



'United in diversity'

**Culture in the EU's external relations:
A strategy for EU-China cultural relations**

REPORT OF THE EXPERT GROUP ON CULTURE AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS – CHINA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The political stakes of an EU strategy on culture in external relations encompass the whole range of priorities of EU external action. While intercultural dialogue is a prerequisite to mutual understanding and trust building, culture is also closely linked with values and lifestyle, political systems and social structures, economic and trade activities. As an important "soft power" asset for the EU and its Member States, culture contributes to a more effective environment for diplomacy and foreign relations. Calls for a more strategic approach to culture in the EU relations with third countries and regions have multiplied in recent years, emanating from different stakeholders (European Parliament, Member States, cultural institutes, civil society). Against this growing momentum, a strategy-setting process in this field was launched in March 2012, bringing together representatives of Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Foreign Affairs. At a first stage, the focus was placed on China, with the intention of proposing a strategic vision for the future of EU-China cultural relations¹ in the context of an evolving EU-China strategic partnership, which was recently enhanced by the establishment of the High-Level People-to-People Dialogue.

China is a strategic partner and a geographic priority for the EU and its Member States. In a changing world, the EU and China share broad common interests and are increasingly interdependent. Europe and China have a lot to offer in the cultural field: they both have a long, rich and diverse cultural, linguistic and historical legacy. At the same time, historical and ideological differences in the EU and China remain, which have an impact on respective policies and practices related to cultural activities.

The Chinese cultural sector has been developing considerably over the past decade as a result of important reforms, investment and opening up by the Chinese government. This evolution coupled with the gradual opening of the Chinese market translates into a variety of opportunities for European cultural operators and for enhanced EU-China cultural cooperation with benefits for both sides. The EU Member States already have a rich tradition of bilateral cooperation with China in the field of culture, which spans a variety of sectors and involves support for cultural cooperation, cultural diplomacy, public diplomacy and outreach. However, cultural cooperation with China also raises a number of common challenges for EU Member States, which mainly derive from different cultural, procedural and administrative traditions between the EU and China.

A shared strategic vision among the EU and its Member States and an effective comprehensive framework for engagement in China, including the means to deliver and work together, could significantly contribute to overcoming common challenges, enhancing the EU image and deepening EU-China cultural relations in the coming years.

The **general objective** of such a strategic vision shall be to develop the capacities of the EU and support its Member States to make full use of the potential of culture as a generator of dialogue and mutual understanding, a vehicle for sharing values and promoting interests, and a prime source for developing trust and encouraging cross-fertilization between European and Chinese societies. More precisely, this translates into pursuing the following **specific objectives**: to project a distinctive, attractive and more coherent image of the EU and the diversity of its cultures in China, with a special attention on young cultural professionals and audiences; to enhance the presence, visibility and competitiveness, of the EU cultural and

¹ In line with the Council Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, the European Commission set up an expert group on culture and external relations, which it co-chaired with the European External Action Service. While the group focused its work on China as a test case, it also contributed more broadly to the general reflections on the role of culture in the EU external relations.

creative 'capital' in China; to contribute to the creation of a conducive and more equitable environment for cultural cooperation/exchanges between European and Chinese cultural operators.

While bilateral activities between Member States and China are and will remain fundamental, seeking greater coherence of actions and synergies and pooling individual initiatives within a broader EU perspective can have a stronger impact by achieving a greater scale and critical mass of activities, which is important when reaching out in a country with the size of China. Economies of scale will also allow doing more within the current financial constraints.

Projecting a more coherent image of the EU in China can improve the way the EU cultural potential and the richness of its diversity is perceived by the Chinese public, thereby strengthening the EU image and the values it embodies.

Concerted EU action can strengthen the EU leverage vis-à-vis Chinese authorities on issues of common interest for EU Member States. Strengthening information sharing and networking among Member States can help better identify common interests and obstacles, as well as mobilise appropriate expertise more effectively. This can further help develop a more conducive environment for EU cultural exchanges with China and better support the European cultural and creative sectors to cooperate with their Chinese counterparts.

The implementation of a strategic approach to EU-China cultural relations shall be based on a flexible and open approach. While mutual interests and opportunities can potentially arise in all cultural and creative sectors, emerging areas of mutual interest at a first stage include: EU-China film co-production; production and commercialisation of TV formats; games (in particular online games and smartphone applications, which are less sensitive to piracy); music (especially live music performances); animation; themed entertainment; architecture; design; cultural merchandising; heritage (in particular linked to urban sustainable development); museums (in particular as regards cultural content development and management); contemporary arts events and festivals. In all these areas, there is a need on both the European and Chinese side to support the development of professional skills and build capacity through training, peer-learning, the exchange of best practices and networking.

Delivering added value through increased cooperation at EU level is a **shared responsibility** of all actors concerned: EU institutions, Member States, civil society. Acting together can bring added value in a number of areas including: better defining and projecting the EU image in China, for instance by displaying European diversity through joint thematic approaches or a better exploitation of virtual tools; addressing common policy and regulatory challenges for the EU Member States in China; facilitating networking and cooperation among cultural operators and supporting their professional development. Concerted efforts are necessary to ensure that the appropriate structures and resources are in place for delivering results on a better informed and effective basis. In the short-term, it is important to identify and better exploit the existing resources, structures and tools, including the currently available EU instruments for China, as well as to enhance the European dimension of existing bilateral initiatives. Special attention shall also be devoted to exploiting the potential of virtual tools, given the enormous potential of the internet in China, in particular to reach out to the young generations. In the medium to long-term, diversified solutions will have to be identified including by exploring the opportunities that may arise in the context of relevant future EU instruments, devising new approaches leading to increased cooperation and pooling of resources among Member States, attracting private funding, developing partnerships with the Chinese side.

Based on the above analysis, the expert group agreed on a set of **recommendations** encompassing general recommendations and principles for a strategic approach to culture in

EU-China relations as well as specific recommendations focusing on the implementation of this approach. The recommendations cover the period until 2020 and are addressed to EU Institutions and Services, Member States, cultural institutes, as well as cultural organisations.

I. General recommendations for a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations

In order to develop a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations, the expert group recommends:

1) To consider the following guiding principles:

- a. To anchor cultural cooperation on the principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
- b. To adopt a broad, articulated vision of culture in the context of EU external action considered in all its facets as a social, economic and political asset for the EU and its Member States.
- c. To share universal values to which the EU attaches utmost importance, such as freedom of expression, free and equal access to information, which are essential for creativity to flourish, through concrete action and cooperation.
- d. To respect the autonomy of the cultural sector and prioritize bottom-up processes.
- e. To make full use of the potential of culture as a generator of dialogue and mutual understanding, a vehicle for sharing values and promoting interests, and a prime source for developing trust and encouraging cross-fertilization between societies.
- f. To engage in long-term, two-way processes aimed at building trust over time and seeking mutual understanding and benefits with China.
- g. To adopt a multi-level approach considering the broader regional context in Asia and addressing different levels of governance within China (local, regional, non-governmental actors).
- h. To develop inclusive processes building on existing expertise and structures both within the EU and Member States and in China and using them more strategically.
- i. To pay special attention to the young generation as a key target group and identify the most effective means of communication and outreach, including the internet and social media.

