



# **TO WHAT EXTENT DOES A MAJOR URBAN EVENT REINFORCE INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL COOPERATION?**

**Françoise Taliano-des Garets**

## **Abstract**

The last decades of the twentieth century were marked in Europe by a return of cities to the international scene, which coincided with globalisation and the development of the European construction. This article examines in more detail the growing place of major events in urban strategies through the example of the label “European Capital of Culture”. It analyses the competitive context that fosters this enthusiasm, as well as the transformation of hierarchical relationships between the different decision-making levels. In a multi-scale approach, it highlights urban voluntarism and its motives, as much as those of the European Commission. The international opportunities and constraints implied by the label are examined, as well as the sustainability of the effects on international cultural cooperation of cities. This is generally strengthened, but due to a great diversity of situations, not all cities manage to create positive long-term benefits with the same efficiency.

## **Introduction**

The nomination of Rijeka as European Capital of Culture 2020 provides a wonderful case study opportunity on which we will indirectly shed light by focusing more on urban events and international relations. Cities are both established and recent players in the field of international

relations. Established players in the sense that they have preceded the state in this field since antiquity, notably at the cultural level in a broad meaning of the term culture, for example with the games that took place in the eighth century BC, in Olympia in Greece. Cities also widely deployed their power of influence during the medieval period, when states were not yet unified. The Italian cities seem to best exemplify the utmost importance of medieval cities on the international scene. Their commercial impact and intellectual and artistic strength were equally influential, as demonstrated by historian Patrick Boucheron.<sup>1</sup>

If we analyse the course of European history, we will notice that diplomacy gradually became a state prerogative between the seventeenth and the twentieth century. Closer to our time, certain cities have understood the importance of international relations, as shown by the increase of “sister cities” agreements especially from 1945, as well as events fostering the external influence of cities. For instance, the development of film festivals was of utmost importance in the field of culture for European cities: Cannes Film Festival 1946, Venice Film Festival 1947, West Berlin Film Festival 1951. These cities were all involved for various tourism or political reasons.

Research conducted by sociologist and political scientist Patrick Le Galès indicates that a new inflection occurred from the last decades of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century. According to Le Galès, we are witnessing a “return of European cities” on the international scene, due to the dual movements of European construction and globalisation.<sup>2</sup> Openness to the world would finally provide municipalities with the opportunity to reaffirm their unique place on the international stage. Therefore, the question to be discussed is: to what extent does a major urban cultural event, such as the “European Capital of Culture”, strengthen international cultural

---

<sup>1</sup> Patrick Boucheron, *Palaces in the city: urban spaces and places of public power in the medieval Mediterranean* (direction, in collaboration with Jacques Chiffoleau), Lyon, Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2004. Patrick Boucheron, *The Cities of Italy (circa 1150-circa 1340)*, Paris, Belin, 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Patrick Le Galès, *The return of European cities. Urban societies, globalisation, government and governance*, Paris, Presses de Sciences Po, 2003.

cooperation? We will first analyse what has changed in international affairs and what enticed an increasing number of cities to organise great cultural events, such as the European Capital of Culture. We will then consider the provided opportunities, as well as limitations or constraints. Finally, we will determine the durability of the related international impacts.

## **Part I: Changes in the international game and growing interest of cities in major events**

### ***1. Changes in international affairs***

The process of Europeanisation seems to be favourable for urban policies. There has been an institutionalisation of the European Union's urban policy since the end of the 1990s. The 2000 agenda reaffirmed this European interest in the municipal policies. The transversal urban dimension of the Structural Funds has likewise been reinforced. The European Commission has encouraged the creation of networks of cities: more than a hundred of networks have been formed in about twenty years. The Eurocities association provides a good example: it was founded in 1986 by six cities with more than 250 000 inhabitants. It now gathers more than 140 cities. Eurocities is headquartered near the European Parliament in Brussels, a tangible sign of the network's aim to be influential.

Finally, the process of Europeanisation has led to a real transformation of hierarchical relations between the national and international local levels. Cities benefited from a growing independence and their importance increased on the international stage. Thus, geographer Boris Grésillon considers that the Marseille-Provence European Capital of Culture enabled the Phoenician city in 2013 to redefine its relationship with Paris and Europe<sup>3</sup> and "one of the most striking geographic consequences of the Marseille-Provence operation is the reconfiguration

---

<sup>3</sup> Boris Grésillon, *A "capital" issue: Marseille-Provence 2013*, Paris, Editions de l'Aube, 2011.

of geographic scales. Local, regional, national and European scales are recomposed according to more or less large-scale projects.”<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, globalisation has made international openness essential and, by doing so, has also stirred competition between cities. International competition between cities implies that they must develop their international visibility, notably with the help of culture. Indeed, culture is a language. According to another geographer, Françoise Lucchini, culture expresses difference, and it also expresses consensus and belonging.<sup>5</sup> For a city, to exist in our open world is to display a positive image, as distinct as possible (which expresses difference). But culture can also build internal social cohesion (concept of belonging) or external membership, for example membership in the EU and its values.

## ***2. The European Commission promoting urban events***

On the cultural level, the construction of Europe has appeared for many cities as a chance to be seized. In 1985, European construction successfully established the label *European City of Culture*, which became *European Capital of Culture* in 1999. Considering the craze of cities to obtain this label, it was necessary to change the procedure to obtain the coveted label. Initially, one city per year was designated. Since 2009, two capitals a year are named after selection. The integration of Eastern European cities was also a target after the fall of the Wall. In 34 years, more than 60 cities were elected. The principles laid down by the Council of European Ministers in 1985 aim to “highlight the richness, diversity and common features of European cultures and contribute to a better mutual understanding between the citizens of the European Union.” It is, therefore, understandable that international cultural cooperation is central to the process, since meeting is a pre-

---

<sup>4</sup> Boris Grésillon, (Feature) France: changing territories. Marseille-Provence 2013, multi-scalar analysis of a European Capital of Culture, *Géococonfluences*, 4 November 2013. <http://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr/informations-scientifiques/dossiers-regionaux/la-france-des-territoires-en-mutation/articles-scientifiques/marseille-provence-2013-analyse-multiscalaire-d2019une-capitale-europeenne-de-la-culture>.

<sup>5</sup> Françoise Lucchini, “European Capitals of Culture. Changing the international image of a city”, *Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaine*, Année 2006, No. 101, pp. 90-99.

requisite to actually knowing each other. Candidate cities, wishing to promote their capacity, must know how to argue in this regard. Lille 2004 proposed to federate 152 municipalities, including some across the border in Belgium (3 Belgian municipalities were associated). Marseille 2013 seems to have been more convincing than Bordeaux on this matter during the campaign for candidature in 2008. In these projects, the Phoenician city proposed the creation of two new pieces of infrastructure placed under the sign of the Mediterranean: the Museum of the Civilisations of Europe and the Mediterranean (MuCEM), which is the only national museum outside the national capital of Paris, but also the Mediterranean Villa in “hangar J4”: an international centre for dialogue and exchanges in the Mediterranean. Rijeka 2020 aims to propose 1000 events and associate 27 points in Europe based on citizens’ proposals. Cities are very eager to apply because they see an underlying new opportunity of international opening and, therefore, development.

