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**THE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION. THE CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH  
THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific states
ASEF	Asia-Europe Foundation
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
CAI	Comprehensive Agreement on Investment
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CoR	Committee of the Regions
DG CNECT	Directorate-General for Digital and Connectivity
DG EAC	Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, previously Directorate-General for Education and Culture
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships, previously Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO)
DG NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EACEA	Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency
EEAS	European External Action Service
EESC	European Economic and Social Committee
EU	European Union
EUNIC	European Union National Institutes for Culture
EYCH	European Year of Cultural Heritage
FPI	Service for Foreign Policy Instruments
GATS	General Agreement on Trade in Services
G-7	Group of seven
G-20	Group of twenty
HR/VP	High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NDICI	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
MPF	Multiannual Financial Framework
ODA	Official Development Aid
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
PI	Partnership Instrument
PRC	People's Republic of China
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TFEU	Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## **INTRODUCTION: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AMIDST POLITICAL TENSIONS**

### **I. RELEVANCE AND OBJECTIVES**

“If I were to do it again from scratch, I would start with culture” is a quote commonly attributed to Jean Monnet, who is acclaimed as the father of Europe. Yet, as a policy domain culture has for a long time been conspicuous by its absence from the European project, despite providing the foundation for shared values and objectives and thus enabling the integration process. In the last decades of the previous century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, culture gradually entered the international agenda, first as a cultural exception to trade agreements and then as cultural diversity under UNESCO’s leadership. In addition, the need for reinforced Public Diplomacy efforts became apparent in the aftermath of the 9/11, while the European states are increasingly engaging in decolonisation, both within their institutions and practices.

As a consequence, the European Union (EU) was slowly granted competences in the sphere of culture, but it was not until 2016 that its foreign policy dimension crystallised. That momentum for culture in International Relations has faded away under the new European Commission. To this must be added the constant challenge for the EU abroad – there is still a lack of understanding of the complex supranational structure. Moreover, the EU’s legitimacy is under attack by populists, Eurosceptics and disinformation campaigns. On the other hand, in its new-found quest for global leadership the Union is facing growing competition from other players, most notably China. Recent political tensions, which some label as the start of a Second Cold War, put at risk the cultural cooperation with the ancient civilisation. Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the cultural sector, with all venues forced to shut down.

Thus, the present thesis takes consideration of the obstacles outlined above, as well as of the underexploited potential of culture to make a positive contribution to International Relations, and in particular to the EU’s external action aspirations. The objective is to map the existing Cultural Diplomacy legal instruments and activities, and analyse their performance in order to identify areas for improvement. The study is based on the hypothesis that, while culture is recognised as a foreign policy area, it is still in its infancy and requires adjustments in terms of priorities and budgets. In other words, there is a need for awareness raising and mainstreaming among politicians and practitioners, as well as for greater flexibility and adaptability to new circumstances such as digitalisation.

### **II. METHODOLOGY**

To that end, this work carries out a legal and policy analysis of official European Union documents, and an extensive literature review of publications of independent analysts. This is complemented by two interviews with relevant experts in the field. Due to the intangible and highly subjective nature of culture, it is impossible to measure it quantitatively. The scope of the study is exclusively limited to the application of culture in the International Relations between the EU and third countries, leaving out the internal dimension within Member States. This research piece contributes to the ongoing debate on the use of the term Cultural Diplomacy versus International Cultural Relations. It also aims to bridge the gap between the abundant commentaries on the Joint Communication, published around 2016, and the relations with China, an object of study between

2012 and 2016, on the one hand, and the accelerated changes in the last year both in terms of culture and rivalry with China, on the other.

The thesis starts by delimiting the conceptual framework of Cultural Diplomacy and describing its historical manifestations. Secondly, the legal basis for the European Union's competence is traced from the 1970s to the present day, with a particular focus on soft law, namely the 2016 strategy on International Cultural Relations. The third chapter is dedicated to the implementation of this policy through concrete steps, adopting a two-fold approach which first zooms in into the actors and then into the most successful cultural programmes. Next is presented a comprehensive case study of the cultural aspects of the relationship between the European Union and the People's Republic of China. Lastly, the conclusion summarises the main findings and highlights possible paths towards strengthening cultural diversity in International Relations.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE CONCEPT AND PRACTICE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

### **I. DEFINITION AND RELATED TERMS**

Before turning to Cultural Diplomacy, it is worth examining the two concepts that compose it – namely, culture and diplomacy. It must be born in mind that none of the European Union legal sources provide a definition of culture. The modern anthropological concept of culture emerged in late 19<sup>th</sup> century when Edward Tylor (1871, p. 1) described it as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. Definitions then rapidly proliferated and Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952) collected more than 150 of them. Nowadays, the often-cited iceberg model attributed to Hall (1976) emphasises the importance of invisible elements - abstract ideas, values and perceptions underlying the actual behaviour. Hence, culture's key characteristics include socially learned, shared, symbolic, integrated, and dynamic (Haviland, Prins, Walrath and McBride, 2010, pp. 324-332).

Similarly, definitions of diplomacy abound (Marshall, 1999, p. 7) and confusion is commonplace (Nicolson, 1939, pp. 8-16). As an essential tool for the implementation of foreign policy, diplomacy is understood as “the conduct of relations between states and other entities with standing in world politics by official agents and by peaceful means” (Bull, 1976, p. 156). The central role of negotiation is recognised by the majority of scholars, take for example Charles de Martens who defines diplomacy as the science or art of negotiation (de Martens, 1866, p. xiii). The main objective of diplomacy is to maintain the peaceful international order by minimising frictions and building consensus, and this is where Cultural Diplomacy comes into play.

The most cited definition of Cultural Diplomacy is the one provided by Milton Cummings (2003, p. 1) that describes it as “the exchange of ideas, information, values, systems, traditions, beliefs, and other aspects of culture, with the intention of fostering mutual understanding”. It is thus evident that the key to Cultural Diplomacy is engaging into a dialogue, in other words, a bidirectional communication, and fostering trust with the purpose of sustaining a long-term relationship. In practice this is achieved through a large variety of activities: language teaching, exchange of students and scientists, export of cultural goods and services (most notably, movies and songs), organisation of events (such as exhibitions and concerts), etc. These are usually

initiated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or that of Culture, as well as by semi-independent cultural institutions under the arm's length principle. However, Cultural Diplomacy goes beyond this list of strictly cultural activities as it encompasses any effort to foster dialogue and understanding, such as participation in international organisations or trade.

Cultural Diplomacy is thus seen as a sub-field of Public Diplomacy, that is to say, the "official communication aimed at foreign publics" or the part of diplomatic activity aimed at shaping public opinion (Melissen, 2005, p. 3). Public Diplomacy in turn is encompassed into Soft Power, a term coined by Joseph Nye in 1990 to express one state's ability to get other countries to want what it wants through attraction rather than coercion, distinguishing between this co-optive power and the hard power of military and economic nature. Nye (2004) specifically lists culture, political values and foreign policies as sources of Soft Power, which highlights the importance of Cultural Diplomacy; and affirms that it includes both external actions and serving as a "city on the hill", that is to say, policies at home that attract talent or inspire others to emulate one's example.

On the other hand, Richard Arndt (2005, p. xviii) distinguishes Cultural Diplomacy from International Cultural Relations that "grow naturally and organically, without government intervention". (For an illustration of the relationship between all concepts see [Appendix 1](#).) Although the term International Cultural Relations is broader and more neutral (advocated for by the British Council and the Goethe-Institut), the present research piece focuses on Cultural Diplomacy (preferred by the Institut Français), as a deliberate attempt, in this case by the European Union, to pursue an agenda with the ultimate goal of building positive relationships with other international actors. In addition, this conceptualisation provides a better starting point for the exploration of the relations with the People's Republic of China, a state that invests heavily in Cultural Diplomacy.

## **II. BRIEF HISTORY AND TYPES**

Early diplomacy did not entail relations between nation states but between cultures, and ever since the Bronze Age ceremony and ritual have been of utmost importance, especially the exchange of gifts including information, goods and people (Ibid., pp. 1-2). Even during the so-called Dark Ages rulers such as Charlemagne promoted arts and even dialogue between cultures, and naturally the Renaissance put the start of intense cultural contact.

In general, the creation of Alliance Française in 1883 is considered the moment of birth of classical Cultural Diplomacy. It was then followed by Istituto Dante Alighieri in 1923, Deutsche Welle in 1924, German Academic Exchange Service in 1925, and British Council in 1934. In the context of the Cold War cultural institutes continued to proliferate: American House Institution in 1945, Goethe Institute in 1951 and Japan Foundation in 1972. By only looking at these dates one cannot help but notice that the majority of national cultural institutes appeared in a post-war context. (For a list of national cultural institutes by the year of creation see [Appendix 2](#).)

Due to the intense ideological battle during the Cold War, the study of Cultural Diplomacy has focused on the United States of America (USA). However, the war-time origins and the strong involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency resulted in the pejorative association of Cultural Diplomacy with propaganda (understood as selective or misleading information with the purpose of manipulating the audience), which ultimately led to the marginalisation of culture from foreign



policy (Topić and Sciortino, 2012, p. 13). Upon the end of the Cold War, in 1993 the USA government discontinued the Information Agency. Nevertheless, a renewed interest in Public Diplomacy appeared in the aftermath of 9/11.

As Walter Laquer affirms, in the new world *disorder* Cultural Diplomacy has increased in importance while traditional diplomacy and military power are of limited use (Laquer, 1994). In the profoundly interdependent multipolar world, it directly contributes to the main goal of diplomacy – to foster cooperation, in the following ways: creating relationships that endure beyond government changes, reaching influential members of society, cooperating despite policy differences, providing a neutral platform for people-to-people contact, transforming conflicts, combating negative image and counterbalancing misunderstanding and terrorism, *inter alia* (U.S. Department of State Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy, 2005, p. 16).

Traditionally Cultural Diplomacy has been either positive (promotion of one's culture abroad, making it accessible to foreign citizens) or negative (restricting the access to one's own culture in order to prevent it from being influenced). However, the new school of Cultural Diplomacy is focused on the mere facilitation of access, showing both the strengths and the weaknesses instead of promoting a certain image, allowing the people to make their own choices and interpretations, and listening to their input (Donfried, 2015 a). This practice is boosted by contemporary developments in the international scene, in particular the truly multilateral character of diplomacy (only possible after the end of the Cold War) and the growing digitisation.

This new interpretation is embodied by the emergent multilateral form of Cultural Diplomacy carried out by international organisations, as opposed to the unilateral national action. The list of new actors is completed by multinational companies and civil society organisations. In this regard, Corporate Cultural Diplomacy is perceived as an extended version of the increasingly popular Corporate Social Responsibility; and bottom-up initiatives signal the return to the original people-to-people nature of Cultural Diplomacy and provides a participatory and sustainable model (Donfried, 2015 b). The thesis will now take a closer look at the European Union, as the example *par excellence* of the new multilateral Cultural Diplomacy.

## **LEGAL FRAMEWORK: THE EUROPEAN UNION LEGAL SOURCES AND POLICIES IN THE SPHERE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

### **I. PRIMARY LAW**

#### **1. Competence in culture**

It is now widely accepted that rather than a mere economic integration process, the European Union is an ever-evolving political project, and as such it is based on a set of common values. However, it was not until the 1973 *Copenhagen declaration on European Identity* that culture was first mentioned as the Member States recognised the “diversity of cultures within the framework of a common European civilisation” (European Communities, 1973, §3). In fact, the document strongly emphasised the principle of unity above diversity, a commitment that was not matched by subsequent declarations (Prutsch, 2017, pp. 18-19). Instead of trying to define this shared identity, the nine Foreign Ministers presented it as a basis for a common foreign policy, commenting on the relations with various third countries or regions. (It is worth mentioning that

the question of European identity has resurfaced in recent years in light of Brexit but definition is still elusive.)

Nevertheless, at that time the Community still lacked a formal competence over cultural matters and thus action in the area was justified in economic terms, with funding coming primarily from the Structural Funds. In the mid-1980s the concerns over the democratic deficit pushed the agenda for a “People’s Europe” which envisioned culture as a way to raise citizens’ awareness of and support for the European project. But at the same time an imposition of a single model was to be avoided, which led to a permanent tension between diversity and unity, further strengthened by the establishment of the Committee of the Regions in 1992 (Barnett, 2001).

Against this backdrop, the entry into force of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1993 brought the recognition of the newly-founded Union’s legal competence in culture. Although Article 128 of the Treaty of the European Union (henceforth abbreviated TEU) mandated not only the cooperation between Member States, but also the consideration of culture in other policy areas and the cooperation with non-EU states, it explicitly prohibited the harmonisation of cultural policies. In this regard, the inclusion of Article 128 can be seen as a compromise between those Member States that wanted to expand Community’s cultural action and those that preferred to set limits to it (Forrest, 1994). Precisely the close interrelation between culture and national identity, acknowledged in 1973, is the reason why states are reticent to giving up on their cultural competence.

The Lisbon Treaty, in force since 2009, and in particular Article 6 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), clarified that the Union only has a supportive competence in culture, as opposed to complementary or exclusive ones. This means it can only “support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States” (TFEU, 2012, Article 6), always following the subsidiarity and proportionality principles. Therefore, as the Commission website stresses, its role is to help face common challenges, such as digitalisation, change of governance models and support for innovation (European Commission, n.d. f). This wording alone suffices to catch a glimpse of the persistent economic perspective – culture is seen as a means to create employment, foster social development, and cultivate the skills necessary for the creative economy.

The Maastricht provisions on respect for diversity and boosting of cooperation are now found under Title XIII of TFEU and its sole Article 167, being Paragraph 3 the most relevant to the study of EU’s Cultural Diplomacy: “The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe” (TFEU, 2012, Article 167 Paragraph 3). Culture is also mentioned in other parts of the Treaty, including: the drawing of inspiration from the cultural inheritance of Europe in the Preamble; the respect for cultural and linguistic diversity as a prerequisite for the internal market in the list of objectives in Article 3 of TEU; the need for unanimity for agreements involving the trade of cultural and audio-visual products in Article 207.4 of TFEU; as well as the respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity in Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

## **2. Competence in foreign policy**

In a similar fashion, the EU transitioned through a gradual acquisition of competence in the sphere of external action. Although the idea came around as early as the end of the Second World War, it was widely opposed by relevant figures such as General de Gaulle. The first major step

towards cooperation in foreign policy was the introduction of the European Political Cooperation through the Luxembourg report in 1970. This coordination process was developed in several stages, culminating in the adoption of the Single European Act in 1987, which put it on a Treaty basis for the first time and meant legally binding rules, but the cooperation remained distinct from the Communities. The consultation and consensus mechanism aimed at increasing the influence of European countries in the international sphere and was naturally intergovernmental in nature, with controversial issues being omitted and the Commission and the Parliament struggling to get access.

The intergovernmental character, that is to say unanimity, was passed down to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), established by the Maastricht Treaty as the second pillar of the system. In 1997 the Amsterdam Treaty made improvements to the decision-making process by allowing constructive abstention and qualified majority voting. It also provided for the creation of the office of the High Representative for the CFSP, which was activated two years later and assigned to Javier Solana until 2009. Nevertheless, the Union proved unable to behave as a collective actor since Member States could not find a common position in key moments, most notably the Yugoslavian war between 1991 and 1995 and the Iraq war in 2003.

The Treaty of Lisbon tried to address these deficiencies without removing the unanimity clause by eliminating the pillar structure and equipping the Union with the European External Action Service (EEAS), which became operational in 2010 replacing Commission's Directorate-General for the External Relations (DG RELEX). Moreover, it elevated the status of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to a Vice-President of the Commission (hereafter HR/VP). It is interesting to note that the whole rather extensive Title V, Articles 21 to 46, of TEU is dedicated to CFSP, in addition to Part 5, Articles 205 through 222, of the TFEU. Notwithstanding, the competence in foreign policy is not categorised in Articles 3 to 6 of the TFEU (2012), but listed separately in Article 2 Paragraph 4 as follows:

*The Union shall have competence, in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty on European Union, to define and implement a common foreign and security policy, including the progressive framing of a common defence policy.*

This omission in TFEU might be explained by the fact that the CFSP is based on the TEU, but even it does not clarify the legal nature of the competence. It is commonly assumed it is a supportive, or at best a shared competence, but international agreements in the area are exclusively concluded by the EU rather than adopting a mixed approach (Ramses and den Hertog, 2013). This special nature of the common foreign policy creates a certain legal vacuum, but at the same time it may be seen as beneficial for diplomats since they are accustomed to dealing with uncertainty and subtlety.

As one might expect, Public Diplomacy or Soft Power are not mentioned in primary law, but they are essential for the attainment of the Union's goals, namely, to build partnerships with third countries and promote multilateral solutions. In particular, culture has the potential to contribute to all objectives pursued through common external action as set out in Article 21 of TFEU: safeguarding of EU values, support for democracy and human rights, preservation of peace and security, boosting of social development, integration of all countries into the global economy, promotion of multilateralism and good governance.

Taking into account the type of competences in culture and foreign policy (see illustration of their parallel development in [Appendix 3](#)), the Cultural Diplomacy of the European Union itself

is limited to complementing the action of Member States, mainly through their national cultural institutes, thus reproducing the diversity-unity tension and posing the threat of competition and duplication. In order to boost synergies, the EU has adopted a specific strategy which will be the focus of the following section.

## II. SOFT LAW

### 1. European agenda for culture in a globalising world

A major step for culture both within and beyond the borders of the EU came in May 2007 when, following a preparatory action in 2003 and a consultation process in 2006, Barroso's Commission issued the Communication on the *European agenda for culture in a globalising world*. The opening quote by Denis de Rougemont reflects the above-mentioned diversity-unity "paradoxical pact" and concludes that "Europe is a culture or it is not" (European Commission, 2007, p. 1). The introductory words go on by citing Dario Fo who acknowledged that Europe was united by culture long before economic integration was conceived, and affirming that culture is instrumental in the unprecedented success of the European project.

The Communication states that the principle of "unity in diversity" (adopted as the official motto of the Union only seven years earlier) gains even more importance in the context of globalisation and interdependence and is closely linked to EU's Soft Power. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the EU played a crucial role in the negotiation of and is the only regional organisation party to the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, which entered into force a mere two months before the approval of the agenda for culture. This led to a legitimisation of the Commission's involvement and actorness in Cultural Relations (Vlassis, 2016, p. 456).

Next the Communication carries out an extensive review of EU's role in culture which at the same time serves the purpose of highlighting culture's contribution for the Union. The section first explores the internal policies and marks a radical change in the justification of culture – while previously it was only focused on the intrinsic value, the 2007 Communication shifted towards creativity as a source of economic growth, employment and social cohesion. This reformulation has permitted the small Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) to abandon its marginal position and mobilise interest in the sphere of culture in order to set the agenda (Littoz-Monnet, 2012).

Regarding the contribution to external relations, culture is seen as an integral part of cooperation programmes, bilateral agreements, and joint action with the Council of Europe. Financial and technical assistance is depicted as a means to strengthen local cultural industries but also to promote access to culture and cultural diversity. Special emphasis is laid on human rights, including cultural rights, as well as intercultural dialogue for conflict prevention. The Communication also refers to public diplomacy efforts involving cooperation between the cultural institutions of Member States, which is without a doubt the creation of EUNIC in 2006.

On the basis of this reasoning, and in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the EU (European Commission, 2007, p. 8) sets three interrelated objectives:

- *promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue;*
- *promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs;*

- *promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations.*

It is the last one that entertains the current research question on Cultural Diplomacy. The Communication committed to a “new and more pro-active cultural role for Europe in the context of international relations” (Ibid., p. 10) with the purpose of promoting knowledge and understanding. The achievement of the intercultural dialogue would be based in the first place on the language links with various countries, and in the second place on the promotion of local cultural diversity. A twin-track approach was proposed: integration of culture in all external and development policies, coupled with support for specific cultural events. The market orientation is once more palpable in the list of sub-objectives: political dialogue and cultural exchanges, market access for cultural goods, financial and technical support for cultural diversity, cooperation programmes mindful of local culture, and involvement in international initiatives such as the United Nations Alliance of Civilisations.

The strategy is operationalised through a structured dialogue with the cultural sector and the establishment of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the area of culture. External objectives are to be pursued together with the Foreign Affairs Ministers. The working methods also call for evidence-based policy-making and mainstreaming culture in all relevant policies, including external relations. The Communication mentions a number of specific external programmes, which are then treated in more detail in the Staff working document that serves as an inventory of actions in the field of culture. External and development policies are examined on a geographic basis, being the lion's share for candidate, potential candidate and neighbouring countries. It must be born in mind that the goal of ensuring a stronger presence on the international scene suffered from an inherent limitation before the creation of EEAS. On the other hand, the proposal for cultural ambassadors seems to have been shelved.

The agenda for culture enjoyed a fast acceptance by the rest of the EU institutions. The Council of the EU (2007) endorsed it in November 2007 pointing out as benefits the increased cooperation, coherence and visibility, as well as the transversal role of culture. In April 2008 the European Parliament (2008) *Resolution on cultural industries* welcomed the recognition of culture's central role, and among other matters demanded the full and effective incorporation of culture into external relations, be it in the Neighbourhood Policy, or in international treaties and forums.

The momentum continued with the December 2008 Council (2008) *Conclusions on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States*, being one of the proposed actions the establishment of specific strategies for third parties or regions. Starting in 2011 external action continuously appeared as a priority area of action in the Council work plans for culture, dating the first one to 2002. (A comparison between the work plans available in [Appendix 4](#) and a full list of resolutions and other documents regarding culture in external relations in [Appendix 5](#).)

The 2007 agenda also received a high level of approval within the academic world. Rather than introducing substantive policies, the document was praised for establishing overarching objectives and integrating culture into other policies, but the subsequent practical impact of the OMC was deemed limited or disappointing since policy recommendations were not translated into concrete steps (Craufurd, 2011). Other criticisms include the excessive economic

instrumentalisation, or the use of broad and imprecise terms such as intercultural dialogue which lack practical applicability (Näss, 2010).

## 2. Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations

The third objective of the 2007 agenda for culture gradually led to the June 2016 Commission and HR/VP Joint Communication *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*, which is the sole strategic document explicitly and exclusively dedicated to culture in external relations. In 2011 the European Parliament resolution on cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions expressed concerns over the fragmentation of projects, and specifically urged for the establishment of cultural and digital diplomacy department inside the newly-created EEAS. In 2012 a Member State expert group reported on the benefits of cultural engagement with partner countries, taking China as a case study. And in 2013-2014 the Parliament carried out the preparatory action Culture in EU external relations spanning over 54 countries, but the national reports were not made publicly available. Thus, the November 2015 Council meeting invited the HR/VP Federica Mogherini to draft the strategic principles.

The move reflected the increased interest in strengthening EU's global role, as set out in the ninth priority of Commission President Juncker's 2014 Political Guidelines. It was also in line with the Global Strategy adopted in the same month of June 2016 which explicitly recognised the role of culture in foreign policy. Further inspiration was drawn from the Agenda 2030 voted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. In this sense, the Joint Communication's importance lies in the elevation of culture to a vector of advancing international objectives such as peace and stability, diversity, employment and development. It must be born in mind that the Brexit referendum served as a wake-up call on the need for deeper integration among EU states, and the culture sector was quick to propose the arts as a way to save Europe by disturbing the status quo and imagining different futures (Polivtseva, 2017).

Apart from echoing the *agenda for culture* in boosting the double justification both in terms of global challenges (conflict prevention, refugee integration, extremism) and of economic benefits (creativity, knowledge, competitiveness), the strategy also replicates the topics of diversity and heritage. However, almost ten years later, the Commission is in the position to claim that "Europe's cultural relations with other countries are already strong" (European Commission and High Representative, 2016 b, p. 3) and calls for smart complementarity to build on the existing ties. The most significant departure from the initial agenda is the change of discourse – the concept of soft power is not mentioned, and the very first paragraph clarifies that the EU commits to promoting both International Cultural Relations and Cultural Diplomacy (although the title of the communication itself was switched from the latter to the former over the course of the negotiations).

Delivering on the Council's request, the Joint Communication establishes the following set of three value-based and two more pragmatic guiding principles:

- (a) *Promote cultural diversity and respect for human rights*
- (b) *Foster Mutual Respect and Inter-Cultural Dialogue*
- (c) *Ensure respect for Complementarity and Subsidiarity*
- (d) *Encourage a cross-cutting approach to culture*
- (e) *Promote culture through existing frameworks for cooperation*

One can conclude that these five lines are mutually reinforcing: equality, respect for diversity and inclusiveness are pursued both internally (through the subsidiarity principle) and externally (through bidirectional listening and learning) in a holistic manner (going beyond literature and arts) by taking advantage of already existing instruments (rather than producing fragmentation by creating new ones). Next, the Communication details the way in which partnership with third countries is to be achieved, proposing three work streams with their respective action items:

1. *Supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development*
  - (a) *Supporting the development of cultural policies*
    - *Share experience with enlargement and neighbourhood countries*
    - *Strengthen cultural policies*
  - (b) *Strengthening cultural and creative industries*
    - *Increase economic revenues from creative industries*
    - *Creative hubs and clusters*
    - *Entrepreneurship and skills development*
    - *Support to European Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)*
    - *Structured territorial cooperation frameworks*
  - (c) *Supporting the role of local authorities in partner countries*
    - *Innovative partnerships*
    - *Support cultural city twinning*
    - *Share Capitals of Culture*
    - *Urban strategies in historic towns*
2. *Promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations*
  - (a) *Support cooperation amongst cultural operators*
    - *Encourage participation in Creative Europe*
    - *Promote Culture within the Eastern Partnership*
    - *Support the Anna Lindh Foundation*
  - (b) *Fostering Peace-building through Inter-Cultural Dialogue*
    - *Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)*
    - *Youth inter-cultural dialogue*
    - *Training for observers of Election Observations Missions and staff to be deployed in civilian stabilisation missions*
    - *Promoting cultural rights*
3. *Reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage*
  - *Research on cultural heritage*
  - *Combat trafficking of heritage*
  - *Protect heritage*

These strands are intertwined with a comprehensive list of instruments, both already existing and potential ones. (For a comparison with the programmes listed in the 2007 agenda for culture see [Appendix 6](#), and for an examination of the current initiatives in light of the new Multiannual Financial Framework see the following chapter on Implementation.) Lastly, the

strategic approach urges an increased cooperation at the European level, particularly with EU Delegations, cultural institutions and civil society. It puts forward the creation of cultural focal points in major Delegations and the establishment of European Houses of Culture. The strategy also highlights the importance of intercultural exchanges, including mobility of students, researchers and staff.

The 2016 Joint Communication ends on a positive note expressing the view that the above actions will contribute to “sustainable growth, peace and mutual understanding”. This sums up the common thread of the whole strategy – it portrays the European Union as an enabler of mutually beneficial intercultural contacts, rather than projecting a selective image of itself, in accordance with the new school of Cultural Diplomacy outlined in the theoretical framework.

However, the drafting process proved less positive due to opposition both from Member States and from within the Commission, as HR/VP Mogherini admitted in an interview shortly after the adoption of the Joint communication (Mogherini, 2016). Seeing Europe as a “cultural superpower”, she asserted that “the more foreign policy focuses on culture, the more effective it is”. In May 2017 the Council endorsed the strategy in a rather short text, whose main highlight is the combination between the call for a bottom-up perspective and the proposal of a Friends of the Presidency Group tasked with the establishment of a roadmap for synergies across policy areas.