2) To integrate culture as part of EU policy towards China more systematically and strategically.

To reach this goal, the EU and Member States should:

- a. Develop closer cooperation and more integrated working modalities between relevant Ministries and departments in charge of culture and foreign policies.
- b. Integrate culture as a 'soft power asset' in the context of public diplomacy and outreach strategies more effectively.
- c. Ensure the articulation of cultural diplomacy and cooperation on the one hand and other relevant policies and priorities of external relations on the other (such as sustainable development, urbanisation, human rights, trade and IPR issues, rule of law, security).

- d. Include more systematically cultural and societal aspects into their country analysis.

3) To support bottom-up approaches as well as direct and sustainable cooperation among cultural professionals and organisations from the EU and China through training, mobility, networking and concrete support to project development.

4) To build the capacity and improve the competitiveness of European cultural and creative sectors.

5) To explore adequate and diversified resources both at the EU and Member States' level as well as seek effective partnerships in China.

More specifically:

- a. To ensure support for actions aimed at a strategic approach to culture in EU external relations in the future EU instruments in the fields of culture and external relations;
- b. To design innovative approaches for Member States to share tasks and pool resources to achieve greater economies of scale and to leverage their efforts at EU level;
- c. To attract private funding and involve private cultural stakeholders, such as businesses and foundations.

The expert group recommends that these general recommendations and guiding principles shall be considered when developing a strategic approach to culture in the EU's relations with other third countries/regions.

II. Specific recommendations for the implementation of a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations

Based on the general recommendations and guiding principles, in order to implement a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations, the expert group recommends:

1) To project a more coherent image of the EU in China through a better integration of culture in public diplomacy strategies and a more strategic use of the potential of virtual tools to facilitate not only showcasing and branding but also concrete forms of cultural cooperation.

2) To undertake a more systematic and structured collection of information on a sector-specific basis about the opportunities and challenges of engaging in EU-China cultural cooperation.

3) To strengthen interactions among the EU cultural stakeholders present in China through an expanded network bringing together Member States' representatives competent for culture, cultural institutes, including the EUNIC China Cluster, as well as major cultural organisations, foundations and private networks as appropriate.

4) To task a dedicated cultural focal point in the EU Delegation in Beijing with working closely with Member States in order to facilitate stakeholders' cooperation, gathering and sharing of information as well as joint approaches vis-à-vis the Chinese authorities on issues of common interest for Member States.

III. The way forward: towards a concrete step change in EU-China cultural relations

In order to move towards a concrete step change in EU-China cultural relations, the expert group recommends:

- 1) To promptly launch a pilot phase in 2013** in order to:
 - a. Task a dedicated cultural focal point in the EU Delegation in Beijing with working closely with Member States;**
 - b. Establish an expanded network of relevant EU cultural stakeholders in Europe and in China and facilitate interactions and information sharing;**
 - c. Launch a series of sector-specific mapping and research, with a view to:**
 - i. gathering information on the state of play in selected sectors of cooperation between the EU and China,
 - ii. making proposals on how to best derive EU added value in the selected sectors,
 - iii. analysing the feasibility of proposed actions.
 - d. Priorities for the pilot phase shall take into account the areas of mutual interest analysed in section 3 of the report "Areas of mutual interest for the EU and China".**
- 2) To identify concrete priorities, actions and resources for the medium to long-term, based on the results of the pilot phase.**
- 3) To assess the results of implemented actions on a regular basis with a possible mid-term evaluation of the proposed strategy (by 2017).**

1. POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 General background

Objectives of EU external action

The European Union is not only an economic bloc or a trading power, but also a rich and diverse social and cultural entity with distinct values and founding principles. Democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity are guiding principles not only within the EU, but also for the EU's external action.²

The new institutional framework for external action following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, as well as the establishment of the European External Action Service, enable the EU to "more effectively punch its weight" as a global player. Acting within common policies and strategies together with the Member States, the EU has the critical leverage to respond to global challenges and achieve its strategic objectives more efficiently. This is also relevant to the EU's relations with third countries, more importantly its strategic partners.

Moreover, in today's globalised world, the connection between local and global, internal and external is unequivocal. For the EU, this establishes a clear connection between its internal and external policies. Projecting proactively Europe 2020 priorities - the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade - as well as priorities of sectoral policies, is a core mission of the EU external action. At the same time, the EU seeks to develop an agenda based on mutual interests with third countries.

Lastly, public diplomacy and outreach is embedded within the strategic objectives of the EU external action, as it can help promote widespread understanding of the EU, its values and views on important policy issues as well as encourage mutual understanding with partner countries.

Role of culture in EU external relations – A strategic approach

Both for its intrinsic value and as a specific sector of economic activity, culture has a clear contribution to make to the development of economic and political relations with third countries, people to people contacts and mutual understanding, as well as in the context of public diplomacy strategies.

Culture has long been a standard feature of EU international relations and is a recognised sector of cooperation with both developing and developed countries. Cooperation and policy dialogue with partners across the board is anchored on the principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions, to which the EU is a Party.

A new political vision for the role of culture, including in international relations, is embodied in the European Agenda for Culture³ - the first policy framework for culture at EU level adopted in 2007⁴. In this context, culture is clearly approached as a strategic factor of political, social and economic development. Developing a strategic approach to culture in

² Article 21 of the TFEU

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF>

⁴ The Agenda for culture opened a new chapter of cooperation on culture policy in the EU: for the first time, all partners – EU institutions, Member States and civil society – were invited to pool their efforts on shared objectives. The Work Plans for culture translate these objectives into priority areas.

external relations and encouraging cooperation in this field is one of the three pillars of the Agenda and a shared priority area for both EU Member States and the European Commission in the current Council Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014⁵.

Calls for a more strategic approach to culture in EU external action have multiplied in recent years. The European Parliament's resolution on the cultural dimension of the EU external action (2011)⁶ emphasised the importance of cultural diplomacy and cultural cooperation in advancing the EU and Member States' interests and values throughout the world. It noted that the fragmentation of external EU cultural policy and projects hampers the strategic and efficient use of cultural resources and called for the development of a visible common EU strategy on the cultural aspects of the EU's external relations⁷. Civil society has also undertaken initiatives in this area (i.e. More Europe⁸), which are expected to feed into the reflections on this matter. The network of European Union Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)⁹ has also been active on this topic by making culture in external relations one of its priorities.