## **Part II: The major event: international opportunities and constraints**

### ***1. International opportunities of the major event***

Cities are ready to carry out this one-year event, to prepare it for 4 years, mainly for local development reasons because they believe they will benefit from international cooperation. The expected gains are internal and external, and the latter can influence local development and local cohesion. Hugo de Greef, Commissioner of Bruges 2002, stated that the label of European Capital of Culture is “a business card that brings together local and national actors and provides international visibility”.<sup>6</sup> In the title of one of his work on the influence of cities, sociologist Mario d’Angelo uses the pontifical expression *Urbi et Orbi* (to the city of Rome and the universe) to describe the process of external influence.

---

<sup>6</sup> Christelle Granja, “European capital of culture and after?”, *Libération*, 30 June 2013.

First, the project setup involves a game on different scales. It is indeed necessary to convince the European Union, to establish contacts with other cities abroad, to obtain the support of national diplomacy. The review of past candidate cities' applications can also be the occasion of international meetings to identify good practices. Involving local partners, such as universities, can lead to the development of additional international exchanges. The existence of the network of universities of the European capitals of culture is well known (UNECC – University Network of the European Capitals of Culture).

By nature, the label provides cities with international visibility. After the event of 2013, Marseille was elected “European City 2014” at the Urbanism Awards in London in November 2014. The image of cities may be transformed, which was the case for Glasgow, Liverpool (which is now the second largest city in terms of the number of museums in Britain), Lille or Marseille, a city which broke away from its bad reputation (according to the title *Marseille or the bad reputation*, a book written by Olivier Boura).<sup>7</sup>

The application also attracts international tourists. New infrastructure, such as MuCEM and other proposed events, is aimed at an international audience. As a result, Bruges has seen a 25% increase in the number of tourists, Lille 2004 saw its hotel stays rise by 30%. 50% of the cities welcome more than 9 times their number of residents during such events.

## ***2. Constraints can also arise in the endeavour to build an event of international stature***

Political difficulties can appear in mobilizing local actors or even local political instability. This was the case for Maribor in Slovenia in 2012, or San Sebastian (Donostia) in Spain in 2016. An electoral change in both cases disrupted the implementation of the project.

International mobilisation is not always easy, the crossing of borders does not always hold true. It was expected for Marseille – Provence but it did not really happen.

---

<sup>7</sup> Olivier Boura, *Marseille or the bad reputation*, Paris, Arléa, 2001.

Another difficult challenge is how to foster synergies between the field of culture with the imperatives of international tourism: bridging with international agencies, meeting deadlines, developing the necessary infrastructures for international opening, such as transport and hosting infrastructures.

### **Part III: The durability of related international impacts**

Of course, there have been failures that are less talked about than successes or half-successes, such as Istanbul 2000 or Patras 2006. However, expertise reports highlight several interesting points.

#### ***1. International cultural exchanges are strengthened***

The European scope of activities is proven everywhere. 40% of the activities in Riga (Latvia) 2014 had an international dimension. Some capital cities like Riga manage to find a balance between major prestigious international events and small-scale local events, as Tim Fox and James Rampton's report demonstrates.<sup>8</sup>

In the same year, the city of Umeå in northern Sweden enjoyed a positive coverage in a range of international media, including the *New York Times*. Umeå has been included in the "Top 10 Cities in the World" list in the Rough Guide.

The cultural players also express their satisfaction because the prestige of their activity has been enhanced thanks to the European dimension.

Cultural life is becoming more international. New connections have been established with all of Europe. New partnerships between artists benefit from new exchanges resulting from this urban event.

#### ***2. The international profile of the city is reinforced***

The transformation of the image of these cities is sometimes radical, as shown by the case of Liverpool. But above all, the label of European

---

<sup>8</sup> Tim Fox, James Rampton, *Summary Ex-post evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture 2014*, European Commission.



capitals of culture allows most of these cities to obtain an international dimension that they did not have until then. Urban events mobilise and develop skills, they also foster building infrastructure, thus perpetuating the international impact of the event. As a result of being a European Capital of Culture, Prague hosted the International Monetary Fund summit in the same year, i.e. in 2000. The status of national capital *per se* is not a sufficient prerequisite. In addition, it is necessary to demonstrate the cities' capacities, a demonstration achieved by cities that hosted the European Capital of Culture project.

However, after the event, expertise reports sometimes highlight shortcomings in terms of internationalisation ability. This is the case of two interrelated criteria: international communication and the international origin of the public. The 2014 report on Riga shows that only 1.4% of the public came from abroad. As we can see, the internationalisation of the public is, therefore, not guaranteed.

### ***3. Building long-lasting international cooperation***

The criterion of the durability of the effects of the European Capital of Culture is taken into consideration ahead of time when the cities are selected. However, this criterion is not always met. Some cities do not necessarily manage to enjoy long lasting benefits from the event. Istanbul 2000 is often criticised in this regard. On the contrary, some cities know how to capitalise on the event. Copenhagen 1996 built projects that spanned over the next ten years. Bergen 2000 gave birth to the Bergen International Film Festival. The festival has attracted more and more visitors over the years (45 000 in 2010), becoming one of the largest in Norway. We can say Lille 3000 was born in Lille 2004, organised by the same committee. Lille 3000 reuses cultural venues created or renovated for Lille 2004, for instance Tri Postal or Maisons Folies, and also creates new ones. Since 2006 and every 3 years or so, Lille 3000 presents different major thematic cultural events that last several months and attract millions of visitors under the artistic direction of Didier Fusillier. These events open with a grand parade in the streets of Lille. The first edition was devoted to India, the second

to Eastern Europe, the fourth to the urban metamorphoses of Rio de Janeiro, Detroit, Eindhoven, Phnom Penh, Seoul.

## **Conclusion**

By way of a conclusion and in order to answer our initial question, a major event can undoubtedly foster international cooperation in the cultural field. This is achieved both through the organisational capital and skills it mobilises and also through the flow of people that it involves: cultural players, artists, public, and also thanks to the circulation of ideas it triggers.

This confirms the claim that cities are players of international cultural relations beyond the states, at least within the framework of the European Union.

Nevertheless, the picture that emerges from this presentation is characterised by an extreme diversity of situations and by the need for researchers to focus more on the study of European capitals of culture. It is clear that all these cities do not reap the benefits of international cooperation with the same efficiency or with the same conviction or intensity. Above all, they do not all capitalise on the long-term benefits from these events with the same effectiveness.



# **ON CULTURAL EXCHANGES BETWEEN AFRICAN CITIES AND EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE**

**Lupwishi Mbuyamba**

## **Abstract**

The comments reflected in this contribution are based on personal experiences and direct involvement in cultural cooperation and respective roles played by European and African actors in official duties, as well as in informal relationships. Thus, a new context is created where former colonies are in dialogue with former empires and request new attitudes if the negotiations are to reach positive results and achievements. In this regard, the identity of actors and stakeholders intervening should be considered, as well as the relevant mechanisms of negotiation. This new approach is the key element for success. It consists of the determination to adopt a new vision elaborated and presented by the newcomers, partners in negotiations. They develop appropriate strategies at different levels of priorities defined for development and socio-economic and political aspects and for culture, heritage and creativity assets. This approach will prevent and help address potential psychological, political and technical obstacles. The paper can serve as a modest contribution to an introduction preparing the exchanges to come on the occasion of the celebration of the First Annual Cultural Capital of Africa expected to happen soon having in mind, as a possible reference, the successful tradition of the European Capitals of Culture.

## **Introduction**

Addressing a vast and important subject of this nature requires initial precautions at least to put some limits to some considerations of this short and partial intervention. A first precaution is to define the geographical area to be considered in the development of this paper. Here, my comments will be applied to the African Continent as a whole and Europe as a global entity, individual countries, with particular regions being selected to illustrate particular cases where necessary.

