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by the European Union

preparatory action

CULTURE *in* EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS



## International Conference: Culture in EU External Relations (BOZAR, Brussels, 7-8 April 2014)

# Report

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### INTRODUCTION

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How can the role of culture in the European Union's external relations be strengthened and improved? What is the potential added value of a strategic approach to culture in EU external relations? How might Europeans and their institutions attain this added value? What should be the role of the Directorate-General of Education and Culture, of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and of other European stakeholders, both public and private, including the cultural institutes of the Member States in such a new approach?

These were some of the many questions debated at the international conference organised in Brussels on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of April, 2014 by the consortium responsible for the Preparatory Action 'Culture in EU External Relations'. This conference was a major building block of the Preparatory Action, a project that emerged in the wake of the adoption of the European Agenda for Culture in 2007, as well as the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the establishment in 2011 of the European External Action Service (EEAS). Growing awareness in both official and civil society circles, together with its own commitment to the strengthening of the role of culture in EU external relations led the European Parliament to decide in 2012 on the launch of the Preparatory Action.

The execution of the Preparatory Action was entrusted by the European Commission to a consortium of independent European cultural organisations. Launched in January 2013, the process consisted of the following stages: i) a mapping of existing resources, approaches and strategies regarding culture in external relations in Member States, in EU Neighbourhood countries and in strategic partner countries;<sup>1</sup> ii) a consultation process involving a wide variety of stakeholders from both the EU and third countries, designed to identify existing policies in this field and activities that

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to EU Member States, the Preparatory Action covered the following partner countries of the EU: the Neighbouring countries of the EU (Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine), and the 10 strategic partners of the EU (Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States of America).

had already taken place, as well as unmet needs, and expectations;<sup>2</sup> iii) a report entitled ‘Towards global cultural citizenship’ prepared on the basis of the mapping and consultation.

The international conference brought together some 400 EU and Member State policymakers, artists, cultural operators, representatives of cultural NGOs and networks, and private stakeholders from European as well as third countries in order to validate, debate and enrich the key findings of the inquiry. Mr. Pavol Demeš, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia and Transatlantic Fellow of the German Marshall Fund Bratislava, acted as master of ceremonies.

In the opening session on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, Ms. Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, Mr. Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service, and Mr. Morten Løkkegaard, Vice-President of the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament, presented their perspectives on the future role of culture in external relations and commented on the results of the Preparatory Action as contained in the draft report. Their statements were followed by the remarks of Mr. Johannes Ebert, Secretary-General of the Goethe-Institut, and a presentation of the results of the Preparatory Action by Prof. Yudhishtir Raj Isar, Professor of Cultural Policy Studies, Scientific Coordinator and Team Leader of the Preparatory Action. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of April, three panel discussions took place, followed by a short closing session.

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<sup>2</sup> Comprehensive country reports for each country where a consultation was carried out are available under: <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/>.

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## SETTING THE STAGE

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Ms. Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, affirmed in her opening statement that ‘Europe’s soft power should consist in taking our own expertise in managing diversity to a global stage.’ She pointed out that Member States acting alone could not have the same impact as they would with a shared front with which to interact with the outside world. The EU, therefore, should develop a strategic approach that included culture in EU public diplomacy on the basis of a multi-layered framework designed to build long-lasting relations with third countries. In this perspective, she noted in particular three ideas in the report: i) the pooling of resources to achieve smart complementarity between the activities of EU representatives and civil society actors in third countries; ii) the establishment and support of European creative hubs in strategic third countries; and iii) the improvement of city-to-city cooperation. She added that the next step will be to position the issue within the broader political agenda and discuss the results and recommendations of the Preparatory Action with the Member States.

Mr. Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service, welcomed the manner in which the draft report underlined the challenges of a globalised world characterised by communication and interaction and in which new actors, notably young people, are increasingly central. He stressed the need for new instruments, modalities and strategies, placing particular emphasis on the need to promote values in a different, more humble way. More listening, more tolerance and more dialogue, he argued, are crucial to the development of a fruitful dialogue between Europe and its partners. A focus point for future interventions, he argued, could be culture in the midst of conflict, where ‘there is room for international action’. In addition, culture could be used as important testimony of what is going on in societies, notably in Eastern Europe, and help to highlight tensions early. The worldwide network of EU delegations and the headquarters of the EEAS, he said, are prepared to improve cultural cooperation in the fields mentioned, meaning that a clear, shared vision of what needs to be achieved in this field is essential.