Of greater interest is the July resolution of the European Parliament (2017, p. 5) for it adopts a more critical stance by concluding that the Joint Communication

*falls short of identifying thematic and geographical priorities, concrete objectives and outcomes, target groups, common interests and initiatives, financing provisions, sound financial management, a local and regional perspective and challenges and implementation modalities.*

Among the identified missing elements stand out digital tools especially media, artist mobility and specific cultural heritage protection mechanism. Thus, the Parliament requested annual and multiannual action plans, as well as the receipt of periodic review of the implementation. In particular, it reiterated its proposals for a dedicated budget line for Cultural Relations, focal points in all Delegations (rather than only major ones), a cultural visa programme – demands which the Commission is yet to meet. All in all, the Parliament welcomed the Cultural Diplomacy Platform as the web portal it had previously suggested but condemned the continuing fragmentation.

The Joint Communication also received mixed reception among scholars. As the fruit of a decade of lobbying and work, it was acknowledged as a huge step forward, but not a policy innovation – rather, as the title itself indicated, it was merely a step *towards* a strategy on Cultural Relations, pervaded by the instrumental use of culture in foreign policy due to its links with conflict and economy (Bouquerel, 2018). Much of the debate has focused on the application of concepts, with some authors claiming that the EU is only capable of promoting International Cultural Relations and the term Cultural Diplomacy alienates states, cultural actors and foreign audiences alike (Trobbiani and Pavón-Guinea, 2019). Others see the combination of both pragmatic and altruistic motives as EU’s main strength, being this balanced approach distinctively different from the conception of a zero-sum cultural power game shared by the United States and China (Triandafyllidou and Szűcs, 2017).

Shortly after, in May 2018, the Commission issued a Communication entitled *A New Agenda for Culture* with the purpose of building an attractive European Union. The renewed agenda constituted a much-needed update of the 2007 edition (comparison in [Appendix 7](#)) since it



took account of the economic crisis, the rise of populism and radicalisation, and the new technologies. However, the *New Agenda* did not contribute significantly to the external dimension of culture because it limited itself to reproducing the objectives already set out in the 2016 Joint Communication. Instead, the accompanying Staff working document served as a report on the progress made so far in the implementation of the strategy on International Cultural Relations.

Five years after the adoption of the strategy, it can be concluded that the Joint Communication “went faster than the sector” – although cultural institutions were initially excited, civil society and independent actors have remained disengaged (culture Solutions, 2020, p. 27). Trends that impact the ecosystem include the fast-paced digitalisation, the weakening of multilateral governance structures (most notably UNESCO upon the USA withdrawal), and the growing division both within and between states as a result of populism, nationalism, as well as Euroscepticism (Ibid., pp. 22-25).

Against this backdrop, EU’s piecemeal approach and lack of consensus on strategic priorities requires an update of the policy toolbox, whose wording was watered down to accommodate diverging Member States’ interests (Helly, 2021, interview in [Appendix 8](#)). Even though a new strategy would again require several years to agree on, it is crucial for mainstreaming culture and adapting to the six lines of action of the new Commission, specifically to the Green Deal and the Digital Compass which are not present in the Joint Communication. All in all, “the EU is still a long way from realising the potential of cultural diplomacy” (De Vries, 2019, p. 94), as will be demonstrated in the next chapter on the real test for any strategy – the implementation phase.

## **IMPLEMENTATION: THE INSTITUTIONS AND INITIATIVES AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL**

### **I. ACTORS INVOLVED IN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY**

#### **1. European Commission**

One of the criticisms to the 2016 Joint Communication is the fact that it does not clarify the division of tasks, nor does it identify all of them (for all actors in Cultural Diplomacy see [Appendix 9](#)). The document inherently focuses on programmes financed by the EU, that is to say, the Commission. As the executive arm of the Union the Commission not only sets the agenda for Cultural Diplomacy, but is also in charge of the implementation. In this regard, it is important to highlight that according to Article 17 of the TEU (2012) the Commission promotes “the general interest of the Union”, and therefore is best positioned to project abroad the EU as a whole.

On the Commission’s Culture and Creativity website a dedicated policy page on International Cultural Relations (previously called International cooperation) provides a brief summary of the Joint Communication and a list of stakeholders. There is a clear division based on the type of relationship: regional cooperation, strategic partners and international organisations. The focus on the adjacent states, the natural sphere of influence for the EU, is made evident by the sheer amount of initiatives (as shown in [Appendix 10](#)).

Conversely, the section on strategic partners includes a list of the 10 states with partnership agreements but only details the cultural cooperation with South Korea and China (developed in the

case study chapter). Under international organisations the two main partners are featured – the UNESCO, whose 2005 *Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* is classified as the “framework for EU policy on culture in its external relations” (European Commission, n.d. c), and the Council of Europe, with which the EU carries out joint projects on heritage. Next, the Commission reiterates its commitment to taking into account culture in all trade negotiations (see below the section on International cooperation and trade). Finally, transversal projects, platforms and awards are mentioned, although some of them belong to EUNIC or the Delegations offices.

Interestingly, the page makes no mention of the departments responsible for the specified actions. The bulk of the work pertains to the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC), supporting the portfolio of Mariya Gabriel as the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth. Notably, DG EAC is the one in charge of the two main programmes – Creative Europe and Erasmus+. These are managed on behalf of the Commission by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) established in 2006 (for an inventory of its programmes see [Appendix 11](#)) as a “catalyst for projects in education, training, youth, sport, audio-visual, culture, citizenship and humanitarian aid” (European Commission, n.d. g).

The external dimension of culture is reflected in the organisational structure of DG EAC – Unit C is dedicated to Innovation, Digital Education and International Cooperation, and specifically C3 International Cooperation is organised by geographic area. There are also some policy officers working on international relations in D1 Cultural Policy. Moreover, reporting directly to the Director-General is the Principal Adviser for the International dimension of policies and programmes (EAC.PA02).

Second in terms of international cultural action is the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), renamed from International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) in January 2021. The fact that DG DEVCO self-recognised its actorness in the 2017 European Consensus on Development can be pointed out as a welcome development. Its work is centred on neighbourhood and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Moreover, it leads the interservice group between the Commission and EEAS. DG INTPA Unit G3 is the one overseeing Youth, Education and Culture. Similarly, the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) supports regional programmes such as Med-Culture.

On the other hand, the mission of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) consists in “building alliances and leveraging the EU’s influence in the world” (European Commission, n.d. k) and its contribution to the culture aspect of foreign affairs is the launch of the Cultural Diplomacy Platform in 2016, in 2019 renamed to Cultural Relations Platform, whose goal is to aggregate information, as well as carry out the Global Leaders programme.

The role of the Directorate-General for Digital and Connectivity (DG CNECT) cannot be underestimated, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic which forced an explosive growth of cultural consumption online. It is therefore clear that there are numerous funding lines available for cultural action abroad and this inevitably leads to lack of coherence and possible duplications. Continuing with the online environment, the Europeana website, financed under the Connecting Europe Facility, provides access to cultural heritage from anywhere in the world.

Regarding the commercial side, DG Trade and DG Competition deserve a mention, the latter having declared state aid in culture as compatible with the internal market. Lastly, certain actions could be nested under the portfolio of Věra Jourová, the Commission Vice-president for

Values and Transparency. It is worth mentioning that even though the Commission priority “Promoting the European Way of Life” and accordingly the portfolio of Vice-president Margaritis Schinas have an external dimension, it is limited to migration and security and defence. Therefore, there is a potential for mobilising culture for International Relations and “building a genuine Union of equality and diversity” (European Commission, n.d. h).

## 2. European External Action Service

As the co-author of the 2016 strategy on International Cultural Relations, the European External Action Service (EEAS) engages both in policy making and programming. The EEAS is in charge of EU's Public Diplomacy, as set out by the 2016 Global Strategy under Priority 1 The Security of Our Union, which identified Strategic Communications among its areas of application. Consequently, the Strategic Communications 1: Communications Policy & Public Diplomacy unit (abbreviated SG.AFFGEN.6) counts with policy officers on Public diplomacy and on Cultural diplomacy.

The EEAS website presents culture as the last topic in its list of actions. Although the introductory text states that “culture is at the heart of EU international relations” (EEAS, n.d. b), the ensuing news feed testifies to its diminished importance after the inauguration of the new Commission – there are no posts between September 2019 and March 2020, nor between August 2020 and March 2021. The short-lived interest in culture between March and May of each year can be explained by the World Day for Cultural Diversity celebrated on 21 May through the issuance of a joint statement by HR/VP Borrell and DG EAC's Mariya Gabriel. On the other hand, in 2021 EEAS is celebrating its tenth anniversary through a social media campaign #EEEEAS10, which would have benefited from utilising culture to strengthen relations with the local population.

Beyond the headquarters, Cultural Diplomacy is carried out on the ground by the EU Delegations, the former Commission representations transformed into embassy-level missions. Their number now totals 145 but if those to other international organisations are subtracted it is left to 136 states, the newest being the one to the United Kingdom. The 2016 Joint Communication brought about the creation of cultural focal points – the equivalent of cultural attachés in the national embassies.

However, it must be born in mind that culture is still a new field and no specific financing instruments are at the disposal of Delegations. In the majority of the cases (namely 97 Delegations) the flagship event is the celebration of Europe Day on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May (KEA European Affairs, 2016, p. 63). Other major initiatives include the Film Festivals, as well as the participation in the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage. Moreover, the Delegations have mandate to advocate for the ratification of the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*. Collaboration with Member States diplomatic missions, as well as cultural institutions, mainly through EUNIC, is possible but also threatened by the perception of competition.

Delegations are uniquely positioned to conduct analysis and mapping of the local cultural context, and adapt the global priorities to the country-specific issues (culture Solutions, 2020, pp. 62-63). But they can also perform an intermediary role before the EU institutions in Brussels advocating for increased funds (Ibid., p. 64). Nevertheless, this is hindered by two persisting issues: Delegations have not yet internalised their ownership of the International Cultural Relations strategy (Ibid.) and they suffer from a Human Resources gap because cultural focal points were

assigned to already over-burdened staff lacking experience in culture or power to effectively pursue an active agenda (Ibid., p. 66).

### **3. Council of the EU and Member States**

Taking into account the competence framework, Member States retain their principal role in Cultural Diplomacy. Hence, the Council of the EU serves as the venue of policy formation and information exchange. The most relevant configurations are the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC), the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS), and the Foreign Affairs Committee (FAC). In addition, some aspects may be discussed in other configurations such as Competitiveness or General Affairs. In addition, in 2018 the Luxembourg presidency established a Friends of the Presidency group specifically dedicated to EU strategic approach to International Cultural Relations.

Introduced by the 2007 agenda for culture the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) consists in groups of national experts which meet over the course of 18 months to produce materials, such as reports, best practices and toolkits. The set of topics are selected in the Work Plans for Culture (refer back to Appendix 4), for instance in 2020 a new group started working on the Cultural dimension of sustainable development.

At the national level, actors include Member States' Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs, as well as their subordinate national cultural institutes and development cooperation agencies. These can work together in networks, namely EUNIC (to be treated as a separate actor), or Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation. Moreover, the Council of Europe, with its 47 members, is an important partner for the EU in what regards culture, and in particular heritage.

When acting independently, cultural institutes still focus on promoting their national culture, with language being the main activity for 25 out of the 29 institutes in a 2016 study (KEA European Affairs, 2016, p. 28). In fact, their mission statements do not feature the EU or its values, and the considerable differences in size, budget and number of offices derive in unequal awareness of EU priorities and programmes (Ibid., p. 53).

### **4. European Parliament, European Economic and Social Committee and Committee of the Regions**

As the representative of the European citizens, the Parliament has the potential to influence the Cultural Diplomacy policy, advocating for a more supranational approach. By way of illustration, the 2011 resolution on the cultural dimension of external actions and the 2014 preparatory action have informed the 2016 Joint Communication. In particular, the relevant bodies are the Committee on Culture and Education (abbreviated CULT), the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET) and the Committee on Development (DEVE). What is more, the nature of parliamentary work and the establishment of multiple inter-groups boost the mainstreaming of culture in other policy areas.

Nonetheless, Parliament's role goes beyond decision making since it has liaison offices in Washington and London which constitutes a way to engage in cultural relations in practice. In addition, the Parliament is in charge of managing the House of European History, which is not only

the largest EU museum but is located in the very heart of Brussels European quarters (culture Solutions, 2020, p. 18). Therefore, it proves a popular tourist attraction and offers a significant opportunity for partnerships with museums located outside the European Union. The Parliament is also managing the Jean Monnet House near Paris, as well as Europa Experience interactive spaces across the EU.

Additionally, the Parliament owns a collection of more than 350 art pieces from all Member States, the majority of which is available online. Lastly, its commitment to culture is demonstrated by the LUX - The European Audience Film Award, co-organised with the European Film Academy. Productions are not limited to EU states but instead include those eligible under the Creative Europe programme. In line with the oft-cited multilingualism, films are subtitled in all official languages and free screenings are organised in all Member States.

On the other hand, as an advisory body, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) is envisioned by Article 300 of the TFEU to include representatives of cultural areas. However, it is striking that currently none of the Member States has appointed a delegate from the cultural sector (Ibid., p. 21). Apart from issuing opinions, the EESC has ventured into activities such as the panel *rEUnaissance - A cultural vision for Europe on Culture* as part of the 2019 priority on culture.

The Committee of the Regions (CoR) is also consulted in relation to legislation on culture, and thus has consistently called for the recognition of the role of cities and regions in the development and internationalisation of the cultural sector, as well as in the EU's International Cultural Relations (see for example the opinion on the 2018 *New Agenda for Culture*).

## 5. European Union National Institutes for Culture

The European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) assembles 35 organisations working on cultural relations, that is to say, cultural institutes or alternatively Ministries of Culture or Foreign Affairs (list available in [Appendix 12](#)). According to its vision statement “[t]hrough culture, EUNIC strives to build trust and understanding between the people of Europe and the wider world[,] (...) to make culture count in international relations” (EUNIC, n.d.), which corresponds perfectly to the definition of Cultural Diplomacy. EUNIC is the living evidence that despite the competition for influence inside the EU, cooperation in third countries is mutually beneficial.

EUNIC was created in 2006 on the initiative of 6 partners: British Council, Goethe-Institut, Institut Français, Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danish Cultural Institute and SICA (now DutchCulture). It operates as a network of 125 clusters (groupings of at least 3 member institutes) in 96 different countries, both within and outside the EU (map in [Appendix 13](#)). In addition, it is assisted by EUNIC Global which serves as the secretariat, strategically located in Brussels. It is thus the European equivalent of a national cultural institute but its networked nature reflects the principle of “unity in diversity”, rather than establishing a single new body which risks facing Member State opposition.

Hence, EUNIC enjoys a considerable lobbying power both in the EU and the national contexts due to the strong ties with ministries or other organisations working in the sphere. EUNIC has succeeded being considered the preferred implementing partner for EU Delegations, being explicitly mentioned in official EU documents including the 2016 Joint Communication. In 2017 an administrative arrangement with the EU was signed and in 2019 joint guidelines were published

on EUNIC – EEAS – Commission Partnership. The scope of clusters' actions is quite wide – predominantly language teaching, followed by arts, but also training, humanities and dialogue.

Nevertheless, EUNIC is facing multiple challenges. In the first place, it still competes with other organisations on the ground, but at the same time its leading position results in overlooking local partners (culture Solutions, 2020, p. 73). At the same time, the close association with the European Commission leads to questioning EUNIC's independence (Martel and Simic, 2018, p. 44). Secondly, EUNIC is exposed to internal criticism coming particularly from smaller members which perceive their power and budget insufficient to assert the respect for diversity (culture Solutions, 2020, p. 73). Thirdly, the network has failed to gain visibility in strategic policy debates (Ibid., p. 78). Fourthly, EUNIC members still lack a shared perception of Cultural Diplomacy or International Cultural Relations (KEA European Affairs, 2016, p. 54). Besides, following Brexit the British Council, one of the four leaders, is now relegated to the status of associate member.

In spite of these limitations, EUNIC has encouraged the “Europeanisation of the national cultural institutes”, for instance through the 2020-2023 strategic framework and the requirement for three-year cluster plans (culture Solutions, 2020, p. 77). Moreover, it helps pool resources and provides an opportunity for experimentation and collaboration. The widely acclaimed pilot project European Houses of Culture has the potential of transforming the EU's Cultural Diplomacy (see dedicated section below). EUNIC also contributes positively to capacity building through trainings and information sharing, as well as monitoring and evaluation processes. In this regard, the Cluster Fund, set up in 2012 and based on voluntary contributions, is a crucial addition to the funding received from membership fees, partners and the EU Creative Europe programme, as it allows the network to take investment decisions independently, reaching 146 projects for its 9 years of existence (the set of 2021 projects is presented in [Appendix 14](#)).

## 6. Cultural sector and civil society

According to 2020 statistics, in the EU there are currently 1.2 million cultural companies (5% of the total number), which employ 8.7 million people (3.8% of the total employment) and produce 2.7% of the Union added value (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2020). It is important to acknowledge that the cultural and creative sector is the one employing the highest proportion of young professionals, and that it faces multiple challenges such as the wide spread of self-employment and precariousness. For the purposes of Cultural Diplomacy, a look beyond professional content creators requires considering also individual artists and even hobbyists.

Cultural companies or organisations are often ensembled into networks which get involved in lobbying efforts at the national and European level. The main players in this field are Europa Nostra, ENCATC, Network of European Museums Organisation (NEMO), International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts (IETM), European Festivals Association (EFA), *inter alia*. Many of these networks are supported through the Creative Europe programme (for a full list see [Appendix 15](#)) which contributes to the vitality of the associational movement and increases its international reach.

Culture Action Europe, established in 1994, deserves a special mention as “the major European network of cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics and policymakers”, whose purpose is to advocate for “access to the arts and participation in culture as a fundamental right of every citizen” (Culture Action Europe, n.d.). In the context of COVID-19, the network has led the cultural community in calling for a Cultural Deal to earmark at least 2% of

the Resilience and Recovery Facility for culture in order to “mainstream culture across all policy fields to fully realise its potential for the European project: from the green transition to Europe’s geopolitical ambition, and from the digital shift to a value-driven Union” (Culture Action Europe, 2020).

Of particular interest is also the public-private partnership More Europe which brings together national cultural institutions, civil society and foundations, and “whose objective is to highlight and reinforce the role of culture in the European Union (EU)’s external relations” (More Europe, n.d.). The work of the network ranges from public debates and advocacy, to research and best practices recompilation. More Europe is perceived as more active and attentive to EU institutions than EUNIC, but its limited membership means it lacks representation, and thus the two organisations are expected to merge (KEA European Affairs, 2016, p. 55).

Aside from networks, the landscape is shaped by foundations and other philanthropic initiatives, such as Mercator or the European Cultural Foundation. The latter strives to “promote a European sentiment through developing and supporting cultural initiatives that let us share, experience and imagine Europe” (European Cultural Foundation, n.d.). In addition, universities play a crucial role in attracting foreign students, as well as producing cultural content and research. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), consulting firms and implementing agencies contribute to the practice of International Cultural Relations, especially in the field of development cooperation. Moreover, big companies, most notably digital platforms, engage in creation and aggregation of content. It must be born in mind that all of the above-mentioned actor types are not restricted within the borders of the European Union – instead local actors are both the target audiences of EU’s Cultural Diplomacy and potential partners and co-creators.

Since the 2007 *agenda for culture* the European Commission maintains a Structured Dialogue with civil society, divided into the European Culture Forums (on a bi-annual basis being the last edition held in 2017) and the Civil Society Culture Platforms (namely, Access to Culture, Intercultural Europe, Cultural and Creative Industries). In 2015 the latter was transformed under the title Voices of Culture which now involve several meetings and a final report. The listening exercise serves as an input for the OMC and is being managed by Goethe-Institut on behalf of the Commission with the purpose of informing its decision-making on actions related to culture, being the selection of the most relevant programmes and initiatives presented in the following section.

## **II. ACTIONS FOR THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS**

### **1. Creative Europe**

Creative Europe is the only EU programme specifically dedicated to culture. Through Regulation No 1295/2013 Creative Europe was established as the merger of the Culture, MEDIA and MEDIA Mundus programmes in the 2014 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Culture can be traced back to 1996 when the Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Raphael programmes were created, shortly after the competence in culture was incorporated into the Treaty of Maastricht. However, the MEDIA programme dates back to 1991, and has historically benefited from a higher budget allocation (as proven by [Appendix 16](#)) due to the higher contribution of the audio-visual sector to Member States’ economies. Creative Europe has been renewed for the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) with a total envelope of €2.2 billion which constitutes an 53% increase from

the 2014-2021 €1.46 billion, but this was only possible after the Parliament rejected the initial proposal for €1.8 billion and reiterates its demand for €2.8 billion.

Half a year after the adoption of the 2021-2027 MFF, the new Creative Europe Regulation (2021/818) was finally adopted by the Council and the Parliament on the 28 May, recognising the “great value to European society from a cultural, educational, democratic, environmental, social, human rights and economic point of view and should be promoted and supported”. This reveals the programme adopts a more social dimension, although the stated main objectives, namely cultural diversity and competitiveness, reflect the traditional acknowledgement of the dual nature of culture. The shift can be, at least partly, attributed to the devastating impact of COVID-19 and thus the aim now is to make the cultural sector more digital, resilient and inclusive, as well as greener.

The scope of the Creative Europe programme goes well beyond the arts, as it spans over “architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audio-visual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts (including theatre and dance), books and publishing, radio, and visual arts” (Article 2 of both Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 and Regulation (EU) No 2021/818). Even though the general objectives set out in Article 3 remain the same, the new regulation, as well as the 2021 work programme adopted on 26 May, present a stronger focus on transnational creation and global circulation.

The specific objectives (Article 4 Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 or Article 3 Regulation (EU) No 2021/818) reveal an interest beyond EU borders, and thus turn Creative Europe into a Cultural Diplomacy instrument, since they include support for transnational and international operations, as well as circulation of works and mobility of artists. Consequently, the regulations (Article 8 Paragraph 3 Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 or Article 9 Regulation (EU) No 2021/818) open the participation to non-EU member states: acceding, candidate and potential candidate countries, parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, Switzerland and countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy. It must be born in mind that additional conditions apply for the MEDIA sub-programme and according to the agreements signed with each partner. In addition, Paragraph 6 sets the stage for cooperation with international organisation and countries not formally taking part in the programme.

As a result, according to the eligibility list, currently there are 7 non-EU countries that fully participate in the Creative Europe programme (Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia) and another 6 which participate partially (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Tunisia, Armenia, Kosovo), pending United Kingdom status update following Brexit (Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency, 2020). Hence, it can be deduced that the European Union cultural action is limited to its near neighbourhood. An examination of the 2007-2020 projects list (European Commission, n.d. b) shows that only 750 out of the 5,215 initiatives financed by the EU included non-EU partners, that is to say, around 14%. Eleven of them have received the distinction of “Success story” and can thus serve as an inspiration for other initiatives.

On the operational level, Creative Europe is managed by the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) and supported by information desks in each country, financed through the cross-sectoral strand. The Culture sub-programme offers the following opportunities or schemes: platforms, networks (see previous section on civil society and [Appendix 15](#)), cooperation projects, literary translations. Notable examples of actions include European Heritage



Label, Music Moves Europe, Border Breakers Awards, Prize for Literature, Prize for Cultural Heritage, Prize for Contemporary Architecture, among others. Since 2019 a promising pilot project called i-Portunus is financing mobility of artists and cultural professionals in a test for a global mobility scheme – the cultural and more accessible equivalent of Erasmus+.

Nevertheless, one of the most well-known cultural projects is European Capitals of Culture, whose goals range from showcasing the diversity of European cultures while also highlighting their common features, to increasing the sense of belonging and contributing to urban development. Running since 1985, Decision No 1622/2006/EC allowed acceding countries to take part in Capitals of Culture, and Decision No 445/2014/EU further expanded the eligibility criteria to candidate or potential candidate states. The opening to third parties culminated in Decision (EU) 2017/1545 which allows for the parties to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, and sets out that a non-EU country will hold the title once every three years (see [Appendix 17](#)).

The MEDIA strand is far richer as it covers film festivals and film forum, audience development, video game development, television programming of audio-visual works, international co-production, distribution support, training, cinema networks, online distribution, and access to market. It is interesting to note that the EU does not fund a specific type of content but rather focuses on quantity and capacity building, while the Council of Europe's funding scheme Eurimages has a clearer agenda (Halle, 2021). Whereas European Film Festivals are highly acclaimed, research shows that although more than half of EU Delegations around the world organise such festivals, Creative Europe offers limited funding options for third countries in comparison to MEDIA Mundus, and thus Delegations turn to other funding lines such as the Partnership Instrument (KEA European Affairs and Film Forever, 2015, p.78).

Overall, Creative Europe contributes to enriching the cultural landscape, yet significant concerns were identified in the 2018 mid-term evaluation, namely the prioritisation of economic aspects above artistic or social ones, the insufficient budget for the sectorial and geographical scope, and the declining success rate (European Commission, 2018, pp. 3-6). As positive aspects can be pointed out the sustainability of partnerships, and the EU added value in transnational cooperation (Ibid.). It is still unclear whether the new Creative Europe programme will address the recommendations for more strategic approach, flexibility, digitalisation and awareness rising both among citizens and beneficiaries (Ibid., pp. 7-10). To these action points can naturally be added strengthening the external dimension of Creative Europe as a valuable tool for Cultural Diplomacy.

## **2. Erasmus+**

Erasmus+ is often characterised as the EU's single most successful programme, and while belonging to the area of education it produces substantial cultural effects. First launched in 1987 with only 3244 students from 11 country having the chance to study abroad, it now totals more than 12 million participants. Continuous restructuring of the EU programmes in education has led to the 2014-2020 Erasmus+, the plus referring to all actions in the area, including predecessor programmes, namely the Lifelong Learning programme, Youth in Action and cooperation programmes with third countries including Erasmus Mundus and bilateral agreements (detailed breakdown in [Appendix 18](#)). Along with the increase of scope has come a rise of the financial commitment – almost doubled in 2014, and again in the 2021-2027 MFF until reaching € 26 billion. This is nevertheless lower than the promise to triple the funds given by President Ursula von der

Leyen at the 2019 address to the Parliament, but it can be attributed to the elimination of mobility during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hence, the large amount of available budget proves a significant advantage over Creative Europe, compensating for the fact that Erasmus+ is not a cultural programme per se. Divided into three Key Actions – mobility, cooperation and policy, Erasmus+ goes beyond higher education exchanges by engaging teacher, trainees, researchers, volunteers, athletes and staff. Apart from contributing to the Europe 2020 strategy (since the improvement of participants skills and employability are of utmost importance for growth and jobs), Erasmus+ objectives include “the sustainable development of partner countries” and “the promotion of European values” (Regulation (EU) No 1288/2013, Article 4).

This international dimension has been supported by the external instruments, for instance the European Neighbourhood Instrument and the Development and Cooperation Instrument. Erasmus+ includes as non-EU programme countries North Macedonia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Turkey and Serbia. In addition, it is open to all partner countries – neighbouring and other (separated into geographic regions according to the external financing lines), but under specific conditions for each action. (Refer to the comparative map and budgetary allocation for Erasmus+ and Creative Europe in [Appendix 19](#).)

A consultation of the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform shows that 67,758 out of the total 176,860 projects implicate a non-EU partner country (European Commission, n.d. d). Standing at 38%, this reaffirms the international commitment of Erasmus+ as opposed to that of Creative Europe. However, zooming in into the Joint Master's Degrees in the area of social sciences or humanities, it turns out that the majority cover topics related to culture, but only 10 of the 49 contain a partner country (culture Solutions, 2020, p. 18).