The second precaution will be taken to indicate the origin and source of my observations and assessments, especially when it comes to addressing the lessons learned, justifying conclusions and making propositions. Personal observations and field experiences of more than 40 years confronted with the development of national, regional and international agendas and implementation of recommendations and resolutions in the cultural sector can allow, I presume, at least provisional conclusions and suggestions for ways to go.

Thus, it is important to shortly evoke the recent historical background of the attempts to define some ways of engaging and developing cultural exchanges between Europe and Africa. The particular context considered here will be the observation of African supposed cultural cities (in this case, cities proclaimed as Creative by UNESCO or still candidates for the title, but also some cities generally considered as such for hosting significant cultural events) and European Capitals of Culture as the one hosting this gathering, the City of Rijeka, considerations in this regard being limited to the period of OCPA, meaning the last 18 years.

## **Historical background**

Two years after its establishment, the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa (OCPA) was invited to participate in the Barcelona Universal Conference organised in 2004 in cooperation with UNESCO, which was following up on the adoption of the Agenda 21 for Culture just adopted in Porto Alegre and which was invited to pay special

attention to the topic of Cultural Indicators of Human Development. OCPA had been created 2 years earlier with a view to monitoring cultural trends and national cultural policies in the region of Africa and enhancing their integration in human development strategies.<sup>1</sup> It is a service-oriented resource centre and a regional coordination and monitoring body for a net of experts and institutions involved in policy- and decision-making, cultural administration and management, as well as research, training and information expected to provide technical assistance to public authorities, community leaders, professionals and civil society animators involved in cultural policies.

In this regard, in its declaration at the Barcelona Universal Conference, OCPA reaffirmed the essence of its Strategy: “Affirming the real wealth of Africa’s cultural diversity and the centrality of cultural rights and human rights in development, we believe that delivery on these three aspects should inform about the African position, as well as global development strategies. This is where we see the role of partnerships at local, national and international levels, which will enhance social movements and civil society across nation states as the only way forward.”<sup>2</sup>

### *African initiative*

The adoption of the Agenda 21 for Culture by 350 local governments of the world by 2009 engaged all the cities and the local governments in making culture part of their instruments in developing urban space. This was seen as offering an opportunity for every city to create a long-term vision of culture as a pillar in their development. It was against this background that OCPA conducted research in a number of African cities taking a proactive approach to cultural policies after the presentation and explanations of this instrument developed at the Barcelona Universal Conference.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Status and Mission* (2002), OCPA, available at: [www.ocpanet.org](http://www.ocpanet.org).

<sup>2</sup> *Cultural Indicators of Human Development* (2004), Strategy Document, OCPA, Maputo, p. 4.

The field study on cultural cities and local governments in Africa was for 10 urban cities considered as emergent cities selected in the five regions of the continent: Algiers, Brazzaville, Cape Town, Harare, Kampala, Kinshasa, Maputo, Ouagadougou, Yaoundé, Ziguinchor. Experts and representatives of these cities met in 2008 in Yaoundé, Cameroun to exchange information, define a common agenda for sensitisation and promotion of the cultural agenda at the level of cities and local governments, and consider responsibilities at different level of stakeholders.<sup>3</sup>

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was noted that all the reports had indeed indicated that cultural policies initiatives and their implementation seemed to be left to central governments. There was also an indication that most mayors were appointed by the governments and that they were not elected by citizens and seemed, therefore, to have no free hands in policy-making.

The meeting and the studies were followed by individual contacts and sometimes by local initiatives for cultural policies revision or for capacity building processes in some cities such as Brazzaville in Congo, Saint-Louis in Senegal and Bulawayo in Zimbabwe.

### ***European initiative***

With the information collected from the field, OCPA had to attend another international meeting jointly initiated in May 2009 by the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat, a large colloquium organised in Brussels and attended by 800 professionals in the field of culture, creators, decision-makers on the topic on Culture and Creativity, Vectors for Development.<sup>4</sup>

In addition, particular problems pertaining to the status of artists were addressed, Euro-African cultural cooperation, in particular

---

<sup>3</sup> *OCPA Regional research on cultural policies of cities and local communities* (2008), OCPA, Maputo.

<sup>4</sup> *Culture and Creativity, vectors for development* (2009), Brussels Declaration by Artists, Professionals and Entrepreneurs of Culture, European Commission, Brussels, [www.culture-dev.eu](http://www.culture-dev.eu).

practical issues such as facilities for the mobility for African cultural professionals in Europe for professional contacts. The respective participation of Europeans in artistic events in Africa and of Africans in Europe was equally discussed.

On this occasion, important contacts were made with mayors of significant cities in Africa and some high-level staff members of EU departments and professionals involved in several domains of the culture sector from Africa and from Europe in the preparation of an important gathering expected to take place soon in Africa.

### ***Joint initiative***

One month later, in June 2009, in close cooperation with Interarts, a Spanish cultural initiative based in Barcelona, and with assistance from the Spanish Cooperation International Agency (AECID), OCPA indeed hosted an important forum entitled “First African Campus for Cultural Cooperation” in Maputo, Mozambique. Amongst the recommendations of this very large meeting, cultural policies of cities and of local governments were given special attention, and an appeal was made to the public authorities of the two continents with a view to promoting and facilitating the establishment of an order of participation of the civil society, decentralisation, democracy and good governance.<sup>5</sup>

### **Justification**

All contacts were oriented towards the need to register the situation on the field and take note of the level of consciousness of the leaders, of their own role, and of the role of culture in the social co-existence of citizens from different cultural backgrounds in the same territory and see if they realise that people moving from villages to urban areas bring with them the creative ingenuity which can contribute, transform and enhance the urban economy.

---

<sup>5</sup> Cooperacion cultural entre Europa y Africa (2009), Actas del 1er Campus Euroafricano de Cooperacion Cultural, AECID, Madrid, pp. 41-70.



The second element of the observation made was to see who the stakeholders and the real and the most significant actors in conducting policies in these cities are. Of course, cities (as was the case for a number of local entities) expect to get direction and guidance from central governments, especially in the political and economic areas of city life. Rarely or almost never does it happen in cultural development programmes or projects, except sometimes for the erection, removal or maintenance of cultural monuments.

This ambiguity is the common characteristic of African cities for the time being and needs clarification and distinction between the duty and service to promote the national identity and national interest and the legitimate aspiration of citizens in the particular area to express their will and mandate their representatives to take care and implement the activities decided on at the root level.<sup>6</sup>

The third element was to enhance the exchange of information and cooperation in particular within the Euro-African cooperation mechanisms, and consider all aspects of development including the redesigning of the urban environment, the extension of cultural infrastructure, the production and the circulation of cultural products from the South to the North and vice-versa.

It is with this package of concrete data that we can now consider the four questions raised in the framework of the Rijeka conference: vision, obstacles, tools and actors.

## **A – Elements for discussion**

### ***1. Vision***

A common vision of city promoters from the South (i.e., from Africa) and from the North (i.e., from Europe) needs to consider the following realities on the ground:

---

<sup>6</sup> Kovacs, Mate (2009), “Summary Report” in *OCPA Regional research on cultural policies of cities and local communities*, Maputo.

### 1.1 General observations

The exponential demographic growth has changed the urban landscape in the world developing new challenges, and new demands request new policies in the all aspects – social, political and economic areas.<sup>7</sup>

Further developments of the situation will reach mega-proportions by 2050, making it impossible for the present social and economic infrastructure to meet the demands in health, housing, sanitation, schools, roads and, above all, culture.