Mr. Morten Løkkegaard, Member of the European Parliament and Vice-Chair of the Culture and Education Committee, also stressed the importance of a ‘common view’ for Europe and called on Europeans to speak with ‘one voice’. He stressed the draft report’s recommendation to improve communication between all actors engaged in international cultural cooperation, and to make greater use of the possibilities offered by new media. However, he argued, cultural communication should not take place exclusively in the virtual world of the internet; it was also important to strengthen people-to-people contact, for instance by using the experience of the Erasmus Mundus exchange programme. An appropriate response to the demands of many third countries for more help from Europe in the fields of capacity building and professional training could be to set up business schools for cultural industries in third countries. To achieve these aims, he asked for a stronger commitment to culture from the EEAS and EU delegations and closer collaboration in this field with the European Commission.

Following these opening statements, Mr. Johannes Ebert, Secretary General of the Goethe-Institut, introduced the 'Preparatory Action' in the name of the Consortium<sup>3</sup> that was responsible for the implementation of the project. He underlined the need to respect the 'arm's length principle' in this field of action and also strongly supported following the guiding principles outlined in the report: adopting a listening mode vis-à-vis third countries; recognising that reciprocal exchange with experience flows in both directions; undertaking monitoring and evaluation; making clever use of synergies between public and private partners; developing a comprehensive understanding of culture that takes into account its intrinsic value on the one hand and its economic aspects on the other.

Finally, Prof. Yudhishtir Raj Isar, Scientific Coordinator and Team Leader of the Preparatory Action, presented the key findings of the consortium's draft report and its principal recommendations that the conference would debate and, he hoped, validate and enrich. There was clearly a strong and growing interest among third country stakeholders in engaging culturally with Europe and with values such as freedom of expression, democracy and human rights. As other countries and regions become increasingly effective competitors, Europe needs to capitalise on its strengths: its robust cultural policies, its professionalised cultural sector, its tradition of nurturing creativity and creative people and its openness to the rest of the world. A spirit of 'global cultural citizenship', the sub-title of the draft report, should characterise the contribution of European cultural actors to the global civilisation that is now in the making. Isar concluded by presenting six key messages of the draft report:

1. Cultural relations have a huge potential for enhancing European influence and attraction, as well as awareness within Europe itself of other cultures and the possibility to learn from them.
2. There is great demand for more and better European cultural relations with the rest of the world that can also deliver greater prosperity and human development for all.
3. Yet the European Union has no cultural relations strategy. We need a strategy that engages with other countries in new ways structured around listening, sharing, imagining and creating together and that can respond to the cultural interests and practices of young people.
4. EU institutions, national cultural relations agencies and cultural civil society need to work together to build a 'joined up' cultural relations strategy based on reciprocity, mutuality and shared responsibility in a spirit of global cultural citizenship.
5. Such a strategy requires political will and commitment and must be adequately funded; in addition, it should be implemented mainly by cultural professionals.
6. Pilot projects are needed to inform and kick start the strategy and trigger a process of transformative change in Europe's international cultural relations.

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<sup>3</sup> The members of the Consortium are: Goethe-Institut (Consortium Leader), British Council, Centre for Fine Arts Brussels (BOZAR), Danish Cultural Institute, European Cultural Foundation, Institut français, ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), KEA European Affairs and EUNIC (associated partner).

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## PANEL 1: REALITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

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What have the European Union and its Member States achieved so far as regards the use of culture in external relations? What examples of good practice can be cited? What are the needs, concerns and expectations of both EU Member States and partners in third countries regarding a future EU strategy on culture? These were some of the questions addressed by the first panel, entitled ‘Culture in External Relations: realities and expectations’. Ms. Marietje Schaake, Member of the European Parliament and moderator of the panel, expressed her appreciation of the fact that the draft report underlined the dual value of culture: its intrinsic value, as well as the role culture can play as an instrument of soft power. She also recognised that the key points she had identified and made in her own report from 2009 were reflected, deepened and provided with a firm empirical basis by the consortium’s inquiry.<sup>4</sup> She pointed to the need for a focus on visa liberalisation, since access to European Member States is the basic precondition for any cultural exchange and also key to reaching out to young people throughout the world. The next step, she stressed, should be to reach out to all foreign policy circles.

