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PRESS RELEASE

PRESS CONFERENCE
19H15 7TH APRIL 2014
BOZAR, RUE RAVENSTEIN 23, 1000 BRUXELLES
IN THE PRESENCE OF ANDROULLA VASSILIOU, PIERRE VIMONT AND MEP MORTEN LØKKEGAARD

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Today, nobody cares about European culture. We have a tradition, a vision, a culture of the past, we have legacy, but we don't have a present culture and we don't have a future.

*Frédéric Martel
Researcher, Journalist, Writer*

Since the adoption of the European agenda for culture in 2007, the entry into force of the Lisbon treaty and the establishment in 2011 of the European External Action Service (EEAS), several important initiatives, both at policy and civil society level, have been launched to underpin and promote the importance of culture in external relations. The European Parliament consequently launched a Preparatory Action¹ in order to obtain clear and detailed recommendations for policymaking within this field.

How can the role of culture in the EU external relations be reinforced in order to strengthen the ties between nations? What is the potential added value of a strategic approach to culture in EU external relations, and how do we achieve this added value? What is the role of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and all stakeholders involved, public as well as private? **Androulla Vassiliou**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, **Pierre Vimont**, Executive Secretary General of the European External Action Service and **MEP Morten Løkkegaard**, Vice-President of the Committee on Culture and Education of the European Parliament, will try to answer these questions during the international conference on culture in EU External Relations.

¹ A Preparatory Action should be designed to prepare proposals with a view to the adoption of future actions and policies. The legal basis for pilot projects and preparatory actions is in the Financial Regulation, in Title IV, Article 54(2)(a) and (b) on the implementation of the budget.

The conference will bring together artists, cultural operators, academics, NGO representatives and high level policy makers to debate the consortium's findings and advise the Commission and other relevant EU institutions on effective follow up to the recommendations of the Preparatory Action. The 26 countries covered by the Preparatory Action will be represented at the conference ensuring international engagement and involvement of key representatives for the debate.

The international conference on Culture in EU External Relations to be held 7th-8th April will bring together academia, artists, culture operators, NGOs and high level policy makers in order to discuss the results of the Preparatory Action as well as the recommendations for a strategic approach to culture in EU external relations.

PROGRAMME

Monday 7th April 2014

Master of Ceremony

Pavol Demeš (SK), Transatlantic Fellow German Marshall Fund Bratislava, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

17:00-17:30 **REGISTRATION**

17:30-18:15 **Opening statements**

- **Androulla Vassiliou**, Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilinguism and Youth
- **Pierre Vimont**, Executive Secretary General, European External Action Service
- **Morten Løkkegaard**, Member of the European Parliament, Vice-Chair, Culture and Education Committee

18:15-18:20 **Introduction to the Preparatory Action**

Johannes Ebert (DE), Secretary General, Goethe-Institut

18:20-18:50 **Presentation of the results**

Prof Yudhishtir Raj Isar (FR/IN), Professor of Cultural Policy Studies, The American University of Paris, Scientific Coordinator & Team Leader of the Preparatory Action

18:50-19:10 **Q&A Session**

19:10-19:15 **Concluding statement**

Pavol Demeš (SK), Transatlantic Fellow German Marshall Fund Bratislava, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

19:15 **COCKTAIL**

Tuesday 8th April 2014

Master of Ceremony

Pavol Demeš (SK), Transatlantic Fellow German Marshall Fund Bratislava, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

09:00-09:30 **WELCOME COFFEE**

09:30-09:35 **Opening statements**

Pavol Demeš (SK), Transatlantic Fellow German Marshall Fund Bratislava, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia

09:35-10:15 **Culture in EU external relations: realities and expectations**

moderated by **Marietje Schaake**, Member of the European Parliament

- **Sir Martin Davidson** (UK), Chief Executive, British Council
- **Sana Tamzini** (TN), President, FACT (Cultural Associations Forum in Tunisia), CONNEXIONS, UNESCO
- **Ting Xu** (CN), Director, Shenzhen Culture Office
- **Nina Obuljen Koržinek** (HR), Research fellow, Institute for Development and International Relations of Zagreb