EACEA is once more the organism in charge of managing the programme, with the support of National Agencies in all programme countries. Additionally, there are National Offices in 27 partner states which serve as a direct contact point for both applicants and local authorities and thus play a part in international dialogue and cooperation. Further assistance is offered by networks, platforms and other bodies including Eurydice and Eurodesk networks. Nevertheless, this extensive bureaucratic machine is aided by the Erasmus Student Network, an association dating back to 1989, now encompassing approximately 15,000 members from 1,000 education institutions in 42 countries and operating on a voluntary and peer-to-peer basis.

Erasmus+ is uniquely positioned to forge the European image of openness, progress and cultural diversity thanks to its reliance on first-hand experience and involvement. The period of stay abroad is often enriched by accompanying cultural events, such as holiday celebrations or trips. Bidirectionality is one of its key aspects, thus fostering intercultural dialogue, not least through language teaching and personal ties (statistics by CHE Consult and ICF Consulting (2019, p. 4) showed that 23% of the participants had a partner from different nationality and thus it was estimated that over a million babies were born to Erasmus couples). The intense and participatory nature of the programme proves crucial to the long-term impact of Erasmus+, with reports showing that between 90% and 95% of the participants improve their intercultural skills (Ibid., p. 3). All in all, by incorporating the external dimension as a building block from the very beginning, Erasmus+ is worthy of being a blueprint for cultural exchanges, defying the limitations of a supporting competence by accentuating the European added value.

### 3. European Year for Cultural Heritage

Heritage diplomacy, understood as “a set of processes whereby cultural and natural pasts shared between and across nations become subject to exchanges, collaborations and forms of cooperative governance” (Winter, 2015, p. 1007), has traditionally been a major focus of attention for the EU and its Member States. To this end testify their involvement in UNESCO, the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), the first two being headquartered in Paris and the last one in Rome demonstrating the European leadership in matters of heritage. EU-UNESCO partnership has been particularly fruitful with the EU ratifying the 2005 *Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, signing the Memorandum of Understanding in 2012, and being the third largest donor.

Another important example are the European Heritage Days, first launched by France in 1985 and since 1999 organised as a joint action by the Council of Europe and the European Union. As a result, all 50 parties to the 1954 *European Cultural Convention* take part in the celebrations every September which attract approximately 30 million visitors at more than 50,000 monuments and sites. The initiative aims at increasing the awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity, as well as boosting tolerance as a counteract to racism and xenophobia. A dedicated web portal provides useful materials for organisers and lists all events and opportunities in every country, totalling 30,000 in 2020 despite the difficulties posed by COVID-19. Every year a specific theme is chosen, either a form of heritage, a period of history or a societal approach. For 2021 the theme is “Heritage: All Inclusive”, thus focusing on access and diversity of “heritage of, by and for everyone”.

The 2018 theme coincided with the European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH), inaugurated by the European Commission during the December 2017 European Culture Forum in Milan and closed exactly a year later at the #EuropeForCulture Conference in Vienna. (For an overview of European Year designations related to culture see [Appendix 20](#).) The designation was preceded by a Special Eurobarometer which shed light on Europeans’ opinion of cultural heritage, with 80% considered it important for the EU as a whole and 70% taking pride in monuments located in other Member States (European Commission, 2017). It is also interesting to note that 2018 brought about the publication of the New Agenda for Culture, which recognised heritage as a horizontal action, thus pointing out to the unprecedented momentum for cultural policies.

Under the slogan “Our heritage: where the past meets the future”, with the ultimate goal of promoting engagement with the European cultural heritage and strengthening the sense of belonging, 23 000 events gathered around 13 million participants and social media reached 18 million users. Activities covered by EYCH spanned over all types of heritage - from tangible, through intangible and natural, all the way to the newly-emerged digital heritage. Ten long-term initiatives were identified and structured around four core principles - engagement, sustainability, protection and innovation. Funding opportunities were made available under Creative Europe, Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens, Horizon 2020, among other.

Essential to the success of EYCH proved the mobilisation of a wide range of actors, including 15 Commission Directorate-Generals, the Parliament, the Council and multiple civil society organisations, complemented by the involvement of UNESCO and Council of Europe representatives in the stakeholders’ committee. Such a bottom-up structure boosted effectiveness and set out the stage for sustainable long-term partnerships. It also highlighted a mindset shift from

preservation and identity towards participatory governance and cross-sectoral approaches, for instance, the link between culture and sustainability (Borin and Donato, 2020).

The European Year of Cultural Heritage international dimension manifested in the participation of 9 associated countries, namely Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Iceland, Serbia and Switzerland. In addition, the international dimension of EYCH was explicitly recognised and developed through three concrete components: celebrating Europe's cultural heritage around the world, supporting capacity-building for the heritage sector worldwide and valorising EU actions in cultural heritage cooperation (European Commission, 2018). In this relation, the role of EU Delegations and EUNIC must be acknowledged, with initiatives going beyond the celebrations of Europe's day, for instance in Mexico and India. Aside from that, a EYCH 2018 International Perspectives Forum was organised by the Cultural Diplomacy Platform.

A major benefit of the EYCH is the continuing commitment to cultural heritage, rather than being a one-off event. The lasting effect was guaranteed by the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, presented by the Commission in December 2018. The 65 actions follow four principles and are structured in five pillars. In particular, the last pillar is titled "stronger global partnerships: reinforcing international cooperation". Firstly, under the geographical cluster of actions, it promised increased funding in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods and Tunisia, as well as support for the joint EU – UNESCO Heritage Corridors on the Silk Road and protection in emergencies. In this regard, the EEAS has financed a report and organised a conference on heritage in conflict and post-conflict situations. Secondly, the global cluster foresaw the creation of an international network of practitioners for cultural heritage innovation and diplomacy funded by Horizon 2020. And this has already materialised in the form of ILUCIDARE project, which in June 2021 shortlisted nine initiatives for the Special Prizes, being five of them in the category heritage-led international relations. The issue of cultural heritage was brought once again to the table by the January 2021 Parliament own-initiative report on the effective legacy of the EYCH.

#### **4. European Houses/Spaces for Culture**

In July 2018, a year after signing the Administrative Agreement between EUNIC, the EEAS and the Commission, the latter invited EUNIC to develop the concept of European Houses of Culture, later renamed to Spaces of Culture. The project was then initiated as a Preparatory Action by the Parliament, and after an initial baseline mapping report pinpointed inspiring models of cultural collaboration, a call for ideas was launched in April 2019. EUNIC received 44 applications that covered 51 countries (as some projects were cross-border) and involved thirty EUNIC members, 39 EU Delegations and a total of 121 local partners. A jury of independent experts pre-selected ten ideas which were granted € 10,000, and finally in January 2020 six proposals were chosen as pilot projects and awarded € 50,000 for their implementation.

These six pilot projects are located in Benin; El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras; Ethiopia; Mongolia; Sri Lanka; and the USA. Their focus is rather diverse – themes range from social inclusion, through digitalisation, to ecology (detailed comparison in [Appendix 21](#)). The adverse impact of COVID-19 has also taken a different toll on each project – while some were perfectly suited to the digital environment (namely, the Grid in the USA which is focused on technology has thrived), others have been unable to adapt to the lockdowns (take for example the festival in Mongolia that had to be postponed for over a year). The projects are subject to an

evaluation through a specifically designed monitoring toolkit and the results will serve as an input for policy recommendations, to be presented in June 2021. In the meantime, in January 2021 a new call for ideas was published with a deadline in June. In November 10 projects are expected to be selected and funded with up to € 60,000.

The following requirements are posed in the calls for ideas: consideration of the local context, engagement of different actors, added value, scalability and sustainability. EUNIC emphasised the symbolic meaning of the term “houses” since the objective was to “create spaces, whether physical or digital, permanent or temporary, for cultural exchange, co-creation and people-to-people contacts” (EUNIC, 2019). It is thus evident that bidirectional interaction and mutual understanding are at the heart of the project. On top of that, innovation is key – the whole pilot phase explicitly seeks to generate new ways of working. Consequently, it is becoming a flagship initiative that has the potential to serve as a prototype for future ways of implementing EU International Cultural Relations in a collaborative and participatory approach (culture Solutions, 2020, p. 79).

Nevertheless, the project, just like the 2016 Joint Communication, has fallen prey to Member State sensitivities: the level of ambition was decreased from houses to spaces, and finally only virtual spaces rather than a network of physical locations (Helly, 2021, interview in [Appendix 8](#)). For the European Spaces of Culture to set out a new type of cultural institute, a multilateral one rather than a national and responding to local needs instead of merely showcasing one's own culture, it is urgent to equip it with the matching budget to ensure both long-term sustainability and a scale that produces impact.

This was precisely the leitmotif of the stock-taking event organised by EUNIC on 1 June 2021 with the objective of reflecting on the first six projects and getting ready for the second phase of the European Spaces of Culture. Other policy recommendations focused on the need to take the lead on International Cultural Relations, committing to this approach and abandoning the Cultural Diplomacy one, and to develop a specific assessment criteria. Furthermore, EUNIC Director Gitte Zschoch acknowledged that there is a room for improvement in listening and reaching equality with local partners. All in all, the success of the pilot scheme prompted Stefano Sannino (2021), Secretary-General of EEAS, to classify it as an “important element in the EU toolbox” and particularly useful to the EEAS considering it is a relatively new institution.

## **5. International cooperation and trade**

EU Member States have been traditionally highly involved in discussions of cultural issues in various international fora, for instance the Council of Europe and, naturally, UNESCO. However, European states have also offered leadership in steering interest in the topic outside the United Nations specialised agency, for instance, the 2019 UN General Assembly *Resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development*. But the protection of cultural heritage has been the topic par excellence, namely in NATO and in the UN Security Council. In 2017 the Security Council adopted the landmark *Resolution 2347 on the protection of cultural heritage* with regards to the destruction and illicit trafficking prompted by the Islamic State. In 2021 the Italian presidency of the G-20 held a session on culture (the first-ever being in Abu Dhabi in 2020). It is thus clear that, although the EU does not hold a member status in such settings, culture is perceived as a “European thing” and there is no widespread opposition nor a clear competition from other states since Russia and China limit themselves to the regional level rather than the global one (Selter, 2021).

Culture has also been dragged into international trade, leading to the so-called “trade versus culture debate”. Since the negotiation of the *General Agreement on Trade in Services* (GATS, later inherited by the World Trade Organisation) in the 1990s, a collation led by France and Canada has established the “cultural exception” which in effect excludes the audio-visual sector from any market liberalisation measures both in multi- and bi-lateral agreements. In this regard, Article 207 of TFEU requires unanimity for the conclusion of agreements on trade in cultural services. It is also important to bear in mind that the “cultural exception” is rejected by the USA (in view of the dominance of Hollywood) and as a result its trade agreements differ substantially from the European ones.

Following the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, the EU has attempted to reconcile the tension between trade and culture through the annexation of a Protocol on Cultural Cooperation to its trade agreements (see for example those with CARIFORUM, Central America or Peru and Colombia). This approach allows for both maintaining a wide policy space and promoting interculturality and cultural exchanges without making legal and trade compromises (Hanania and Vlassis, 2014, p. 30). Nevertheless, these protocols were used as a ready-to-use template for all negotiating partners and thus the one signed with South Korea in 2010 faced a significant criticism due to the strength of the Korean audio-visual sector. As a consequence, the EU has abandoned the practice of having a separate framework for cooperation in cultural matters, which might be seen as a regression of the international trade policy.

Another path to supporting cultural sectors in third countries is through the Official Development Aid (ODA). According to the EU Aid Explorer in the period between 2007 and 2021, the total amount of donations reached 840 billion EUR, of which 3 billion were destined to the line of culture and recreation (European Commission, n.d. e). However, one cannot fail to notice the decreasing trend over the years – if in 2007 aid in culture totalled 560 million, in 2019 (the last year with complete data) it barely trespassed 130 million (see graphics in [Appendix 22](#)). In addition, the EU is specifically funding the 2019-2024 ACP-EU towards a viable cultural industry programme, as a fourth-generation action after ACP Films, ACP Cultures and ACP Culture+. This clearly demonstrates EU’s focus on its neighbours, with very limited investment available for distant countries, as is the case of China, examined in detail in the following chapter.

## **CASE STUDY: THE CULTURAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

### **I. CULTURE IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND CHINA**

#### **1. Historical overview and current state of the diplomatic relations**

The first contacts between European states and the Chinese empire took place along the Silk Road, dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. However, it was not until the Age of Discovery that exchanges intensified as Portuguese ships reached Chinese shores in early 15<sup>th</sup> century. The “century of humiliation”, started in 1839 with the First Opium War against the British empire, is a source of persisting resentment towards Western powers. When in 1949 Mao Zedong put an end to the devastating civil war, the newly-established People’s Republic was left isolated from the

non-Communist bloc. Integration into the international order began in the 1970s with the admission to the United Nations and USA President Richard Nixon's visit.

In 1975 official relations were established between China and the European Communities. Amid Deng Xiaoping's Opening and Reform, prospects were highly promising, and the European Commission established a delegation in 1988. However, the next year brought relations at the brink of a breaking point, five years later leading to a period of "exploration and construction" (Snyder, 2009, p. 309). Following China's accession to the WTO in 2001 and the crisis in the transatlantic relations caused by the Iraq invasion, the EU and China established a "strategic partnership" in October 2003. A new phase of "deepening and maturing" (Ibid.) was then succeeded by "disenchantment" as a result of the enlargement towards the more Atlanticist central Europe and the increasing concerns over Chinese exponential growth and unfair trade practices (Casarini, 2013, p. 2). The "common interest" around the 2008-2009 economic crisis provided a new impetus to the relations between the EU and China, "challeng[ing] the dominance of the dollar" (Ibid, p. 3).

Balancing partnership and cooperation has been a constant trait ever since, in which the Commission delegation, transformed into an EU one after the creation of EEAS, was entrusted with a crucial role. Notable agreements signed by China and the EU include the 1985 *Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation*, the 1998 *Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation*, and the 2013 EU-China 2020 *Strategic Agenda for Cooperation*. Starting in 1989 annual summits are celebrated between both sides' presidents, further complemented by strategic and sectoral dialogues. In addition, China and the EU have adopted various policy documents outlining their strategy towards each other. (Timeline of documents and major events is available in [Appendix 23](#).)

For instance, the Commission and HR/VP (2019, p. 1) strategy *EU-China – A strategic outlook* classified China as a "cooperation partner [...], a negotiating partner [...], and a systemic rival" depending on the issue. Meanwhile, China has pushed against these labels, reiterating its commitment to a "peaceful rise" and multilateralism. The COVID-19 pandemic effects (beyond migrating towards meetings via video conference) further destabilised an already damaged relationship, with a new consensus forging among EU Member States over the wariness towards China (Oertel, 2020). But mutual suspicion is also growing among European and Chinese citizens, especially since the start of COVID-19 (Pew Research Center, 2020). The end of March 2021 marked a dramatic escalation as the EU imposed sanctions on China for the first time in more than thirty years and, as one might expect, Beijing reciprocated. Search for common stance against China spilled beyond Europe at the G-7 meeting in May. While "the promotion of human rights will continue to be a core part of the EU's engagement with China" (European Commission and High Representative, 2016 a, p. 5) and this is one of the three pillars of Action 1 of the *strategic outlook*, it remains a major contentious issue.

As both the EU and China keep adopting a more geopolitical and assertive stance, it is crucial to ramp up diplomatic efforts in order to maintain the channels for dialogue open and tackle issues of common interest. Historically, China has presented a difficulty due to its geographical remoteness, but one must not forget in the today's interconnected world cultural distance continues been a determining factor for relations. And, although China and the European Union are rather different in what regards values and cultural characteristics (see Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Inglehart-Welzel cultural map in [Appendix 24](#)), they are both based on cultural diversity and have a blooming cultural and creative sector (see comparison in [Appendix 25](#)). This suggests

mutual understanding and respect can be further deepened through intensified cultural exchanges in the broad sense.

## **2. Cultural goods and services in the bilateral trade**

Although the scope of partnership between China and the EU has been progressively widened, the economic realm retains its status as the primary aspect of the relationship. This is owing to the fact that the European Union is China's biggest trading partner, and vice versa China occupies the overall second place among EU trade counterparts, only after the USA (even though China is the largest one in terms of imports, it is third in exports). The total volume of trade in services and goods flowing between the EU and China exceeds 600 billion euros, in other words, close to 2 billion per day, which makes it particularly relevant for both trade and foreign policy.

The importance of cultural goods and services must be acknowledged, as they amount to a total of 8 million euros. In addition, they represent a large percentage of the overall EU trade in culture, meaning it is a preferred destination. For example, the imports of cultural goods are only 1.5% of the total imports from China but they reach 28% of all cultural imports, while the exports of EU cultural services with their 1.2% of total services exports to China amount to 42% of all cultural exports (graphics available in [Appendix 26](#)). Furthermore, around 1% of the total EU Official Development Aid to China is assigned to the cultural and recreational sector ([Appendix 27](#)). This illustrates the role that cultural products, as conveyors of meanings and values, play in the economic exchanges between the EU and China.

However, trade is not without its challenges. In the webpage dedicated to trade with China, the EU expresses its concerns over fair trade and intellectual property in the very first paragraph (European Commission, n.d. a). Another drawback is the looming trade war between the USA and China that some have come to label a Second Cold War. Another inherent difficulty is the divergence between Member State positions regarding China, especially regarding the Chinese 5G networks, or the 16+1 and the Belt and Road initiatives. Cooperation and mutual understanding are sought through dialogues on various levels, as well as through the chambers of commerce established in each other's territory. Furthermore, the EU-China Trade Project, launched in 2004, assists reform for integration into the WTO system, and includes work in the field of cultural and creative industries.

A major milestone in EU-China relations was the conclusion of the negotiations of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI), started as early as 2013. The announcement made on the 30 December 2020 caught by surprise analysts and policy makers on both sides of the Atlantic, and this unfortunate timing (merely 20 days before the inauguration of Biden) was condemned as "disappointing" or a "mistake" for further undermining a common Western action against China (Grieger, 2021, pp. 10-11). However, the European Commission defends it as the most ambitious one reached by China, as well as reflecting European sensitivities, including the audio-visual sector. However, due to mounting tensions at the end of April 2021 the European Parliament froze the approval procedure on CAI.

The CAI reflects the EU and China's shared vision of cultural diversity as a legitimate policy objective and incorporates the "cultural exception" from liberalisation and subsidies in the audio-visual sector. The EU attached its standard reservations to recreational, cultural and sporting services (see above section on international cooperation). An innovative approach by China appeared in reservation 25 "Network Audio-Visual Service, Internet Culture Operation", which



stands out as one of the few trade agreement clauses explicitly dedicated to the distribution of digital cultural content, thus demonstrating China's awareness of its central role in the current age of tech giants. An examination of both sides' reservations (comparison in [Appendix 28](#)) reveals that market access remains a key issue for European cultural goods and services trying to reach the Chinese public.

Nonetheless, recent developments (such as the Chinese crackdown on digital platforms, the signature of the China-backed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership between fifteen Asia-Pacific countries, the V-shaped economic recovery of China as the only big economy to register a growth despite COVID-19, and the ever-rising nationalism directly reflected into the consumption of local movies and the rejection of Hollywood), increase the need to involve China in international regulations, like the CAI, which provide the framework within which cultural exchanges take place.

### **3. People-to-People Dialogue as the cultural dimension of the relations**

Recognising that exchanges are “ever more important in these challenging political and economic times” (Vassiliou, 2014), in 2012 the EU and China launched the People-to-People Dialogue as the third pillar of their relation, thus complementing the strategic and the economic dialogues (see the architecture of relations in [Appendix 29](#)). The dialogue consists in a bi-annual high-level meeting between DG EAC and the Chinese vice-premier, celebrated alternately in Brussels and China, in combination with three policy dialogues, centred on the following topics: higher education, cultural affairs and youth. The then EU Commissioner for Education and Culture praised the first meeting as successful thanks to the “high quality of the discussions” and the “increased openness on the Chinese side in their desire [...] to learn from European experiences” (Ibid.). On the other side, China under the recently inaugurated president Xi Jinping saw the initiative as a “partnership of civilisations”, embedded in its strategy for harmony and co-existence (Ibid.).

The next year the annual summit of the presidents resulted in the adoption of the *EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation*, whose very last point is dedicated to people-to-people exchanges as a means to “foster cross-fertilisation between societies” (European Union and People's Republic of China, 2013, p. 15). The document expressed both sides' commitment to: taking follow-up actions after the high-level policy dialogue, respecting the principles of the 2005 UNESCO *Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, boosting cooperation in cultural industries and heritage protection, promoting the establishment of cultural centres and the teaching of languages, enlarging student and youth exchanges, working towards the compatibility of their educational systems, and encouraging tourist flows.

In November 2020 the fifth High-Level People-to-People Dialogue took place virtually due to the COVID-19 conditions. The first day of the event consisted in five thematic discussions: mobility, gender, sport, youth, and culture, each composed of two panels. The topic on culture focused on creative ecosystems and renovation of cultural heritage, thus highlighting the common prioritisation of economy and heritage. The next day Commissioner Mariya Gabriel and the Chinese vice-premier took stock of the cooperation so far and issued a joint statement that pointed out the negative impact of COVID-19 on educational mobility, and promised strengthening the efforts in heritage preservation and “intellectual exchanges in various forms and fora, such as festivals and book fairs” (European Commission, 2020). Although the dedicated event page

included an option for asking questions and participating in networking during the whole November, it was barely used. This serves as an example of the limitations stemming from online events which lack the cultural exchanges surrounding international summits, ranging from travel and exposure to a foreign culture, through attending cultural performances or exhibitions, to participating in side events with diverse actors.

While the EU engages in policy dialogue in higher education with numerous countries, culture is a welcome addition. The stated objective to “build mutual trust and to consolidate intercultural understanding” (European Commission, n.d. j) reflects directly the essence of cultural relations. However, although the name of the third pillar is particularly suited for the People's Republic of China, it gives a rather equivocal impression of civil engagement, while in fact the bi-annual character and the enduring focus on high governmental levels render the dialogue more of a rhetoric exercise. The very structure of the EU-China pillars (as seen in [Appendix 29](#) mentioned above) hints to the lower importance attached to cultural exchanges – with only three policy dialogues and no ministerial or directorate level meetings, it is not comparable to the more than sixty policy areas of the political and economic pillars.

In practical terms, the dialogue has led to little more than the commissioning of studies and mappings. One such example is the *Tuning EU-China Study for the modernisation of higher education in China*, which was launched in 2012 together with the dialogue and took over seven years to contribute to “the alignment and understanding of the European and Chinese higher education systems” (Tuning China, n.d.). Another co-financed research project is the *Mapping the EU-China cultural and creative landscape*, published in 2015. The final 100-pages output offers an overview of policies adopted by EU Member States and China, as well as a list of important stakeholders in the culture and creative sector. The compilation of joint projects, such as exhibitions, negotiations on the return of relics or trainings, are in fact at the level of Member States rather than the EU as a whole. In addition, although exchanges and co-productions are increased, they are still limited. Expert recommendations, among which stand out the establishment of Culture Exchange Committee and a Cultural and Creative Business School, the conferring of an Annual Heritage Award, the involvement of non-governmental actors, and the development of cultural data (Staines, pp. 40-41 and 80-81), have not been taken up by the relevant authorities.

Other facets of the cultural relations between China and the EU include the organisation of events and the designation of years. In particular, the celebrations of the anniversary from the establishment of diplomatic relations feature culture in the form of Europe Street and Showcase Europe during the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2005, and a China Unlimited Creative Contest and the First China Arts Festival in the EU for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. That year the EU launched an information portal in Chinese (oumeng.eu) but it is not accessible anymore. On the other hand, in 2011 the EU and China celebrated the Year of Youth, in 2012 the Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and in 2018 the Tourism Year. The latter coincided with the European Year of Cultural Heritage and included among its fifty initiatives the EU-China Light Bridge, which connected one hundred important landmarks and involved local communities, and a Virtual Travel Fair on Cultural Tourism. (Summary timeline in [Appendix 30](#).)

All in all, cultural relations between European states and China extend to multiple sectors and predate the creation of the EU as an institution, but Europeanising bilateral projects can bring benefits for both the nation states (pooling of resources to reach audience outside of the mega cities) and the EU (boosting its actorness and branding beyond economy and tourism) (Reiterer, 2014). Nevertheless, the current focus on showcasing one's own culture is incapable of strengthening

mutual understanding, and rather serves to satisfy the audience's curiosity and inadvertently increases the sense of otherness (Zhou, 2012, p. 30).

A real intercultural dialogue requires dealing with values (however different they might be) and active listening (instead of lecturing). In this sense, European Commissioner's contentment with Chinese desire to learn from the EU in 2012 should have been paired with a similar yearning to learn from China, for example regarding long-term thinking. An additional difficulty stems from the difference in their approaches – China prefers acting on the official level, while the EU relies on cultural agents “at arm's length” (Reiterer, 2014, p. 152). These particularities will be revealed in the chapters below focusing on the actions initiated by the European and Chinese sides to complement the joint endeavours outlined above.

## II. EU EXTERNAL CULTURAL ACTION TOWARDS CHINA

### 1. Strategy

The EU has long sought to devise a common line of action in respect to China in the field of culture, making it the recurrent focus of multiple studies as shown below. However, these recommendations have never materialised in the form of an official position, endorsed by the Member States or the institutions. While this is certainly a drawback, it must be acknowledged that the EU is yet to carry out the imperative task of producing country-specific cultural strategies, adapted to the local context as well as the EU's goals. Thus, the reports, although not representing an authoritative position, serve as a starting point to the actors involved in cultural relations between the EU and China.

In 2009 the Parliament published the lengthy study *The Potential for Cultural Exchanges between the European Union and Third Countries: The Case of China*. It included an extensive study of nine cultural sectors in China, an overview of exchange programmes at the EU and Member State levels, and a set of conclusions. After denouncing the cultural dialogue between the EU and China as “not very advanced and developed” (Media Consulting Group, 2009, p. 81), the document recommends a three-stages process of reinforcing EU action in China, assisting China in discovering a “European culture” and facilitating EU artists' entry into the Chinese market. Although the cultural aspect of the high-level dialogue has been improved since the launch in 2012, the set of necessary actions is still relevant today.

The year 2012 can be considered as the peak in the interest in EU-China cultural relations, as it brought about two more studies. The first one entitled *Mapping Existing Studies on EU-China Cultural Relations* offered policy makers and cultural professionals fifty pages of recommended literature on the topic, ranging from Soft Power ranking, through China's cultural diplomacy strategy, to mappings of the sector. The second one, written by the Expert Group on Culture and External Relations set up by the Commission and EEAS, explored *Culture in the EU's external relations: A strategy for EU-China cultural relations* under the pre-headline “United in diversity”. The study defended the value of a concerted EU action and proposed concrete steps to achieve it: integration of culture in public diplomacy, expansion of network collaboration, designation of a cultural focal point in the EU Delegation, *inter alia*.

In 2014, the Preparatory Action, initiated by the Parliament more than a year earlier and ultimately leading to the adoption of the 2016 Joint Communication on a strategy for cultural

relations, produced a series of country reports, among which naturally was China. After reviewing the Chinese strategy (subject of the next section), the study moves on to a diagnosis of the China-EU relations and concludes they have advanced but “only on [the] policy dialogue level” (Expert Group On Culture And External Relations – China, 2012, p. 28). The exploratory phase gathered opinions from both European and Chinese stakeholders, coinciding in the need for a common European approach. Lastly, in 2015 the joint *Mapping the EU-China cultural and creative landscape* mentioned in the previous section was released.