In addition, repeated economic crises and autocratic governance here and there can show the risk of uncontrolled situations.

### 1.2 Need for a common response

This global situation needs to be addressed and some aspects of the problems observed be part of priorities. In this regard, beyond local and national efforts, the magnitude of the problems encountered will require regional and interregional interventions and contributions. So, the interventions for a given situation, such as the training of specialists, should be considered at the regional level – ECOWAS (for West Africa) or ECCAS (for Central Africa) as examples for similar problems. The example of UNESCO and UNDP projects in museology in the 1980s can be cited here in the implementation of a common training centre of curators for francophone countries museums at the National Museum in Niger and another training centre for English-speaking countries (from Western, Eastern and Southern Africa) in Nigeria.

Another positive experience of such interactions can encourage an initiative of redefinition of a common vision and a co-action based on a long common history. An example can be cited: the rehabilitation of the São Sebastião Castle in Mozambique, the former capital of the country and currently a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was entrusted to the Association of Portuguese Cities after an agreement between Portugal, a former colonial power, and Mozambique, a former colony, and a negotiation facilitated by UNESCO.

---

<sup>7</sup> Cities, *National Geographic*, special issue, April 2019, vol. 235, no. 4.

Indeed, such a delicate intervention needs a careful approach, a re-visited attitude and a generous disposition from both parties concerned.

It is on the agendas of several African cities to request the involvement of the best designers of Western cities in the extension of or redesigning new areas in search of a modern urbanism order and the redesigning of old and historical sites and monuments, such as the rehabilitation of Timbuktu, a major monument in Mali placed on the World Heritage List of Humanity.<sup>8</sup>

An also delicate issue concerns the return to Africa of museums objects and archives and the recuperation of art works stolen today. UNESCO can call to facilitate negotiations, as well as INTERPOL based in Lyon, France, ICOM at UNESCO in Paris, and AFRICOM in Nairobi.

## **2. Obstacles**

The problems generally encountered in a cooperation or co-action process to solve or for which solutions envisaged need facilitation are of 4 orders: psychological, social, technical and political.

### **2.1 At psychological level**

A change of mentality is not an easy operation; it is a question of generation, sometimes of several generations, and it depends on the environment in which you live and of the education received. The residual mentality of some western European experts can be an obstacle to a programme to succeed and even to be accepted. There is then a need to carefully select experts and delegates to represent in negotiations. From the African side, you can also encounter partners still affected by the memory and reluctant to believe in recent changes of attitudes.

Moreover, the use of provoking terminology, such as ‘barbaric’, needs to be removed from the cooperation language, especially when we know that a word of this kind can be just a demonstration of ig-

---

<sup>8</sup> Ali Ould Sidi (2017), *Les mystères de Tombouctou. La ville mystérieuse*. La Sahélienne, Bamako, pp. 39-48.

norance. Indeed, the term ‘barbaric’ in the Ancient Roman Empire encompassed the Visigoths and Ostrogoths, *inculti* (the uneducated) and *intonsi* (the bearded), part of contemporary Europe’s northern and central regions (including the region of the “Gaules” in France). Who in Italy can call the Germans ‘barbaric’ today!

## 2.2 At social level

In promoting the cultural exchange programme, the exchange of artistic groups and ensembles encounter a crucial problem of access. Today, mobility is a complicated issue for many countries in Europe, but less in Africa except for those countries looking for reciprocity. Artists are generally seen as potential immigrants, as a danger for the European civilisation, a threat for Europe.

In addition, the real damage of terrorism is sometimes mixed with the previous situations, while everyone knows that Africa is itself a victim of horrible terrorism. These two elements are amongst the obstacles to a sincere and efficient cooperation and cultural dialogue.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.3 At technical level

The economic imbalance between Europe and Africa can easily increase misunderstanding of young Europeans naively told that European money is spent in Africa for humanitarian reasons; they are probably not informed of the meanders of cooperation, investments, debts and geopolitics. The fact that financial contributions from the African side are not always visible in cash during negotiations sometimes leaves a negative impression even on African partners themselves. This impression can be amplified when the African expertise in a given area is not always welcome in cooperation on a particular project or programme.

---

<sup>9</sup> Mbuyamba, Lupwishi (2020), *La constitution d’une nouvelle identité dans un contexte de mobilité*. Communication au Colloque de l’Institut Koré, Ségou, Mali.

## 2.4 At political level

Sixty years after the global movement of political independence in Africa, the level of development is, of course, unequal and the differences between the 55 countries follow particular specificities in geography, history, insecurity, itinerary, partnership types. But if we ask where unanimity is in the heart of all Africans, it is in fate, in destiny. Culture and development, sustainable development, the Africa We Want – against neo-colonialism – are amongst the slogans common to the continent these days, the continuation of the guideline for cooperation. The achievement of a partnership will be evaluated accordingly. It happens that offers for cooperation are far from there and then that they become obstacles to a common interest.

## 3. *Tools and actors*

In order to achieve a positive benefit of a successful cultural co-operation for projects and programmes for the cities, there is a need to identify actions and actors who could be the efficient operators in accelerating the process.

### 3.1 At internal level

The first and essential element is the national government's understanding of the role and the importance of leadership of the city in the politics of proximity and allowing the necessary autonomy of initiative, management and negotiation. European partners will help in understanding this effort.

The leadership of an African city should then demonstrate its ability and imagination in listening to the popular voice, accepting the democratisation in the management of solutions and propositions, paying attention to the best practices existing in other cities of the country, the region and of the international models, and facilitating the participation of people from the roots in the implementation and assessment of the results achieved. European cities will facilitate access to this information.

The composition of the City Council should reflect the main categories of professionals, especially in cultural and socio-economic areas. As such, its approach to cultural needs and action will be connected to the global vision of development integrating all aspects of citizen life. In the cooperation process, significant European professionals can be identified and interested to take initiative in this field.

### 3.2 At external level

The regional approach method can be suggested from the conception to the implementation of activities in the same domain if this can facilitate a mutual inspiration by the best examples. The European partner in contact with several cities in the same area can take initiative in this regard.

Cities affiliated to the same international cultural associations can be encouraged to set up common initiatives, share expertise, and organise common production markets. The leaders of such international associations are encouraged to suggest cultural events in that regard.

Finally, the twinning initiatives are to be encouraged since many aspects of the general management of cities involved can benefit from the formula. One of the models I was given to observe was the twinning of the City of Maputo and the City of Barcelona. Exchange of artists, capacity building for administrative staff, cultural visits and cultural tourism, encounters of youth associations achieved the development of the cultural agenda of the two cities not only in its formal cooperation, but also in people's friendships. The best way of developing mutual understanding and dialogue.<sup>10</sup>

## **B – Cultural cooperation: strategies for action**

The vision, the tools and the actors identified will help in designing programmes and raising awareness of possible obstacles to overcome in projects. All these are elements for actions to be undertaken and for which strategies are to be defined.

---

<sup>10</sup> Filimao, Estevao (2009), *What Cultural Policies for the Municipality of Maputo?* In: OCPA Regional research on cultural policies of cities and local communities, Maputo.

## **1. Principles**

Cultural cooperation is a matter of a common understanding and needs to be addressed at all levels and for all parties involved in negotiations between Europe and Africa: at summits, at bilateral commissions, etc.