10:15-11:00 **Q&A Session**

11:00-11:30 **COFFEE BREAK**

11:30-12:00 **The potential added value of European dimensions and strategic approaches to culture in external relations**

moderated by **Gottfried Wagner** (AT), ad hoc expert to the Preparatory Action

- **Pooja Sood** (IN), Director/Curator, Khoj, International Artists' Association, New Delhi
- **Ferdinand Richard** (FR), President, Roberto Cimetta Fund
- **Ambassador Cynthia P. Schneider** (US), Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy, Georgetown University, Washington
- **Gijs de Vries** (NL), former adviser to Javier Solana, author of *A Europe Open to Culture: Proposals for a European Strategy of Cultural Diplomacy*

12:00-12:45 **Q&A Session**

12:45-14:15 **LUNCH**

- 14:15-14:45 **The ‘smart’ and flexible options for the achievement of a strategic approach to culture in external relations**
moderated by **Isabelle Schwarz** (DE/FR), Head of Advocacy, Research and Development, European Cultural Foundation
- **Oussama Rifahi** (LB), Director, AFAC-Arab Fund for Arts and Culture
 - **Pawel Potoroczyn** (PL), Director, Adam Mickiewicz Institute
 - **Corina Şuteu** (RO), President, FilmETC (Bucharest-New York)
 - **François Rivasseau**, Deputy Head, EU Delegation in the US
- 14:45-15:30 **Q&A Session**
- Wrap-up session/conclusions**
- 15:30-15:35 • **Sana Ouchtati**, Project Coordinator, Preparatory Action
- 15:35-15:45 • **Alain Ruche**, Senior Advisor on cultural matters, Office of the Secretary General, European External Action Service
- 15:45-15:55 • **Jan Truszczyński**, Director General DG Education and Culture, European Commission
- 16:00-17:00 ***CLOSING DRINK***

EXPERT OPINIONS

A range of experts of the Preparatory Action have been asked to summarise the situation, the challenges and the potential of culture in external relations prior to the conference. This section introduces their perspectives and opinions.



Prof. Yudhishtir Raj Isar

Professor of Cultural Policy Studies, The American University of Paris
Team Leader & Scientific Coordinator, Preparatory Action

Yudhishtir Raj Isar is an analyst, advisor and public speaker who straddles several worlds of cultural theory, experience and practice. He is Professor of Cultural Policy Studies at The American University of Paris and 'Eminent Research Visitor' at the University of Western Sydney, Australia.

Why is culture relevant for external relations?

The 'culture' we have been concerned with under the Preparatory Action consists of the works and practices of human creativity, including heritage and education in the humanities. These aesthetic and intellectual dimensions of the human condition have become central to the way in which individuals and groups define and locate themselves in the world, as they construct 'narratives' of who they are, where they come from and where they want to go. It is through culture in this sense that people increasingly seek to represent themselves and want to be represented by others. This is particularly important in a time of accelerated globalisation; global recognition of different identities is part and parcel of the 'global cultural citizenship,' the Draft Report advocates. This means that peoples engage culturally with each other through stances of mutual learning and sharing. These imply shared cultural rights and responsibilities as well as access and participation for all in a spirit of cosmopolitan solidarity.

Hence the importance now being attached everywhere to 'projecting' or 'promoting' a cultural image of the nation – or city, or region, or ethnic group – internationally, precisely because governments at all levels recognise that cultural relations are meaningful for their people – often more than political

or trade relations can be. As the EU consists of a singular – even unprecedented – community of nations, the ‘soft’ cultural dimensions of this European-ness offer many rich pathways of communication, exchange and mutual learning amongst states and societies, along with the benefits afforded by the ‘hard’ dimensions of economic or political power.

The EU institutions, notably the Commission and the Parliament, have recognised this. This is precisely why culture has come to be seen as centrally relevant for external relations and why this Preparatory Action has been undertaken.

What is the potential added value of a strategic approach to this field?