As regards the status quo, the first speaker, Sir Martin Davidson, Chief Executive at the British Council, noted that current events in Ukraine reveals a ‘failure in the cultural relations’ of the EU with third countries. It is an example, he said, that makes clear that it is the right time to re-organise the agenda for cultural policies and intercultural relations. He underlined the importance of an ‘arm’s length model’ for any future strategy, pointing out that governments can play only a limited role in the field of international cultural relations. While governments can provide frameworks, create conditions and invest in cultural activities and initiatives, other actors have to implement cultural relations. Any future strategy, therefore, needs to find a balance between political conditions and frameworks on the one hand, and private, socio-economic activities that are outside the sphere of political influence on the other. He agreed with the guiding principles of the final report, such as ‘mutuality’, ‘long term relations’ and the importance of private socio-economic activities. Nevertheless, in his view the purposes and outcomes of the strategy advocated should be stated much more clearly. He was also of the view that the following three points mentioned in the report are crucial for any future EU strategy: the link between the framework of the European cultural institutes and the EU; the technical expertise required to accomplish goals such as monitoring and evaluation; and, finally, the field of trade and development which, he argued, should be a particular focus of any future strategy. He emphasised that issues such as the discussions concerning a possible trade agreement between the EU and the USA, the ‘cultural exception’ and the regulation of the digital environment should be given high priority.

As an expert on arts and arts management in the Arab World, Sana Tamzini, President of FACT (Cultural Association Forum in Tunisia), pointed out that cultural actors and artists in the Arab world have an ambivalent view of the EU. While they see that there is a strong will within the EU to create win-win situations with partners in the Arab world, they are discouraged by what they see as the excessive bureaucracy involved. According to Tamzini, cultural cooperation between the EU and the Arab world has, until now, been far more the result on the efforts of engaged and committed

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<sup>4</sup> The full report of the inquiry will be available on the Preparatory Action website: <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/mainoutcomes>.

individuals who have helped to overcome obstacles than on significant EU funding. Despite her esteem for the European engagement in the Arab World, she also expressed her disappointment with the fact that cultural institutes of EU Member States have sometimes refused to help Tunisian artists who felt threatened by radical forces within their society. At times, she said, she missed a spirit of sharing (*sens de partage*). ‘You should practice what you preach’, she said, particularly with regard to dialogue and real partnership. As regards future cooperation, she asked for more exchange in both directions between EU Member States/the EU and cultural actors in the Arab World: ‘[w]e have a lot to offer, but we need you to show us how to do this better.’ She fully agreed with the finding of the Preparatory Action that useful EU programmes should focus on training and capacity building.

Mr. Ting Xu, the Director of the Shenzhen Culture Office, China, said that there was a ‘huge potential’ for collaboration between Chinese and European cultural actors. New initiatives, he argued, should build on and strengthen the already existing and very successful city-to-city programmes already developed between China and Europe. Differences between policy models in China and European countries should not be obstacles to such collaboration. He argued, moreover, that the functioning of his own Culture Office is already based on an arm’s length model, because it is free to decide on the contents and modalities of its activities.

In order to avoid reinventing the wheel, any future strategy on culture should be based on already existing documents and basic agreements – was the message of Ms. Nina Obuljen Korzinek from Zagreb’s Institute for Development and International Relations. While there is no lack of ideas and concepts, there is a gap between theory and practice: ‘[w]e already have bilateral relations between the EU and several regions and countries outside the EU, but we have to ask ourselves why we are failing to meet our own expectations.’ To be more successful, she said, existing guidelines and agreements need to be taken far more seriously. Although the 2005 UNESCO Convention is binding for the EU, its full potential has not been explored within existing EU-programmes and frameworks. Much more was envisaged in the treaty to which the EU was a Party, notably as regards preferential treatment and mobility. However, in her view there is an even more important question that has not yet been sufficiently answered: ‘To whom are we going to give the role of turning the wheel?’