Against this growing momentum and, in line with the priorities of the current Council Work Plan for Culture, the European Commission set up in March 2012 an expert group on culture and external relations. The intention was to launch, as a pilot initiative, a strategy-setting process in this field bringing together representatives of Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Foreign Affairs. It was jointly decided with EU Member States¹⁰ that the expert group focuses its work on China, with the objective of proposing a strategic vision for the future of EU-China cultural relations. While focusing on China, the work of the expert group was also expected to contribute to the development of a more general EU strategy on culture and external relations.

Mandate of the expert group

- To propose EU objectives and medium term outcomes (2020) for a strategic approach to EU-China cultural relations at EU and Member State level building on EU values while taking into account China's Five-Year Plan to enhance its cultural policies at home and abroad.
- To identify the value added of EU initiatives and cooperation and its relationship with Member States' bilateral initiatives.
- To identify the areas where the added value of initiatives and cooperation at EU level can contribute to support or complement Member States' initiatives.
- To make concrete recommendations, including in terms of tools, processes and other initiatives designed to implement the strategic vision and bring in the EU added value.
- To assess the expert group process in terms of its potential to contribute to the development of the strategic role of culture in the EU external relations in other parts of the world.

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:325:0001:0009:EN:PDF>

⁶ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A7-2011-0112&language=EN>

⁷ A preparatory action on the role of culture in EU external relations is currently implemented by the European Commission with a total budget of 500 000 euros.

⁸ <http://www.moreeurope.org/>

⁹ <http://www.eunic-online.eu/>

¹⁰ Discussions took place at joint meetings of senior officials of Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Pécs and Lublin held in 2011. EU-China relations were subsequently discussed more in detail at the joint meeting of senior officials of Ministries of Culture and Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Copenhagen in June 2012.

The following sectors fall within this mandate: arts co-operation in all art forms and delivery means (including literature), the heritage sector (museums, libraries, tangible and intangible heritage), cultural and creative industries¹¹, intellectual exchanges (including research and academic cooperation in humanities), training and skills for the cultural and creative sector, media (traditional, new media and social media). Links with other policy areas such as tourism, urban development, sustainable development, trade relations, intellectual property, are also considered.

1.2 Why China?

The geographic focus on China was prompted by a number of considerations.

A strategic partner

China is a strategic partner and a geographic priority for the EU and its Member States. In a changing world, the EU and China share broad common interests and are increasingly interdependent. China is now the EU's second trading partner and the EU's biggest source of imports by far. The EU is also China's biggest trading partner and the EU's open market has been a large contributor to China's export-led growth.¹² Europe and China have a lot to offer in the cultural field and citizens on both sides are increasingly interested in better understanding each other, which can only reinforce the EU-China comprehensive strategic partnership.

As Parties to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the EU and China can draw mutual benefits from exchanging practices on policies in support to the cultural and creative sectors and from encouraging cooperation between cultural operators and circulation of cultural goods and services.

A fast-evolving Chinese context

The Chinese society has experienced a rapid transformation in the last decades, including a fast pace of urbanisation and the emergence of a middle class with lifestyle aspirations that include individual choices, sophisticated taste for culture and art and critical reflection. The rapid evolution characterizing the Chinese society, notably with regard to the dynamism of the young generation, the emergence of new civil society players and the potential of the digital and social media, offers opportunities to strengthen cultural exchanges with the EU. At the same time, historical and ideological differences in the EU and China remain. They have to be considered in the EU-China relation context given their impact on respective policies and practice related to cultural activities.

In this context, a new Cultural Reform and Development Plan under the National "12th Five-Year Plan" was adopted in early 2012. It set both internal and external policy priorities with a particular emphasis on the economic dimension of culture, which is translated into a series of measures aimed at developing the market of culture and at strengthening public investment in culture both in China and abroad. Accelerating the development of the cultural industries is a clear priority area, with a specific focus on exploring links with innovation, capitalising on

¹¹ In this report, "Cultural and Creative Industries" refers to sectors and activities which could represent trading opportunities between the EU and China, including, in particular, architecture, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), design, music, publishing and radio.

¹² In relation to trade in services, EU imports from China increased from € 13.6 billion in 2009 to € 17.5 billion in 2011, while the EU exports of services to China increased from € 19.1 billion to € 25.1 billion in the same period. This resulted in a small EU surplus of about € 7.5 billion in 2011.

cultural tourism and cultural heritage, building capacity and facilitating access to market both domestic and international¹³.

The broader context in which this Plan has been developed is characterized by a reform of the culture sector over the last decade, which has been given a new priority by the Chinese government. Since the launch of reforms in this field in 2002, culture has increasingly been perceived as an element of well-being for the population, a source of growth notably via the CCIs and of internal legitimacy and international influence for the Chinese government. According to Chinese official statistics, public investment in the field of culture has been growing by 23% annually since 2007. Strengthening the Chinese cultural sector translates into a high demand for skills development, capacity-building and professionalization.

Internationally, China has been deploying a soft power strategy with significant resources with a view to making the Chinese culture better known, strengthening cultural exports and enhancing the image of the country worldwide. One significant illustration of China's recent efforts to develop its cultural diplomacy is the expansion of the Confucius Institutes network around the world¹⁴.

China is interested in developing its cultural exchanges with the EU and its Member States, as illustrated by the rich tradition of bilateral cooperation with different Member States as well as, more recently, by the establishment of a third pillar on "people-to-people exchanges" in the EU-China Strategic Partnership (see below). European cultures benefit from an attractive image in China, but the understanding of their richness is often lacking. European expertise in the cultural sector is also highly appreciated by Chinese professionals. The Chinese authorities are also keen to promote their vision of the reality concerning their country in Europe, which is also a way of counter-balancing critical views held by segments of the public opinion.

At the same time, an ambivalent perception of the European civilization persists in China. While Europe's historical treasures are a great source of attraction for the Chinese people, the European image also suffers from a perception of "decadence" linked with the context of the current economic crisis. Moreover, as some research shows¹⁵, while China's perception of Europe and Europeans is in general positive, especially in comparison to the US, Japan and Russia, it is nevertheless often seen as less "important" to China than these other major "strategic partners", despite the fact that the EU is China's largest trading partner.