Firstly, a strategic approach would involve the pooling of ideas, resources and personnel and ways of deploying cultural resources that would create critical mass for greater impact than if each national community were to do it alone. In addition to this practical benefit as regards cultural action itself, the approach would also demonstrate a shared sense of belonging, a ‘soul’ that exists beyond the market. Secondly, at the level of the EU itself a strategic approach would enable the Commission and other EU institutions to play an overarching facilitating role that reinforces and amplifies the effectiveness of what individual country actors do.

What are the current reality and the current expectations in the field of culture in external relations?

The current reality is that governments and cultural communities like European Member States and to some extent the European Commission have already built cultural relationships with counterparts in third countries. But these relationships are still rather limited in most cases. They can all be diversified and strengthened. The benefits would accrue both to Europeans and their third country partners. The inquiry has shown that the latter are less interested in stronger patterns of traditional cultural diplomacy in which cultures are put on display, or ‘promoted’ abroad. Instead, what they are looking for are things like joint reflection, debate, research and experimentation, co-creation and co-curation. While cultural actors in third countries understand that culture is used to position a country in terms of both access to markets, international political influence and the like – their own governments do this as well and in some cases more deliberately than European countries – they also want the EU to transcend this instrumentalist position and operate far more in terms of mutual listening and learning in the spirit of ‘global cultural citizenship’ that we advocate. Third country cultural actors and operators expect European counterparts to share knowledge, knowhow and experience with them in order to make cultural systems and policies function better.



Rod Fisher

Director, International Intelligence on Culture
Independent Expert, Preparatory Action

Rod Fisher is Director of International Intelligence on Culture. He is also Associate Lecturer on European Cultural Policies at Goldsmiths College, University of London.

Why is culture relevant for external relations? What is the potential added value of a strategic approach to this field?

In the main, gone are the days when cultural diplomacy was seen as a somewhat esoteric process confined to the diplomatic sphere to further intergovernmental relations or to seal important trade deals. In today's interconnected world, few countries can ignore the fundamental changes that have been taking place in international relations as a result of the emergence of new communication tools and social media that is transforming interpersonal contact. The sphere of international relations is no longer the sole preserve of diplomatic staff. Practitioners in culture, education, development etc. are helping to shape perceptions of peoples and nations as are, of course, the commercially driven creative industries.

The factors driving these changes include:

- *the political importance attached to the growth of the creative and cultural industries;*
- *the quest of nations, regions and cities for greater international visibility;*
- *the deployment of culture as instrument to 'mend fences' when political relations have broken down;*
- *the promotion of intercultural dialogue;*
- *a determination to attract foreign investment and tourism;*
- *the desire of many EU Member States and their cultural practitioners to engage with the larger emerging economies.*

What are the current reality and the current expectations in the field of culture in external relations?

The cultural space that was once primarily the preserve of governments and their national cultural institutes is now occupied by many cultural NGOs, artists, artistic directors, administrators, networks etc. Much international cultural activity in and beyond Europe takes place without government assistance or even awareness. The desire of cultural practitioners in Europe to engage with external counterparts as a means of developing their practice, reaching new audiences, honing their skills and building relationships has never been stronger. Similarly, there is a strong desire in third countries to engage with European practitioners. The cultural sector is looking to the EU and its Member States to overcome the current impediments in terms of resources, visas, the need for simplification of procedures etc. in order to achieve deeper engagement.



Damien Helly

Professor, College of Europe

Independent Expert, Preparatory Action

Damien Helly has been a specialist on the cultural dimensions of the external action of the European Union since 2006. He is currently policy officer for EU's external action at the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) and visiting professor at the College of Europe, Bruges, on EU's diplomacy, security and defence. Damien holds a PhD in political science from Sciences Po, Paris and has published extensively on the EU's external action.

Why is culture relevant for external relations? What is the potential added value of a strategic approach to this field?

Today's international affairs have an increasingly significant cultural dimension: they relate to translation and language learning, cultural differences and mutual understanding; they help avoid violence and conflict through the use of social media, global web-based technology as well as the cultural and creative industries in global value chains.

In other words, culture is the golden thread of trust in international relations. Without trust, you don't smile, laugh and love or find something touching and beautiful, you don't make friends, you don't make business, you hardly make peace.