The second principle and practical strategy is to depart from the existing cultural initiatives based on the linguistic particularities and linguistic regions already engaged in a practical cooperation. This is the case for English-speaking countries cooperating in the Commonwealth Foundation framework, for OIF (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie) for French-speaking countries, and CPLP (Community of Portuguese Language Countries) for countries using Portuguese as an official language.<sup>11</sup>

It is interesting to know that within this official context several cultural initiatives exist, such as the International Association of Francophone Mayors, which can be approached, for example, for concrete initiatives, such as the building of a cultural centre in the City of Kananga in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is the same for the programme of libraries initiated by the CPLP and existing in the five African Portuguese-speaking countries (PALOP). This offers a possibility for a smooth contribution in an existing frame of co-action.

The fourth principle concerns the legitimacy of common action. It is important in this regard to consider the central role played by the African Union in Culture, its instrument for cultural policy, the Charter for African Cultural Renaissance, as the fundamental guidelines and the African Agenda 2063, The Africa We Want, as the global long-term programme for Africa.

The fifth principle is related to the decision adopted by the African Union to consider the African diaspora all over the world as the 6th region of Africa. The significance of such a decision is to reaffirm the

---

<sup>11</sup> Mbuyamba, Lupwishi (2014), *Empowering processes, Framework for Cultural Policies in Africa*. In Wolfgang Schneider/Daniel Gad (eds.), *Good Governance for Cultural Policy. An African-European Research about Arts and Development*, Peter Lang Ed., Frankfurt am Main, p. 163.

implication of Africans all over the world in the global efforts for the development of Africa and Africans and an invitation to all for contribution and thus to consider all cultural activists as actors of cultural development and cooperation for Africa in the world.

## **2. Actions**

A range of possible actions can be identified here just for an illustration of domains to be considered for cooperation between African cities and European cities including the European former or recent cultural capitals.

### **2.1 Cultural activities with a socio-economic impact**

- Establishment of centres of excellence for street children in great cities of Africa with a view of basic training, vocational education, and preparation for entrepreneurship in practical areas and conclusion with a micro-credit to be regularly evaluated.
- Inventory of existing craftswomen workshops, assistance in upgrading and sharing knowledge, and establishment of an organised market locally in Africa and in Europe.

### **2.2 Cultural activities with an impact on climate and environment**

- Assisting in redesigning model-cities by participation in projects of urbanism offices of medium-sized cities, creation of public gardens and parks, and development of crossroads paying attention to historical statues and monuments and contributing to art education for the general public.
- Organisation of cultural tourism at historical monuments and sites, and integrating such trips in the school curriculum for the youth.

### **2.3 Cultural activities with an impact on creativity and art promotion**

- Facilitation of regular and periodical great cultural events (festivals, exhibitions, competitions, etc.) involving cultural actors from Europe and from Africa.



- Exchange of students of merit between Africa and Europe and the organisation of artist residencies, internships, and competitions in order to promote intercultural dialogue.

## 2.4 Special

There is a need to consider the preparation of the celebration of the first African Capital City of Culture as an opportunity for experiencing some of the principles and strategies developed in this paper. The European experience will certainly inspire the African leadership of the project in addition to the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) impressive tradition in this area.

## Conclusion

A reference to the historical background of the mutual expression by both parties, African cities and European cities and, behind them, Africa and Europe has demonstrated the feasibility and indicated the ways for a significant and successful cooperation and co-action. The consideration of the efforts in identifying tools and existing actors shows an incredible potential for a dynamic future and for a significant development with a set of synergies and interactions. With some concrete best examples produced, what is left if not good will and a determination from all?

Definitely, cultural cooperation between European cultural capitals and African cultural cities in creation is welcome, expected to grow, and encouraged to succeed. But, while growing, this cooperation will need to adapt its mechanisms to the new environment of international cooperation.

OCPA's humble recommendation to its partners is to facilitate, specialise, reinforce and promote the creative diversity agenda in the international cultural relations while taking into account the new context of the emergence of new comers.

# **LES RÉSEAUX CULTURELS, IMPORTANTS OUTILS DE COOPÉRATION, DEVANT ÉVOLUER / CULTURAL NETWORKS, IMPORTANT COOPERATION TOOLS, THE NEED TO EVOLVE**

**Jean-Pierre Deru**

## **Abstract**

European cultural networks are an important element of cultural cooperation in Europe and beyond. They have enabled many operators in various sectors, be it music, dance, training, cultural centres, etc., to exchange information, practices, and launch cooperation projects. However, having worked for many years in the networking field, I am convinced that most of them need to evolve. They should, for instance, be more active as ‘cooperation platforms’, take bold positions on sensitive subjects, and professionalise their management. One extra element needed to reinforce networks and international relations is to be found in the necessary development of cultural cooperation training programmes for cultural and arts managers. University exchanges, open to cultural life, are part of the solution. However, the reinforcement of informal training programmes, focused essentially on cultural cooperation and targeting young experienced cultural managers, should be a priority.

Les réseaux culturels européens constituent un élément important de la coopération culturelle en Europe et au-delà. Ils ont permis à de nombreux opérateurs de différents secteurs, que ce soit la musique, la danse, la formation, les centres culturels, etc., d'échanger des informations, des pratiques et de lancer des projets de coopération. Cependant, actif depuis de nombreuses années dans le domaine du *cultural networking*, je suis convaincu que la plupart de ces réseaux doivent évoluer.

En effet, la 'période héroïque' de réseaux fondateurs comme IETM (Informal European Theatre Meeting, devenu International network for contemporary performing arts), Trans Europe Halles et autres pré-curseurs, lors de laquelle ils jouaient des rôles d'influenceurs, tant dans le domaine du développement de projets de partenariat culturel que, plus largement, dans celui des politiques culturelles, est – en quelque sorte – révolue.

Cela ne signifie, aucunement, que les réseaux culturels aient perdu leur raison d'être et leur importance. Ils restent incontournables, mais ne doivent pas se reposer sur leurs lauriers et éviter d'effectuer une nécessaire révolution copernicienne.

Il est, de fait, de plus en plus stratégique et important de développer la coopération culturelle intra-européenne ainsi qu'avec des pays d'autres continents, particulièrement avec les pays se trouvant autour de la Méditerranée. Les questions essentielles qui se posent aux réseaux culturels actuellement, et pour le futur, sont de différents ordres:

La question de la professionnalisation. Les réseaux importants peuvent difficilement fonctionner de la meilleure manière uniquement avec des bénévoles. Il est donc nécessaire d'avoir, dans les fonctions de gestion, des personnes ayant été formées à la gestion de réseaux culturels. Ceci implique évidemment que ces opérateurs aient suivi certaines formations adaptées à ce secteur et sa dynamique.

Ce sujet soulève la problématique globale des formations culturelles. Elles sont, en général, réalisées soit sur le modèle de la gestion d'entreprise avec des critères souvent autant quantitatifs que *business*, soit il s'agit de formations artistiques. Très rares sont, de ce fait, les formations qui sont d'ordre culturel et centrées sur la réalisation des projets de

partenariat et de coopération culturelle qui, pour passionnantes qu'elles soient, confrontent les opérateurs à des situations variées et complexes.

En tant qu'association Marcel Hicter pour la démocratie culturelle, nous organisons, depuis de nombreuses années, le Diplôme Européen en Administration de Projets Culturels et sommes bien placés pour réaliser les spécificités indispensables pour former des opérateurs culturels au lancement et à la gestion de projets de partenariats culturels.