In the ensuing discussion, Mr. Charles-Etienne Lagasse, the President of EUNIC, took up the question of future responsibilities in the domain of culture in external relations. He argued that the 90 EUNIC clusters, their local presence worldwide and the professionalism of their members made them an indispensable component of any future strategy. He proposed building on the experience of EUNIC on three levels: first, a EUNIC think tank could flank the activities of the EAAS; secondly, an arm’s length agency could help to translate the strategy into concrete programmes and help to implement them; thirdly, the local clusters throughout the world could work together with each respective EU delegation and local cultural actors and institutions.

However, opposition to such a role for EUNIC was also expressed. Obuljen, for example, stated that ‘[t]he experience of EUNIC can be extremely valuable in certain fields’. However, EUNIC is only ‘one of the partners, and there are many others’. EUNIC is very important and strong in the field of cultural activities and cultural exchange, she said, but more discussion is needed to see if EUNIC is also able to engage in other relevant fields. ‘EUNIC is driven by powerful cultural institutes, but there

are a number of countries that do not have such bodies.’ She also stated that several countries do not have the capacity or tradition to work in fields such as culture and development and culture and conflict. Placing greater emphasis on conflict prevention and less on cultural activity in post-conflict states should be central to any future cultural intervention by the EU. ‘We can’t react, we have to prevent’, she concluded. ‘If we manage to implement our ideas via culture, we might be able to prevent further conflicts.’

One participant asked the EU to develop an inclusive strategy that integrates different competences from outside the field of culture. She argued that at present the EU has to address three main challenges: the EU-US trade agreement and the cognate question of the cultural exception; culture as a dimension of development policies and the regulation of the digital environment. A future EU strategy on culture needed to cooperate with all partners dealing with these issues. Obuljen also stressed that it was crucial to build synergies between all actors dealing directly and indirectly with cultural questions instead of giving the responsibility to only one of the partners.

Ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider asked the panellists to provide examples of cultural events and activities that had helped to drive democratisation processes forward. In her reply, Tamzini mentioned a project in the Medina in Tunis that was carried out together with the city of Graz in Austria and involved artists and experts from Austria and Tunis who were attempting to make the Medina more accessible to the public. The added value of the project, she said, consisted in the fact that it not only integrated local residents, but also counteracted the European ‘folklorisation’ of Tunis. According to Tamzini, ‘changing the image you have of us’ is still extremely important for Tunisians. Regarding future cultural intervention in the region, she pointed out that the EU and its Member States should be aware that since the Arab Spring the cultural situation on the ground had changed completely. Totally new networks are now operating; in order to understand this, it is crucial to be present and work on the ground. She added that future activities should not only address creative hubs in the cities but also neglected rural areas, whose cultural wealth is considerable. Best practice examples in China according to Ting Xu can be found in city-to-city projects. He proposed architectural competitions as an attractive tool to engage young people in particular and as fruitful field for future cooperation between China and the EU. Davidson argued, however, that more consideration needed to be given to the impact of a future strategy not only on other cultures but also on Europe itself: ‘[w]hat is the impact we want to have on our own young people in Europe via external cultural relations?’

Concluding the discussion, Schaake highlighted the importance of an ‘inclusive strategy’ that addresses all foreign cultural circles and the needs of different target groups and regions. But she also pointed out that ‘everything stands and falls with the credibility we have in the world’.

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## PANEL 2: ADDED VALUES

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The second panel, entitled ‘the potential added value of European dimensions and strategic approaches to culture in external relations’, had been designed to deal with the possible advantages of a common strategy. What can we expect from a European strategy in addition to what the EU Member States and their national cultural institutes already provide? How can we create win-win situations for both EU Member States and partners in countries outside the EU? ‘We should talk about the expected output’, said Mr. Gottfried Wagner, ad hoc expert to the Preparatory Action and moderator of the panel, who asked the participants to keep an eye to the future and to debate the positive impact of concerted action on culture.