State of play of Member States' cultural relations with China

Although there is no comprehensive mapping of EU-China cultural exchanges, the most generalised reality of Member States' engagement in China is a bilateral framework of cooperation under which bilateral initiatives are carried out mainly with a view to portraying national specificities and offering concrete cooperation for national organisations, artists and companies. Each Member State has its own organisations to deliver, directly (Embassy, Consulate) and/or indirectly (institutes¹⁶) and mostly through organisations in both the public

¹³ <http://chinacopyrightandmedia.wordpress.com/2012/02/16/outline-of-the-cultural-reform-and-development-plan-during-the-national-12th-five-year-plan-period/>

¹⁴ According to an article published by Guangming Daily and carried by the website of the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party in September 2012, China has set up 380 Confucius Institutes in 108 countries around the world. More information available at: http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm

¹⁵ Findings of the research project "Disaggregating Chinese views of the EU and the policy implications" co-funded under the EU Framework Seven Programme: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/cpi/research/funded-projects/chinese-eu/events.aspx>

¹⁶ A number of Member States has national cultural institutes in Beijing and other locations in China. These include: Austria (Austrian Cultural Forum), Denmark, (Danish Cultural Institute), France (Institut Français), Germany (Goethe Institut), Italy (Istituto Italiano di Cultura), Spain (Istituto Cervantes), UK (British Council).

and private sectors (e.g. museums, heritage organisations, CCI companies). This variety of initiatives and actors reflects the diversity and richness of EU cultures.

The experience of cultural cooperation with China raises challenges that are common to all EU Member States. Some challenges are linked to procedural and administrative traditions in China (e.g. differences in procedures, difficulty in identifying the right interlocutors, difficulty in predicting decision-making by the Chinese authorities/partners, timeframes and sudden changes or cancellations at a short notice, bureaucracy), some are regulatory (e.g. ambiguous, weak or restrictive regulatory framework as regards for instance intellectual property, market access and investment restrictions), some are cultural (e.g. language barriers and capacity issues within the developing Chinese cultural sector), some are political (e.g. censorship).

When taken collectively, the EU and its Member States have not yet developed an articulated strategic long-term vision on EU-China cultural relations, based on shared interests and objectives. A shared strategic vision and an effective comprehensive framework for engagement in China, including the means to deliver and work together, could contribute significantly to overcoming these challenges, enhancing EU visibility and deepening EU-China cultural relations in the coming years. The rapid evolution characterizing China both in terms of economic, infrastructure and social development, as well as the gradual opening of its market, will require an enhanced adaptation and response capacity on the part of the EU and its Member States. More systematic information-sharing will be key in this regard, building on the national cultural institutes in place and the EUNIC Cluster China.

EU-China relations

The EU-China relationship is based on a comprehensive strategic partnership. This was further enhanced with the decision at the 14th EU-China Summit in February 2012 to establish an EU-China High Level People-to-People Dialogue (HPPD) as a third pillar of cooperation, alongside the High Level Strategic Dialogue and the High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue. Formally launched in April 2012, the HPPD aims to contribute to the knowledge and common understanding between the EU and China, to open a new channel for the informal discussion of strategic societal issues of common interest and to identify opportunities of cooperation based on mutual interests and reciprocity in the fields of education and training, youth, culture, language and research. The launch of this third pillar of cooperation builds on the acknowledgement that promoting exchanges between civil societies, including in the field of culture, is key to further promote EU-China relations¹⁷. People-to-people contacts play an important role in enhancing mutual knowledge and understanding, which are essential to further the EU-China partnership.

In the case of culture, the HPPD reinforces the already existing sectoral policy dialogue between administrations¹⁸ by upgrading the dialogue on cultural policies, in particular in the field of cultural and creative industries, and by creating a mutually conducive environment for increased cooperation and exchanges.

Against this political backdrop, the EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue in 2012 marked a first concrete contribution to the HPPD. Labelling more than 180 events in the fields of culture, education, youth, languages and exchanges among intellectuals, the Year celebrates

¹⁷ The important role of civil society in the EU external relations was emphasized in the recent Commission Communication "The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations" of 12 September 2012, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0492:FIN:EN:PDF>

¹⁸ A policy dialogue between the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Culture exists since 2007

intercultural relations by promoting all forms of people-to-people contacts and mobility, but also offers an opportunity to promote policy and civil society dialogue, thus triggering long-term benefits for EU-China relations¹⁹.

With the establishment of the HPPD, the EU-China Strategic Partnership entered a new phase which prompts a more strategic reflection on the EU side on how to enhance the contribution of culture to strengthening EU-China relations.

2. A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CULTURE IN EU-CHINA RELATIONS

2.1 Added Value

The political stakes of an EU strategy on culture in external relations, and in particular in the case of China, are much broader than a mere strengthening of Member States' bilateral cooperation. **EU strategic interests encompass the whole range of priorities of EU-China relations.**

Culture is not an isolated area. It is closely linked with values and lifestyle, political systems and social structures, as well as economic activities. Developing a strategic approach to culture in external relations is therefore not only about culture, but also about sharing universal **values** to which the EU attaches utmost importance and which have largely influenced the construction of the international system. It is also linked with **trade relations** and the circulation of EU cultural goods and services, as well as with public diplomacy and **image building**. Developing through culture the EU soft power projection capacities in China can strengthen the EU image while promoting the diversity of its cultures and its shared values, and improve mutual understanding which can be further useful in political dialogues and trade relationships.

Moreover, the new media explosion and the rising influence of the internet and social media on public opinion call for increasing attention to 'cultural' and societal evolutions and to the interactions within the cultural field can only benefit the EU's capacity to forecast and better evaluate transition processes and address geopolitical challenges. This is also true in the case of China.

While bilateral activities between EU Member States and China are and will remain fundamental, there are areas²⁰ where, by acting collectively, Member States can gain more than from the simple aggregation of their individual activities.

Seeking greater coherence of actions and synergies will **increase the scale and impact of both EU and Member States' initiatives undertaken**. It will help reach out to wider audiences and ensure broader geographical coverage beyond the biggest cities in China. Large scale events are very attractive for the Chinese public but are often too costly and difficult to manage for individual Member States alone. Economies of scale will also allow doing more within the current financial constraints.

Concerted EU action can **strengthen the EU leverage vis-à-vis Chinese authorities** on issues of common interest for EU Member States. This in turn can help develop a more conducive environment for EU cultural exchanges with China and better support the European cultural and creative sectors to cooperate with their Chinese counterparts.

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eu-china/index_en.htm

²⁰ See section 4 for an overview of potential areas of increased cooperation

2.2 Objectives

Against this background and within the perspective of an evolving EU-China Strategic Partnership, **a step change in EU engagement in the field of culture in China can bring significant benefits for the EU and its Member States.**

In order to achieve this step change, the **general objective** of a strategic EU approach to culture in the context of EU-China relations shall be to develop the capacities of the EU and support its Member States to make full use of the potential of culture as a generator of dialogue and mutual understanding, a vehicle for sharing values and promoting interests, and a prime source for developing trust and encouraging cross-fertilization between European and Chinese societies.