Avec une méthodologie radicalement différente du système académique, nous avons comme premier objectif de 'déstabiliser' les participant.e.s pour qu'ils/elles quittent leurs modèles prédéterminés, en quelque sorte leurs zones de confort. Pour ce faire, nous avons établi un 'système nomade'; chaque année nous organisons, avec des partenaires locaux, deux sessions résidentielles d'une dizaine de jours dans deux pays différents. Par exemple, en 2019, notre formation a été réalisée en Irlande du Nord et en Islande; en 2020, en Croatie et au Portugal. Les participant.e.s, jeunes opérateurs culturels déjà actifs, doivent développer un projet de coopération culturelle pour être sélectionnés.

Nous n'avons pas de 'professeurs' mais bien quelques experts de haut niveau, présentant tant leurs recherches que leurs expertises, et interagissant avec les participants. Nous considérons, en effet, qu'il faut abolir le système *top down* et que les participants et intervenants ont tous à apprendre les uns des autres.

Le cœur même de la formation est constitué par des *work groups* sur les projets d'une part, et les enjeux culturels stratégiques de l'autre. Il n'y a jamais plus de 2 participants du même pays et, chaque année, des Européen.ne.s rencontrent des participant.e.s d'Afrique, du Moyen Orient et/ou d'Asie.

Ce que nous avons découvert et nous renforçons constamment, c'est, notamment, ce qui manque fort aux participant.e.s, même s'ils/elles sont, par ailleurs, de très bons opérateurs culturels:

- la capacité de définir des Visions; Mission/*Statement*; des objectifs ainsi que des stratégies;
- la conception d'un projet de collaboration, conçu et réalisé avec des partenaires complémentaires de pays différents;
- ainsi qu'un *modus operandi* du partenariat; apports et responsabilités des différents acteurs de pays et d'*habitus* différents.

Cette formation, tout en gardant ses principes de base, évolue depuis son lancement en 1989, prenant en compte les enjeux du présent ainsi que du futur, qu'ils soient culturels, politiques, sociaux ou écologiques. Le fait que le Diplôme Européen, non reconnu officiellement et non financé structurellement, existe toujours et se développe, montre son utilité. Il serait nécessaire que d'autres formations de ce type existent, afin de renforcer la formation d'opérateurs à la spécificité des coopérations culturelles.

Cependant, il faut noter qu'il existe, également, des formations universitaires innovantes qui 'arment' des opérateurs culturels en termes de gestion de projets et programmes culturels.

Enfin, les programmes Erasmus et Erasmus Plus de l'Union Européenne jouent un rôle aussi positif qu'important pour permettre des échanges d'étudiant.e.s, les ouvrant à d'autres cultures et leur permettant parfois de lancer des partenariats culturels.

Une autre question qu'il faut rencontrer est celle du financement des réseaux. Il est nécessaire qu'ils obtiennent des financements relativement structurels, notamment venant des pouvoirs publics, qu'ils soient locaux, régionaux, nationaux ou internationaux. Par ailleurs, pour que les réseaux restent autonomes, il est nécessaire qu'ils obtiennent des financements alternatifs, venant de cotisations des membres, venant aussi d'activités et de services pouvant générer des recettes. Cela implique, bien entendu, d'avoir, dans le *staff* des réseaux importants, des membres ou employés possédant de sérieuses capacités de gestion financière et de récoltes de fonds. Et, à mon sens, encore plus important, il ne peut être question de trouver des financements qui seraient en contradiction avec les valeurs ou l'objet du réseau. C'est pourquoi la stratégie mise en œuvre à ce propos doit être définie par les organes élus démocratiquement.

Autre enjeu important, actuel et pour le futur, ce sont l'autonomie et l'indépendance des réseaux culturels. En effet, dans certains pays, ils risquent d'être sous la coupe de pouvoirs locaux ou nationaux non démocratiques et, donc, leur liberté de parole et d'action est parfois bridée par des pouvoirs autoritaires. C'est, par exemple, ce qui s'est passé avec *Racines*, association culturelle marocaine, travaillant beaucoup

en collaboration sur le bassin méditerranéen, qui a été dissoute par le pouvoir judiciaire marocain, de manière politiquement manipulée. Il s'agit d'un exemple tout à fait significatif, étant donné qu'il montre le risque que des associations et réseaux culturels courent dans certains pays non démocratiques lorsqu'ils font preuve d'autonomie de pensée, de discours et d'action. Ce qui est tout autant significatif, c'est le fait que *Racines* ait été soutenu par un grand nombre d'associations et de réseaux culturels européens ce qui lui a permis de rebondir en se relançant sous forme d'association juridiquement basée en Belgique, tout en continuant ses actions dans le bassin méditerranéen.

Il est important de noter également qu'il existe un autre type de dépendance, plus subtil, et qui est lié aux relations des réseaux à l'Union Européenne. Même si, à mon sens, l'Union Européenne est indispensable et joue un rôle souvent très positif en soutenant des opérations culturelles et de coopération ainsi que des réseaux, il est évident qu'une dépendance très nette s'installe pour certains réseaux qui dépendent tellement des programmes de l'Union, qu'ils n'ont plus toute l'autonomie voulue pour décider librement de leurs projets et de leurs actions.

En effet, pour survivre et se développer financièrement, certains réseaux, notamment parmi les plus importants, font du *shopping* et modélisent leurs actions propres en fonction de programmes européens. Il s'agit là, évidemment, d'un danger considérable en termes d'autonomie et d'implication sociétale. Certains réseaux se trouvent de la sorte mis dans de véritables 'boîtes' et leurs projets deviennent des copies collées des programmes de l'Union Européenne.

Problème supplémentaire, cette très grande dépendance réduit quasiment à néant la possibilité pour ces réseaux de garder une liberté de parole et de critique vis-à-vis de telles structures dont ils dépendent presque totalement. Pour lutter contre ces dangers de détournement, il est nécessaire de renforcer les réseaux et, pour ce faire, il faut de manière indispensable, qu'ils soient basés sur des principes forts de démocratie culturelle et de démocratie interne. Ils doivent se réinventer, être plus actifs en tant que 'plateformes de coopération' et prendre des positions audacieuses sur des sujets sensibles.

Actuellement, alors que nous sortons petit à petit des *lockdowns* et des effets de la pandémie, les actions culturelles et les réseaux culturels ainsi que la coopération culturelle sont plus indispensables que jamais pour recréer une société créative, chaleureuse et interculturelle!

# **Croatia in the EU Context of International Cultural Cooperation**





# **CROATIA'S INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION OPPORTUNITIES BEYOND EUROPE**

**Aleksandra Uzelac**

## **Abstract**

During the period of Croatia's accession, as well as after Croatia joined the EU, Croatia's main focus has predominantly been on establishing closer cultural cooperation between Croatia's cultural sector and both the EU and other European countries, while establishing international cultural relations beyond Europe has not been in the spotlight. The paper discusses whether Croatia as the newest EU Member State shows interest in international cultural cooperation beyond Europe, whether it supports public cultural diplomacy initiatives, and what framework exists in Croatia for fostering international activities in cultural relations. The focus is on Croatia's involvement in the already existing regional platforms that the EU has set up for Asia, Latin America and the Euro-Mediterranean region. The paper also tries to find out whether these platforms have actively been promoted in Croatia with a view to introducing Croatian cultural professionals to cooperation opportunities, and whether there are mechanisms in place to provide more systematic support to the development of international cultural relations beyond Europe.