Since 2016 the focus has shifted from research and strategy formulation towards implementation, within the overall “principled, practical and pragmatic” policy on China (European Commission and High Representative, 2016 a, p. 5), adopted that same year. Nevertheless, in relation to the 2019 strategy update, the EU Ambassador to China, Nicolas Chapuis, asserts that cultural relations fit into all three modes: cooperation in higher education, science and technology; competition on Soft Power between the national cultural institutes; and rivalry on values and narratives (Chapuis, 2021, full interview annexed in [Appendix 31](#)). Although Chapuis lists as objectives promoting EU’s image in China, improving mutual understanding and opening China for mobility, he acknowledges that “cultural relations are not a core focus of EU action in China” and this absence must be compensated with public diplomacy efforts. The Ambassador also points out to obstacles such as Chinese governmental control, culture being a Member State competence and citizens’ decreasing interest in exchanges, in addition to lack of financing.

## 2. Implementation

The 2014 country report rightly voiced a concern over the absence of funding instruments that could support cultural relations with China (Smits and Raj, 2014, p. 29). This is owing to the EU’s focus on neighbouring countries, meaning that the Asia-Pacific programme is severely underfunded, considering the concentration of world’s population in this region. Regrettably, no change is foreseen for the 2021-2027 period, although all external action will be encompassed under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – ‘Global Europe’, adopted on 9 June 2021, with a total budget of € 80 billion of which only 10% is dedicated to Asia and the Pacific.

Even though the preceding Culture Programme selected China and India as its priority third countries in 2007, Creative Europe sets precise conditions for participation, which entails that China has not been involved in any project since 2014. One notable exception is the Young Talent Architecture Award which in 2018 invited participation from South Korea and China, and in 2020 launched a specific Asia Edition, open also to the other two strategic partners in Asia, namely Japan and India. A workaround in support for artists could be the setting up of a cultural and creative industries action line under the EU-China Trade Project.

Higher education has traditionally been the major field of cooperation, as shown by funding opportunities and Ambassador Chapuis’ testimony (2021, [Appendix 31](#)). Specifically, over the 2014-2020 period Erasmus+ has enabled more than 3,000 Chinese students and staff to move to Europe, and almost 2,000 European ones to visit China. Moreover, China is involved in 36 Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degrees, a comparable number of capacity-building projects, and Jean Monnet activities. Therefore, it is crucial to maintain this major contact point and dispel the mutual animosity caused by the sanctions on scholars imposed in April 2021.

Additional actions were underwritten by the Partnership Instrument (PI) which, in the very last paragraph of the EEAS (n.d. a) webpage on the relations with China, is said to cover culture, digital cooperation, higher education, innovation and public diplomacy, among other. With a budget of 2 million and a duration of 27 months until 2022, the second phase of the China strand of the EU Policy and Outreach Partnership (EUPOP) explicitly aims to “enhance the image of the EU” and “to build trust and mutual understanding” (European Commission, n.d. i).

Also financed by the PI, the Cultural Relations Platform (previously Cultural Diplomacy Platform) is responsible for the Global Cultural Leadership Programme, and in 2017 it held a forum on cooperation between the European Capitals of Culture and the Culture Cities East Asia, complemented by a report in 2018. Another initiative managed by the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments is the EU Alumni network, targeted at all beneficiaries of EU programmes, which the EU Delegation to China joined in 2019.

The EU Delegation to China is the principal actor carrying out Cultural Diplomacy on the ground, both at the institutional and the citizen level. However, the Delegation's capacity is severely limited by the lack of a cultural focal point, first recommended by the 2012 Expert Group and later promised by the 2016 Joint Communication. Although a mixed DG EAC/DG Immigration and Home Affairs position was created in 2014, it was eliminated in 2019, in the words of Ambassador Chapuis (2021, [Appendix 31](#)) depriving the Delegation of “resources to monitor Chinese cultural policies or to support cooperation projects”.

Hence, the organisation of activities is assigned to the Press and Information section, already overburdened. Flagship initiatives include the global Europe Day, EU Open Days and EU Film Festival, as well as the China-specific EU Book Festival, Children's Art Exhibition, and the Europe Street Festival. Previous one-time events include the EU Olympic Photo Book Exhibition and the European Wine and Food Festival. For 2021-2022 the Delegation is preparing a high-level dialogue whose aim is the publishing of an “EU-China dictionary of cultural misunderstandings”, and a think tanks dialogue.

The Delegation coordinates joint activities with the Member State embassies and collaborates with EUNIC clusters. One instance was the exhibition “European Cultural Routes” unveiled in September 2020 both in person and digitally. This partnership between the Delegation and EUNIC is particularly useful for the latter since it faces significant institutional hurdles because it is not considered a valid counterpart to the Chinese Ministry of Culture (which prefers speaking to officials) and cultural institutes are classified as private companies (Vandewalle, 2015, p. 12). An additional drawback is the low representation – for the whole territory of China there are only two clusters, one in Beijing and one in Hong Kong, the first composed of ten members and the second one of three.

Between 2008 and 2014 EUNIC organised six editions of the EU-China cultural dialogue, which brought together cultural professionals and institutions in different cities in both China and the EU. Apart from discussions, the dialogues featured artist residencies and partnership programmes. Furthermore, in 2011 EUNIC published Europe-China Cultural Compass, an impressive 300-pages document explaining terminology, Chinese values, policies, and cultural industry conditions. It then zooms in into challenges and case studies of project cooperation, with an additional thematic overview, and finishes with a list of useful resources. By joining forces with Chinese cultural experts EUNIC managed to incorporate a genuinely intercultural perspective, as opposed to the official EU policy documents.

With outreach already limited by the single location in Beijing (unlike Member States consulates throughout the territory), the COVID-19 pandemic has afflicted a substantial damage to the Delegation's cultural activities. In spite of the practical non-existence of new cases since April 2020, the Chinese government has maintained strict measures in place. The resulting closure of public venues has impeded the celebration of foreign events (which customarily require a prior permission from the Chinese state). What is more, travel restrictions have halted cultural mobility in both directions. Against this backdrop, in 2020 the Film and the Book Festivals, as well as the 2021 Europe Day took place entirely online.

It must be born in mind that while digital diplomacy allows agenda setting, listening and advancing mutual understanding, mere presence doesn't not automatically translate into a more favourable public opinion (Bjola and Holmes, 2015, p. 75). A 2015 study of the EU Delegation's Weibo account (the Chinese equivalent of Twitter) in comparison with those of the Japanese and American embassies showed EU's "clear focus on culture" (around one third of the 200 posts over the course of two months) with the purpose of "showcas[ing] unity in diversity" (Ibid., p. 78). At the same time, the posts under the category of culture and travelling were shared the most and political and economic the least, which proved that the strategy suited the interests of the audience (see [Appendix 32](#)). The expert concluded that digital diplomacy was used for information dissemination rather than conversation generation due to the fact that the Chinese public still lacked understanding of the region (Ibid., p. 91).

However, a fast-forward to 2021 reveals a rather different picture. The Delegation's account now has more than 350,000 followers but during the months of March and April 2021 posted only 23 times and the average engagement is less than 0.2% (see [Appendix 32](#)). Although the featured images are indeed focused on culture (Study in Europe, Cultural Routes Exhibition 2020, Children's Art Exhibition 2019, Film Festival 2019), none of the posts is connected to culture. In addition, the best performing posts were the sanctions imposed by the EU.

This loss of orientation towards culture cannot be attributed to the change of Delegations' leadership, since Ambassador Chapuis has a background in cultural relations, but rather to the elimination of the DG EAC representative. Interestingly enough, it coincided with the end of the #ExperienceEurope campaign, which started in May 2017 and over its two-year duration produced 6,000 Weibo posts and 350 WeChat articles. Thus, it can be concluded that now the EU is underutilising social media, whose visual content provides the perfect opportunity to reach a wider audience at a relatively low cost and simultaneously facilitate bidirectional communication.

### **III. CULTURAL DIPLOMACY WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS**

#### **1. Strategy**

The People's Republic of China has been a latecomer to the Soft Power game but it has ended up embracing the concept and bestowing it with a distinct meaning, broader than the original scope proposed by Joseph Nye. By putting culture at the heart and soul of Soft Power, it has come closer to resembling a Cultural Power (Silva and Menechelli, 2019). The term Cultural Soft Power is not only replacing Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy in the academic debate, but is also being used by high-level government officials, including Xi Jinping himself on multiple occasions (Ibid.). For instance, the five-year plan adopted in March 2021 entitles its Chapter 10 "Develop advanced

socialist culture and enhance national cultural soft power” and dedicates a section to “Enhance the influence of Chinese culture” through the “use [of] online and offline to tell Chinese stories, spread [of] Chinese voices” and in particular “activities of Perceive China, Read China, Audio-visual China” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 2021).

The shift had already begun under the previous Supreme Leader Hu Jintao, who declared culture as crucial for Chinese image and development in 2007 and called for building a “socialist cultural superpower” in 2011. A key factor in this process was the reappropriation of traditional Confucian values in early 2000s (Gu, 2021), which has led to the idea of a “peaceful rise” based on the respect for multilateralism and the pursuit of universal harmony. Nevertheless, the Chinese diplomatic style has been labelled “Wolf Warrior”, after a 2017 Chinese action film. While for the Western analysts and politicians this has a clear pejorative connotation, Chinese leaders and even the public have shown high levels of approval and support. A certain shift can be deduced from Xi’s speech on 31 May 2021 calling for a “trustworthy, lovable and respectable” image, although it is still unclear if it will lead to a substantive change in the communication strategy (Bloomberg, 2021).

The particularities of the Chinese approach to Cultural Diplomacy include: a pragmatic rhetoric of culture as an instrument of power, centrality of the state as the main actor, blurred line between propaganda and Public Diplomacy, and function as protection of cultural security at home (Silva and Menechelli, 2019). These are often seen by outsiders as interventionist, ideological and arbitrary state action, although the mechanisms used by China are the same as other countries (Ibid.). This criticism only reinforces China’s commitment to international cultural competition against and protection from the hostile Western powers. Therefore, the United States is the primary objective of Chinese cultural efforts, followed by Europe and only then Japan and other neighbouring countries.

Hartig (2016, p. 6) points out that the EU could learn from the Chinese “realist view of culture” by recognising its functional usefulness, without this implying that culture should be weaponised but neither should it be relativised and idealised. In practice, this means not only the allocation of large amounts of funding but also symbolic support from state leaders. In other words, the strategic importance is acknowledged in both statements and acts, such as paying visits to the Confucius Institutes around the world (Ibid., p. 7) – a tactic easily replicable by EU high-level officials. Other aspects worth of replicating are the establishment of joint ventures with local partners, as is the case of all Confucius Institutes, and the strengthening of the internal dimension of Cultural Diplomacy.

In twenty years, China’s “charm offensive” has started harnessing both explicit and implicit signs of success, including increased interest in the learning of Chinese language, export of films and books, improved opinion polls, extensive media coverage, acceptance of its diasporas, among others (Kurlantzick, 2007). China consistently ranks high on Soft Power rankings, such as the Soft Power 30. Although in 2018 China’s ascendant tendency halted and it stalled at the 27<sup>th</sup> place for two years, it is a “cultural juggernaut” occupying the 8<sup>th</sup> place in the culture sub-index (see [Appendix 33](#)). However, the rankers warn against taking this cultural strength for granted and recommend leveraging it to boost the overall Soft Power performance (Portland, n.d.).

Despite China’s fruitful nation branding and conversion into the new role model for developing countries (Norrman, 2020), its Cultural Diplomacy lacks a “masterminded strategy” and is instead a “process of learning and trying out” (Smits and Raj, 2014, p. 11). The major

difficulty stems from the absence of a specific document outlining the objectives and action lines, equivalent to the EU's 2016 Joint Communication, and the fragmentation this entails in terms of involved actors and initiatives. On the other hand, a credibility shortage renders Chinese efforts less attractive than neighbouring Japan and South Korea. What is more, China appears to lack the necessary self-confidence because it sticks to a "simplified and standardised" representation of its rich culture, preferring the folkloric elements over its real diversity and idiosyncrasy (Cappelletti, 2016, p. 9). This highlights the difficulty in identifying what Chineseness is, similar to European struggles with defining a common identity. At the same time, it gives rise to external criticism for lack of respect for cultural diversity.

In what regards China's specific strategy towards the European Union, culture has been given a prominent place in all three white papers produced by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, generally as a response to EU's position papers. It is interesting to note that culture is described as both an aspect that has historically differentiated China and the EU and an area for cooperation. Contrary to what one might expect, the first policy paper dating back to 2003 is the one that features culture the most as it sets out to "promote cultural harmony and progress between the East and the West" and anticipates the creation of cultural centres (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC, 2003), being Confucius Institutes set in motion the following year. The emphasis on culture decreased significantly in the 2014 white paper, with more prominent role given to press and publication, as well as in the latest 2018 strategy, which merely mentions joint promotion of cultural diversity. However, one must not forget that China has a strong preference for bilateral relationships with Member States (such as signing cultural cooperation agreements) rather than dealing with the EU as a bloc, as the next section will demonstrate.

## 2. Implementation

The hallmark of Chinese Cultural Diplomacy has been the Confucius Institute, the first one established in Seoul in 2004 and since then the number has been growing exponentially. Despite aiming to open 1,000 branches by 2020, China now counts with almost 550 institutes (joint ventures with universities) and 2,000 classrooms (pre-university level) in 150 countries around the globe. Approximately 23% of the institutes are located in EU Member States, and in addition, the one at the European School in Brussels is labelled as EU (see [Appendix 34](#)). Aimed at the general public, the Confucius Institutes provide not only language classes but also raise awareness and promote Chinese culture. The institutes are affiliated to the Ministry of Education and coordinated by a non-profit organisation, popularly known as Hanban, serving as headquarters.

However, the worsening international image of Hanban itself has led to the closure of multiple locations, mainly in the United States but also in the EU. As a result, last summer the Ministry undertook a name change as a "manifestation of Chinese culture that regards harmony as a precious cultural tradition" (Zhuang, 2020). The rebranded Centre for Language Education and Cooperation oversees a wide range of programmes: apart from language learning, it also offers various scholarships, proficiency tests, competitions (such as Chinese Bridge) and cultural exchange. The latter consists in the provision of platforms, networks and resources, as well as "opportunities [...] to participate in and experience Chinese culture in depth and in person" (Centre for Language Education and Cooperation, n.d.). Similarly to Hanban, the proposal for a Fudan University branch in Budapest has been widely criticised on the international level and even led to mass protests in Hungary in June 2021.



A second actor is the Ministry of Culture and Tourism which is in charge of the bilateral Cultural Years, for instance those held with Italy in 2010 and Germany in 2012, and the China Cultural Centres Abroad. By not only organising cultural and exchange activities but also teaching and information services, these Cultural Centres are in fact duplicating the work of the Confucius Institute and thus competing with it. Although dating back to the 1980s and promising to open fifty locations by 2020, currently there are only 36 Cultural Centres, of which ten are in EU Member States ([Appendix 34](#)). This included the one in Brussels, inaugurated in 2015 coinciding with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations between the EU and China. These numbers imply that the Centres did not yield satisfactory results and instead of rebranding them, the Chinese government opted for the creation of a new institution, fortunately equipping it with a substantial budget. The Ministry of Culture is also in charge of the chinaculture.org portal that since 2003 gathers information about events, policies, news, as well as photos, videos and reports and even virtual tours.

A third group of actors relate to the audio-visual and media sectors. In the first place, the National Radio and Television Administration not only regulates the sector but also directly controls the China Radio International that has 38 overseas bureaus and broadcasts in 44 languages. At the same level is the Xinhua News Agency, which following an intense internationalisation, now has over 170 offices worldwide, thus surpassing Western media outlets such as BBC or CNN. The Chinese film industry is steadily entering Western cinemas, in part thanks to co-productions, mainly with Hollywood but also with European producers, and in part due to increased audience demand. One example is the film *In the Mood for Love*, which in 2016 BBC ranked second in the “100 Greatest Films of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” and in 2019 *The Guardian* fifth in “Best Films of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”. To mark the twentieth anniversary since its premiere, the Hong-Kongese was further selected for rescreening at the 2020 Cannes Festival and theatres in EU states, including Spain.

Next, the role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot be understated. Its Information Department is charged with conducting Public Diplomacy around the world, although not explicitly mentioning Cultural Diplomacy. However, the majority of Chinese embassies abroad, including the Mission to the EU stationed in Brussels, count with an Education and Culture Department. The Chinese Mission has recently announced a video competition European Youth in China. But, similar to the EU Delegations, the Mission's biggest event is the celebration of the Chinese New Year in January-February. In 2021 the celebration was held via social media and lasted for three weeks, with multiple musical and traditional Chinese opera performances, sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and carried out by China Global TV Network, being streamed online. The Mission posts primarily cultural content on its Facebook page, while some is also pushed to Twitter although it is usually reserved for political matters (see [Appendix 35](#)).

Although the Mission's website dedicates a specific section on culture (unlike the EU Delegation's one), the English translation is empty. Despite the fact that the Chinese version has not been updated for years, notable past initiatives include the 2016 “China-Europe Story - Photography, Painting and Calligraphy” exhibition at the European Parliament and the 2015 “China-EU Friendship Day”. Up to 2012 the webpage features timely updates on EU cultural policies, which suggests that since that point there was a budget and staff cut, similar to the elimination of DG EAC representative in the EU Delegation.

In this regard, the target audience of the Mission to the EU is not the whole population of the EU but rather the EU officials. Therefore, effective cultural outreach to the citizens depends on the Chinese embassies in each Member State, which gives China the upper hand over the EU that

lacks representation outside Beijing. This also reflects China's bilateral Cultural Diplomacy strategy, as outlined in the previous section. Considering the lack of a specific budget line for cultural cooperation with the EU, Chinese funding is either project-based or relies on the EU to bear the burden of joint initiatives, as a result of the European policy in the 1990s (Smits and Raj, 2014, p. 26).

In recent years China has started to incorporate a cultural dimension into the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Xi Jinping's signature foreign policy programme. What is more, the related art festivals and cultural forums are executed through cooperation with local actors, for example by entrusting them the content creation. This new approach proves that China is increasingly self-confident and aware of the importance of marketing for reaching audiences (Cappelletti, 2016) and improving the perception not only of BRI itself but also of the People's Republic in general. Nevertheless, the concerns of the G-7 countries are expected to crystallise in the launch of a rivalling programme under the name Clean Green Initiative.

Besides, capitalising on the extensive presence of Chinese companies abroad, as well as the influence of the tech giants dubbed BATX (Baidu, Alibaba, Tencent, Xiaomi, in opposition to the American GAFAM), would be particularly effective in tying the Chinese "economic miracle" to its cultural claims and mending the "Made in China" label. While the loosening of the governmental control is useful both for the cultural sector, as it addresses the creative deficit, and the country itself because it fosters empathy and credibility, it entails the herculean task of balancing individualistic and collective social value (Gu, 2020).

Chinese values are prominently displayed at international summits and events celebrated in China in what is known as "host diplomacy" (Wang, 2018), transmitting more than 2000 years of history of hospitality and courtesy of the so-called "state of ceremonies" (Lu, 2013). One needs not look further than the large-scale opening ceremonies of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2014 APEC meeting or the 2016 G-20 summit, full of references to traditional Chinese culture, such as the performers' costumes, the classical music or the food, but in a harmonious combination with modern elements symbolising the Western civilisation (Zhou, 2019). It goes without saying that similar arrangements are made for the assembly of the Asia-Europe Meeting. However, these events are not without their challenges, for instance, currently there are numerous calls from all over the world to boycott the 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

#### **IV. ASEM AND OTHER MULTILATERAL INITIATIVES**

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was established in 1996 as a process for dialogue and cooperation between the two continents, upon a joint proposal by France and Singapore. The European Commission has been a member since the very beginning and in fact its 1994 *Towards a New Strategy for Asia* might be considered as the triggering event. As a result of the broadening membership, ASEM now comprises 30 European countries (including all of the EU Member States) and 21 Asian states (one of which is China), as well as the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat. Thus, the biennial Heads of State meeting also counts with the presence of the Presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, and the Secretary-General of ASEAN. The aim of providing a space for exchange of ideas "in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership" suffices to classify ASEM as a platform for cultural relations.

However, the intergovernmental process goes a step further by first, specifically putting cultural, educational and social issues on the agenda. And second, apart from high-level conferences, it also contributes to people-to-people exchanges. The example *par excellence* of the former is the Policy Panel entitled *From Cultural Diplomacy Towards Cultural Co-operation: What Future Directions for Asia-Europe Relations?*, held at the 8<sup>th</sup> ASEM Culture Ministers Meeting in 2018. The event was organised by the Bulgarian presidency of the Council of the EU with relation to the 2016 Joint Communication on a strategy for international cultural relations, which again demonstrates the interplay between the EU and ASEM. The leitmotif of the discussion was that “states can and should play the role of funder, catalyst, and facilitator of cultural relations”.

Regarding the second modality of cultural cooperation, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) deserves the credit as the only permanent body of the otherwise informal and flexible process. ASEF's non-profit aim is the incarnation of Cultural Diplomacy: “advancing mutual understanding and collaboration between the people of Asia and Europe through opportunities that enable an exchange of ideas”. Moreover, it promotes the establishment of international networks and acts as an intermediary between civil society and ASEM governments. Culture and education stand out among the six areas of work, covering together more than 70% of ASEF's partnerships, with the Sustainable Development Goals as an overarching theme. Thus, the Culture Department is responsible for multiple projects, publications and approximately one hundred events per year (see details in [Appendix 36](#)).

The EU is an official co-organiser of many of these events, with financing coming through the Partnership Instrument. In the period between 2016 and 2018 the EU's allocation of 1 million euro contributed to the celebration of 24 activities, such as Young Leaders Forum, Editors' Roundtable, Seminar for Human Rights and Journalists' Seminar. This “strong support for ASEF and the ASEM process” is thought to “evidence the EU's commitment to multilateralism” (European Commission, 2019, p. 4). Aside from being ASEF's biggest donor, the EU is coordinating the European group within ASEM.

However, a 2014 report found that EU leaders' habitual absence from ASEM Summits was counter-productive to trust-building since it deepens polarisation originating in political issues and colonial memory (DRN, ECDPM, Ecorys and Particip, 2014, p. 7). Furthermore, the tensions over political values affect not only the intergovernmental level but also people-to-people relations. On a separate note, while expectations from ASEF are too high, its visibility among EU Delegations is only limited (*Ibid.*, p. 15). On the other hand, while European members have gradually reduced their voluntary donations, the ever-increasing financing provided by China is turning it into a more active player and potentially an agenda-setter (*Ibid.*, p. 3).

Nevertheless, China's traditional reluctance to engage in multilateral initiatives is still preventing it from exercising the type of regional cultural leadership that South Korea exhibits, for example through the Konnect ASEAN project which includes art exhibitions, workshops and events like a Cultural Diplomacy Forum held in April 2021. Famous for its long-term perspective, China is yet to reveal if it practices what it preaches and takes over EU's role within ASEM or it embraces the “wolf warrior” diplomacy and falls back into isolationism. In any case, if the EU is already an example of the new school Cultural Diplomacy, multilateralism is taken to a whole new level by ASEM and ASEF through their building of a bi-regional cultural space.

At the global level, China and the EU are actively collaborating in international fora such as UNESCO. China leads the list of World Heritage Sites (together with Italy) and has been a strong

supporter of the 2005 *Convention on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions*, including thorough financial contributions to the International Fund for Cultural Diversity. In 2013 China hosted an international congress which adopted the *Hangzhou Declaration: Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies* advocating for the designation of a specific Sustainable Development Goal on culture. With Trump's withdrawal from UNESCO, in 2017 China nominated a candidate for the post of UNESCO Director-General but it was finally awarded to the French runner, and a Chinese is now holding the Deputy position. The chief project is the Silk Roads Programme which connects China to Europe and Africa via an interactive platform. In consonance with the EU-China Tourism Year, the two co-organised a High-Level Conference on *World Heritage and Sustainable Tourism* at the UNESCO, taking stock of the World Heritage Journeys in the EU project developed in cooperation with National Geographic.

The landscape of cultural exchange between the EU and China is complemented by numerous non-governmental initiatives like the EU-China Friendship Association, the China-EU association, the Asia Centre, the Europe-China Foundation, the European Association for Chinese Studies, the EU-China Business Association, the European Association for Chinese Philosophy, the Global Chinese Arts and Culture Society, the Bridging the Dragon association, the Euro-China Audio-visual Network, the China Arts Festival in the EU, the EU-China Filmpartners, just to name a few. While some of them enjoy a limited public funding, the majority are non-profit organisations, based on voluntary participation of active citizens, thus building cross-continent networks.

The proliferation of civil society activities fostering exchange between the Europeans and the Chinese is a sign of their continuing interest in each other's culture, more often than not despite the governments' quarrels. While political tensions are sure to emerge between the two as they become more assertive in the quest for global influence, understanding each other's cultural background is a mandatory prerequisite for solving any outstanding issue. As Ambassador Chapuis comments, at present mutual perceptions are deteriorating and there is an urgent need for educating people and ultimately supplying cadres with both expertise and personal experience in China and the EU, respectively. In the context of growing political tensions, it is all the more pertinent to bridge the differences in the approaches of China and the EU (see summary in [Appendix 37](#)) and increase cooperation in cultural matters in order to avoid misunderstandings and build trust.

## **CONCLUSION: A "UNITED IN DIVERSITY" EUROPEAN CULTURAL ACTION**

The Cultural Diplomacy of the European Union lies on a shaky foundation since it emerges from one supporting competence (culture) and one with an unclear categorisation (foreign policy). As a consequence, these limitations and clashes of interests are passed over to the relatively new policy area, with the only strategy being adopted in 2016. A central theme identified throughout the present research is the tension between unity and diversity, despite the EU's official motto being "unity in diversity". The disunion begins with the impossibility to define Europeanness, as an imaginary concept based on moving borders through constant enlargements, continues with the difficulty to establish a common approach, be it on culture (see above the chapter on legal framework) or towards a specific country like China (see case study), and culminates in the multitude of actors involved in Cultural Diplomacy, each pursuing its own objectives, and the subsequent fragmentation of funding instruments and projects, leading to a high degree of complexity and duplication of efforts (see the chapter on implementation).

Nevertheless, this ambiguity brings also certain advantages. In the first place, it allows a buy-in from all Member States and a wide participation of artists and citizens, prioritising the production of big amounts of content over dictating specific conditions on its substance. As a result, it reinforces EU's credibility as an open and tolerant defender of cultural diversity, thus stimulating cultural exchanges and co-production with local societies in third countries on equal terms rather than being seen as neo-colonial. Last but not least, it ensures the availability of cultural opportunities even if one actor's priorities switch, most notably the self-proclaimed "geopolitical" Commission whose focus has shifted towards hard power since 2019. In this regard, it is crucial to bear in mind the importance of the personality of the leaders, both in terms of their perception of the relevance of culture and their capacity to rally support. Hence, the momentum for culture built by HR/VP Federica Mogherini was extinguished with the inauguration of the new Commission.

