations

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The European Union is a party to the 2005 UNESCO Convention and therefore the 139 EU Delegations have a mandate in this realm. The 2016 Joint Communication on EU international cultural relations explicitly acknowledges this legal obligation and is an expression of it<sup>1</sup>. EU Delegations therefore combine international cultural relations priorities and approach (independence of cultural professionals, culture for socio-economic development, cultural and creative industries, cultural heritage, intercultural dialogue) with country-specific thematic priorities (youth, employment, etc.).

### EU Delegations' cultural mandate

EU Delegations are expected to put their expertise in project management to implement the Joint Communication and deliver on its objectives, identifying opportunities and tailoring it to the reality of the local cultural contexts.

#### Identify opportunities

As representatives of the EU and its citizens globally, EU Delegations staff are serving EU's strategic objectives in cultural relations through communication and visibility. In this regard, they have their share in the perceived success of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage<sup>2</sup>. More than half of them are involved in the organisation of film festivals, which are major exponents of EU cultural diplomacy. While some EEAS officials believe that EU Film Festivals represent more than cultural diplomacy tools as they involve local populations in a two way intercultural dialogue, a KEA report still ranks them as showcasing European culture<sup>3</sup>. The latter notes that these initia-

tives are organised on a tight budget, "giving a wrong image on the quality of EU's creative industries"<sup>4</sup>. Other reports indicate the strong potential of digitalisation in this field (see our CS Brief #5 2019/2020 on culture and digital change). According to another EEAS Advisor working on developing countries, the superficial showcasing practice of film festivals can also be explained by the fact that extremely limited means are earmarked for public diplomacy. As a consequence diplomacy does not come up as a priority. He suggests to merge DEVCO funds used for EU visibility with the EEAS public diplomacy envelope so as to allow EUD to design more strategic and significant communication projects<sup>5</sup>.

In countries where cultural rights are threatened, EUD are expected to advocate for the ratification and implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention and to empower cultural actors to challenge the status quo. It was EUD West Bank and Gaza Strip's objective to foster social cohesion and diversity in supporting a street arts festival. It initially met reluctance from de facto Gaza authorities and radical religious leaders<sup>6</sup>.

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1. European Commission & High Representative, "Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations", JOIN(2016) 29 final, Brussels, 8 June 2016, 16 pages.

2. Observations made at internal EC training seminar on culture, October 2019.

3. Interview with an EEAS official, Brussels, 4 December 2019.

4. Kern P., Le Gall A., Pletosu T., "Creative Europe: Towards the Next Programme Generation", Brussels, KEA, June 2018, p. 57.

5. Interview with an EEAS Advisor, Brussels, 12 November 2019.

6. Example presented in Brussels at an internal European Commission training seminar, October 2019.

## Support local cultural sectors

In EUD's mandate to develop the conditions allowing the cultural sector to contribute to socioeconomic development, culture is regarded both as a mean and an end in itself<sup>7</sup>. EUD's leverage rests on the equation: (infra)structure–human capital development–creation of a conducive environment. In the case of Burundi or Central African Republic for instance, their set of actions target cultural operators' increased contribution to the formal cultural economy through professionalisation. EUD technical assistance supports the diffusion of diverse local cultural goods and services by increasing their market access. In EU "Southern Neighbourhood", according to some officials, strengthening the governance of the sector by guaranteeing a conducive legal and administrative environment and fostering peer-to-peer activities with governmental institutions has proved overambitious<sup>8</sup>. Another priority for EU Delegations in this region is to identify "local, European or other organisations that are able to manage sub-granting, cascade granting, re-granting so as to reach cultural end-users on the ground", especially remoted or marginalised populations<sup>9</sup>.

For some of its implementers, lessons learned from the European Year of Cultural Heritage show that "what works best is capacity building of the sector and civil society<sup>10</sup>. Cultural cooperation indeed takes place and has impact locally ("auf Augenhöhe") and EU Delegations are potentially direct interfaces with local stakeholders, provided they have enough human capacity to engage in cultural action. Their mandate

**EU Delegations abroad still need to absorb and take ownership of the general strategy and guidelines on how to implement their cultural mandate**

encompasses the safeguard and promotion of diverse cultural expressions and their legacy. Effective cultural programmes require upstream mappings & context analyses encompassing the diversity and complexity of the local cultural sector and its local, regional and global environment as well as transnational cultural phenomena such as artists displacements, climate change and other types of disasters. This phase is best designed when it is run in close consultation with the main partners and beneficiaries but it is not always the case (or easy) in practice. A Polish ambassador, for instance regrets that the EU

is preparing the strategies towards the Eastern Europe countries "without consulting much the stakeholders"<sup>11</sup>.