This translates into pursuing the following **specific objectives**:

- To project a distinctive, attractive and more coherent image of the EU and the diversity of its cultures in China, with a special attention on young cultural professionals and audiences;
- To enhance the presence and visibility, as well as the competitiveness, of the EU cultural and creative 'capital' in China;
- To contribute to the creation of a conducive and more equitable environment for cultural cooperation/exchanges between European and Chinese cultural operators.

2.3 Guiding Principles

The development of a strategic EU approach to cultural relations and cooperation with China rests on a set of key guiding principles. While they take into account the specificity of the Chinese reality, these principles also apply *mutatis mutandis* to the development of cultural relations with other partner countries or regions.

Abiding by the principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

As Party to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, the European Union is committed to integrating culture as a vital element in its relations with partner countries and regions. This is also true in the case of China, which is a party to the Convention. The UNESCO Convention therefore provides a comprehensive set of guiding principles which shall apply to the development of EU-China cultural relations.

A broad, articulated vision of culture

This strategic approach is based on a broad, articulated vision of culture in its widest meaning, encompassing not only different forms of (artistic) expression and the dual (economic and cultural) nature of cultural goods and services, but also the complex set of beliefs, attitudes, views and values, which shape the identities and habits of individuals and communities. Perceived as such, culture emerges as an important "soft power" asset, which can contribute to creating a more effective environment for diplomacy and foreign relations. There is therefore a need to articulate the strategic approach to EU-China cultural relations with other policies and priorities that are high on the agenda of EU-China relations, such as sustainable development, urbanisation, political dialogue, trade and IPR issues, rule of law, security.

Sharing values through concrete action

Certain values such as respect for human rights, freedom of expression, free and equal access to information, the independence of cultural life and expressions are precious. Differences of views between the EU and the Chinese Government as regards the acceptance of core values are known. However, these differences should not become an obstacle to the development of an open dialogue and cooperation; rather they should be seen as opportunities for enhancing mutual learning and exchanges. Parallel to the specific mechanisms of dialogue with the Chinese Government that exist for this purpose, there is widespread consensus among Member States that universal values to which the EU attaches utmost importance are best demonstrated in action rather than only in statement. Cultural cooperation can contribute to sharing these values by creating the adequate space to communicate them convincingly through concrete action.

Respecting the autonomy of the cultural sector

Respecting the autonomy of the cultural sector and creating the conditions for bottom-up initiatives to emerge is a firm principle in EU Member States. Direct and sustainable cooperation between European and Chinese artists, cultural operators, professionals and organisations can create the space where the most effective and fruitful actions can take shape. Moreover, contacts at the level of civil society are essential to build and maintain long-lasting relationships based on trust and mutual understanding.

A long-term two-way process between equal partners

The EU (with its Member States) and China have a long, rich and diverse cultural and historical legacy, which deserves to be better known, understood and recognized on both sides. Cultural cooperation with China is a process in which both sides engage as equal partners. In a context of increased interdependence, it is to both sides' benefit to learn more about each other's reality, cultures and values. Improved mutual knowledge can lead to a more meaningful process of dialogue and cooperation, based on mutual interests and leading to mutual benefits, not only from a cultural perspective but also from a social and economic point of view. This calls for a long-term process. Engaging in this process requires a long-term vision not limited to one-off initiatives but built on activities which can serve as catalysts for lasting cooperation.

A multi-level approach

Developing cultural cooperation with China requires addressing different levels. On a general level, the country cannot be considered in isolation from the broader Asian context to which it belongs and in which it has a strong influence. Within China, there is a need to address all levels of governance and not only the central one. As a matter of fact, besides the central administration, provinces and cities play an important role in implementing cultural policies. They also have heavily invested in cultural infrastructures and cultural and creative industries hubs which need both content and management. The possibility to rely on contacts also at those levels of administration is a key success factor. At the same time, the cultural and creative sectors have significant potential to foster regional and local development and many interesting opportunities for cooperation are worth exploring at this level.

Developing inclusive processes building on experiences and structures on the ground

Cultural cooperation with China can and should build on the existing wealth of experience and contacts, which European cultural operators on the ground have developed over many years of concrete cultural work in China. It can also rely on the long-standing cultural relationships which already exist between a number of Member States and China and which

can offer useful lessons both in terms of successful and unsuccessful practices. European cultural institutes in particular represent an important source of practical expertise on cultural relations with China. The EUNIC China Cluster is also worth mentioning in this context. There is a need to ensure that these important resources are used more strategically.

Focus on the young generations

China's vast youth population²¹ has an enormous potential both as a producer and as a consumer of cultural content and should therefore be a key target group of the strategy. This will have certain implications in the choice of tools and modalities to be used, with special emphasis to be placed on new media and the opportunities they offer to reach out to and engage with today's youth more effectively.

3. AREAS OF MUTUAL INTEREST FOR THE EU AND CHINA

The development of a strategic EU vision on cultural relations and cooperation with China builds on the assumption that all sectors are relevant for potential engagement and therefore deserve attention. While pursuing this flexible and open approach, an analysis of the current situation identified a number of mutual opportunities in the following sectors.

Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) are a clear priority for both the EU²² and China. At the crossroads between culture, business and technology, CCIs contribute to innovation and trigger important spill-over effects in other sectors of the economy, such as ICTs and new media, tourism, urban development. The Chinese leadership wishes to increase these industries' share of national GDP and encourage them to "go global". To this end, there is an interest on the Chinese side (both at the level of authorities and of operators on the ground) in furthering international cooperation with a view to developing an attractive offer for the international markets. China also wishes to move away from the "made in China" concept towards the "designed in China" concept, with increasing emphasis on developing creativity locally. On the EU side, the interest in enhancing cooperation with China in this field mainly lies in promoting a level-playing field for European CCIs in China and in creating more favourable conditions for European CCIs to access the Chinese market (e.g. in relation with market access barriers and difficulties concerning the IPR regime, counterfeiting and piracy). Moreover, it is in both sides' interest to build up networks and long-term partnerships, which will ultimately open up business opportunities.

In this context, a few industries seem to deserve particular attention given their growth potential. These include EU-China film co-production, production and commercialisation of TV formats, games (in particular online games and smartphone applications, which are less sensitive to piracy), music (especially live music performances), animation, themed entertainment, architecture, design, cultural merchandising as well as art, design and management education. It is also worth looking into the opportunities of digital platforms development (video on demand, online music, etc.).