Related to this is the debate on the concepts Cultural Diplomacy and International Cultural Relations. While the former is associated with the projection of a positive image and thus seen as propaganda tool, the latter has gradually become the preferred term by the EU because it sounds politically correct (see for example the change of the name from Cultural Diplomacy Platform to Cultural Relations Platform). In any case, the boundary between the two concepts is unclear and even if one accepts that they stand for different strategic goals, they can be easily combined. However, from an academic point of view Cultural Diplomacy is the appropriate denomination when referring to the actions carried out by a particular agent, in this case the European Union. The war of words has been counterproductive for devising a common action, but it has also led to a shift from monopoly of the cultural institutions to a richer spectrum of actors (Helly, 2021, [Appendix 8](#)). To overcome this politico-theoretical hurdle, a new more impartial notion of External Cultural Action is currently being developed from within the practitioner community.

Beyond the labels, what really matters is the implementation in practice and its effectiveness in improving the relationship between Europeans and third country nationals. Through the traditional involvement of its Member States in cultural topics, the EU has ascertained itself as the leader in this area, presenting a distinct approach from other global players like the United States of America and China. Therefore, the European side has been the primary driver for the development of the cultural relations with the People's Republic of China, especially in terms of financial support for common projects, albeit without an explicit joint strategy. However, in the midst of growing political tensions, the 2012 momentum has faded away and the biannual High-Level People-to-People Dialogue is insufficient to rebuild the trust between the two, especially if culture is the first to be cut from the budget. There is a need to embrace diversity and reconcile the differences between the European and the Chinese conceptions of Cultural Diplomacy, and particularly to increase the genuine listening and mutual learning efforts by both sides, as well as the engagement of citizens outside of the capital cities.

The case of China illustrates the limited cultural exchanges between the EU and countries outside the immediate neighbourhood. Rather than being stuck with the customary and easiest option, the Union should focus its Cultural Diplomacy where it can gain the most in strategic terms. As demanded by the Council of the EU, country-specific strategies should be agreed upon to guide the cultural action by all actors involved. Regarding the centrally managed instruments, it is imperative to increase the budget and broaden the participation in the Creative Europe programme to effectively transform it into a brand. In this sense, Erasmus+ can clearly serve as an inspiration, as the EU's most widely known initiative. In addition, the successful experience with the European

Year of Cultural Heritage can be repeated under a different cultural theme. Moreover, the European Spaces of Culture project must be scaled up in both geographic scope and duration.

In order to address the continuing fragmentation locally based actions, the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (yet to be adopted) should merge the multiple financing lines under a new one specifically dedicated to culture, rather than being subordinated to public diplomacy as was the case of the Partnership Instrument. Furthermore, each Delegation should be equipped with a cultural focal point, rather than only selected ones (among which is not Beijing). Besides, it is pertinent to capitalise on the opportunities brought by the accelerated digitalisation during the COVID-19 lockdowns. Although the pandemic resulted in the mass closure of cultural spaces (be in museums, galleries or cinemas) and practically eliminated cross-border mobility, online events have burgeoned and brought together people from all over the world. On a more subtle level, COVID-19 has highlighted the role of culture for both human and social well-being and has reverted the tendency of weakening of the nation state. While the digital is here to stay and flexibility and resilience are a must for any organisation, the lessons learnt from the pandemic put the emphasis on the need for personal interaction.

The rapid developments in the spheres of digital and climate action, which now constitute the two main priorities of the Commission, create a pressing need to incorporate them into the 2016 Joint Communication on International Cultural Relations. The novelty and thus significance of the strategy lies in the fact that it provided for the first time a shared vision and guidelines for European cultural action. However and rather paradoxically, the Communication went faster than the cultural sector, that is only marginally partaking in international cooperation, but has already become obsolete. Nevertheless, the current Commission's limited interest in International Cultural Relations suggests that a new draft may only appear after the inauguration of the 2024 Commission. And considering the lengthy policy cycle, by the time it is adopted, a full decade will have elapsed since the first strategy document.

The biggest challenge for the EU's Cultural Diplomacy is the fact that the actors involved persistently lack both knowledge of the existence of the Joint Communication and understanding of its content and the concrete means to put it into practice. Therefore, apart from updating the policy document, it is vital to raise awareness and build human capacity throughout the institutions and the independent cultural organisations, creating a community of practice. In this way, the European Union will be able to increase its actorness on the global arena by working "United in diversity" and embodying the new school of Cultural Diplomacy – multilateral and bidirectional. Engaging in intercultural dialogue in a respectful and trust-building manner, on every level from the governmental to the citizens one and regardless of political frictions, stands as the prerequisite for forging international alliances and advancing towards common goals.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1. CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AND RELATED TERMS

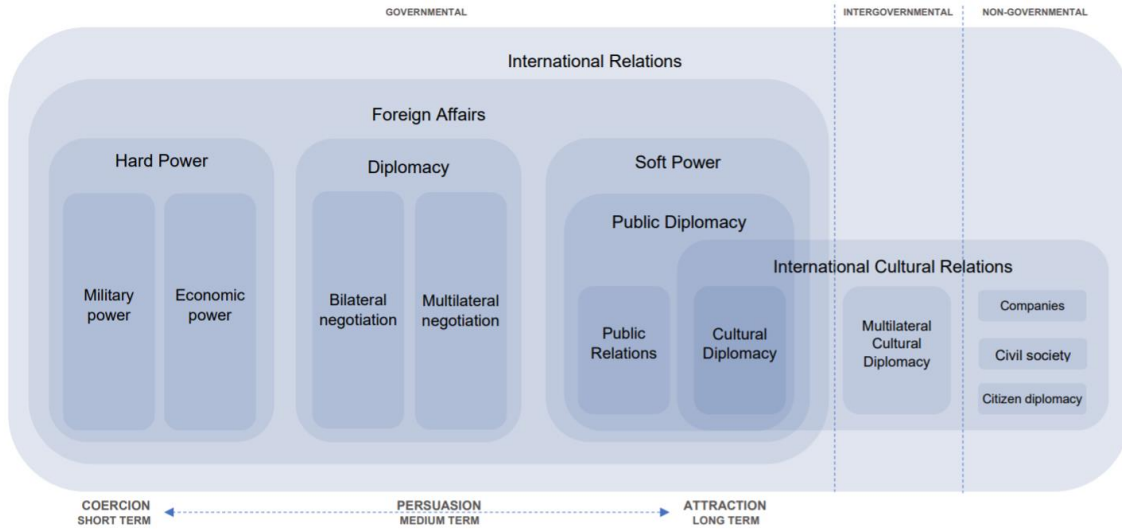


Image 1. Relationship between Soft Power, Cultural Diplomacy and International Cultural Relations (Source: own elaboration).

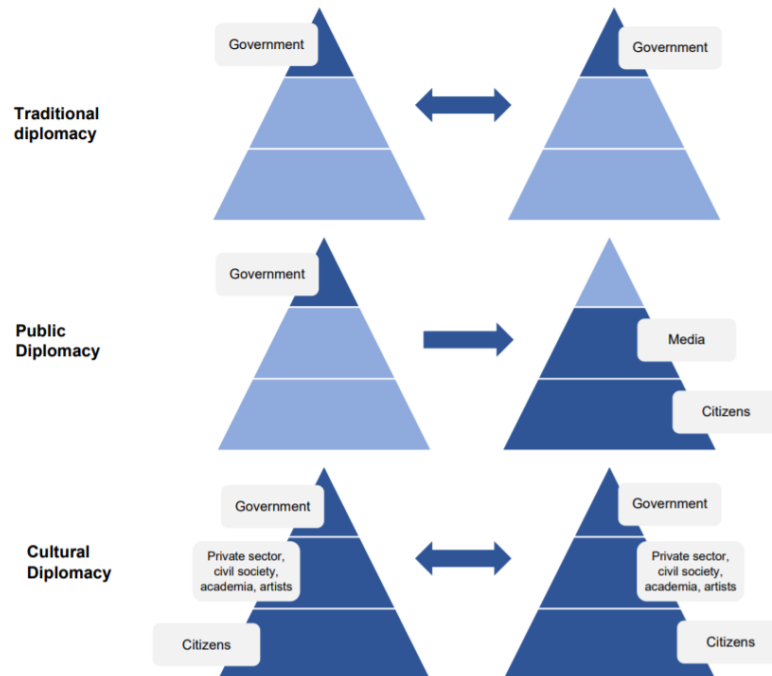


Image 2. Subjects and direction of relationship in Traditional, Public and Cultural Diplomacy (Source: own elaboration).

(See in the text: p. 7)

### APPENDIX 2. NATIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTES

Year	Name	Country
1883	Alliance Française	France
1889	Società Dante Alighieri	Italy
1907	Institut Française	France
1917	Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen	Germany
1925	German Academic Exchange Service Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries	Germany Russia
1926	Istituto Italiano di Cultura	Italy
1934	British Council	United Kingdom
1945	American House Institution	United States of America
1951	Goethe Institute	Germany
1954	Fins Cultureel Instituut	Finland
1956	Polish Cultural Institute	Poland
1972	Japan Foundation	Japan
1991	Instituto Cervantes	Spain
1992	Hellenic Foundation for Culture	Greece
2004	Confucius Institute	China
2006 / 2019	European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) / European Houses/Spaces of Culture	European Union

Table 1. Selected national cultural institutes by year of creation (Source: own elaboration). Note that cultural activity increased in the aftermath of the two World Wars. Highlighted in light blue are the subjects of the current study – the EU and China. In italic EUNIC established in 2006 as a multilateral rather than national institution and its flagship 2019 project European Spaces of Culture.

(See in the text: p. 7)

### APPENDIX 3. PRIMARY LAW EVOLUTION

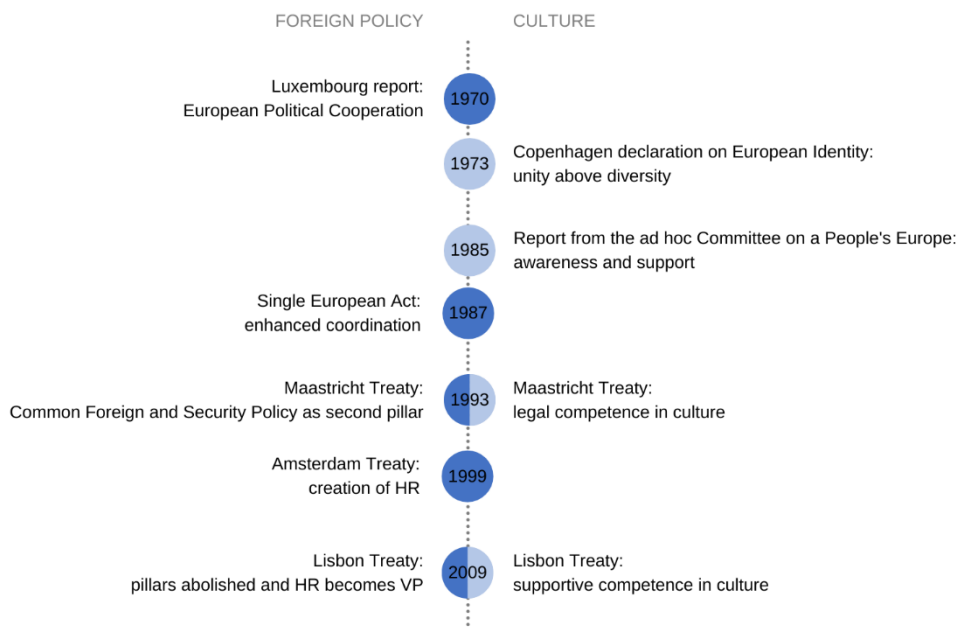


Image 3. Parallel development of EU’s competence in foreign policy and culture (Source: own elaboration).

(See in the text: p. 10)



#### APPENDIX 4. COUNCIL WORK PLANS FOR CULTURE

2008-2010	2011-2014	2015-2018	2019-2021
1. Improve the conditions for the mobility of artists and other professionals in the cultural field	A. Cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and accessible and inclusive culture	A. Accessible and inclusive culture	A. Sustainability in cultural heritage
2. Promote access to culture, in particular through the promotion of cultural heritage, multilingualism, digitisation, cultural tourism, synergies with education, especially art education, and greater mobility of collections	B. Cultural and Creative Industries	B. Cultural heritage	B. Cohesion and well-being
3. Develop data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural sector and improve their comparability	C. Skills and mobility	C. Cultural and creative sectors: creative economy and innovation	C. An ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content
4. Maximise the potential of cultural and creative industries, in particular that of SMEs	D. Cultural heritage, including mobility of collections	D. Promotion of cultural diversity, culture in EU external relations and mobility	D. Gender equality
5. Promote and implement the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions	E. Culture in External Relations		E. International cultural relations
	F. Culture Statistics		<i>F. Culture as a driver of sustainable development</i>

Table 2. Council Work plans for culture since the adoption of the 2007 *agenda for culture* (Source: own elaboration).

Highlighted in light blue is the action line dedicated to culture in external relations – listed in the last place but always present since 2011. In *italic* the priority added in June 2020, with a special working group being set up.

(See in the text: p. 12)

#### APPENDIX 5. SOFT LAW

Institution	Date	Reference	Type	Title
Commission	10.05. 2007	COM(2007) 0242	Communication	<i>European agenda for culture in a globalising world</i>
Commission	10.05. 2007	SEC(2007) 0570	Staff working document	<i>Inventory of Community actions in the field of culture</i>
Council	16.10. 2007	2007/C 287/01	Resolution	<i>European Agenda for Culture</i>
CoR	30.11. 2007	COR/07/151	Opinion	<i>Culture, a means of contact between an integrated Europe and globalisation</i>
Parliament	10.04. 2008	P6_TA (2008)0123	Resolution	<i>Cultural industries in Europe</i>
Council	20.10. 2008	2008/C 320/04	Conclusions	<i>The promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States</i>

Commission	14.07.2009	SEC(2009)1033	Staff working document	<i>The External Dimension of Audio-visual Policy</i>
Commission	27.04.2010	COM(2010)183	Green Paper	<i>Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries</i>
Parliament	12.05.2011	P7_TA (2011)0239	Resolution	<i>Cultural dimensions of EU external actions</i>
Council	21.05.2014	2014/C183/08	Conclusions	<i>Cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe</i>
Parliament	30.04.2015	P8_TA (2015)0179	Resolution	<i>On the destruction of cultural sites perpetrated by ISIS/Daesh</i>
Commission	22.07.2014	COM(2014)477	Communication	<i>Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe</i>
Parliament	08.09.2015	P8_TA (2015)0293	Resolution	<i>Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe</i>
Council	27.05.2015	2015/C172/04	Conclusions	<i>On cultural and creative crossovers to stimulate innovation, economic sustainability and social inclusion</i>
Council	15.12.2015	2015/C417/06	Conclusions	<i>On culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation</i>
Commission, HR/VP	08.06.2016	JOIN(2016)29	Joint communication	<i>Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations</i>
Parliament	13.12.2016	P8_TA (2016)0486	Resolution	<i>A coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries</i>
CoR	08.02.2017	CDR 5110 / 2016	Opinion	<i>On Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations</i>
EESC	01.03.2017	REX/480 EESC-2016-6397	Opinion	<i>On Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations</i>
Council, Member States	19.05.2017	9459/17	Joint Statement	<i>The New European Consensus On Development 'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future'</i>
Council	24.05.2017	9635/17	Conclusions	<i>On an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations</i>
Parliament	05.07.2017	P8_TA (2017)0303	Resolution	<i>On Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations</i>
Commission	22.05.2018	COM(2018)267	Communication	<i>A New European Agenda for Culture</i>
Commission	22.05.2018	SWD(2018)167	Staff working document	<i>A New European Agenda for Culture - Background Information</i>
EESC	17.10.2018	SOC/590	Opinion	<i>On A New European Agenda for Culture</i>
Commission	05.12.2018	SWD(2018)491	Staff working document	<i>European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage</i>
CoR	07.02.2019	SEDEC - VI/040	Opinion	<i>On Creative Europe and A New European Agenda for Culture</i>
Parliament	27.05.2019	P8_TA (2019)0298	Resolution	<i>On the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument</i>
Council	08.04.2019	2019/C192/04	Conclusions	<i>On an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action</i>

Table 3. List of resolutions, opinions and other official soft law instruments regarding culture in external relations since the 2007 *agenda for culture* (Source: own elaboration). Highlighted in light blue are the major strategic documents.

(See in the text: p. 12)

### APPENDIX 6. PROGRAMMES FOR EXTERNAL ACTION

<b>Document</b> <b>Type</b>	<i>Staff working document Inventory of Community actions in the field of culture (2007)</i>	<i>Joint communication Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (2016)</i>
<b>Thematic programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI)</li> <li>• European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)</li> <li>• Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)</li> <li>• Culture Programme</li> <li>• Europe for Citizens programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnership Instrument (PI)</li> <li>• European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)</li> <li>• Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)</li> <li>• Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)</li> <li>• Creative Europe Programme</li> </ul>
<b>Geographic programmes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS)</li> <li>• Programme of Community aid to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (PHARE)</li> <li>• Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)</li> <li>• Euromed Partnership, including Euromed Heritage Programme and Euromed Audiovisual</li> <li>• Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue between Cultures</li> <li>• Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)</li> <li>• EU-India economic cross-cultural programme</li> <li>• European Development Fund (EDF) under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enlargement Policy, including Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)</li> <li>• European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), including Southern Mediterranean and Eastern Partnership</li> <li>• Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)</li> <li>• European Development Fund (EDF) under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement</li> </ul>

Table 4. Comparison between the programmes listed under the external objective in the Staff working document to the 2007 *Agenda for culture* and in the 2016 Joint communication *Towards a strategy on international cultural relations* (Source: own elaboration). Despite the ten-years time lapse, the available funding schemes are largely the same and no instrument is specifically dedicated to Cultural Diplomacy.

(See in the text: p. 14)

### APPENDIX 7. AGENDAS FOR CULTURE

<i>European agenda for culture in a globalising world (2007)</i>	<i>A New European Agenda for Culture (2018)</i>
<p>1. Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field and the circulation of all artistic expressions beyond national borders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– mobilise public and private resources in favour of the mobility of artists and workers in the cultural sector within the EU;</li> <li>– promote the mobility of works of art and other artistic expressions;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>1. Social dimension - harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Foster the cultural capability of all Europeans by making available a wide range of cultural activities and providing opportunities to participate actively;</li> <li>• Encourage the mobility of professionals in the cultural and</li> </ul>

<p>– improve European coordination for aspects affecting mobility of cultural workers within the EU in order to take into account the needs resulting from short term and frequent mobility between Member States.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote and strengthen intercultural competences and intercultural dialogue, in particular by developing 'cultural awareness and expression', 'social and civic competences' and 'communication in foreign languages', which are part of the key competences for lifelong learning identified by the European Parliament and Council in 2006.</li> </ul>	<p>creative sectors and remove obstacles to their mobility;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and promote Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource, to raise awareness of our common history and values and reinforce a sense of common European identity.</li> </ul>
<p>2. Culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote creativity in education by involving the cultural sector in building on the potential of culture as a concrete input/tool for life-long learning and promoting culture and arts in informal and formal education (including language learning).</li> <li>• Promote capacity building in the cultural sector by supporting the training of the cultural sector in managerial competences, entrepreneurship, knowledge of the European dimension/market activities and developing innovative sources of funding, including sponsorship, and improved access to them.</li> <li>• Develop creative partnerships between the cultural sector and other sectors (ICTs, research, tourism, social partners, etc) to reinforce the social and economic impact of investments in culture and creativity, in particular with regard to the promotion of growth and jobs and the development and attractiveness of regions and cities.</li> </ul>	<p>2. Economic dimension - supporting culture-based creativity in education and innovation, and for jobs and growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the arts, culture and creative thinking in formal and non-formal education and training at all levels and in lifelong learning;</li> <li>• Foster favourable ecosystems for cultural and creative industries, promoting access to finance, innovation capacity, fair remuneration of authors and creators and cross-sectoral cooperation;</li> <li>• Promote the skills needed by cultural and creative sectors, including digital, entrepreneurial, traditional and specialised skills.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop political dialogue with all countries and regions in the field of culture and promote cultural exchanges between the EU and third countries and regions;</li> <li>• Promote market access, both to European and other markets, for cultural goods and services from developing countries through targeted actions as well as through agreements that grant preferential treatment or trade-related assistance measures;</li> <li>• Use its external and development policies to protect and promote cultural diversity through financial and technical support for, on the one hand, the preservation of and access to cultural heritage and, on the other, the active encouragement and promotion of cultural activities across the world;</li> <li>• Ensure that all its cooperation programmes and projects take full account, in their design and their implementation, of local culture and contribute to increase people's access to culture and to the means of cultural expression, including people-to-people contacts. Especially important is education, including advocacy for the integration of culture in education curricula at all levels in developing countries;</li> <li>• Promote the active involvement of the EU in the work of international organisations dealing with culture, and in the United Nations 'Alliance of Civilisations' process.</li> </ul>	<p>3. External dimension - strengthening international cultural relations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development;</li> <li>• Promote culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations;</li> <li>• Reinforce cooperation on cultural heritage.</li> </ul>
	<p>Cross-cutting actions:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Protecting and valorising cultural heritage;</li><li>• Digital4Culture.</li></ul>
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Table 5. Comparison between the objectives and sub-objectives of the two agendas for culture (Source: own elaboration). Highlighted in light blue culture in international relations. The objectives under the External dimension of the 2018 *New agenda* are directly transferred from the 2016 *strategy on international cultural relations*. The 2007 *agenda for culture* presents a strongly economic narrative, while the 2018 one reflects a sustainability approach, but other than that there is an equivalent between the objectives of the two.

(See in the text: p. 15)

## APPENDIX 8. INTERVIEW WITH DAMIEN HELLY, EXPERT IN INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

Damien Helly is currently managing the EU-funded programme Tfanen in the EUNIC Tunisia cluster. He is also founder of the consultancy dh creative partnerships, and of culture Solutions, an association dedicated to the EU's International Cultural Relations. In addition, he teaches a course on culture as a visiting professor at the College of Europe. His previous work experience includes the British Council and the European Centre for Development Policy Management. He was one of the four external experts for the drafting of the 2016 *Joint Communication "Towards a strategy on international cultural relations"*. The interview was conducted on the 14 May 2021 via Skype.

### 1. *Why is culture such a sensitive topic?*

For states culture is related to state belonging and state building. So, depending on the situation of state building processes and history, the cultural dimensions will impact the way governments or political forces behave or use culture. We can see that at the moment, in countries like Hungary or Poland, or even France sometimes, there are political forces that are quite keen to put forward so-called "national identity" and call for some kind of sovereignty over cultural issues. It is becoming even more sensitive due to the increasingly multicultural societies, a phenomenon that is casting doubts and bringing even more complexity to the issue.

### 2. *How do Member States' approaches to culture in external action differ?*

Member States have different approaches and views, also within each state. It is very diverse and fragmented, it is really hard to simplify. But one of the criteria is the openness to Europeanisation, like a continuum of readiness to consider that the European dimension is a layer that matters and it is not a threat to national identity, or to sub-national entities, like landers in Germany or autonomous communities like in Spain.

### 3. *How does culture contribute to International Relations?*

Culture is part, an essential component of International Relations, although it is not always visible, it is there. Recently Mogherini, the previous HR/VP, was in my course in Bruges and she said that

culture is everywhere in foreign policy. It is on all levels: both anthropological, and artistic or aesthetic terms, or as a sector. Therefore, the question is how you exploit it, how you approach it, how much attention you pay to it.

4. *What is the level of awareness of these benefits among the policy makers, the citizens and the cultural sector?*

It depends on the prominence of cultural policies and what type of cultural policy you have in each country. Some countries have a very market-led, so there is less public policy interference, and therefore less appetite for state-led external cultural relations. Because it should not be the mandate or competence of these bodies, so the awareness is quite low. In other models at the opposite side of the spectrum, there is a clear link between internal and external cultural policy. So there is a much stronger role for and awareness of governmental action.

At the EU level there is very limited awareness because external cultural action is a new agenda. Some are aware of the importance of culture but not of policy frameworks and opportunities that are potentially open for it.

Cultural actors usually have a high level of awareness but then it depends on their ability to be organised to make their case as an interest groups towards foreign policy players.

For citizens it depends on public opinion. Available data links the level of awareness with the level of education. It also depends on high versus popular culture, what citizens consume.

5. *What is your take on the 2016 Joint communication? Can you describe the difficulties around the agreement on the text?*

The 2016 Joint communication can be traced back to 2005 when the Commission joined the UNESCO Convention. Then there were efforts towards the European Parliament from a number of interest groups, including the European Cultural Foundation, calling for more engagement. The 2014 report on cultural and digital diplomacy, the 2012 OMC attempt to design a strategy for China coordinated by DG EAC. Then the Parliament called for Preparatory Action leading to a report and the drafting of the 2016 Joint Communication.

It took around 18 months to be approved, and it was a compromise between those who wanted to move faster and those who did not. So it was a stocktaking document, looking at what has been done so far, and not necessarily being ambitious about next steps. What is important is the follow-up Council conclusions 2018-2019 mentioning sustainable development or the need for cultural strategies for partners, and reflecting the balances between different Member States on their desire to develop this agenda or not.

Now this document is already outdated and needs a new version. It is important to mention it now so that the process can start and you can expect something to be adopted in 4-5 years time, which would be almost 10 years after the first document, which is a reasonable length for that type of cycle.

6. *What are the EU's geographic and thematic cultural priorities in external action?*

Like any other international topic, there are no priorities because it only reflects the variety of interests. The neighbourhood is an obvious priority. The strategic partners are also important, but just to some extent but it is difficult to have an added value. Then, developing countries, especially Africa, are becoming more and more a priority.

But there are also programmes with worldwide coverage, like Erasmus+, Horizon 2020, Creative Europe. This gives you an indication of the degree of prioritisation of a certain country.

There is a certain shift from the 2016 Joint Communication, which had three pillars, to the programming priorities of the new Commission since 2019. Cultural heritage is the only one still worded in the same way. CCI are now presented as jobs and growth but related to sustainable development.

There are the two new agendas - the Green Deal and the Digital, which were not in the 2016 Communication. They will now influence cultural agenda, especially since there will be less thematic funding, so if Delegations want to do cultural work they need to mainstream culture in thematic funding lines.

#### *7. What are the main achievements since 2016? And the persisting difficulties?*

The main achievement is that culture is mentioned more and more in policy documents. But the remaining obstacle is that the top of the hierarchy is not made of people who are cultural champions. For instance, HR/VP and DG INTPA Director General, all the Commissioners, you do not see cultural narrative there.

If you add to this the fact that some Member States are quite happy to promote their own cultural relations or diplomacy, and just use EU frameworks to access funds, the critical mass for a real push for a wider agenda is not there.

#### *8. Why is the transition from cultural diplomacy to international cultural relations important?*

This is an ongoing debate. The principles underpinning cultural relations are valid (mutuality, dialogue, etc.) but those who have been championing the “cultural relations” concept, mostly the British and the Germans, some have been quite radically opposed to “cultural diplomacy” and others have been more pragmatic that there is not a clear boundary, even within the same organisation, or within a state. You can have a mix of both, depending on the imperatives, the instructions received from the government or the parliament.

It has been useful to shape the discourse and to encourage a shift from a monopoly of cultural cooperation in the hands of cultural institutes towards a wider group of actors, but sometimes it creates tensions that are not necessarily constructive. The ambiguity of the wording is better than creating tensions around words. What matters is how you perform the cultural action, as well as the quality of the relationship that is developed between the Europeans and their partners and the level of trust that is built. It is about behaving and the best ways to gain trust.