## EUDs and the diplomacy of cultural relations

EUD cultural focal points are specifically entitled to foster a shared understanding of the JC's vision among EU staff, to mainstream EU international cultural relations in all possible frameworks along the hierarchical chain (from Head of Delegation down to devoted programme implementation managers) and to "include these aspects in job descriptions and staff trainings"<sup>12</sup>. EUD focal points, according to joint EU-EUNIC guidelines are expected to be involved in extensive communication and information gathering among EU partners (staff in headquarter, diplomatic or consular representations of EU Member States) on cultural activities and opportunities<sup>13</sup>.

"A good EU diplomat should be able to engage simultaneously with the EU member states and

7. European Commission, "Termes de références : Programme Culture Burundi", Ares(2019)2053466, 24 March 2019, p.5.

8. Interview with a DG NEAR Task Manager, via telephone, 11 December 2019.

9. European Commission-DG DEVCO, "Top 20 questions for culture work in EU Delegations", DEVCO Seminar on culture, Brussels, 2018-2019, 1 page.

10. Interview with Lorena Aldana-Ortega, European Policy Coordinator at Europa Nostra, Brussels, 26 November 2019.

11. Interview with a high-level Polish cultural diplomat, Warsaw, 27 November 2019. In Tunisia, the Tfanen programme started thorough mapping and studies with local experts only very gradually.

12. European Commission, Joint Guidelines: EUNIC - EEAS - EC Partnership, Brussels, June 2019 (first edition), 20 pages, p.13.

13. Ibid., p.6.

the host government to build sustainable relationships”<sup>14</sup>. Cultural cooperation is not a given in many countries marked by high centralisation of cultural policies. In those contexts EUDs could play a central intermediary role to ensure local government’s buy-in of EU cultural programmes. The latter, by supporting endogenous solutions to jointly identified sector’s challenges may contribute to a climate of trust for current and future consultations with partner countries officials<sup>15</sup>.

EU Delegations also have to play an intermediary and advocacy role with EU institutions in Brussels. The five-year major cultural heritage programme in Algeria initially struggled to receive the European Parliament’s buy-in and its implementation suffered from a high degree of decision-making centralisation. However, as Algiers-based EU Delegation staff explained, the EU Delegation’s long-standing cooperation with the Ministry of Education and the technical assistance to the Ministry of Culture were successful in mobilising students and in the production of a catalogue on heritage.

## Cultural leadership in EU Delegations

Although a clear and ambitious policy framework (Council conclusions, 2016 Joint Communication, New Agenda for culture, new cultural heritage policy, guidelines to EU Delegations etc. See our cS Briefs #1 & #2 2019/2020 on the policy ecosystem of EU international cultural relations) is in place, there is still a long way to go develop cultural leadership among EU Delegations staff worldwide.

## Headquarters-EUDs: a policy still to explain and implement

EUDs are EU’s “service active abroad” tied to the EEAS, Relex and thematic Commission DGs<sup>16</sup> and have, as most important partners for cooperation on cultural relations, DEVCO and NEAR<sup>17</sup>. Collaboration around cultural projects with these DGs has started and there is ample room for more coherent programming. An EEAS official recalls that when he was in position abroad, his proposals to put culture on the EUD agenda for conflict prevention were consistently rejected by Brussels HQs<sup>18</sup>. The Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture, the EU Global Strategy and other policy documents produced in Brussels now provide a policy-base for EU Delegations to launch and implement activities linking more consciously culture with peace-building and development<sup>19</sup>. The same official however notes that with the change in political terms, HQs’ follow up on international cultural relations is not secured among the HQs: “in the preliminary phase of the MFF, culture is not coming up strongly.”