In all these industries, as well as in others which may emerge at a later stage (depending in particular on the IPR framework and enforcement), there is scope for increasing synergies among EU Member States in order to build on existing capacities and experiences, to facilitate the establishment of a better framework for cooperation, to identify and address challenges in a more coordinated way, to facilitate the monitoring of regulations, etc. The

²¹ Around 500 million under the age of 30 (source: http://www.thebergstromgroup.com/new/book_summary/)

²² On 26 September 2012, the European Commission adopted a strategy aimed at increasing the competitiveness and export potential of the cultural and creative sectors in order to boost growth and jobs in the EU. The text is available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/documents/communication-sept2012.pdf>

scaling up of successful projects from the bilateral to the European level could also contribute to generating economies of scale and stimulating exchanges on a bigger scale. For example, this could allow scaling up business to business contacts (e.g. joint participation in major fairs) as well as developing contacts between regional authorities and/or cities engaged in CCIs clusters development.

Heritage is another area of common interest for the EU and China. The governance and conservation of cultural heritage (both tangible and intangible) is a matter of key concern on both sides. On the EU side, Member States can boast a rich and varied heritage and a long experience in preserving, protecting and promoting cultural heritage. Better valorising the EU excellence and know-how in this sector in the relations with China can generate interesting benefits for the EU and its Member States. At the same time, developing long-term cooperation between the EU and China in the heritage field can generate mutual as well as global benefits. For instance, it can support the exchange and learning from respective policies, practices and standards in order to improve respective approaches as regards heritage management and conservation, accessibility of culture to wider audiences, as well as contrasting wrong practices (e.g. illicit trafficking, heritage decay...).

Taking into account the Chinese context of fast urbanisation, one aspect which deserves great attention is the close link between **cultural heritage and urban sustainable development**. Europe can share many examples of how the adaptive reuse of historic buildings in the cities can effectively contribute to the preservation of cultural heritage as well as to economic development and job creation. This, in turn, can also create cooperation opportunities for European cultural operators in the Chinese cultural scene and market. In this perspective, it will also be interesting to follow developments and explore possible synergies with initiatives to be developed in the framework of the new EU-China Urbanisation Partnership²³ and in a wider context such as that of ASEM.

Another area of strategic interest is the **museums** sector. The impressive boom in museum construction in China can generate a lot of promising opportunities for intensifying EU-China cooperation with the view to sharing EU expertise and knowledge, promoting EU cultural assets and help build capacity within the museum sector in China. Many of these new impressive structures require quality content as well as professional managers and curators. These needs translate into significant opportunities to valorise European excellence in cultural content management and production. The openness in the Chinese cultural strategy towards exporting Chinese culture abroad ("going out") but also, increasingly, "inviting in" foreign culture and artistic influence, can lead to a win-win situation by increasing the cultural offer for both sides and the opportunities for being exposed to different cultural and artistic approaches, ultimately contributing to enhancing mutual understanding. By analogy, similar opportunities could also be found in the area of performing arts, where many theatres have been built and require both quality content and professional management.

Contemporary arts events, such as festivals and art biennales, are another sector with great potential to stimulate exchanges and cross-fertilization among artists and cultural professionals, place greater emphasis on contemporary creation, as well as to attract younger audiences. These events can also become excellent platforms for increasing cooperation among Member States in order to ensure a more coordinated presence of different European expressions and facilitate the appreciation by the Chinese audiences of the richness of the diversity of EU cultures.

²³http://ec.europa.eu/energy/international/bilateral_cooperation/china/doc/20120503_eu_china_joint_declaration_urbanisation_en.pdf

In all these sectors, there is a need on both sides to enhance the development of relevant skills and professional capacities through training, peer-learning, the exchange of best practices as well as networking.

4. DELIVERING ADDED VALUE THROUGH INCREASED COOPERATION AT EU LEVEL

Delivering added value through increased cooperation at EU level is a **shared responsibility** of the different actors concerned, both at institutional and at civil society level. While EU actions can be particularly relevant, especially in the framework of the EU-China political, economic and cultural dialogues as well as in areas where European experience is of special relevance and EU instruments can be mobilised, a lot can also be achieved by Member States on their own initiative (groupings of Embassies, Consulates, Cultural Institutes, or of different countries) as well as by other players on the ground (e.g. civil society, businesses).

Increased cooperation among actors involved shall in particular concentrate on the following areas, where acting together can bring EU added value:

i) Better defining and projecting the EU image in China

The EU needs a more articulated soft power strategy, better structured around a set of common messages and initiatives harnessing the potential of its soft power assets. In this perspective, there is scope for improving the way the EU cultural potential and the richness of its diversity is presented and perceived, in particular by the Chinese public and with a special focus on the Chinese young audiences.

The EU has a case in presenting itself also as a social and cultural project, which has led to a union of diverse people, languages and cultures founded on shared values. It can convey the transnational experience of jointly working on a vision and jointly facing shortcomings and failures. In the culture field, it can present a successful model of an independent cultural sector and the advantage of arms-length strategies in dealing with civil society. It can also portray its ability to build on a rich heritage to invest in creativity and attract talents. All these aspects could be of great interest for Chinese partners.

Europe's diversity cannot be displayed and underlined if only larger cultural actors, state or private, have the capacity to engage in and with China. The EU stands for its richness of diverse cultures each in their own right and should be credible for its own sake and for having a reliable shared position vis-à-vis China. Chinese people want to know more about different cultures in Europe. It is in Europe's interest to promote its image of cultural diversity and the vision which is attached to it, especially in the context of ongoing international discussions on this issue.

Displaying European diversity through joint thematic approaches

Initiatives focusing on a common theme which would be representative of European creativity, spirit, history and tradition could contribute to illustrating in a telling manner the EU "unity in diversity" to the Chinese public while valorising the EU experience in curating and managing cultural content. An example of such initiatives could be joint, professionally-curated exhibitions on common European themes, which could become a concrete platform for enhancing cooperation among Member States.

Some experience has been gained in organising European cultural events in cooperation between the EU Delegation and Member States notably around Europe Day celebrations (e.g.

Open Days for young people, EU extravaganza outdoor culture and food festival) and the EU Film Festival. However, more should be done to ensure a more systematic exploitation of the potential of European cultures. The development of this approach will also need to take into account and aim at exploiting the importance and enormous potential of the Internet in China, in particular to reach out to the young generations.

Exploiting the potential of virtual tools

A first step in this direction will be the development of an EU public diplomacy cyber-platform to be funded under the ICI+ Instrument²⁴ and to be managed by the EU Delegation in Beijing with contributions and support from the EU Member States. The project will rely on and exploit the vast potential of cyberspace to create a common virtual space for communicating about the EU and its Member States towards the Chinese public. It is intended as a "one-stop shop" for all major European soft power elements (e.g. education, culture, design, fashion, sports, lifestyle, science and technology, etc.) so as to bring under one easily accessible and attractive umbrella these disparate but highly attractive elements and ensure that Chinese people will relate them directly and explicitly to Europe.

