



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

Brussels, 7 April 2014

Maximizing the impact of cultural diplomacy in EU foreign policy

How can the European Union and its Member States maximize the impact of culture in foreign policy? Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, addresses this question today at a meeting involving policy makers, cultural organisations, artists and academics from 54 European and non-European countries (list below). They will discuss proposed recommendations by experts which could form the basis of a new EU strategy on the role of culture in the EU's external relations. The proposals follow a pilot initiative, launched by the European Parliament and led by the European Commission in cooperation with experts from the Goethe Institute and other cultural organisations. Pierre Vimont, Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service, and Morten Løkkegaard, Vice-President of the European Parliament's Culture and Education Committee, will also address today's discussion, which will feed into final recommendations, due to be published in the next few weeks.

Androulla Vassiliou, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, said: *"Culture is a vital part of our collective European identity and helps to underpin our shared values such as respect for human rights, diversity and equality. Cultural diplomacy is an opportunity for us to share these values and our European culture with other countries. Developing a more active and dynamic role for European culture on the international stage is one of my key priorities. Used intelligently, I believe this 'soft power' can benefit the EU and its Member States in their relations with the wider world."*

The pilot initiative aims to promote better cooperation between Member States and to maximize the added value of European cultural diplomacy. Increased cooperation between cultural institutes and civil society, partnerships between cities and the creation of European 'creative hubs' in countries such as China and Brazil are among the ideas which have been under discussion during the consultations involving the Commission and cultural groups. The meeting will also discuss how best to help artists, producers and companies to break into new markets outside the EU.

Today's meeting takes place at the Palais des beaux-arts ('Bozar') in Brussels.

Next steps

The report and the recommendations– which will also include ideas put forward at the conference – will be discussed with the Member States under the Greek and Italian Presidencies of the EU.

Background

Culture as a key component of external relations, based on the [European Agenda for Culture](#), has been one of the three strategic objectives for the Commission and the Member States since 2007 – alongside cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and culture as a catalyst for creativity.

In addition to the 28 EU Member States, the following partner countries of the EU are involved in this initiative:

- the 16 neighbouring countries of the EU: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine;
- the 10 strategic partners of the EU: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States of America

Participating cultural institutes include:

[The Goethe-Institut, Brussels](#)

[BOZAR, Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels](#)

[The British Council, Brussels](#)

[The Danish Cultural Institute, Brussels](#)

[ECF European Cultural Foundation](#)

[IFA Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen](#)

[The Institut français, Paris](#)

[KEA European Affairs](#)

For more information

European Commission: [Culture](#) and [culture in external relations](#)

European Commission: [Education and training](#)

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