Overall, EUDs still need to absorb and take ownership of the general strategy and guidelines on how to implement their cultural mandate. The positive side of the story is that there is a strong and clear precedent for EUDs to build on (in addition to the many past EU cultural programmes), with their involvement in the implementation of the international dimension of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, including a mid-term follow-up action plan.

14. Canali S., “European Union diplomats: an emerging epistemic community?”, CEPOB # 8.19, Bruges, December 2019, p.4.

15. Interarts, “Programme Culture Burundi, États des lieux du secteur et formulation d’une proposition d’action: Rapport final (projet)”, FED/2019/405-892, Juin 2019, p. 36. “Le travail de recherche, approfondi, a été accompagné par un travail de terrain de fonds servant à compenser l’absence de données agrégées et mises à jour sur le secteur au niveau national et des organisations faitières des filières culturelles et créatives. Cela (...) a également permis d’établir un dialogue constructif avec les opérateurs culturels burundais de la société civile et des instances publiques, et de resituer la culture au centre des débats entre ces opérateurs, la DUE et les États membres de l’Union européenne présents au Burundi ainsi que d’autres États qui y poursuivent des programmes de coopération culturelle.”

16. Helly D., Herrero A., Knoll A., Galeazzi G., Sherriff A., “A closer look into EU’s external action frontline: Framing the challenges ahead for EU Delegations”, Briefing Note 62, ECDPM, Maastricht, March 2014, 16 pages. <https://ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/BN-62-EU-External-Action-Challenges-EU-Delegations-2014.pdf>

17. European Commission, Joint Guidelines: EUNIC - EEAS - EC Partnership, Brussels, June 2019 (first edition), 20 pages, page 16.

18. Interview with an EEAS Advisor, Brussels, 12 November 2019.

19. European Council, “Draft Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022”, 13948/18 CULT 137, Brussels, 15 November 2018.

## EUDs-Member States: towards mutual recognition

According to the treaties, the EU has a supportive role in cultural policies which remain Member States' competence. EU's cultural competence is "complementary". In practice though, and with the quiet blessing of Member States that suffer from cultural budgets cuts, the EU has already taken the lead in the implementation of full-fledged cultural programmes with partner countries and organisations. The question is therefore less a competence matter than a need for optimal division of labour and subsidiarity in partner countries between Member States representations (or agencies) and EU Delegations. Such optimisation that could and should be reached by the systematic extension of country and regional joint programming and implementation to the cultural sector.

Even when Member States do not have an explicit strategy for international cultural cooperation, they intervene through many other mechanisms (development agencies supporting creative industries, financial support to SMEs, democratic dialogue, education) in which synergies and complementarity with EUD projects are crucial. However, as EUNIC points in its 2016 Neighbourhood meeting report, since "EUDs' involvement in this field is not clearly defined", it adds confusion about respective roles and responsibilities. Interviewees from national institutions confirm that improving the communication between EU Delegations and Member States is a priority<sup>20</sup>.

Research shows that EU Delegations have a "capacity to listen and empathise and to build relationships of trust – both inside the EU and with non-EU partners"<sup>21</sup>. In other words, EU Delegations have a strong potential to assist and lead in the implementation of EU international cultural relations. In an EU diplomacy marked by increasing complexity, EUD diplomats and EUD senior

staff indeed hold "a 'layered' knowledge in EU procedures as well as in EU partners" and an "authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge". However, "some scholars and policy-makers alike still seem to believe that EU diplomats are mere coordinators of Member States' positions" thereby denying the existence of an EUD expertise community. For the field of EU international cultural relations is relatively new, EU Delegations are still building up their thematic expertise in this area. Maximised synergies between EU Delegations and Member States (including EUNIC) are thus likely to emerge from mutual exchange, joint learning and shared experience in the management of cultural programmes.

## Mutual learning and sharing with EUNIC

The 2016 Joint Communication highlights "the many benefits of close cooperation for the EU delegations, cultural institutes and EUNIC clusters" and the subsequent "Joint Guidelines" aim to provide a framework for this cooperation<sup>22</sup>. Where clusters exist, EUNIC and EUDs are to embrace a joint approach on EU-funded projects with signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) referring to the Joint Communication "as a policy framework guiding the joint work"<sup>23</sup>. Professionalisation of the partnership is fostered by the appointment of permanent coordinators within EUNIC clusters and EUD cultural focal points, both convening regular meetings for information and knowledge sharing "vital to the success of the partnership"<sup>24</sup>.