Once set up, this platform could offer a virtual space not only for showcasing existing Member States and EU initiatives, but also for collecting practices and experiences and facilitating networking. This could then evolve into other forms of cooperation on concrete initiatives, such as virtual exhibitions, online fora/debates, etc. thus becoming a virtual European shared space, which could secure a single entry point to the Chinese audiences to explore and appreciate the diversity of EU cultures as well as a platform for Member States and European cultural operators to share content, practices and join efforts for common initiatives.

ii) Addressing common policy and regulatory challenges

Against the common challenges that all Member States and European cultural operators face in their relations and cooperation with China, there is a clear scope for a more structured approach at EU level. Strengthening networking and coordination among Member States can help better identifying issues of common interest and obstacles, as well as mobilising appropriate expertise in order to undertake more effective approaches vis-à-vis the Chinese authorities.

Member States have individually developed extensive experience in dealing and negotiating with China in the context of their bilateral agreements. While these agreements will remain under bilateral negotiation, greater exchanges among Member States, for instance to identify common challenges and complementary objectives or to define a common position on common interests, could help them get greater leverage vis-à-vis the Chinese authorities.

Enhancing EU-China policy dialogues relevant to the field of culture

In the context of the EU-China strategic partnership, over 50 sectoral dialogues have been established and are regularly organised. These policy dialogues can contribute to supporting the sharing and building of expertise at the level of administrations in areas of relevance for the strengthening of EU-China cultural cooperation. Reinforcing networking and coordination among Member States can contribute to nourishing and substantiating these policy dialogues. It can help identify relevant topics, issues at stake and expertise, thus making the dialogues (and ultimately the strategic partnership)

²⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:347:0021:0029:EN:PDF>

more effective and beneficial for both sides.

iii) Enhancing the European dimension of current bilateral initiatives

The attempts made by the EUNIC China Cluster at bringing together bilateral initiatives of individual Member States in China under a common "umbrella" during the 2012 EU-China Year of Intercultural Dialogue, without additional funding, opened new ways of cooperation, which will be worth further exploring and deepening in the future. Pooling individual initiatives/projects/programmes and putting them into a broader EU perspective can help achieve a greater scale and critical mass which is important to have an impact in a big country like China. This can also improve planning and help identify relevant areas of engagement in a more concerted way. One concrete area worth looking at is that of festivals in China, which can offer interesting opportunities for engagement with high impact at low costs.

iv) Facilitating networking and cooperation among culture professionals

Cooperation at the level of cultural operators and among networks is essential to ensure the active involvement of civil society and go beyond the formal level of administrations. Cultural operators on the ground represent the power of practice and the unexpected, the power of intellectual exchange and its irreplaceable role in inspiring not only audiences, but also media and policy-makers. Greater benefits can be derived from encouraging synergies, networking and the exchange of experiences and practices also at the level of players on the ground. This can contribute to the transfer of knowledge and the capacity-building of operators as well as enhance concrete cultural cooperation. By favouring the development of long-term relationships, networking also has a positive impact on trust-building, thus generating positive long-term effects on EU-China cultural relations. While the actual cooperation initiatives should stem from players on the ground themselves, closer cooperation among EU Member States can contribute to ensuring that the necessary conditions that may encourage increased cultural cooperation are in place.

Supporting cooperation among culture professionals through calls for proposals and partnerships with the private sector

Calls for proposals based on transparent and objective selection processes are a well-suited tool to support cooperation among culture professionals and respect the autonomy of the culture sector. Under the EU Culture Programme (2007-2013), a special action was launched in 2007 to support projects in cooperation with Chinese partners. This resulted in the financing of 10 concrete projects based on cooperation among partners from at least three different EU Member States and China. The interest triggered by this call for proposals proved the readiness of cultural professionals and organisations to seize opportunities to build partnerships and cooperation. This approach was also appreciated by the Chinese authorities. Similar opportunities also exist under the Media Mundus Programme²⁵ to reinforce cooperation among independent audio-visual professionals. In the future, new opportunities may arise under the future EU instruments currently being negotiated²⁶, hence the importance of ensuring openings to support cultural activities in the most relevant ones.

Apart from the funding opportunities that may be offered by EU instruments, innovative modalities will also need to be found at Member States' level, including by

²⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/media/mundus/funding/index_en.htm

²⁶ The Commission proposal for the Creative Europe programme, for instance, foresees the possibility to open dedicated "windows" for third countries or regions provided that additional appropriations are available. Opportunities under the future Partnership Instrument will need to be explored.

devising ways of pooling resources among different Member States. In parallel, it will be necessary to look more into ways of developing partnerships with the private sector. This can lead to win-win situations both for the cultural operators and the businesses involved. Supporting the cultural sector can become a special branding opportunity for businesses and help them build their image and gain market access. At the same time, it can be of benefit for cultural operators who can get financial support for their projects.

v) Supporting skills and professional development

On both the EU and Chinese side there is a need for more **skills and professional development** in the cultural and creative sectors. On the one hand, EU professionals need to be better equipped to deal with the specificities of the Chinese reality and culture. On the other hand, there is a strong demand on the Chinese side for greater professional skills both in terms of cultural production and management. There is also a true demand on both sides for intercultural training aimed at raising cross-cultural awareness and understanding. Language training is also a clear need on both sides. In addition to responding to the skills development needs of the targeted professionals (cultural operators, cultural diplomats, etc.), training is also an important long-term investment as it generates a systemic effect on trust-building and the establishment of more sustainable connections and networks.

Cultural leadership training

Some Member States already propose training opportunities for cultural leaders / managers. Building on existing programmes, there is potential for enhancing training opportunities for European and Chinese cultural professionals by envisaging closer cooperation among EU Member States and with China. This could start by developing greater synergies among Member States (e.g. developing joint training modules, reuniting under a common umbrella different training modules based on each Member State's fields of excellence). A next step could be the development of a more European dimension to the training offered by Member States by combining the latter with a European experience (e.g. a European summer school prior to bilateral visits).

vi) Developing cooperation on a better informed basis

A more systematic and structured collection and sharing of information is fundamental to develop better awareness of the actual opportunities and challenges, potential partners (or competitors) as well as to capitalize on past successes and failures. This needs to be underpinned by measures aimed at ensuring a regular update of research results, given the fast-evolving Chinese reality.

Pooling resources for joint research or studies

The production of the Europe-China Cultural Compass²⁷ by the EUNIC network is a good illustration of a joint effort aimed at collecting knowledge, experience and resources to support practitioners in developing EU-China cultural cooperation. Similar efforts will need to be stepped up in order to ensure a systematic and structured collection and sharing of information as well as regular updates in different sectors. As a starting point, there is a need to better identify the key EU and Chinese actors engaged in each sector of interest as well as to map out ongoing cooperation activities on which further cooperation can build. Further research needs will have to be defined

²⁷ http://www.eunic-online.eu/sites/eunic-online.eu/files/EN_Europe%20China%20Cultural%20Compass_E-Book_2011.pdf

in consultation with operators on the ground.