#### *9. What are the implications of the European Spaces for Culture?*

This project reflects the same trend - a high level of ambition in the first place with the wording of Houses of Culture and the idea of a network of infrastructure. But then it was downsized and tuned

down into Spaces of Culture, and then only virtual spaces and not physical spaces anymore. So, it expresses all the sensitivities around it.

But it is experimental and this is why it is interesting - you proceed step by step, demonstrate that with some examples you can achieve results and then you build on those to get further in terms of ambitions. Thus, it is interesting to see the lessons learnt and the way of communicating them.

The main weakness of the initiative is the limited size, duration and budget. It would be very difficult to derive long-lasting conclusions, in other words, there is a risk of not being able to draw any conclusions because it was not long enough. The initiative should be politically bolder, but it again depends on sensitivities and willingness.

#### *10. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted cultural relations?*

The impact of COVID is huge, disastrous, transformative. It questions the way of doing culture. It also sped up the ecological questioning. It really brings radical doubts on certain ways of doing culture internationally. So, we need to invest more thought in the transformation of international cultural relations.

Digital is not just the answer, it is much more complex. As any topic, now that it has been identified as a structural trend of change, the question is how to address it in each sector. There are many aspects of digital transformation not studied yet, like blockchain or cryptocurrency. Everything will become digitalised, so it will be a part and parcel of cultural relations. The German proposal for a digital culture institute can be a game changer in the way the EU addresses it, but the fact that it is already in the policy makers' minds means it will be a serious field to look at.

#### *11. What are the challenges for cultural relations between the EU and China?*

Large Member States really matter in these questions. There is still a lot to be done in terms of mutual understanding among governments and Member States' representatives in the EU about what they want to achieve in culture globally. These linkages between internal and external action are really crucial and essential. Unless there is investment in more intercultural awareness among Europeans themselves, it would be difficult to have a structural move.

(See in the text: [p. 16](#), [p. 28](#), [p. 43](#))



### APPENDIX 9. CULTURAL DIPLOMACY ACTORS

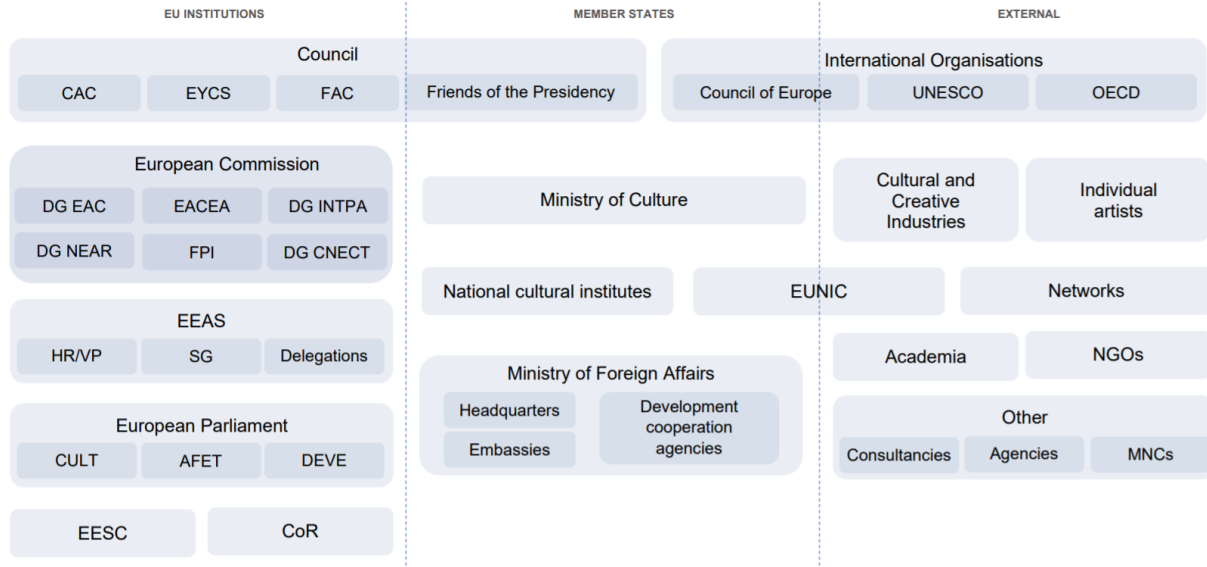


Image 4. Mapping of actors involved in EU’s Cultural Diplomacy (Source: own elaboration).

(See in the text: p. 16)

### APPENDIX 10. PROGRAMMES FOR REGIONAL CULTURAL COOPERATION

Regional grouping	Available funding programmes
<b>Candidate and potential candidate countries</b>	Creative Europe, Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX), Twinning programme, Interreg B
<b>Neighbourhood countries</b>	European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX), Twinning programme, Creative Europe (with conditions)
<b>Southern Partnership</b>	Regional South Multiannual Indicative Programme, project SAFIR, Med-Culture regional programme (previously)
<b>Eastern Partnership</b>	EU4Culture Programme, Eastern Partnership Culture Programme
<b>Developing countries</b>	Development Cooperation Instrument, European Neighbourhood Instrument, European Development Fund, Horizon 2020, ACP-EU Culture programme “Toward a viable cultural industry”, CREATIFI - Creative Industry Financing initiative, TransCultura

Table 6. Programmes listed under the regional cooperation on the official Culture and Creativity website (Source: own elaboration based on information from European Commission. (n.d.). Culture and Creativity: International cultural relations. <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policies/international-cultural-relations> [Accessed online on 13 March 2021]). The fragmentation of cultural action and the geographic priorities are apparent.

(See in the text: p. 16)

### APPENDIX 11. EACEA PROGRAMMES

2007-2013	2014-2020	2021-2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifelong Learning Programme</li> <li>• Erasmus Mundus</li> <li>• Tempus, Bilateral cooperation agreements</li> <li>• Intra-ACP academic mobility scheme</li> <li>• Culture and MEDIA</li> <li>• Youth in Action</li> <li>• Europe for Citizens</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erasmus+</li> <li>• Creative Europe</li> <li>• Europe for Citizens</li> <li>• Intra-Africa</li> <li>• EU Aid Volunteers</li> <li>• European Solidarity Corps</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Erasmus+</li> <li>• Creative Europe</li> <li>• European Solidarity Corps</li> <li>• Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme (CERV)</li> </ul>

Table 7. Programmes managed by EACEA on behalf of the European Commission (Source: own elaboration based on information from European Commission. (n.d.) European Education and Culture Executive Agency: Which programmes do we manage? [https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/about-eacea/which-programmes-do-we-manage\\_en](https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/about-eacea/which-programmes-do-we-manage_en) [Accessed online on 13 March 2021]). These turn the EACEA into a major player in the field of international cultural relations, although it is usually disregarded.

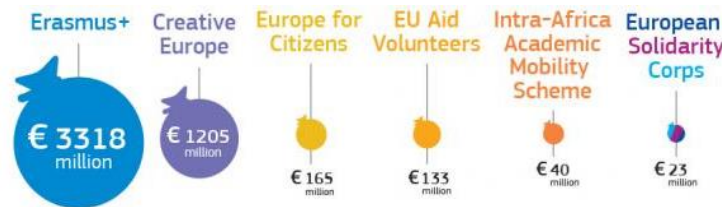


Image 5. EACEA budget for the 2014-2020 programmes (Source: European Commission. (n.d.) European Education and Culture Executive Agency: Which programmes do we manage? [https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/about-eacea/which-programmes-do-we-manage\\_en](https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/about-eacea/which-programmes-do-we-manage_en) [Accessed online on 13 March 2021]). Erasmus+ accounts for 68% of the total budget, and the Intra-African Academic Mobility Scheme is the only programme specifically dedicated to third countries.

(See in the text: p. 17)

### APPENDIX 12. EUNIC MEMBERS

Country	EUNIC members		Non-member cultural institutes
	Cultural institutes	Ministries	
<b>Austria</b>	Österreich Institut GmbH	Ministry for European and International Affairs	Österreichische Kulturforen Kulturkontakt
<b>Belgium</b>	Wallonie-Bruxelles International Flemish Department of Foreign Affairs		
<b>Bulgaria</b>		Ministry of Culture	Bulgarian Cultural Institute
<b>Croatia</b>	Foundation Croatia House		
<b>Cyprus</b>		Ministry of Education and Culture	
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Czech Centre		
<b>Denmark</b>	Danish Cultural Institute		
<b>Estonia</b>	Estonian Institute		

<b>Finland</b>	The Finnish Cultural and Academic Institutes		
<b>France</b>	Fondation des Alliances Françaises Institut français de Paris	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs	
<b>Germany</b>	Goethe-Institut ifa - Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen		
<b>Greece</b>	Hellenic Foundation for Culture	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
<b>Hungary</b>		Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Balassi Institute
<b>Ireland</b>	Culture Ireland		
<b>Italy</b>	Società Dante Alighieri	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Istituto Italiano di Cultura
<b>Latvia</b>	Latvian Institute		
<b>Lithuania</b>	Lithuanian Culture Institute		
<b>Luxembourg</b>		Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs	
<b>Malta</b>	Arts Council Malta		
<b>Netherlands</b>	DutchCulture		
<b>Poland</b>		Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Adam Mickiewicz Institute Polish Institute
<b>Portugal</b>	Camões – Institute for Cooperation and Language, I.P.		
<b>Romania</b>	Romanian Cultural Institute		
<b>Slovak Republic</b>		Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Slovak Cultural Institute
<b>Slovenia</b>		Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
<b>Spain</b>	Instituto Cervantes AECID		
<b>Sweden</b>	Swedish Institute		
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<i>British Council</i>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	24 cultural institutions + 11 ministries = 35 members		

Table 8. Members of the EUNIC network divided into cultural institutions and ministries (Source: own elaboration based on information from EUNIC. (n.d.) About European Union National Institutes for Culture.

<https://www.eunicglobal.eu/about> [Accessed online on 15 March 2021], and KEA European Affairs. (2016). Research for CULT Committee – European Cultural Institutes abroad. European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies. p. 17). There are noticeable differences between the states: while some lack their own cultural institutes and thus participate through the Ministry of Culture or that of Foreign Affairs, others have several or combine institute and ministry. This results in power imbalance within EUNIC, subsequently transferred into its action abroad. In *italic* the British Council which following Brexit became the first associate member in May 2021, meaning it cannot hold the presidency of a cluster.

(See in the text: p. 20)

### APPENDIX 13. EUNIC CLUSTERS

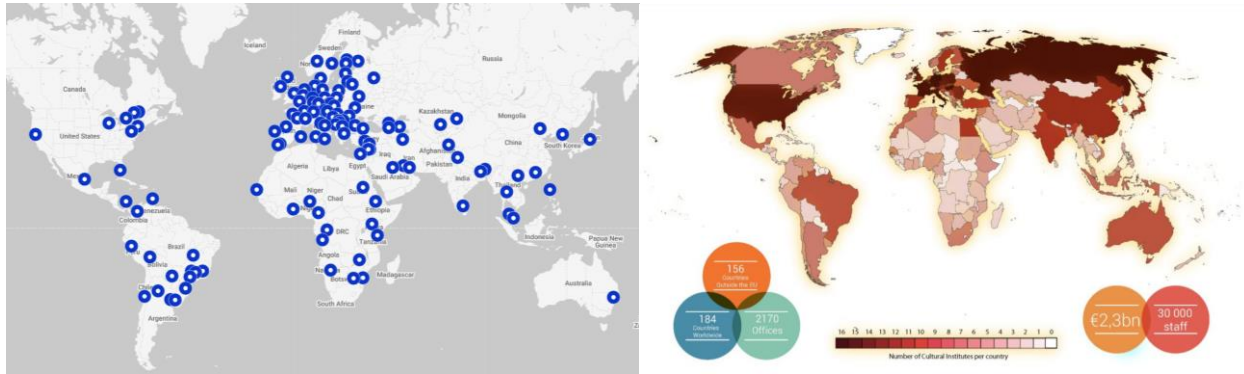


Image 6 (left). EUNIC’s 125 clusters in 96 countries (Source: screenshot of EUNIC. (n.d.). Map. at: <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/map> [Accessed online on 15 March 2021]).

Image 7 (right). Distribution of European cultural institutes worldwide (Source: KEA European Affairs. (2016). Research for CULT Committee – European Cultural Institutes abroad. European Parliament, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies. p. 35). Note that it includes 29 national cultural institutes, not all of which are EUNIC members. However, considerable overlap exists with EUNIC clusters concentration, which reflects the strategic priorities of European states, namely Africa and Latin America.

(See in the text: p. 20)

### APPENDIX 14. EUNIC CLUSTER FUND PROJECTS

Country	Project title
Albania	Archeovision: back to the future
Algeria	Film Critic Encounters: an Algerian premier
Belarus	Human Library: EUNIC Belarus Edition
Germany	Babylon Europa 2021
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Bridges between Herzegovina
Brasilia	Media Literacy: Combating misinformation
Belgium	The Future of Living
Bulgaria	e-UConvArt
Egypt	Building a virtual Egyptian European Space for Culture
Ethiopia	Tibeb Online
Israel	European: Israeli Podcast Project
Italy	Quartieri di Vita: Life infected with Social Theatre!
Kenya	Wasanii Waomoke (Empowering Artists)
Poland	Renowa Huta
UK	Imagining Futures: Independent Festivals in a Post-Covid World
Mexico	Flash ACT: Art, Science and Technology
Morocco	Dance-Fusion
Mozambique	Digital Platform of Visual Arts in Mozambique

India	Hoogli Heritage Hub
USA	UN/MUTE - 10002
Nigeria	A Culture of Memory
Paraguay	Rehabilitation of Caballero Park in Asunción
Czech Republic	Tranzit Residencies: Cultural Deserts
Romania	New Regional Cultural Cooperation
Singapore	Conference on Culture   Smart City
Slovenia	Creative Boost: Empowering the Society through Cultural and Creative Industries
Russia	VITAA: A Virtual Artists' Assembly

Table 9. Projects selected by the EUNIC Cluster fund in 2020 for implementation throughout 2021 (Source: own elaboration based on information from EUNIC. (2020). EUNIC Cluster Fund 2020: Results published. <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/news/eunic-cluster-fund-2020-results-published> [Accessed online on 15 March 2021]).

Highlighted in light blue the projects outside the EU – 19 out of the total 27, in other words, an impressive 70% compared to Creative Europe's 14%.

(See in the text: p. 21)

## APPENDIX 15. CULTURAL NETWORKS IN THE EU

Sub-sector	Networks
<b>Architecture</b>	Architects' Council of Europe (CAE)
	European Association for Architectural Education
<b>Audiences and Participation</b>	Audiences Europe Network
	European Network for Active Participation in Cultural Activities (AMATEO)
<b>Cultural Policy and Research</b>	Culture Action Europe
	Culturelink
	European National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC)
	European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies
	Compendium
	European Cultural Foundation
	European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC)
<b>Dance</b>	Trans Europe Halles (TEH)
	European Dancehouse Network (EDN)
	Life Long Burning (LLB)
<b>Design</b>	RESEO – European Network for Opera and Dance Education
<b>Digital</b>	Art Directors Club of Europe (ADCE)
<b>European Cities and Regions</b>	GÉANT Association
	Banlieues d'Europe
	EUROCITIES
	European Walled Towns (EWT)
<b>Festivals</b>	Les Rencontres
	European Festivals Association (EFA)
	Yourope – The European Festival Association
	European Forum of Worldwide Music Festivals (EFWMF)
<b>Film and Media</b>	European Talent Exchange Programme (ETEP)
	Association of European Film Archives and Cinémathèques
	Europa Cinemas
	Europa Distribution
	European Children's Film Association (ECFA)

	European Documentary Network (EDN)
	European Film Agency Directors Association (EFADs)
	European Film Gateway
	Federation of European Film Directors (FERA)
	Filming Europe (EUFCN)
<b>Interdisciplinary</b>	FOAM
<b>Libraries</b>	European Library
	The European Bureau of Library
<b>Literature</b>	Eurozine
	Federation of European Publishers (FEP)
	European Booksellers Federation
	European Publishers Council (EPC)
	European Writer Congresses
	European Writers' Council
	PEN International
	Federation for European Storytelling (FEST)
<b>Mobility</b>	On the Move (OTM)
	Pépinières européennes pour jeunes artistes
<b>Museums and Heritage</b>	Association of Cultural Encounter Centres (ACCR)
	Association of European Open Air Museums (AEOM)
	Association of European Royal Residences (ARRE)
	Europa Nostra
	European Forum of Heritage Associations
	European Museum Forum
	Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO)
	European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH)
	Future for Religious Heritage (FRH)
<b>Music</b>	European Choral Association - Europa Cantat
	European Union Baroque Orchestra (EUBO)
	European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA)
	European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO)
	Europe Jazz Network (EJN)
	European Music Office (EMO)
	European Conference of Promoters of New Music (ECPNM)
	European Music Council (EMC)
	European Talent Exchange Programme (ETEP)
	European Union of Music Competitions for Youth (EMCY)
	Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)
	European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA)
	Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne (REMA)
	International Music + Media Centre (IMZ)
	European Network for Music Venues and Festivals (Live DMA)
<b>Performing Arts</b>	New European Theatre Action (NETA)
	European Network of Information Centres for the Performing Arts (ENICPA)
	International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts (IETM)
	European Theatre Convention (ETC)
	Union of Theatres of Europe (UTE)
	Performing Arts Employers Associations League Europe (PEARLE)
	European Network for Circus Arts and Street Arts - Circostrada
<b>Training and Education</b>	ENCATC
	European League of Institutes of the Arts - ELIA
	European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)
<b>Visual Arts</b>	Réseau Art Nouveau Network

<b>Youth</b>	Jeunesses Musicales International (JMI)
	Association pour la Biennale des Jeunes Créateurs de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée (BJCEM)
<b>Video Games</b>	European Games Developer Federation (EGDF)

Table 10. European networks working in the field of culture and creativity. (Source: Creative Europe Desk UK. (n.d.). European Networks. <http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/european-networks> [Accessed online on 15 March].) Highlighted in light blue those networks that have received funding under Creative Europe or the previous Culture and MEDIA programmes, being the number of currently supported 28. (Source: Cultural Relations Platform. (2020). Creative Europe Networks. <https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/2020/09/15/european-networks/> [Accessed online on 15 March].) The sheer number of cultural networks reflects the vitality but also the fragmentation of the sector, which makes difficult concerted action abroad, as well as effective research into their impact.

(See in the text: p. 21)

### APPENDIX 16. CREATIVE EUROPE PREDECESSOR PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET

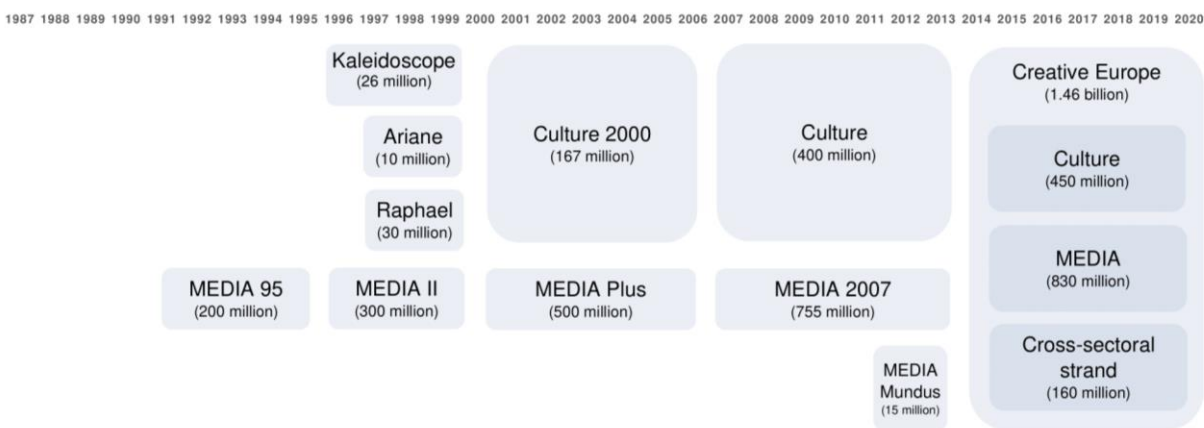


Image 8. Evolution of cultural programmes up until the establishment of Creative Europe (Source: own elaboration).

Note the continuous preponderance of the audio-visual sector through the larger budget of MEDIA over Culture, almost double in the programming period 2014-2020. In the new MFF, pending the approval of the new regulation, the MEDIA strand will account for €1 billion (42%) and the Culture one for €600 million (25%) out of the total €2.4 billion.

(See in the text: p. 22)

### APPENDIX 17. EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE

Year	City	Country
1985	Athens	Greece
1986	Florence	Italy
1987	Amsterdam	Netherlands
1988	West Berlin	West Berlin
1989	Paris	France
1990	Glasgow	United Kingdom
1991	Dublin	Ireland
1992	Madrid	Spain
	Antwerp	Belgium

1994	Lisbon	Portugal
1995	Luxembourg City	Luxembourg
1996	Copenhagen	Denmark
1997	Thessaloniki	Greece
1998	Stockholm	Sweden
1999	Weimar	Germany
2000	Avignon	France
	Bergen	Norway
	Bologna	Italy
	Brussels	Belgium

	Helsinki	Finland
	Kraków	Poland
	Prague	Czech Republic
	Reykjavík	Iceland
	Santiago de Compostela	Spain
2001	Rotterdam	Netherlands
	Porto	Portugal
2002	Bruges	Belgium
	Salamanca	Spain
2003	Graz	Austria
2004	Genoa	Italy
	Lille	France
2005	Cork	Ireland
2006	Patras	Greece
2007	Sibiu	Romania
	Luxembourg City	Luxembourg
2008	Liverpool	United Kingdom
	Stavanger	Norway
2009	Vilnius	Lithuania
	Linz	Austria
2010	Essen	Germany
	Istanbul	Turkey
	Pécs	Hungary
2011	Turku	Finland
	Tallinn	Estonia
2012	Guimarães	Portugal
	Maribor	Slovenia
2013	Marseille	France
	Košice	Slovakia
2014	Riga	Latvia
	Umeå	Sweden
2015	Mons	Belgium
	Plzeň	Czech Republic
2016	San Sebastián	Spain
	Wrocław	Poland
2017	Aarhus	Denmark
	Paphos	Cyprus

2018	Leeuwarden	Netherlands
	Valletta	Malta
2019	Matera	Italy
	Plovdiv	Bulgaria
2020-2021	Rijeka	Croatia
	Galway	Ireland
2022	Kaunas	Lithuania
	Esch-sur-Alzette	Luxembourg
	Novi Sad	Serbia
2023	Veszprém	Hungary
	Timișoara	Romania
	Eleusis	Greece
2024	Tartu	Estonia
	Bad Ischl	Austria
	Bodø	Norway
2025	Nova Gorica	Slovenia
	Chemnitz	Germany
2026	TBA	Slovakia
	TBA	Finland
2027	TBA	Latvia
	TBA	Portugal
	TBA	TBA
2028	TBA	Czech Republic
	TBA	France
2029	TBA	Poland
	TBA	Sweden
2030	TBA	Cyprus
	TBA	Belgium
	TBA	TBA
2031	TBA	Malta
	TBA	Spain
2032	TBA	Bulgaria
	TBA	Denmark
2033	TBA	Netherlands
	TBA	Italy
	TBA	TBA

Table 11. List of European Capitals of Culture (Source: own elaboration based on University Network of the European Capitals of Culture. (n.d.). European Capital of Culture History. <https://uneecc.org/european-capitals-of-culture/history/> [Accessed online on 18 March 2021].). Highlighted in light blue are the cities located in non-EU countries (note that some of them joined the Union at a later date). TBA stands for To Be Announced, since the European Parliament has not yet chosen the specific city in the designated country. Note that in 2017 it decided non-EU states will hold the title once every three years. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's negative effect on tourism, the 2020 Capitals of Culture were allowed to retain their titles for an extended period.

(See in the text: p. 23)



## APPENDIX 18. ERASMUS+ PREDECESSOR PROGRAMMES AND BUDGET

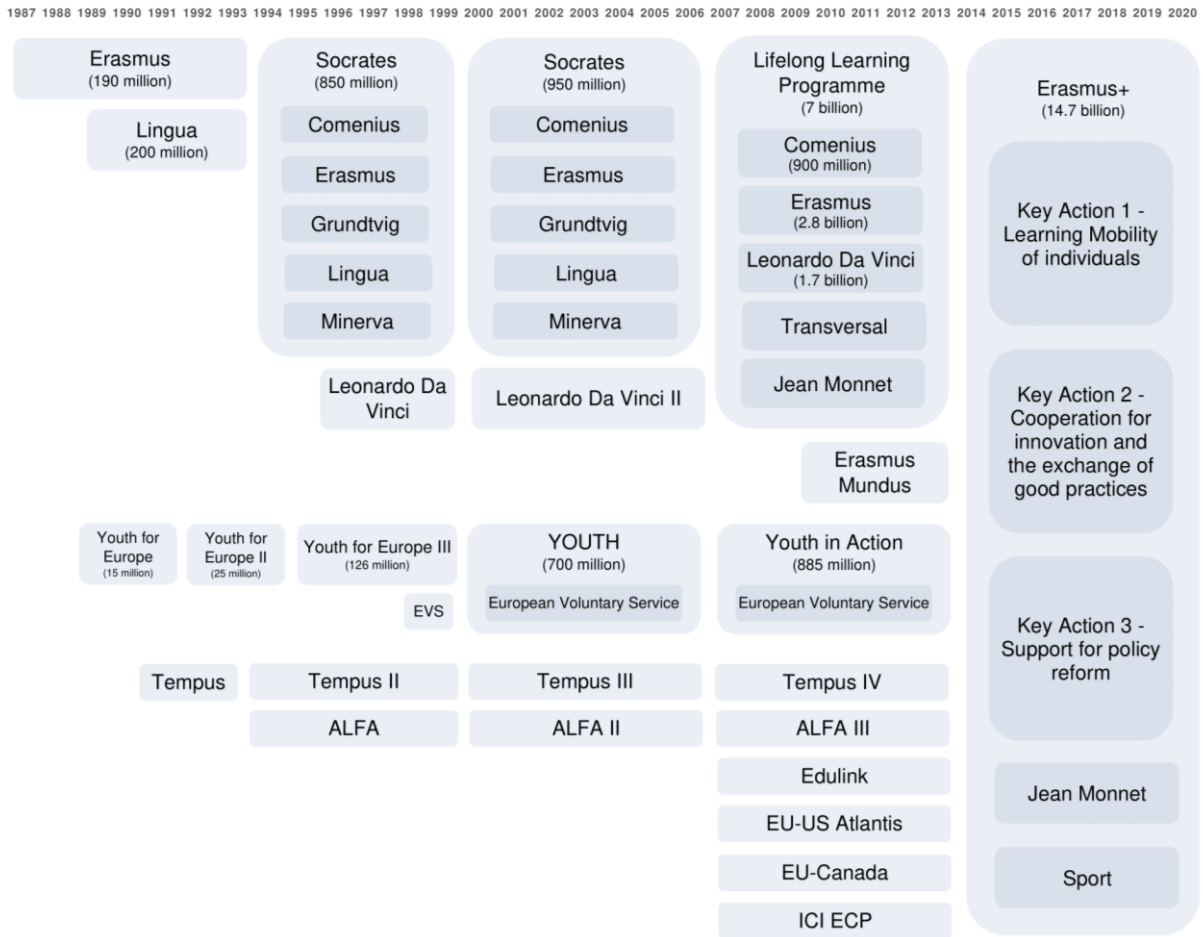


Image 9. Evolution of international exchange programmes up until the establishment of Erasmus+ (Source: own elaboration). For the 2021-2027 programming period, the budget ascends to €26.2 billion.