Despite the "Joint Guidelines" effort to clarify the distribution of tasks in international cultural relations, the role of EUNIC clusters' as regular implementing partners of EUD still have to become a reality. There might be appetite for collaboration but working cultures are still very different: EUNIC staff is usually very unaware and inexperienced in the management of large

20. Interview with a high-level Polish cultural diplomat, Warsaw, 27 November 2019.

21. Canali S., "European Union diplomats: an emerging epistemic community?", CEPOB # 8.19, Bruges, December 2019, quoting Haas, P. "Knowledge, Power and International Policy Coordination", International Organisation, vol. 46, no. 1, 1992, pp. 1-35.

22. European Commission, Joint Guidelines: EUNIC - EEAS - EC Partnership, Brussels, June 2019 (first edition), 20 pages, p.13.

23. Ibid, p. 8.

24. Ibid.



EU funds. The vision on projects may diverge substantively and “there is still room for improvement of both parties’ understanding of cultural relations”<sup>25</sup>. Some officials in the French MFA even see a competition between EUNIC and EU Delegations<sup>26</sup>. Some EU Delegations find it difficult to activate the partnership with EUNIC while other (usual) partnerships seem easier to launch. For them, it still looks more convenient and relevant to partner with other international implementing agencies (UNESCO, UNIDO) or large Member States pillar-assessed cooperation agencies that are not EUNIC members (such as GIZ, Expertise France). Aware of this reality, EUNIC is going through an internal learning and capacity-building process. (See our cS Brief #8 2019/2020 on EUNIC).

### Human resources gap

EUD have been required to appoint a cultural focal point “receiving training on the cultural dimension of development and external relations”<sup>27</sup>. These focal points have been tasked to ensure “broad internal ownership” of international cultural relations by making the case for culture among EU Delegations teams. EU-EUNIC guidelines suggest focal points to develop training on international cultural relations within EU Delegations and to refer to their economic and trade rationales<sup>28</sup>.

However, these objectives suffer from a human capacity gap: cultural portfolios were awarded to already overwhelmed EUD staff. A significant number of EUD cultural focal points are usually officers from the Press and Information Section which tends to restrict their action to showcasing and does not encourage peer-to-peer dialogue, as

noted by EU headquarters<sup>29</sup>. Faced with limited funds and limited legitimacy and power (they usually are young and low-grade staff), they also struggle to upgrade culture in the Delegation’s agenda, confessing a sense of apology when asking for budget for cultural projects yet addressing topics such as gender equality and social inclusion<sup>30</sup>.

Other EUD staff appointed as cultural focal points may occupy more influential positions. In industrialised countries, some of them are deputy heads of delegation and/or heads of the political section, reflecting a tendency to prioritise cultural and public diplomacy over cultural relations. This set-up yet bears more potential for culture mainstreaming in EUD activities than the ownership of cultural cooperation by press and information sections. The optimal scenario would probably to have two cultural focal points in each EUD: one located in the political section to ensure strategic guidance and direct access to the Head of the Delegation, and another in the cooperation section or at least a section having direct access to EU cooperation funds. Such combination would help communication with HQs when it comes to include cultural areas in programming and in various EU calls for proposal. It would also help cultural focal points to be more legitimate and not viewed only as Public Relations officers dealing with culture as a hobby.

**EU Delegations need two cultural focal points: one in the political section to ensure strategic guidance and another with direct access to EU cooperation funds**

25. Ibid.

26. Interview with an official in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs-Culture, Education, Research and Networks Directorate, via telephone, 4 October 2019.

27. European Commission, “A New European Agenda for Culture”, COM(2018) 267 final, Brussels, 22 May 2018, p. 14.

28. European Commission, Joint Guidelines: EUNIC - EEAS - EC Partnership, Brussels, June 2019 (first edition), 20 pages, p.7.

29. Interview with an EEAS officer, Brussels, 13 June 2018.

30. Remarks made by several cultural focal points participating in an EU annual training seminar on culture, Brussels, 2018 and 2019.