Funding possibilities will need to be identified not only within EU instruments (some opportunities may exist for instance under the Policy Dialogue Support Facility (PDSF)²⁸ or the EU-China Trade Project (EUCTP)²⁹), but also by looking into ways of pooling Member States' resources (e.g. funding by groupings of Member States – Ministries, Embassies/Consulates or Cultural Institutes, platforms or groupings of cultural operators) and/or of attracting private funds (e.g. private foundations).

In all the areas described above, delivering added value through increased cooperation at EU level means that the EU and Member States present in China need to ensure that the necessary structures and resources are in place in order to develop their cooperation efforts with China on a more structured, better informed and coordinated basis. In the short-term, this will translate, in particular, into identifying and better exploiting the existing resources, structures and tools, including the currently available EU instruments for China³⁰. In the medium to long-term, diversified solutions will have to be identified including by exploring the opportunities that may arise in the context of relevant future EU instruments, devising new approaches leading to increased cooperation and pooling of resources among Member States, attracting private funding, developing partnerships with the Chinese side.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above analysis, the expert group agreed on the set of recommendations presented in this section. These include both general recommendations and principles for a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations and specific recommendations focusing on the implementation of this approach. The recommendations cover the period until 2020 and are addressed to EU Institutions and Services, Member States, cultural institutes, as well as cultural organisations. They propose an approach which is open and flexible and allows adapting the EU strategic objectives to the fast evolving Chinese reality. In addition, the proposed recommendations and principles guiding EU-China cultural relations may be useful in the development of a more general EU strategy on culture and external relations.

5.1 General recommendations for a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations

In order to develop a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations, the expert group recommends:

1) To consider the following guiding principles:

- a. To anchor cultural cooperation on the principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.
- b. To adopt a broad, articulated vision of culture in the context of EU external action considered in all its facets as a social, economic and political asset for the EU and its Member States.

²⁸ <http://www.eu-chinapdsf.org/english/home.asp>

²⁹ <http://www.euctp.org/>

³⁰ Including PDSF, EUCTP, ICI+, Media Mundus.

- c. To share universal values to which the EU attaches utmost importance, such as freedom of expression, free and equal access to information, which are essential for creativity to flourish, through concrete action and cooperation.
- d. To respect the autonomy of the cultural sector and prioritize bottom-up processes.
- e. To make full use of the potential of culture as a generator of dialogue and mutual understanding, a vehicle for sharing values and promoting interests, and a prime source for developing trust and encouraging cross-fertilization between societies.
- f. To engage in long-term, two-way processes aimed at building trust over time and seeking mutual understanding and benefits with China.
- g. To adopt a multi-level approach considering the broader regional context in Asia and addressing different levels of governance within China (local, regional, non-governmental actors).
- h. To develop inclusive processes building on existing expertise and structures both within the EU and Member States and in China and using them more strategically.
- i. To pay special attention to the young generation as a key target group and identify the most effective means of communication and outreach, including the internet and social media.

2) To integrate culture as part of EU policy towards China more systematically and strategically.

To reach this goal, the EU and Member States should:

- a. Develop closer cooperation and more integrated working modalities between relevant Ministries and departments in charge of culture and foreign policies.
- b. Integrate culture as a 'soft power asset' in the context of public diplomacy and outreach strategies more effectively.
- c. Ensure the articulation of cultural diplomacy and cooperation on the one hand and other relevant policies and priorities of external relations on the other (such as sustainable development, urbanisation, human rights, trade and IPR issues, rule of law, security).
- d. Include more systematically cultural and societal aspects into their country analysis.

3) To support bottom-up approaches as well as direct and sustainable cooperation among cultural professionals and organisations from the EU and China through training, mobility, networking and concrete support to project development.

4) To build the capacity and improve the competitiveness of European cultural and creative sectors.

5) To explore adequate and diversified resources both at the EU and Member States' level as well as seek effective partnerships in China.

More specifically:

- a. To ensure support for actions aimed at a strategic approach to culture in EU external relations in the future EU instruments in the fields of culture and external relations;
- b. To design innovative approaches for Member States to share tasks and pool resources to achieve greater economies of scale and to leverage their efforts at EU level;
- c. To attract private funding and involve private cultural stakeholders, such as businesses and foundations.

The expert group recommends that these general recommendations and guiding principles shall be considered when developing a strategic approach to culture in the EU's relations with other third countries/regions.

5.2 Specific recommendations for the implementation of a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations

Based on the general recommendations and guiding principles, in order to implement a strategic approach to culture in EU-China relations, the expert group recommends:

- 1) To project a more coherent image of the EU in China through a better integration of culture in public diplomacy strategies and a more strategic use of the potential of virtual tools to facilitate not only showcasing and branding but also concrete forms of cultural cooperation.**
- 2) To undertake a more systematic and structured collection of information on a sector-specific basis** about the opportunities and challenges of engaging in EU-China cultural cooperation.
- 3) To strengthen interactions among the EU cultural stakeholders present in China through an expanded network** bringing together Member States' representatives competent for culture, cultural institutes, including the EUNIC China Cluster, as well as major cultural organisations, foundations and private networks as appropriate.
- 4) To task a dedicated cultural focal point in the EU Delegation in Beijing with working closely with Member States** in order to facilitate stakeholders' cooperation, gathering and sharing of information as well as joint approaches vis-à-vis the Chinese authorities on issues of common interest for Member States.

5.3 The way forward: towards a concrete step change in EU-China cultural relations

In order to move towards a concrete step change in EU-China cultural relations, the expert group recommends:

- 1) To promptly launch a pilot phase in 2013** in order to:
 - a. Task a dedicated cultural focal point in the EU Delegation in Beijing with working closely with Member States;**
 - b. Establish an expanded network of relevant EU cultural stakeholders in Europe and in China and facilitate interactions and information sharing;**
 - c. Launch a series of sector-specific mapping and research, with a view to:**

- i. gathering information on the state of play in selected sectors of cooperation between the EU and China,
- ii. making proposals on how to best derive EU added value in the selected sectors,
- iii. analysing the feasibility of proposed actions.

d. Priorities for the pilot phase shall take into account the areas of mutual interest analysed in section 3 above.

2) To identify concrete priorities, actions and resources for the medium to long-term, based on the results of the pilot phase.

3) To assess the results of implemented actions on a regular basis with a possible mid-term evaluation of the proposed strategy (by 2017).