The presentations in fact covered a wider range of issues. For many countries outside the EU that are used to bilateral cooperation with Member States, it is not easy to imagine cultural cooperation with the EU as a whole entity – a point made by Ms. Pooja Sood, Director and Curator of Khoj International Artists’ Association, New Delhi: ‘[w]ho is the EU, this large entity we are supposed to know about?’ Bilateral relations work very well, she said, citing the excellent results attained through cooperation with the Goethe-Institut, which supports not only cultural relations between India and Germany, but also exchange across South Asia as a whole. However, she also argued that the EU should think ‘in long term frames’ instead of supporting single programmes and better adapt its activities to the needs of the target countries. Help is therefore needed, she said, in the field of capacity building and also with support for infrastructural development. Projects in the field of new media, she stressed, should not only focus on cities, but also on the regions. Added value could be gained from focusing more closely on the intrinsic value of culture and from supporting artist exchanges; people-to-people contact, she argued, was much more important than digital devices as a means of learning from each other and making India better known to Europeans and vice versa.

Mr. Ferdinand Richard, President of the Roberto Cimetta Fund in Marseille, argued that both the intrinsic value and the capacity of culture to be a tool of economic growth are important, and that the ability to compete and cooperate should be seen as the added value of a common EU strategy. The world is changing, he said, and Europeans have to face the fact that the ‘economic war around culture is wild and violent’: ‘Hollywood is being replaced by Google’. The EU has to take into account the ‘new bulldozers’ that are not impressed by international conventions and that cannot be addressed by individual Member States. The future role of the EU should be to moderate the ‘struggle between big and small’. The EU should therefore help to facilitate interactions between regional and global cultural industries: ‘[w]e have to be the facilitators between the regional and the global cultural industries.’ The instruments needed, he argued, are incubators and platforms, notably in the field of micro-business.

Ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider emphasised the need to test added value in practice. She drew attention to what she saw as an imbalance between reflexion and action and called for a more active role by the EU: ‘[y]ou can talk about human rights or you can show them in action’. An example of best practice by the US, she said, was the worldwide concert tours by black jazz musicians organised in the 1950s during the Cold War. These tours not only spread awareness and appreciation of jazz throughout the world, but also raised awareness of questions of cultural difference and



minority issues. For Schneider, too, cultural activities in situations of conflict, e.g. in countries like Mali, Afghanistan or Syria, should be regarded as promising avenues of future common engagement by the EU that would create win-win situations for all. Her advice was not to talk too much about the process and the question of ‘why culture is important’. The EU, she said, needed more ‘examples of where culture is used in external relations’.

Mr. Gijs de Vries called for more engagement and stated that ‘the EU must speak out much more loudly’. The EU, he said, needed to make clear that ‘culture is a key vector for Europe in the world.’ But at the same time the EU needed to be much clearer about the target groups of and the priority regions to be addressed by any future strategy as well as about the deliverables expected. The guiding principles of such engagement should be values such as human rights, freedom of expression and freedom of religion, which needed to be integrated into any new strategy. In order to achieve congruence and a shared outlook, he said, ‘we have to build alliances’ within the main fields of intervention, e.g. arts and new media, tourism, ecology, sciences and education. Alliances should also be built, he added, with all the sectors and domains concerned, notably the Directorates General within the European Commission. The question of culture should be mainstreamed between the DGs, which should be committed more to culture according to their specific priorities and existing focuses. According to de Vries, culture should be a higher priority for DG DEVCO.

As examples of fields of intervention with an added value he mentioned the heritage sector – which, in his view, was not addressed strongly enough in the final report of the Preparatory Action – sports, education and science, values and cultural property, which has recently become ‘a weapon in the battle’ over cultural power. Finally, he opined, a win-win-situation implies that all partners are well-known, and the EU still often suffers from a lack of visibility. Therefore he agreed with the recommendation of the report that the EU should improve its visibility: ‘We support people from Israel and Canada, but they don’t know it.’