## EU Delegations & culture: where to start?

### Mainstreaming culture in international cooperation

There are many ways to foster cultural relations in EU's international cooperation and it does not always require to label programmes as cultural ones. Cultural and artistic approaches to change (might it be social, economic or political and taking place on an individual, group or societal level) can be developed and used in all kinds of international cooperation programmes: from technological innovation to climate change, from agricultural transformation to gender, hu-

man rights and civil society engagement. A DG NEAR Task manager even recommends the existing "Guidelines for EU support to civil society in enlargement countries" as a potential source of inspiration for the cultural sector<sup>31</sup>.

In other words, the existing EU cultural policy frameworks encourage EU Delegations to invest in the support of cultural expressions (arts as much as world views and creative industries) as potential vehicles for behavioural and value transformation in all sectors. Mainstreaming culture in external action writ large and designing EU-funded specific cultural programmes are not mutually exclusive actions, although some still make the opposite assumption<sup>32</sup>.

### FOCUS

## Stepping up cultural joint programming

Both Member States and the EU are now legitimately and actually involved in EU international cultural relations despite legalistic arguments about Member States' competences in the field of culture. The reality is that most Member States will increasingly need EU funds to continue their international cultural cooperation. Member States need EUD to exert more leadership in the coordination and the steering of country and regional cultural strategies. This can only be achieved if EUD cultural focal points are senior EUD staff members having both political and financial management responsibilities.

The best way to ensure coherence and efficiency in European (both EU and Member States) cultural programming abroad is to invest more systematically in joint programming, a priority already stated by Council Conclusions on Joint Programming and the EU Global Strategy<sup>33</sup>. This requires i) to extend locally managed EU joint programming agendas to culture and ii) that EUNIC is involved in local joint programming meetings coordinated and steered by EUD

31. Interview with a DG NEAR Task Manager for Cultural and Civil Society, op. cit.

32. Cultural Diplomacy Platform, International Cultural Relations in practice: Workshop, 23 March 2018. "Arm's length vs. centralised" <https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/2018/04/09/workshop-international-cultural-relations-in-practice/>

33. European Council, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe - A Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy", Brussels, June 2016, 57 pages. Council of the EU, "Council Conclusions on stepping-up Joint Programming", DEVGEN 89-ACP 67-RELEX 378, Brussels, 12 May 2016.

## Strengthen EUD's involvement in regional cultural actions

"There is an utmost need to continue to sensitise people for cultural issues, especially through regional programmes"<sup>34</sup>. This call from an EEAS officer, in line with the view of some DEVCO high officials is echoed by the Council and the New Agenda for Culture which identify regional strategies as a model for cultural cooperation in the future. Together with the definition of a Regional Culture Strategy for the Western Balkans, the recent EU-UNESCO-Cuba joint initiative Transcultura represents an emblematic move towards regional cultural programming<sup>35</sup>. It foresees further professionalisation of the cultural heritage and CCI sectors and new opportunities for cultural cooperation within the Caribbean and between the region and the EU.

Regional cultural projects facilitate EUD's work by streamlining the procurement process, easing access to regional envelopes and, as revealed by the multi-country MED Culture Programme, allowing to bypass the sometimes difficult agreement of the national government<sup>36</sup>. The "EU-EU-NIC Joint Guidelines" strive to institutionalise the regional approach by convening joint EUD-EU-NIC clusters working sessions during EUNIC regional seminars<sup>37</sup> (see also cS Brief #8 2019/2020 on EUNIC). Since 2016 EUNIC has already organised 11 such regional seminars<sup>38</sup>. Regional activities such as EU Film Festivals, roadshows similar to the EU Magic Tour in Ivory Coast<sup>39</sup> or initiatives connecting the European Capitals of Culture may use EU regional funds to create opportunities on the regional level. Other measures could include: adding an item on joint cultural regional strategies in the Heads of Delegations/

Heads of Cooperation annual meetings agenda and increase funds dedicated to cultural programmes in Regional Indicative Programmes.

Indeed, EUD cultural projects are characterised by a very high return on investment potential. In that regard, those who have launched the Western Balkans Cultural Heritage Route consider that it has left a deep mark in the region, giving visibility Member States and being continued with spin-off activities.