(See in the text: p. 24)

### APPENDIX 19. COMPARISON BETWEEN CREATIVE EUROPE AND ERASMUS+

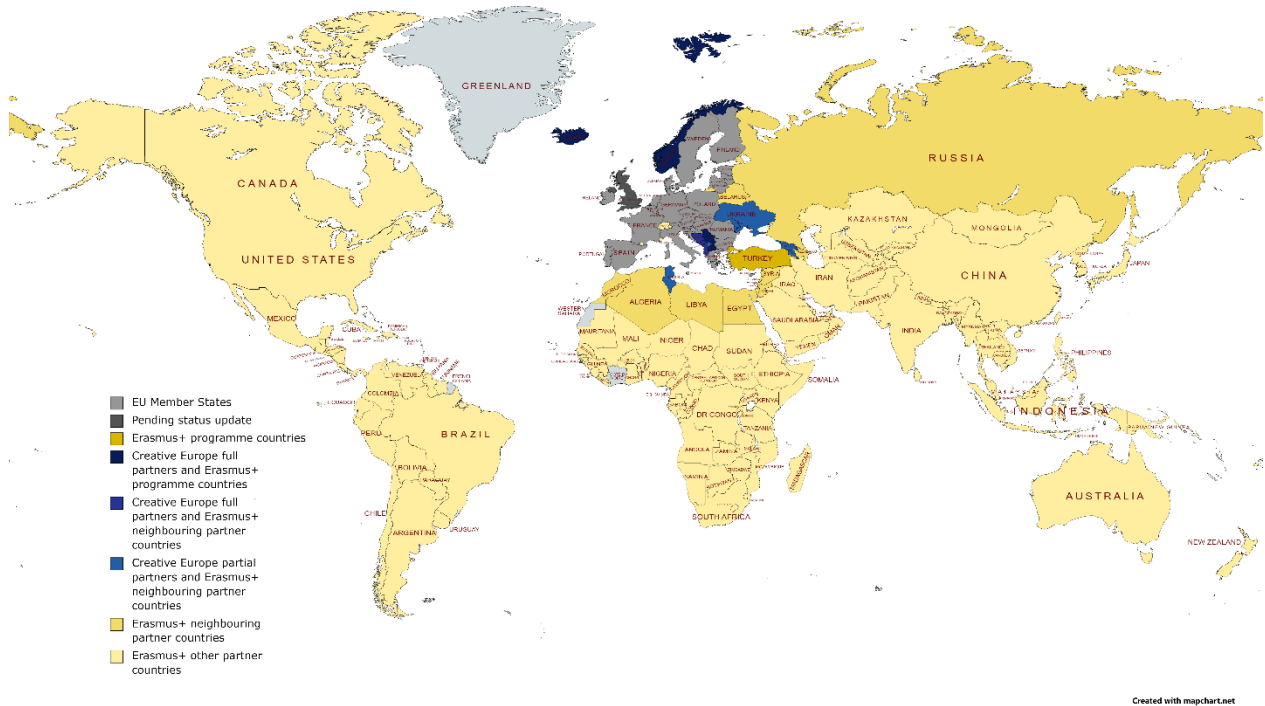
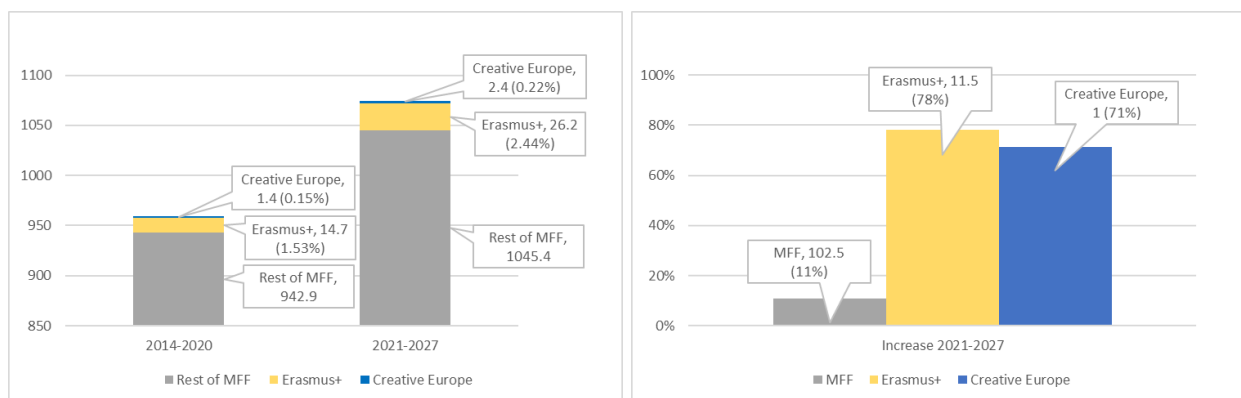


Image 10. Third countries participating in Creative Europe and Erasmus+ programmes based on their status (Source: own elaboration based on European Commission. (n.d.). Erasmus+: Who can take part?. [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/who-can-take-part\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about/who-can-take-part_en) [Accessed online on 20 March 2021] and Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency. (2020). Eligibility of organisations from non-EU countries. [https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/library/eligibility-organisations-non-eu-countries\\_en](https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/library/eligibility-organisations-non-eu-countries_en) [Accessed online on 20 March 2021]). While all Creative Europe countries are also Erasmus+ partners, the scope of the latter is much bigger, covering almost the entirety of the globe. The status of the UK after Brexit is still unclear.



Images 11 and 12. Erasmus+ and Creative Europe budgets as a relative proportion of the whole MFF and as an increase from the previous MFF (Source: own elaboration). All numbers are in billion EUR. Note that Erasmus+ counts with exactly hundred times higher budget than Creative Europe, which makes it far more impactful. However, with 78% and 71%, respectively, they are similar in terms of increase between the 2014 and the 2021 programming periods, although the overall budget only grew by 11%.

(See in the text: p. 25)

### APPENDIX 20. EUROPEAN YEARS

Year	Title
2021	European Year of Rail
2020	None
2019	None
<b>2018</b>	<b>European year for cultural heritage</b>
2017	None
2016	None
2015	European Year for Development
2013-2014	European year of citizens
2012	European year for active ageing
2011	European year of volunteering
2010	European year for combating poverty and social exclusion
2009	European year of creativity and innovation
2008	European year of intercultural dialogue
2007	European year of equal opportunities for all
2006	European year of workers' mobility
2005	European year of citizenship through education
2004	European year of education through sport
2003	European year of people with disabilities
2002	None
2001	European year of languages
2000	None
1999	European year of action to combat violence against women
1998	European year of local and regional democracy
1997	European year against racism and xenophobia
1996	European year of lifelong learning
1995	European year of road safety and young drivers
1994	European year of nutrition and health
1993	European year of the elderly and solidarity between generations
1992	European year of safety, hygiene and health protection at work
1991	None
1990	European year of tourism
1989	European year of information on cancer
1988	European year of cinema and television
1987	European year of the environment
1986	European year of road safety
1985	European year of music
1984	European year for a people's Europe

1983	European year of SMEs and the craft industry
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Table 12. List of designated European Years. (Source: European Union. (n.d.). European years. [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/european-years\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/european-years_en) [Accessed online on 22 March 2021].) Highlighted in light blue those related to culture. Note that although the 2018 European year for cultural heritage (in bold) was largely successful, no designation was made for the following two years.

(See in the text: p. 26)

### APPENDIX 21. EUROPEAN HOUSES/SPACES OF CULTURE

Title	Urban Cult Lab'afrika	Triángulo Teatro	Tibeb Be Adebabay	Nogoonbaatar - International Eco Art Festival	Colomboscope – On Language And Multitudinal Belonging	The Grid
States	Benin	El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras	Ethiopia	Mongolia	Sri Lanka	USA
Goal	Make diversity an opportunity to avoid sources of tension and conflicts	Cross-border creation and mobility of cultural products	Get the public to participate in the making of artworks with artists in the streets	Raise awareness about the effects of air pollution and promote best practices for sustainability	Offer opportunities for creative producers to have a horizontal exchange on creative questions	Investigate if art-thinking can humanise technology and influence design processes
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Healthcare Volunteers corps</li> <li>• Music Lab'Africa</li> <li>• Mémoire Lab'Africa</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theatre tour</li> <li>• Workshop “Horizontes”</li> <li>• Conversations: “Dramaturgia contemporánea”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign “Our Future Together”</li> <li>• Interactive art production festival</li> <li>• Virtual exhibition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nogoonbaatar Eco Art Festival</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tandem residencies</li> <li>• Professionalisation workshops</li> <li>• Digital Programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nodes - Art + Tech Encounters</li> <li>• Exposure - Art + Tech + Policy Days</li> <li>• Solidarity Grid</li> <li>• eVe Award</li> </ul>
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 local partners</li> <li>• 3 EUNIC members</li> <li>• 1 EU Delegation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 local partners</li> <li>• 4 EUNIC members (several branches)</li> <li>• 3 EU Delegations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 local partners</li> <li>• 6 EUNIC members</li> <li>• 1 EU Delegation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 local partners</li> <li>• 3 EUNIC members</li> <li>• 1 EU Delegation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 local partner</li> <li>• 3 EUNIC members</li> <li>• 1 EU Delegation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 local partners</li> <li>• 5 EUNIC members and others</li> <li>• 1 EU Delegation</li> </ul>
Budget (EUNIC grant)	€ 110,000 (€ 50,000)	€ 75,925 (€ 50,000)	€ 23,000 (€ 10,000)	€ 50,000 (€ 50,000)	€ 87,000 (€ 50,000)	€ 110,000 (€ 50,000)

Table 13. (Source: own elaboration based on EUNIC. (n.d.). European Spaces of Culture. <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/european-spaces-of-culture> [Accessed online 24 March 2021].) Note the differences between the objectives and the budget of each project.

(See in the text: p. 27)

**APPENDIX 22. OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT AID IN THE SECTOR OF CULTURE**

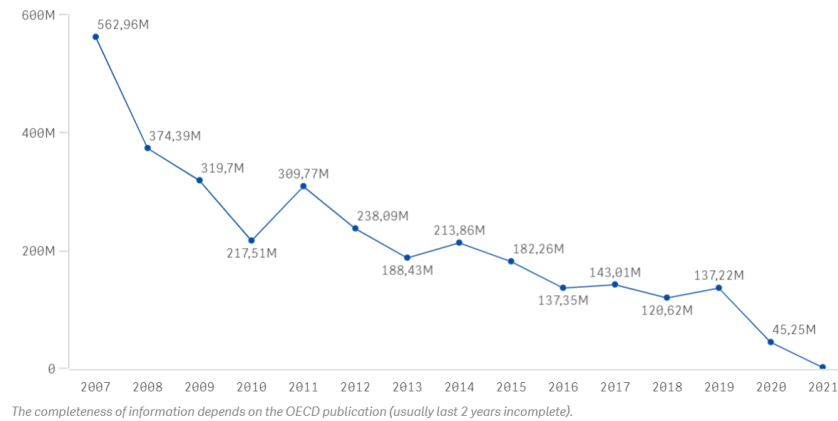
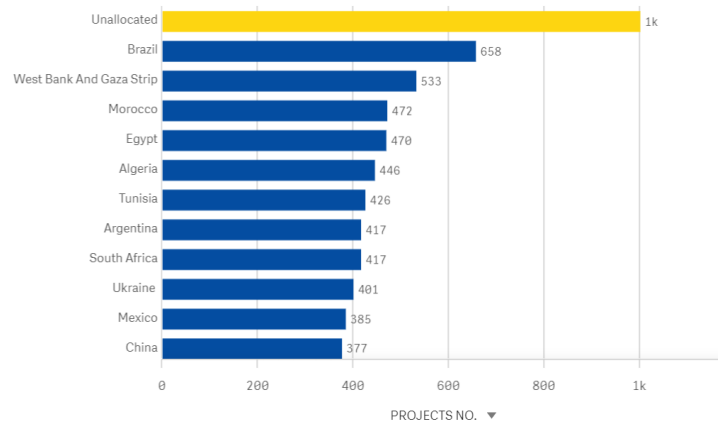
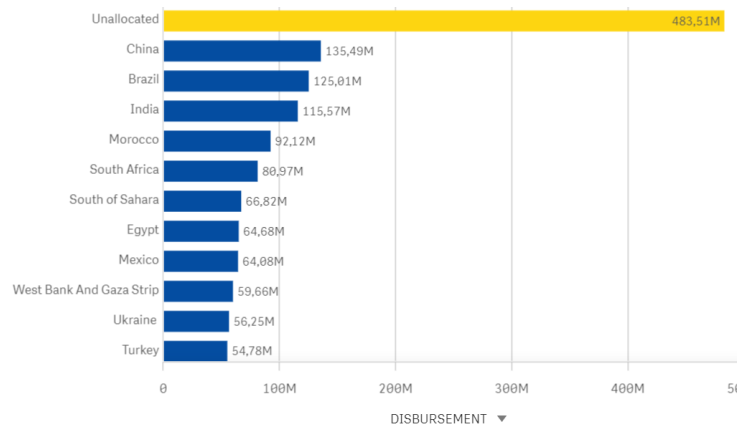


Image 13. EU Official Development Aid in Culture and recreation. (Source: European Commission. (n.d.). EU Aid Explorer by sector. [https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors\\_en](https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors_en) [Accessed online on 15 April 2021].)



Images 14 and 15. Top recipients of Official Development Aid in Culture and recreation by disbursement (on the left) and by number of projects (on the right). (Source: European Commission. (n.d.). EU Aid Explorer by sector. [https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors\\_en](https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors_en) [Accessed online on 15 April].)

(See in the text: p. 29)

### APPENDIX 23. TIMELINE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND CHINA

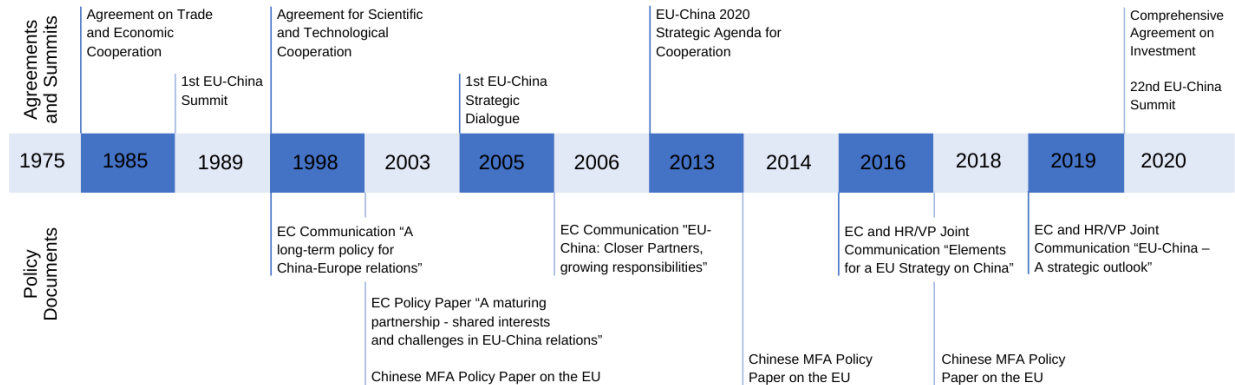


Image 16. Major agreements, summits and policy documents in the diplomatic relations between the EU and China (Source: own elaboration). Note that the Chinese MFA adopts a new strategy for Europe after the EU update its own.

(See in the text: p. 30)

### APPENDIX 24. CULTURAL VALUES IN CHINA AND THE EU

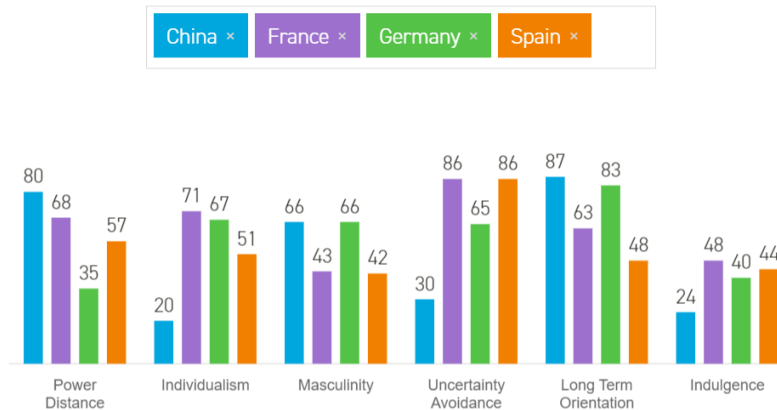


Image 17. Comparison between the national cultures of selected European countries and China in the six cultural dimensions identified by Geertz Hofstede (Source: screenshot of Hofstede Insights. (n.d.). Country comparison. <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/china.france.germany.spain/> [Accessed online on 4 May 2021].) Significant differences exist in all dimensions, most notably individualism and uncertainty avoidance, but the diversity within the EU should be accounted for (no aggregated data is available and the maximum number of compared countries is four).

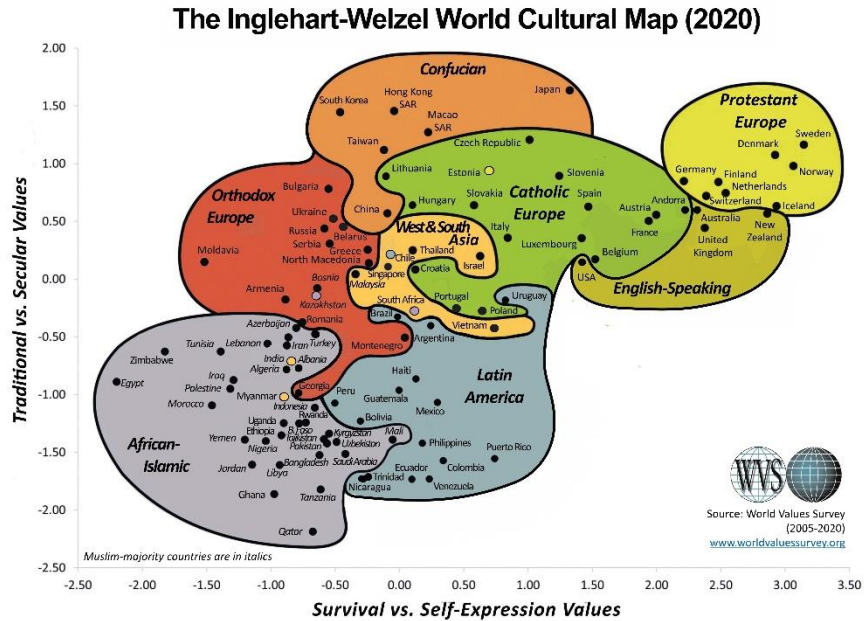


Image 18. 2020 World Cultural Map (Source: World Values survey. (2021). The new 2020 World Cultural Map has been released. <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSEventsShow.jsp?ID=428> [Accessed online on 4 May 2021]. Although China is rather close to some Orthodox and Catholic European states, it is distant from English-speaking and Protestant Europe.

(See in the text: p. 30)

## APPENDIX 25. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE EU AND CHINA IN TERMS OF CULTURE

Entity		European Union	People's Republic of China
Population		450 million, 27 nationalities	1.4 billion, 56 nationalities
Area		4,500 million km <sup>2</sup>	9,500 million km <sup>2</sup>
Capital		De facto Brussels	Beijing
Form of government		Supranational union, 27 Member States	Unitary republic, 50 provinces and 2 Special Administrative Regions
Languages		24 co-official languages	Mandarin Chinese, minority languages
GDP (PPP, 2018)		16 trillion EUR	18 trillion EUR
Cultural and creative sector (2018)	Employment	3.7%	2.8%
	Companies	5%	8.9%
	Value added	2.7%	4.2%
Government expenditure for recreation, culture and religion (2019)		National: 90 billion EUR (1.4% of GDP)	Mainland: 66 billion EUR (0.4% of GDP)
		EU: estimated 15 billion EUR (1% of MFF)	Hong Kong: 2,5 billion EUR (0.7% of GDP) Macau: 0,5 billion EUR (0.8% of GDP)
Household expenditure for culture		7.3% (2015)	8.8% (2020)
UNESCO World Heritage Sites	Cultural	326	37
	Natural	26	14
	Mixed	5	4
	Total	357	55
UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage		142	42

Table 14. The cultural diversity and the cultural and creative sectors of China and the EU. (Source: own elaboration based on various data from World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Eurostat, National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, and UNESCO. (n.d.). <https://data.worldbank.org/>, <https://data.imf.org/>; <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php>, <http://www.stats.gov.cn>, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list>; <https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists> [Accessed online on 3 May 2021].) In terms of heritage sites, China shares the first place with Italy.

(See in the text: p. 30)

## APPENDIX 26. TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND CHINA

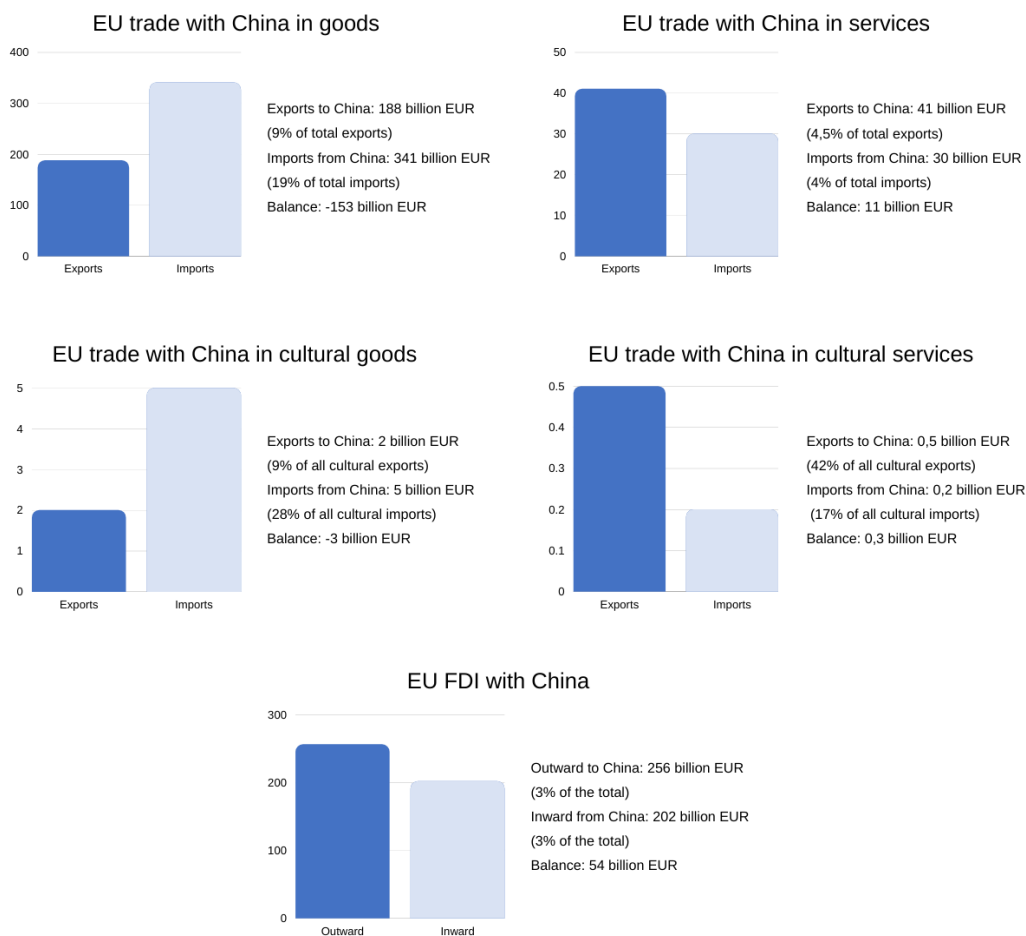


Image 19. Cultural goods and services as proportion of the trade between the EU and China in 2019 (Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat. (n.d.). Statistics in Culture. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Category:Culture> [Accessed online on 3 May 2021].) In relative terms cultural trade occupies a large proportion, especially in what regards services where the balance is positive for the EU.

(See in the text: p. 30)



**APPENDIX 27. EVOLUTION OF EU OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT AID TO CHINA**

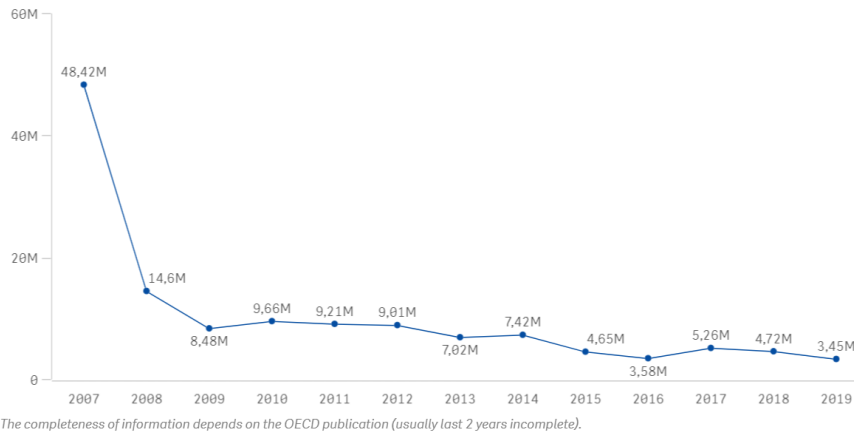


Image 20. EU ODA to China in the sector of culture and recreation (Source: screenshot of European Commission. (n.d.). EU Aid Explorer by sector. [https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors\\_en](https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors_en) [Accessed online on 3 May 2021].) The average sum disbursed between 2009-2019 is € 6.6 million.

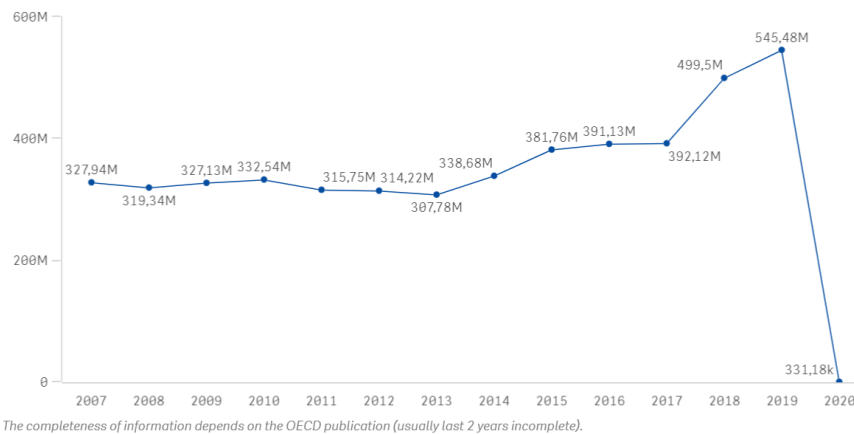


Image 21. EU ODA to China in the sector of education. (Source: screenshot of European Commission. (n.d.). EU Aid Explorer by sector. [https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors\\_en](https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/content/explore/sectors_en) [Accessed online on 3 May 2021].) With an average of € 376 million in 2009-2019, education presents the opposite trend to culture – European investment is gradually increasing.