## **Introduction**

In academic literature and policy documents, the terms ‘international cultural relations’, ‘cultural cooperation’ and ‘cultural diplomacy’ are often used interchangeably, with the present discourse shifting from international cultural cooperation towards cultural diplomacy whose ambit has broadened considerably (Ang, Isar, and Mar, 2015). Even if these concepts overlap to some extent, they are not the same. In literature we find authors emphasising the difference, while linking the concepts with different underpinning values. Ang, Isar, and Mar (2015: 365) distinguish between “cultural diplomacy that is essentially interest-driven governmental practice and cultural relations, which is ideals-driven and practiced largely by non-state actors.” Dragičević Šešić (2017: 26) links these concepts with the different roles and opportunities available to cultural agents to contribute to international cultural relations and exchanges based on principles, such as values of equality, collaboration or solidarity, “that are often different from standard cultural diplomacy actions that follow geopolitical interests and official foreign policies.” Lovrinić (2019) reaffirms this and proposes that “the main difference between cultural diplomacy and (international) cultural relations/cooperation is that the latter naturally seeks an engagement in dialogue with a much broader public and is not limited to governmental actors’ initiatives and, thus, all acts of cultural diplomacy could be considered international cultural relations, but not vice versa, since international cultural relations are not necessarily supported nor funded by government” (Lovrinić, 2019: 5).

Culture is a non-exclusive competence of the EU and – under the principle of subsidiarity – is within the competence of individual Member States in terms of the development and implementation of their respective national cultural policies. The development of their respective international cultural relations also remains within the purview of each Member State. Nevertheless, the EU has recognised the importance of international cultural relations in a number of its documents. *The European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* (European Commission, 2007) recognises “the promotion of culture

as a vital element of the European Union's international relations.” In 2016, the EU announced that it would place culture at the very heart of international relations. Accordingly, in a document entitled *Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations* (European Commission, 2016), it calls for enhanced cooperation with the national cultural institutes of EU Member States. As a follow-up, in 2016 the EU Cultural Diplomacy Platform<sup>1</sup> was set up with the aim of providing advice on external cultural policy, facilitating networking, carrying out activities with cultural stakeholders, and developing training programmes for cultural leadership. In one of its objectives, *A New European Agenda for Culture* (European Commission, 2018) refers to “Strengthening international cultural relations”, focusing on actions in third countries which would contribute to a) supporting culture as an engine of sustainable social and economic development, b) promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations, and c) reinforcing cooperation in the domain of cultural heritage. Isar (2015: 494) affirms that the term ‘culture in external relations’ has acquired broader connotations for EU actors; in addition to expedient motives, it also responds to a variety of idealistic, if not altruistic ones.

During Croatia's accession negotiations with the EU, Croatia had been aligning a number of its policies with EU policies. The mentioned agendas are indeed reflected in Croatia's short-term strategic plans for culture, but whether the related activities have been conducted requires further investigation. For the International Cultural Relations of the European Union – Europe, the World, Croatia international conference that took place in Rijeka in 2019, I set off to investigate whether Croatia, as the newest EU Member State, shows interest in international cultural cooperation beyond Europe and whether it supports public cultural diplomacy initiatives. For this purpose, I contacted Croatia's Ministry of Culture and Media, and Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs requesting data that would provide insight into the actual state

---

<sup>1</sup> The work carried out by the EU Cultural Diplomacy Platform (2016-2020) has been continued by the Cultural Relations Platform (CRP) that was launched in April 2020 as an EU-funded project, designed to support the European Union in its engagement in international cultural relations.

of affairs in Croatia. Furthermore, I focused on Croatia's involvement in the already existing regional platforms that the EU has set up for Asia, Latin America and the Euro-Mediterranean region. I tried to find out whether these platforms have actively been promoted in Croatia with a view to introducing Croatian cultural professionals to cooperation opportunities, and whether there are mechanisms in place to provide more systematic support to the development of non-European international cultural relations.

### **Croatia's external cultural relations**

While fostering international cultural cooperation is considered to be part of cultural policy, cultural diplomacy and developing international cultural relations could be considered to be part of cultural policy or foreign policy. Thus, different programmes and instruments, falling under the competence of different entities, can be developed. Even though the concept of cultural diplomacy has been present in European policy practices for several decades, in Croatia it seems rather marginal. However, in 2013, following the joint initiative of its Ministry of Culture and Media, and Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Croatia tried to establish its own national cultural institute for the promotion of Croatian culture abroad – the Hrvatska kuća – Croatia House Foundation.<sup>2</sup>

After its Board of Directors was elected in 2014, the Croatia House provided – through public calls for submission of project proposals – some financial support to projects between 2014 and 2016, while its

---

<sup>2</sup> “Established with a view to promoting Croatian culture, arts, history, Croatian language, and cultural heritage abroad, the Hrvatska kuća – Croatia House Foundation combines diplomacy and culture in the best way possible to present Croatian culture and arts throughout the world systematically. Croatian diplomacy, like Croatia's other institutions, has used culture as a powerful means of national promotion and of building a positive image of Croatia. However, given that no synergy has been ensured and no system set up until now, no recognisable result has been achieved. This is precisely why the Hrvatska kuća – Croatia House Foundation was established, that is, to coordinate all activities concerning the promotion of Croatian culture through diplomatic and consular missions, and cultural centres.” This description was translated from: <http://www.mvep.hr/hr/posebni-projekti/hrvatska-kuca/o-zakladi/>.

official website reports no activities after 2016. The Croatia House is a programme hosted within and by Croatia's Ministry of Foreign and European affairs, and is not an autonomous agency or an arm's-length body tasked with developing cultural diplomacy initiatives and with promoting Croatian culture abroad. Unlike similar cultural diplomacy agencies that other EU countries have set up, the Croatia House has not developed its institutional structure adequately, it did not set aims to facilitate long-term engagement strategies through cultural programmes, nor has it organised, for example, any annual 'country focus' programmes to showcase Croatian culture abroad. In other words, the new platform that was to ensure synergy and set up a system that would ultimately yield recognisable results fell short of expectations.

It follows that fostering Croatia's international cultural relations/cooperation remains principally in the purview of its Ministry of Culture and Media. The Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Culture and Media 2019-2021 (Ministarstvo kulture RH, 2018) includes references to the importance of presenting Croatian culture in Europe and the world, and to supporting comprehensive international cultural cooperation. Three specific aims stated in the said plan (i.e., 1.1.4. Strengthening the Presence of Croatian Arts and Culture in the World, 1.1.5. Creative Europe 2014-2020 – Culture Sub-Programme, and 1.1.6. ECoC – European Capital of Culture) indicate that the main emphasis is still placed on the promotion of Croatian culture in Europe, and on fostering cultural cooperation at European level. In the Strategic Plan, it is stated that, "[w]ith regard to the development of cultural and artistic creativity and production in the period between 2016 and 2020, certain cultural programmes are expected to be financed with financial support from the EU Creative Europe Programme and the European Social Fund (ESF)" (Ministarstvo kulture RH, 2018), while also highlighting the need to actively participate in the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). Additionally, in the past few years, Croatia has focused much of its efforts on preparations for Rijeka 2020 ECoC, given that this is the first time that Croatia is participating in the ECoC programme. Within the international framework, the Croatian Commission for UNESCO has been tasked with coordinating Croatia's ministries,

governmental, and non-governmental organisations; participating in UNESCO's normative work; and supporting long-term initiatives and projects of national, regional and international importance.