However, regional approaches are not a one-size-fits all recipe: In the Southern Neighbourhood for instance, gradually more funds are committed to bilateral rather than regional envelopes. The multi-country MED Culture Programme was cut by half<sup>40</sup>. In principle and in practice, there is no reason to oppose the objective of developing regional strategies to the principle of independence of cultural organisations. The key to reconcile both is to ensure that EU regional strategies are the result of genuine consultative and participatory policy-making processes in which cultural professionals are fully included and listened to.

## Exploring new financial resources and contracting partners

Before 2016, most of EU Delegations projects were financed under the Press & Communication budgets and the 'global allocation' budget line for external action, which represent only small amounts<sup>41</sup>. Another way for EU Delegations to find internal funds for culture is to use the Technical Cooperation Facility, like in Senegal<sup>42</sup>. In other cases, culture focal points have also used existing framework contracts and service contracts to finance cultural activities. EU Dele-

34. Interview with an EEAS Advisor, 12 November 2019.

35. "UNESCO, EU, UNESCO and Cuba join hands for new major culture initiative Transcultura", 1st October 2019, retrieved 19 December 2019, <https://en.unesco.org/news/eu-unesco-and-cuba-join-hands-new-major-culture-initiative-transcultura>

36. Interview with a DG NEAR Task Manager for Cultural and Civil Society, via telephone, 11 December 2019.

37. European Commission, "Joint Guidelines: EUNIC - EEAS - EC Partnership", Brussels, June 2019 (first edition), 20 pages.

38. Chronologically: Belgrade, Tunis Rabat, Addis Ababa, Prague, Cairo, Skopje, Bogotá, Accra, Sarajevo, Bangkok. EUNIC, Cluster List, EUNIC Global, <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/clusters> (Regional seminars).

39. [https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/70831/lue-magic-tour-une-tourn%C3%A9e-dun-mois-%C3%A0-travers-la-c%C3%B4te-divoire-pour-parler-des-valeurs-que-lue\\_be](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/70831/lue-magic-tour-une-tourn%C3%A9e-dun-mois-%C3%A0-travers-la-c%C3%B4te-divoire-pour-parler-des-valeurs-que-lue_be)

40. Interview with a DG NEAR Task Manager for Cultural and Civil Society.

41. In 2014, 83% of EUD film festivals were funded through the global allocation. See KEA, BFI, "EU Film Festivals at EU Delegations", 2015, p. 119, [https://www.europacreativamedia.cat/rcs\\_auth/convocatories/SMART20150095G6StudyFilmFestivals.pdf](https://www.europacreativamedia.cat/rcs_auth/convocatories/SMART20150095G6StudyFilmFestivals.pdf)

42. Example shared by a participant at the DEVCO annual seminar on culture, October 2019.

gations can also make the case for the partner country's access to certain Creative Europe MEDIA Programmes so as to maximise their international dimension.

Against this background and experience, until there are no dedicated lines for cultural action per se, cultural focal points would be well advised to "check if there are opportunities to find funds in EUD remaining budgets to kick-start small cultural initiatives"<sup>43</sup>.

That being said, EUD staff develop most of the above-mentioned funding tactics to navigate financing frameworks that have not dedicated specific budget lines for culture. Overall, EUD staff is asking for more financial flexibility. Under the next MFF, external action instruments will be packaged under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) labelled by EC officials as a very promising tool to increase the budget for cultural programmes. (See our cS Brief #3 2019/2020 on financing EU international cultural relations). Officials are aware of internal capacity gaps in EUDs to access such programmes and they say some training activities on that matter are under preparation<sup>44</sup>.

EUDs often struggle to find the right intermediaries between the EU funding level and the local one. Contracting International Organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP via Pillar Assessed Grants or Delegation Agreements (PA-GoDA) implies indirect management and the risk of losing ownership of the action.

### Innovative financing and partnerships with private operators

Innovative financing encompasses private-public-partnerships, blending, loans, start-ups financing, crowd-funding and technology-based financing methods. Specialised Trust-Funds are also sometimes considered as innovative financing modalities that can be managed at the EU Delegation level.

EUDs have also started to make use of innovative funding for cultural projects: the Bekou Trust Fund has financed the EUD Central African Republic FabLab incubating 13 cultural entrepreneurs.

Creatifi is a recent innovating funding initiative aiming at gathering multi-donor development banks around the financing of culture and creative industries programmes.