Questions posed to the panellists underscored the importance of increasing the EU’s credibility. The discussion also made it clear that the different points of departure of the various partner countries mean that case-by-case strategies, programmes and interventions will be required. One participant stated that several target groups feel pressured by European stakeholders/the EU to adapt their creative work to ‘western’ expectations. She described her observation that, in order to receive funding from the EU, artists from the Arab World tend to ‘deform’ and ‘decompose’ their work. A representative from Africa raised the question of why Europe was so interested in Africa: ‘[i]s it seeking new markets?’ According to him, cultural operators in African countries felt that European partners were reluctant to support projects dealing with issues of human rights and freedom of expression because of the potential for conflict with the political authorities. This, he said, was leading to mistrust and a fear that the EU was aiming to promote its own political and economic interests in Africa rather than the ‘spread of values’. Human rights and freedom of expression, he concluded, are the basis for mutuality and partnership in the field of creative industries as they are in other fields. Ms. Leila Shahid, the Palestinian Ambassador to the EU, argued that Europe should be open about the fact that its cultural interventions are not free of political power interests.

The discussion also revolved around the question of how a future EU strategy should deal with the fact that governments and civil societies are often unequal partners and in some cases in

conflict with one another. A participant from Georgia asked the EU to be more effective in protecting 'human values' within civil societies. There was, she said, 'an economic war around culture in Georgia' between the government and civil society, and the EU needed in future to more actively support efforts by cultural actors within civil society, particularly in the field of heritage protection. Until now, the main source of support in this regard had been the cultural institutes rather than the European Commission.

Participants from EU Member States also commented on the role of culture in situations of conflict. According to Ferdinand Richard, the 'conflict around culture is very much linked to economic development'. Therefore the question was: '[h]ow to give autonomy to local cultural industries in order to provide them with dignity and development?' Martin Eichtinger, Director-General for Cultural Policy at the Austrian Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs, went a step further and proposed that 'culture and conflict should be one of the key elements of the EU strategy on culture'. The issue of culture and conflict is 'at the crossroads of all forms of cultural activity and cultural diplomacy', he said. The EU, with its multicultural EU Member States, is already very experienced in issues of diversity and the protection of minorities. 'By showing the efforts we have made at home we gain a lot of credibility around the world when trying to help resolve conflicts that relate to religious and ethnic issues.' Culture and conflict should therefore be a major focus of a new common strategy on culture, he argued.

Some dissented from this view. Pooja Sood argued that cultural engagement by the EU 'cannot solve all problems'. She also expressed a concern that a future EU strategy might focus only on regions currently experiencing conflicts such as Iran, Syria and Afghanistan. 'There are other areas that need equal support', she argued.

De Vries concluded the discussion by pointing out that the question of culture and conflict in particular made it necessary to think about different kinds of interventions such as long-term cooperation, short-term partnerships and immediate interventions. These, he argued, should exist alongside each other and be implemented as required. He also stressed that first of all 'you need to mainstream this question of cultural relations through different DGs' – not only because 'that is where the money is', but also because the different DGs deal with cultural issues even if culture is not their priority.

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## PANEL 3: SMART AND FLEXIBLE OPTIONS

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What are the guiding principles, mechanisms and tools for a new strategy on culture in EU external relations? What kinds of pilot projects could help to kick-start the strategy? On the basis of the proposals in the draft report, these questions were discussed in the third and final panel discussion, entitled ‘smart and flexible options for the achievement of a strategic approach to culture in external relations’. Moderator Ms. Isabelle Schwarz characterised the task as putting together ‘the pieces of the puzzle of the strategy’.

Mr. Oussama Rifahi, Director of the AFAC-Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, began by pointing out that any ‘smart’ approach needed to balance contradictory findings within Europe itself: while there was a considerable desire for more cultural activity in Europe, at the same time funding was being cut; there was a will to promote more participation and flat hierarchies, but also a tendency to adopt top-down bilateral approaches; there was a wish for more flexibility, but in practice an increase in bureaucracy. To balance these contradictions, any smart approach should not try to invent new activities and to create new actors, but rather draw inspiration from what already exists, including in the private sector and, as regards the Arab World, particularly in existing foundations. In general, he encouraged the EU to move ahead quickly with the implementation of a common strategy on culture: ‘[t]here has never been a better moment for the EU to convey its values to the Arab World.’