(See in the text: p. 31)

**APPENDIX 28. CULTURE IN THE COMPREHENSIVE AGREEMENT ON INVESTMENT**

	EU	China
<b>Legitimate policy objective</b>	Section I Article 1: “The Parties reaffirm the right to regulate within their territories to achieve legitimate policy objectives, such as [...] the promotion and protection of cultural diversity”	
<b>Exclusion from investment liberalisation</b>	Section II Article 1: “This Section does not apply to: (a) audio-visual services;”	

<b>Permission of subsidies</b>	Section III Article 8: “This Article does not apply to: (d) subsidies provided for audio-visual services and for the services set out in Entries 1.21 to 1.26 of China’s schedule in Annex I.”	
<b>Reservations for existing measures</b>	Annex I Reservation No. 12 – Recreational, cultural and sporting Services	Annex I Entry 12 – Telecommunication Services
		Annex I Entry 20 – Press
		Annex I Entry 21 – Publication
		Annex I Entry 22 – Radio and Television
		Annex I Entry 23 – Film
		Annex I Entry 24 – Culture and Recreation Annex I Entry 25 – Network Audio-Visual Service, Internet Culture Operation
<b>Reservations for existing and future measures</b>	Annex II Reservation No. 11 – Telecommunication	Annex II Entry 1 – Social Services
	Annex II Reservation No. 18 – Recreational, Cultural and Sporting Services a) Libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services b) Entertainment services, theatre, live bands and circus services c) News and press agencies d) News and press agencies e) Gambling and betting services	

Table 15. The provisions relating to culture in the CAI between the EU and China (Source: own elaboration). Note the different approach adopted by the EU and China regarding the inclusion of reservations within only existing or also future measures (in the Chinese case, social services include public culture). While the EU reservations are the same as those it applies to all Free Trade Agreements, the Chinese explicit mention of network and internet content is particularly interesting.

(See in the text: p. 31)

## APPENDIX 29. ARCHITECTURE OF EU-CHINA RELATIONS

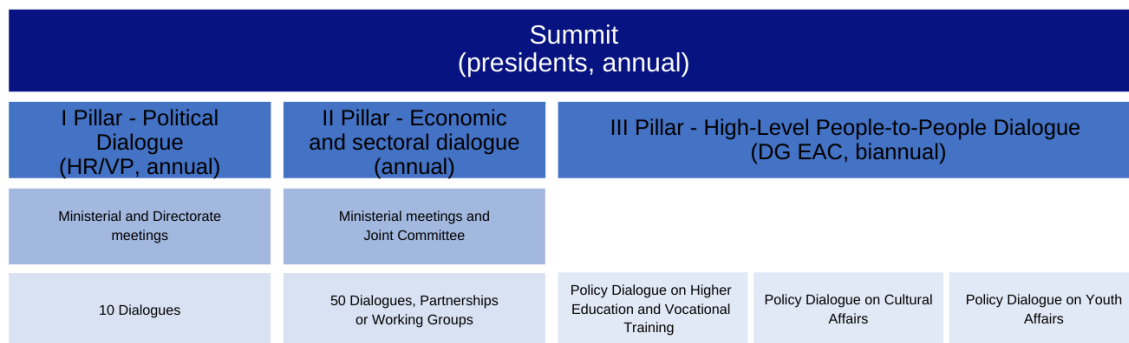


Image 22. Architecture of the EU-China relations (Source: own elaboration based on EEAS. (2015). EU-China dialogue architecture. [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2015\\_november\\_eu-china\\_dialogue\\_architecture.jpg](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2015_november_eu-china_dialogue_architecture.jpg) [Accessed online 4 May 2021].) Notice that the first and second pillars hold annual meeting, include ministerial and directorate levels, and numerous expert-level dialogues. This imbalance clearly shows the relatively lower importance attached to the third pillar.

(See in the text: p. 31, p. 32)

**APPENDIX 30. TIMELINE OF JOINT CULTURAL ACTIONS OF THE EU AND CHINA**

High level meetings			1st High-Level Culture Forum (Brussels)		1st People-to-People Dialogue (Brussels)		2nd People-to-People Dialogue (Beijing)		4th People-to-People Dialogue (Shanghai)		6th People-to-People Dialogue (China TBD)	
				2nd High-Level Culture Forum (Beijing)	3rd High-Level Culture Forum (Beijing)		4th High-Level Culture Forum (Beijing)	3rd People-to-People Dialogue (Brussels)			5th People-to-People Dialogue (online)	
	2005	2008	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2017	2018	2020	2022
Events and publications		1st Film Festival in China		Year of Youth	Year of Intercultural Dialogue	EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation		40th anniversary (China Arts Festival)	1st Literary Festival		Year of Tourism (Light Bridge, Travel Fair on Cultural Tourism)	
	30th anniversary (Europe Street and Showcase)				Tuning of educational systems		Mapping of cultural landscapes					

Image 23. High-level dialogues, major event celebrations and co-financed research in the sphere of EU-China cultural relations (Source: own elaboration).

(See in the text: p. 33)

**APPENDIX 31. INTERVIEW WITH NICOLAS CHAPUIS, AMBASSADOR OF THE EU TO CHINA**

Nicolas Chapuis assumed the post of Ambassador of the EU to China in 2018, after serving as French diplomat for almost forty years in countries such as China, Mongolia, Singapore, the UK, the USA, and Canada. Over the course of his career, he has occupied positions relevant to Cultural Diplomacy, including press attaché, cultural advisor, and director of the Institut Français, in addition to translating books from Chinese. The interview was conducted on the 21 April 2021, via email due to the time difference between Madrid and Beijing and the Ambassador's busy agenda. An equivalent questionnaire was sent to the Chinese mission to the EU but no response was obtained.

*Due to the confidentiality requested by Ambassador Nicolas Chapuis, the transcription of the interview is not enclosed in this publicly available document.*

(See in the text: p. 34, p. 35)

**APPENDIX 32. EU DELEGATION TO CHINA'S DIGITAL DIPLOMACY**

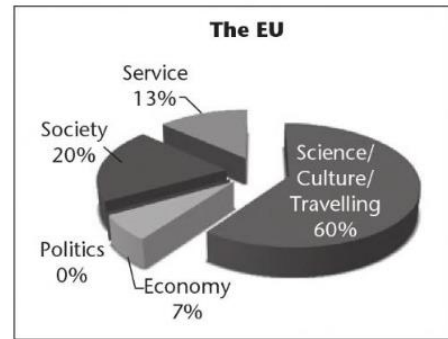
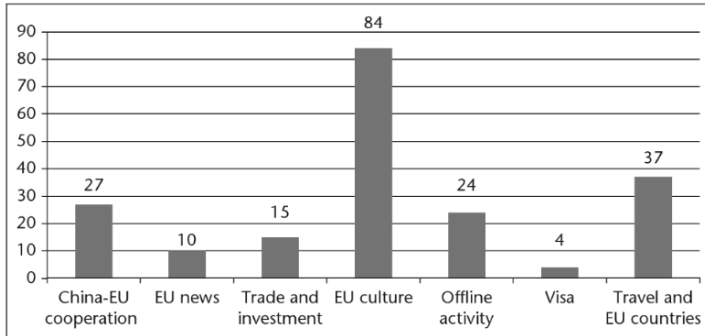


Image 24 (left). Weibo entries of the EU Delegation between 5 February and 25 March 2013 (Source: Bjola, C. and Holmes, M. (2015). *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge. p. 78). Culture represents the praiseworthy 30% of the total 201 posts.

Image 25 (right). EU Delegation's most reposted and commented on Weibo posts (Source: Bjola, C. and Holmes, M. (2015). *Digital Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. London: Routledge. p. 83). Note that culture is the most attractive topic, while political and economic issues are not popular with the Chinese public.



Images 26, 27, 28 and 29. Featured images of the official Weibo account of the EU Delegation to China (Source: screenshots of <https://www.weibo.com/euinchina> [Accessed online on 6 May 2021]). All four highlights are related to culture, although two of them are already obsolete since they refer to events that took place in 2019.

Followers	352,368		Following	159
Date	Topic	Shares	Comments	Likes
30-Apr	Politics	2	35	137
28-Apr	Society	49	165	411
28-Apr	Society	7	29	74
28-Apr	Politics	0	30	92

26-Apr	Politics	111	370	1001
16-Apr	Society	23	306	1249
31-Mar	Politics	44	333	1010
30-Mar	Society	23	127	402
29-Mar	Politics	14	89	275
26-Mar	Economy	28	223	614
<i>23-Mar</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>2140</i>	<i>8553</i>
<i>23-Mar</i>	<i>Politics</i>	<i>316</i>	<i>1311</i>	<i>6183</i>
23-Mar	Politics	15	141	444
11-Mar	Economy	21	379	803
10-Mar	Society	23	120	401
08-Mar	Society	3	85	118
08-Mar	Society	8	57	142
03-Mar	Politics	195	637	2329
03-Mar	Politics	13	57	165
03-Mar	Society	3	14	38
02-Mar	Politics	96	300	751
02-Mar	Politics	7	18	35
01-Mar	Economy	38	32	67
<b>Average</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>1100</b>
<b>Engagement rate</b>		<b>0.4%</b>		
<b>Excluding two best performing</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>503</b>
	<b>Engagement rate</b>	<b>0.2%</b>		

Table 16. Analysis of the engagement rate of the Weibo account of the EU Delegation to China (Source: own elaboration based on data retrieved from <https://www.weibo.com/euinchina> [Accessed online on 6 May 2021]). Since

2014, the followers have increased from 140,000 to 350,000 but there is a decrease in the frequency of posting.

Moreover, none of the 23 posts in the comparable two-month period was related to culture, the closest one being about the Youth Sounding Board. In addition, the two best performing posts (in italic) were those related to the news about the EU's sanctions on China. Hence, if this anomaly is excluded, the engagement rate is very low (around ten times lower than the recommended level) and shows that the Delegation is failing to engage in dialogue with Weibo users.

(See in the text: p. 37)

### APPENDIX 33. CHINA'S SOFT POWER



Image 30. China's ranking in Soft Power 30 between 2017 and 2019. (Source: screenshot of Portland (n.d.). Soft Power 30. [https://softpower30.com/country/china/?country\\_years=2017,2018,2019](https://softpower30.com/country/china/?country_years=2017,2018,2019) [Accessed online on 7 May 2021].) In 2018 China stopped ascending but has since retained the 27<sup>th</sup> position. Note that its best position is always in the sub-index of culture. Since the ranking is based on nation-state level, it is impossible to compare China to the EU, but it must be highlighted that 16 out of the total 30 states are EU Members, and most importantly the leader France.

(See in the text: p. 38)

### APPENDIX 34. CHINA'S CULTURAL INSTITUTES ABROAD

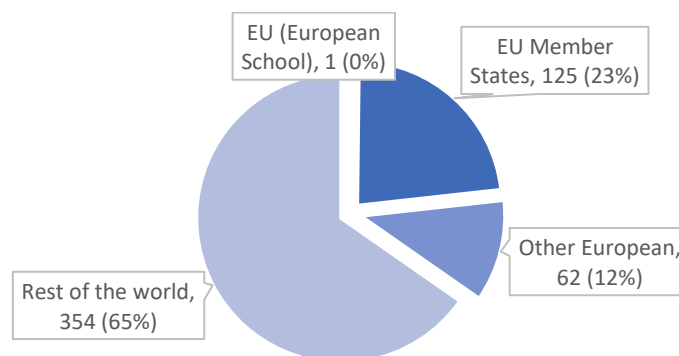


Image 31. Confucius Institutes by geographic region (Source: own elaboration based on data from Hanban. (n.d.). List of Confucius Institutes. [http://english.hanban.org/node\\_10971.htm](http://english.hanban.org/node_10971.htm) [Accessed online on 5 December 2020. Website not accessible after the rebranding as Centre for Language Education and Cooperation].) There is a clear

concentration of Chinese cultural institutes in Europe, only surpassed by the United States. One of the institutes is even designated as European Union in a separate category from Belgium.

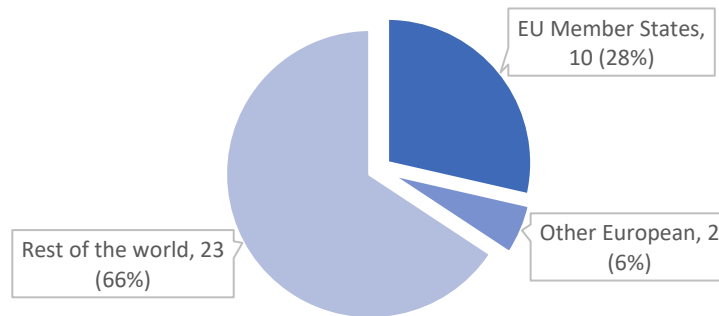


Image 32. Chinese Cultural Centres by geographic region (Source: own elaboration based on data from China Cultural Centre. (n.d.) About us: Worldwide. <http://en.cccweb.org/aboutccc/worldwide> [Accessed online on 7 May 2021].) Note that the EU Member States occupy a similar proportion of the whole. However, there are no Cultural Centres in the USA.

(See in the text: p. 39)

**APPENDIX 35. MISSION OF CHINA TO THE EU’S DIGITAL DIPLOMACY**

<b>Followers</b>	<b>27000</b>		<b>Following</b>	<b>1910</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Shares</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Likes</b>
30-Apr	Society	8	18	19
30-Apr	Politics	1	3	11
30-Apr	Politics	3	7	15
30-Apr	Economy	1	2	6
30-Apr	Politics	2	3	5
30-Apr	Politics	1	3	3
29-Apr	Politics	26	62	94
29-Apr	Politics	6	5	12
29-Apr	Politics	2	7	11
29-Apr	Society	7	22	74
29-Apr	Politics	1	2	11
28-Apr	Politics	3	23	57
28-Apr	Politics	4	6	9
28-Apr	Politics	2	1	3
28-Apr	Politics	1	1	3
27-Apr	Politics	2	2	3
27-Apr	Politics	7	1	6
27-Apr	Politics	1	2	1
<b>27-Apr</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
27-Apr	Society	1	4	5

27-Apr	Politics	2	8	16
27-Apr	Politics	1	1	1
26-Apr	Politics	1	2	3
26-Apr	Politics	2	1	3
26-Apr	Society	1	2	4
24-Apr	Politics	2	4	4
24-Apr	Politics	2	2	3
24-Apr	Politics	1	3	2
22-Apr	Economy	3	4	9
22-Apr	Economy	3	1	1
22-Apr	Economy	2	1	1
22-Apr	Economy	3	11	23
22-Apr	Politics	1	0	1
22-Apr	Society	1	0	3
22-Apr	Politics	2	6	11
22-Apr	Politics	1	0	5
22-Apr	Politics	0	0	5
21-Apr	Economy	1	3	4
21-Apr	Economy	0	0	1
20-Apr	Politics	0	1	5
20-Apr	Politics	1	1	2
20-Apr	Politics	0	1	3
20-Apr	Politics	0	0	5
20-Apr	Politics	4	8	21
20-Apr	Politics	1	2	8
20-Apr	Politics	0	0	2
20-Apr	Politics	1	0	2
20-Apr	Politics	1	3	6
20-Apr	Politics	1	1	6
19-Apr	Politics	0	2	6
19-Apr	Politics	0	5	10
19-Apr	Economy	0	1	2
19-Apr	Economy	0	1	4
19-Apr	Politics	0	0	2
18-Apr	Politics	7	18	46
18-Apr	Politics	0	7	12
18-Apr	Politics	1	9	12
18-Apr	Economy	0	1	4
17-Apr	Politics	1	6	16
17-Apr	Politics	1	1	5
17-Apr	Politics	1	1	8
17-Apr	Society	0	0	3
17-Apr	Politics	4	9	21



17-Apr	Politics	1	2	7
17-Apr	Politics	0	1	5
17-Apr	Politics	2	3	7
17-Apr	Politics	2	1	4
17-Apr	Politics	0	0	1
17-Apr	Politics	0	3	6
17-Apr	Politics	3	17	42
17-Apr	Politics	1	2	4
17-Apr	Politics	1	3	6
17-Apr	Society	3	7	11
16-Apr	Society	0	1	2
16-Apr	Politics	5	8	38
16-Apr	Politics	2	2	9
16-Apr	Politics	2	2	8
16-Apr	Politics	3	3	11
16-Apr	Politics	3	4	4
16-Apr	Politics	3	1	1
16-Apr	Society	3	0	8
16-Apr	Economy	1	3	5
15-Apr	Politics	1	14	34
15-Apr	Economy	0	0	1
15-Apr	Economy	0	1	2
<b>14-Apr</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
14-Apr	Economy	0	1	7
14-Apr	Economy	0	4	12
<b>14-Apr</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>
12-Apr	Economy	2	5	7
12-Apr	Economy	1	3	4
12-Apr	Politics	1	5	9
12-Apr	Politics	0	0	2
09-Apr	Politics	3	4	6
09-Apr	Economy	3	1	6
09-Apr	Economy	3	5	1
08-Apr	Economy	1	4	4
07-Apr	Politics	7	30	101
07-Apr	Politics	1	5	12
07-Apr	Politics	0	4	12
<b>06-Apr</b>	<b>Culture</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
07-Apr	Economy	1	4	8
08-Apr	Society	0	3	7
09-Apr	Economy	0	4	2
10-Apr	Politics	0	2	6
11-Apr	Economy	0	6	12

12-Apr	Economy	2	4	6
02-Apr	Politics	1	1	4
03-Apr	Politics	1	1	5
04-Apr	Politics	1	1	2
05-Apr	Politics	1	1	3
01-Apr	Economy	1	1	2
<b>Average</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Engagement rate</b>		<b>0,01%</b>		

Table 17. Analysis of the engagement rate of the official Twitter account of the Mission of China to the EU (Source: own elaboration based on data retrieved from <https://twitter.com/ChinaEUMission> [Accessed online on 8 May 2021].) In the month of April 2021, the Mission posted 113 tweets (retweets are excluded), of which only four can be categorised as culture (in **bold**). These were related to gastronomy, traditional clothing and religious festivals (see images below), and performed slightly worse than the average in terms of engagement, being the rate already extremely low. It is interesting to note that the Mission to the EU posts not only in English but also in French (7%) and Chinese (4%), while the EU Delegation to China posts almost exclusively in Chinese. A recurring theme in the Chinese feed are quotes from Xi Jinping or the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi, which means many of the tweets are not directly connected to EU-China relations.

**Mission of China** @ChinaEUMission · Apr 27  
China government organization

Have you ever tried #Luosifen, a "smelly" but tasty dish from the southern Chinese city of Liuzhou? It has a very unusual aroma, so you either love it or hate it. Find out more about China's "smelliest rice noodles".



From **China Xinhua News**

3 3 4

**Mission of China** @ChinaEUMission · Apr 14  
China government organization

Hanfu, the traditional Chinese attire worn before the Qing dynasty, has seen a strong comeback in recent years. The number of hanfu enthusiasts has almost doubled, from 3.56 million in 2019 to over 6 million in 2020. [news.cgtn.com/news/2021-04-14-... via @cgtnofficial](https://news.cgtn.com/news/2021-04-14-...)



Love for hanfu: Ancient fashion trend draws enthusiasts in Beijing  
[news.cgtn.com](https://news.cgtn.com)

2 4

**Mission of China** @ChinaEUMission · Apr 14  
China government organization

Muslims in northwest China's #Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region began observing #Ramadan on Tuesday under regular anti-COVID-19 measures.



Muslims in Xinjiang begin observing Ramadan  
Muslims in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region began observing Ramadan on Tuesday under regular anti-COVID-19 ...  
[globaltimes.cn](https://globaltimes.cn)

1 3

**Mission of China** @ChinaEUMission · Apr 6  
China government organization

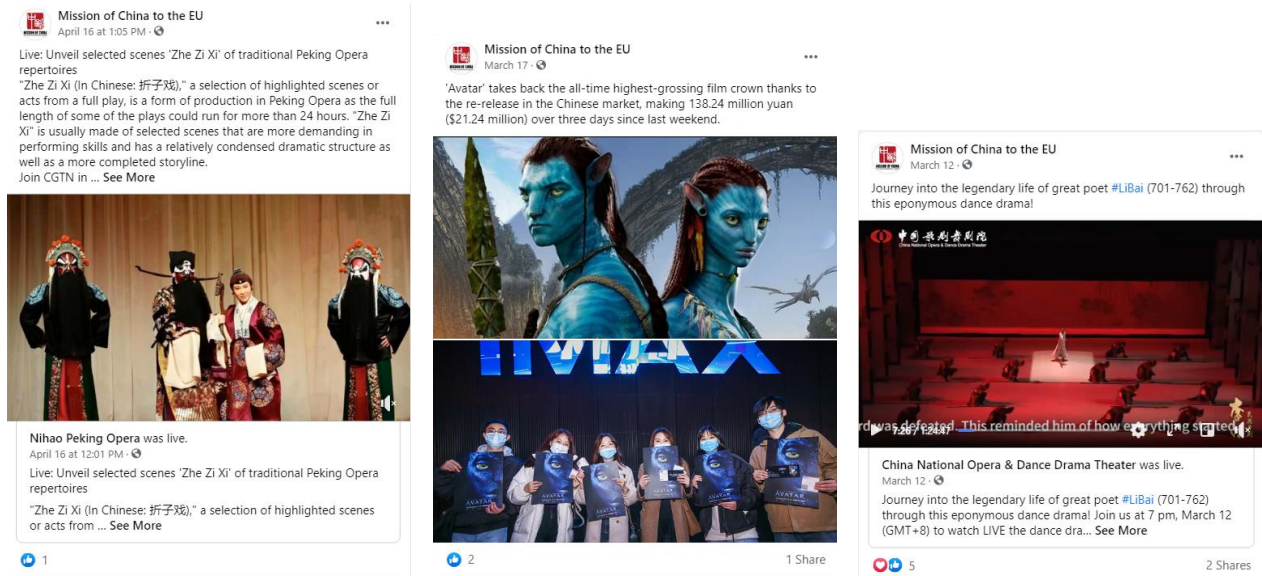
During the Saturday-to-Monday #QingMingFestival holiday, Chinese travelers made about 102 million trips to domestic destinations, a year-on-year rise of 144.6% and about 94.5% of the level in 2019, before the novel coronavirus pandemic.



Blossoming holiday travel indicates trend for year  
Chinese people let loose their desire to travel over the Tomb Sweeping Day holiday this past weekend, turning the three-day break into a boo...  
[global.chinadaily.com.cn](https://global.chinadaily.com.cn)

3 1 3

Images 33, 34, 35 and 36. Mission of China to the EU's Twitter posts related to culture (Source: screenshots of <https://twitter.com/ChinaEUMission> [Accessed online on 8 May 2021].)



Images 37, 38 and 39. Mission of China to the EU's Facebook posts related to culture (Source: screenshots of <https://www.facebook.com/ChinaEUMission> [Accessed on 8 May 2021].) While the Facebook page is considerably less used (only 7 posts in April 2021), its main focus is culture, unlike the Twitter account centred on politics. With only 4200 followers, the engagement rate is again low.

(See in the text: p. 40)

### APPENDIX 36. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES BY ASEF

Project title	Launch	Description	Achievements
<b>ASEF culture360 portal</b>	2005	The website aggregates information about events, opportunities, news, policies; produces a magazine, a podcast and a newsletter; carries out promotional activities on social media; and hosts the website of the Asia-Europe Museum Network.	In 2010 UNESCO's Committee on the Diversity of Cultural Expressions recognised the tool as a best practice for information exchange. Furthermore, its potential for being a model replicable in the relations with other regions was explicitly stated in 2014 the EU's Preparatory Action on culture in external relations.
<b>Mobility First</b>	2017	The cultural mobility grants support cross-border experience and collaboration.	They have financed more than 300 artists and another set of 55 is already selected for 2021.

<b>ASEM Cultural Festival</b>	The first edition was held in 2009 in Beijing but the festival was only renewed in 2018 when Brussels organised a Summit side-event called <i>Europe meets Asia, Asia meets Europe</i>	The festival brings together not only two continents but also traditional and contemporary art through exhibitions, performances and dialogues. The ASEM leaders decided to turn the festival into an annual event and thus the 2019 edition took place in Madrid but due to the pandemic, the next edition has been postponed until November 2021 when Cambodia will be the host.	
<b>A passage to Asia: 25 centuries of exchange between Asia &amp; Europe</b>	On ASEM Day 2021 with participation of several high-ranking EU officials	The digital exhibition gives a new life to the physical exhibition of 300 artifacts that accompanied the 2010 ASEM Summit held in Brussels thanks to 3D techniques.	
<b>Events and publications</b>	Periodic	Recent webinar series focused on topics such as <i>Public Diplomacy</i> and <i>Culture in the Time of COVID</i> .	The estimated total amount of activities is 100 per year.

Table 18. Projects and events supporting cultural relations organised by ASEF (Source: own elaboration).

(See in the text: p. 41)

### APPENDIX 37. COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CULTURAL DIPLOMACY APPROACHES OF THE EU AND CHINA

	Entity	European Union	People's Republic of China
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Latest policy on counterpart</b>	<i>EU-China - A strategic outlook</i> (2019)	<i>China's Policy Paper on the European Union</i> (2018)
	<b>Cultural Diplomacy policy</b>	<i>Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations</i> (2016)	No *
	<b>Preferred concept</b>	International Cultural Relations	Cultural Soft Power
	<b>Stated objectives</b>	Promote cultural diversity and Human Rights; Foster mutual understanding and intercultural dialogue	Create a lovable image of China; Build a harmonious world
	<b>Approach</b>	Cultural sector at arm's length; Contemporary art; United in diversity	Official bilateral communication with Member States; Traditional culture; Simplified monolithic image
<b>Unilateral implementation towards counterpart</b>	<b>Actors</b>	EEAS and DG EAC, EU Delegation to China, EUNIC Beijing and Hong Kong clusters	MFA and Ministry of Culture and Tourism, China Mission to the EU, Confucius Institutes, Cultural Centres
	<b>Structure of the embassy</b>	No cultural focal point	Education and Culture Department
	<b>Actions and programmes</b>	Erasmus+, EUPOP and Global Cultural Leadership Programme, EU Alumni network, Young Talent Architecture Award; Europe Day, EU Open Days and EU Film Festival, EU Book Festival, Children's Art Exhibition, Europe Street Festival	Language education, Chinese Bridge competition; Chinese New Year, European Youth in China; Belt and Road Initiative; Broadcasting
	<b>Use of digital tools</b>	Decreased	Extensive

	<b>Strengths</b>	Credibility, neutrality, openness, expertise in culture, flourishing creative sector	Commitment, strategic long-term planning, centralisation, attractiveness to the public
	<b>Weaknesses</b>	Limited funding and fragmentation, decreasing interest and lack of awareness within the EU, limited actorness and knowledge among the public	Credibility and creativity deficit, protectionism, aggressive diplomatic style
<b>Bilateral Cooperation</b>	<b>Pillar</b>	High-Level People-to-People Dialogue	
	<b>Thematic areas</b>	Cultural heritage, tourism, cultural and creative sector, higher education	
	<b>Projects and events</b>	<i>Tuning EU-China Study for the modernisation of higher education in China, Mapping the EU-China cultural and creative landscape;</i> Exchanges and co-productions; Anniversaries; Year of Youth, Year of Intercultural Dialogue, Tourism Year	
<b>Multilateral Cooperation</b>		UNESCO, ASEM and ASEF, UN, G-20, WTO	

\* Although there is no publicly available policy, enhancing the international influence of Chinese culture is part of the five-year plans and might have been further developed in a confidential document.

Table 19. Summary of the differences between the cultural action of the EU and China and their joint activities (Source: own elaboration.)

(See in the text: p. 43)