Private operators are important potential partners to finance CCIs projects and improve market access in partner countries. Since January 2019, an EEAS arrangement allows EUD to receive sponsoring in nature from private funds and foundations<sup>45</sup>. This option is not so clear among them and KEA invites EU HQs to "develop tools and guidelines for EU Delegations to team up with European companies"<sup>46</sup>.

### Towards a community of practice on EU international cultural relations

EU Delegations need specialised staff in cultural matters to implement the EU international cultural relations policy framework. Results and impact will depend on the strengthening of human resources in the cultural field. Observers note uneven levels of skills and experience with generally no expertise in the cultural field at the Delegations level<sup>47</sup>.

EU HQs moved from theoretical training seminars to more practice-oriented training methods addressing the needs of both EUD staff and (Deputy) Heads of Delegation<sup>48</sup>. Since 2017, Culture Focal Points from developing countries meet for a multiday seminar in Brussels aimed at enhancing their knowledge and practice of

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43. European Commission-DG DEVCO, "Top 20 questions for culture work in EU Delegations", Brussels, Shared at the DEVCO annual seminar on culture, October 2018 and 2019.

44. European Commission-DG DEVCO, Statements made during the 2019 DEVCO annual seminar on culture, Brussels, October 2019.

45. Interview with an EEAS officer, 13 June 2018.

46. KEA, op. cit, p. 83.

47. Interview with Cristina Farinha, Independent cultural policy expert, via Skype, 25 November 2019.

48. Interview with EEAS staff, 13 June 2018.



policy frameworks, financial instruments, and future programming trends. These seminars also grant them opportunity to interact with HQs staff members. These seminars have disclosed the need to foster a community of practice composed of engaged EU institutions' staff and external experts. The community's objective would be to enhance EU staff skills through a continuous learning and sharing cycle. Such community would still need to be nurtured by (more) frequent full-fledged tailored training sessions at regional level and within individual EU Delegations themselves. An external community management structure providing permanent services to EU institutions and EU Delegations could be set up to this end. It would ensure continuous know-how circulation as well as institutional memory in the field of EU international cultural relations.

It is also fundamental to promote knowledge sharing about cultural cooperation among EUD by promoting peer-to-peer support and exchanges of information and best practices on projects. According to an EEAS official, "there is a need for a more digestive knowledge sharing in terms of good practices [than the Capacity-4Dev, the European Commission's knowledge sharing platform for development cooperation since 2009 containing thousands of projects] so each Delegation does not have to reinvent the wheel"<sup>49</sup>. EUD staff taking part in training seminars so far have expressed their interest in sharing lessons learned and best practices. However they are aware they have very spare time and capacity to engage voluntarily in such mechanism. The newly created CultureXchange Platform open to all stakeholders contributing to EU cultural action might feed the new platform from the CSO side if cultural professionals see its added value. Its real usage by EUD staff will have to be monitored and evaluated in the future.

## Conclusion

EU Delegations have a clear mandate to implement the new EU policy framework for international cultural relations. They need more human resources (internally and externally) to deliver on this new strategic agenda.

To understand more clearly their new mandate and engage substantively in joint cultural programming for the next multiannual financial framework, they need more training, coaching and tailored mentorship.

They will also need support to ensure effective and impactful delivery of new and innovative cultural programmes.

To deliver effectively, each EU Delegation should appoint two focal points: one with a strategic and overarching mandate able to connect culture with other thematic priorities (political dialogue, climate change, digitalisation, development, public diplomacy) and another located in an operational section with direct access to cooperation funding.

EU Delegations and Brussels headquarters would be well advised to support the development of an independent multi-layered and multi-stakeholder community of practice in the field of EU international cultural relations. Such mechanism would ensure EU staff skills enhancement as well as institutional memory, to compensate staff regular turn-over.

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49. Interview with an EEAS Advisor, Brussels, 12 November 2019.



# Com- po- sing Trust



culture Solutions Europe (cS) is an independent and non-for-profit social innovation group serving all those involved in EU international cultural relations.

We contribute independently to the excellence of EU international cultural relations with the opening of creative trust-building spaces, the production of commons and the brokerage of know-how.

We follow a specific **Theory of Change**.

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