For Dr. Paweł Potoroczyn, Director of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Warsaw, funding is a crucial precondition. He warned the EU against using culture as a propaganda instrument: ‘[t]raditional diplomacy tells the story; cultural diplomacy tells the truth’. Ms. Corina Şuteu, President of Film ETC in Bucharest and New York, pointed out that the EU needed to learn from its own history: European engagement in Hungary after the end of the Cold War had shown that ‘culture is a tool to make values travel’. Hungary became a laboratory for European cultural engagement; today the EU is experienced and ‘can create the legal instruments that could be impactful outside Europe’. The guiding question for future cooperation, she argued, should be: ‘[h]ow can we turn cultural impact into social impact with mass effect?’ It was important, she said, to consider not only the needs, expectations and concerns of the ‘big’ Member States, but also the smaller ones: ‘[w]here do the recently included countries stand and to what degree are their perspectives included in the future EU strategy on culture?’ In addition, the EU also has to consider the fact that ‘all existing instruments are out of date’, and have to be ‘adapted to the present world’. ‘Being efficient’, she added, is what the EU could learn from the USA when it came to forging successful instruments for cultural cooperation. She also proposed giving particular support to artists and cultural actors who are not yet well-established and known.

Moderator Isabelle Schwarz opened the ensuing discussion with the question: ‘[h]ow do you see the new interplay with different actors coming together in a new way?’ A participant from Sweden stated that at this stage, ‘less is more’ and that the EU should focus on a few key fields of intervention as starting points. Like several other participants, she supported an emphasis on city-to-city projects, because ‘there are a lot of synergies we are missing out on already’. Mr. François Rivasseau of the EU Delegation in the USA also advocated city-to-city-projects and

programmes that could benefit from the experience accrued through the European Capital of Culture programme.

The discussion again took up the issue of which entities would be responsible for a future EU strategy on culture and what the organisational structure would be.

According to Mr. Péter Inkei, Director of the Budapest Observatory, the model of a 'House of European Culture' – given adequate resources – was preferable to a model with EUNIC at the top. The advantage of a House of European Culture, he argued, was, first, that it would give all Member States the opportunity to participate, whereas EUNIC 'excludes the countries without cultural institutes' and, second, that it would take into account the fact that local cultural actors prefer to cooperate with cultural stakeholders from EU Member States rather than with government officials. Several participants also underlined the importance of an arm's length model. Mr. Rivasseau, however, argued that 'no one size fits all'. A House of European Culture could be a priority for countries like the US, he said, but not for every partner country. In other regions, emphasis needed to be placed on support for grassroots activities and facilitating the mobility of artists.

The discussion also showed that many other questions needed to be resolved before deciding on concrete pilot projects. In her reply to the question by a representative of the Cervantes Institute as to whether the EU wants to speak with 'one cultural voice', Corina Şuteu stressed that 'there is no longer one voice'. 'We are part of a global voice', she said. What all cultural stakeholders from the EU have to learn now is 'how to use the existing structures to get into the culture of the user'. A filmmaker from Georgia came back to the question discussed previously about how to address partners from civil society in cases of political conflict. He called attention to a contradiction within existing EU programmes and application procedures: although the EU officially wanted to strengthen civil society and to support independent actors, information was often shared through government agencies. 'Does the EU have a strategy for intervention when the official political dialogue stumbles?', he asked. He stressed that the EU should develop a strategy that can function even in cases in which government officials are no longer well-disposed towards the EU.

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## TOWARDS WAYS FORWARD

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In the concluding wrap-up session, Project Coordinator Ms. Sana Ouchtati called for follow-up of the Preparatory Action at a policy and institutional level, with the next Commission and the incoming European Parliament as well as the implementation and follow up of concrete pilot projects that would illustrate effective and efficient external culture relations. Mr. Alain Ruche, Senior Advisor on cultural matters in the office of the Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service, called for a shift from the soft power paradigm to collaborative schemes. Finally, Mr. Jan Trzuszczński, Director General of Education and Culture in the European Commission, promised that the next steps taken by the project would be the dissemination of its results to date and further work on the findings by the Commission and the European Member States: '[w]e need to coordinate and we need to coordinate wisely.'



An initiative funded by the European Union

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