What is needed to strengthen the role of culture in international relations?

Europeans must spend more time listening to what their colleagues of the cultural sector abroad need from them, and less time in procedures to manage their effective response to these needs.

European states would benefit from more frequent and deepened joint cultural initiatives abroad and would act as unique enabling power for peace and trust in the world.

More translation at all levels of external relations would make everybody's lives easier. The EU should invest massively in a European translation facility at the disposal of the world, as a common public good.

Less borders for cultural professionals, more freedom on the web, free and fair regulation of the internet, respect for cultural and linguistic diversity are essential elements.

There ought to be a Worldwide Cultural European Radio Service, as one channel of a new European digital diplomacy. European broadcasting agencies should get together to deepen their co-production into a European initiative.



Gottfried Wagner
Ad hoc Expert, Preparatory Action

Gottfried Wagner is currently working for the Austrian ministry of education and women's affairs.

Why is culture relevant for external relations? What is the potential added value of a strategic approach to this field?

External relations are not only about economy or politics; in the end it is about people, their imagination, curiosity, fears, and it is about empowering shared futures.

Culture can free commonalities and respect for diversity. Its positive energy deserves and demands nurturing, knowledgeably resourced frames and autonomy.

In Europe, we Poles, French, Austrians, Danes etc. have gathered manifold and convincing experience that cultural cooperation, supported in its autonomy, works. Now it's about doing things together where it makes sense; the challenges are global and if we don't create synergies, we won't achieve enough. Our European Union has a lot to offer – and to learn – in the global discourse. To do so successfully, we need a bold cultural strategy.

What are the current reality and the current expectations in the field of culture in external relations? What is needed to strengthen the role of culture in international relations?

Curiosity is enormous vis-à-vis Europe and this 'strangely interesting Union'. Given our expectations and those of our partners across the world, we don't do enough in bolstering cultural relations and sometimes we still do it insufficiently, following old paradigms rather than the 21st century spirit of cooperation for mutual benefit. Yet there is impressive evidence that could be applied at EU level as well if key stakeholders work on a magic formula for shared practice. It is about supporting and complementing what EU member states do, and it is about including civil society and the cultural experts right from the start.

Adequate strategies will need some operational flesh. Given the overall situation in regards to e.g. resources, pilot projects could make a good starting point.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Preparatory Action ‘Culture in EU External Relations’ is an initiative funded by the European Parliament and implemented by the European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture, through a Consortium of cultural institutes. (see more information on the consortium below).

This Preparatory Action was initiated by the European Parliament following its Resolution on the cultural dimensions of the EU external action which called for the development of a visible common EU strategy on culture in the EU external relations.

The Preparatory Action consists of the following stages:

- Stage 1** A comprehensive mapping of existing resources, approaches and strategies regarding culture in external relations in Member States and in a number of EU partner countries.
- Stage 2** A consultations process involving a wide variety of stakeholders from both the EU and third countries which contributes to identifying strategies and visions on the role of culture to the development of external relations as well as the positioning of different actors vis-à-vis this topic.
- Stage 3** A final conference to be held 7th-8th April 2014 to draw conclusions and recommendations for a strategic approach to mobilising the potential of culture in EU external relations.

In addition to the EU Member States, the Preparatory Action covers 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, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia, 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

The purpose of the action is to facilitate and support an on-going process of research, exchange of knowledge and public debate about the role of culture in the EU external relations and to give recommendations for a strategic approach to mobilising the potential within this field.

ORGANISING CONSORTIUM MEMBERS

CONSORTIUM LEADER

[Goethe-Institut](#)



[European Cultural Foundation](#)



[Centre for Fine Arts Brussels](#)



[Danish Cultural Institute](#)



[KEA European Affairs](#)



[Institut français](#)



[ifa \(Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen\)](#)



[British Council](#)



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INFORMATION AND GRAPHICS:

Additional information on the Preparatory Action as well as logos and graphics can be found on the Preparatory Action website (please follow link below).

PROGRAMME OF THE CONFERENCE:

Changes to the programme may occur prior to the conference. Please refer to the programme on the Preparatory Action website for the most recent version.

Website: <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/>