The specific 1.1.4. Strengthening the Presence of Croatian Arts and Culture in the World aim centres on establishing bilateral cultural cooperation agreements and programmes, and on intensifying cooperation programmes within regional initiatives and associations (from Central Europe and the Mediterranean). This is meant to facilitate wider presentation of Croatian culture in other countries and the culture of other countries in Croatia, as well as to support the participation of artists and cultural workers in the multilateral programmes of international organisations and associations that encourage the development of intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity. Bilateral cultural cooperation agreements are expected to encourage the development of direct and continued cooperation and exchange between institutions and associations, artists and experts in different fields of arts and culture, such as translation and publishing of literary works, presentation of films and art exhibitions, guest performances by theatre, dance and music artists, participation in book fairs, and other international cultural events and gatherings (Ministarstvo kulture RH, 2018).

To gain insight into how these specific aims stated in the Strategic Plan have been implemented in practice so far, I have examined the data accessible on the website of Croatia's Ministry of Culture and Media, and have requested insight into the data available on financing granted within the framework of yearly public calls for submission of international cultural cooperation project proposals requesting financial support from the ministry. The website of the Ministry of Culture and Media<sup>3</sup> lists all bilateral agreements that have been signed since 2016. In total, 51 cultural cooperation agreements (17 with non-European countries) and 27 programmes on cultural cooperation that concretise those agreements have been signed by the Croatian Ministry of

---

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/arhiva-344/medjunarodna-suradnja-9816/sluzba-za-bilateralnu-i-multilateralnu-kulturnu-suradnju-19763/bilateralni-sporazumi-koji-su-sklopljeni-izmedju-republike-hrvatske-i-drugih-zemalja/19764>.

Culture and Media in the last five years. Such a coordinated approach can, in addition to increasing visibility, strengthen bilateral cultural ties. Two examples from the previous period of such multi-month multidisciplinary programmes include, for example, “Festival Croatie, la voici! – Festival de la Croatie en France” that took place in France in 2012 to mark Croatia’s accession to the EU by bringing Croatian arts and culture into the public eye in France, and the corresponding “Rendez-vous” festival that in 2015 presented French culture in Croatia.

In the area of multilateral cooperation, in 2019 Croatia’s main focus was on activities within the China +16 initiative, and on preparations for both the Croatian presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2020 and the presidency of the regional initiative of the Council of Ministers of Culture of South-East Europe in 2019/2020. The China +16 initiative provides a framework within which Croatian artists and cultural professionals can participate in events and conferences organised in China and different European countries. As a continuation of this cooperation, 2019 was declared the Croatian-Chinese Year of Culture and Tourism, when approximately 15 Croatian and Chinese programmes were planned, covering exhibitions, performances, concerts, and professional cooperation in the field of cultural heritage. In addition to the Croatian-Chinese Year of Culture and Tourism, in its report for 2019 the Ministry of Culture and Media singled out – as the most important contributions to the visibility of Croatian culture abroad – the participation of the Republic of Croatia at the 58<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale, as well as two guest performances by two Croatian national theatres in Italy and Belgium, and their continued support to the organisation of the annual The Best in Heritage international conference (Ministarstvo kulture RH, 2019).

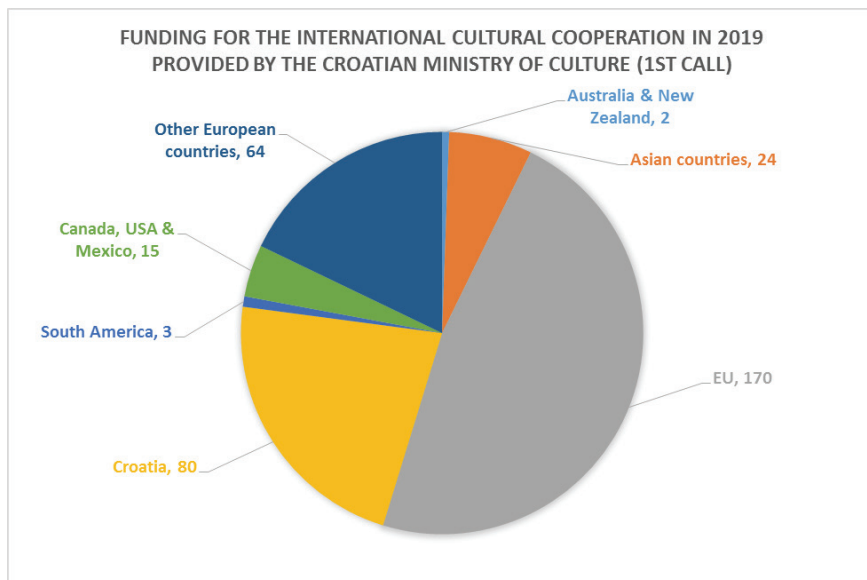
In addition to the activities supported within the mentioned bilateral or multilateral agreements, the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media publishes a public call for submission of international cultural cooperation project proposals to be financially supported by the ministry twice a year. In the “International Cultural Cooperation 2019” (Ministarstvo kulture RH, 2019) chapter, the report affirms that this



call supports cultural cooperation based on direct communication between cultural institutions and professionals (bottom-up approach), and that it includes exchanges in various fields of culture and art, guest performances in music and on stage, tours, study visits by artists, writers and other professionals, arts training, and co-productions of joint art projects. The report also states that the ministry's call supports new forms of cooperation, work in cultural networks active within the scope of international cultural cooperation, co-productions and transnational art projects. As far as criteria are concerned in the decision-making process with respect to funding, they include priority given to programmes which place Croatian culture in the European context, which promote intercultural dialogue and development of civil society, which are professionally based, of high-quality, and which are graded in relation to the organiser's core activities, ongoing and economic.

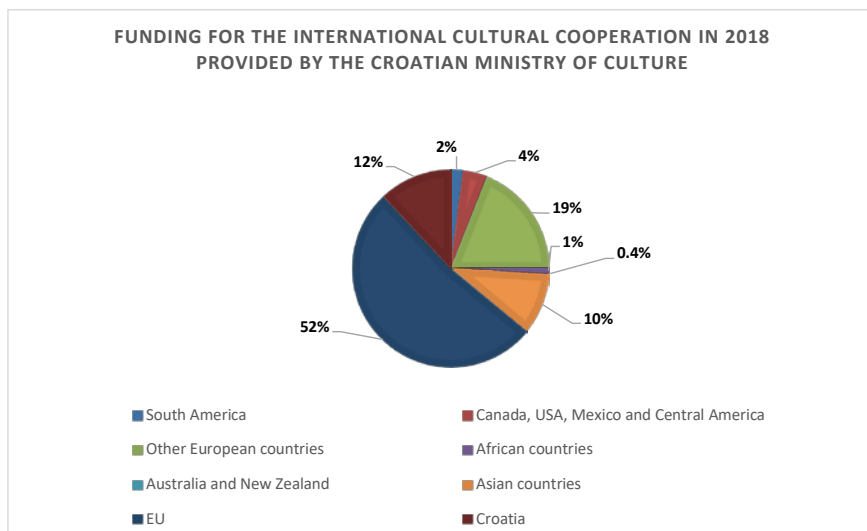
In preparation for my conference presentation in Rijeka, the Ministry of Culture and Media provided me with data for the last three years – two calls in 2017 and 2018, and one call in 2019. In 2017, a total of 665 programmes received financial support. In 2018, 814 programmes were supported financially, while the first call in 2019 resulted in 370 projects receiving financial support, which was in most cases for travel or accommodation expenses. If we analyse the data of the past three years according to the geographic key (Charts 1, 2 and 3), it becomes clear that most cultural cooperation projects that received support took place with partners from the EU or other European countries. These cultural cooperation projects either took place in the said countries or were brought to Croatia. At the same time, international cultural cooperation beyond Europe is under-represented.

*Chart 1*



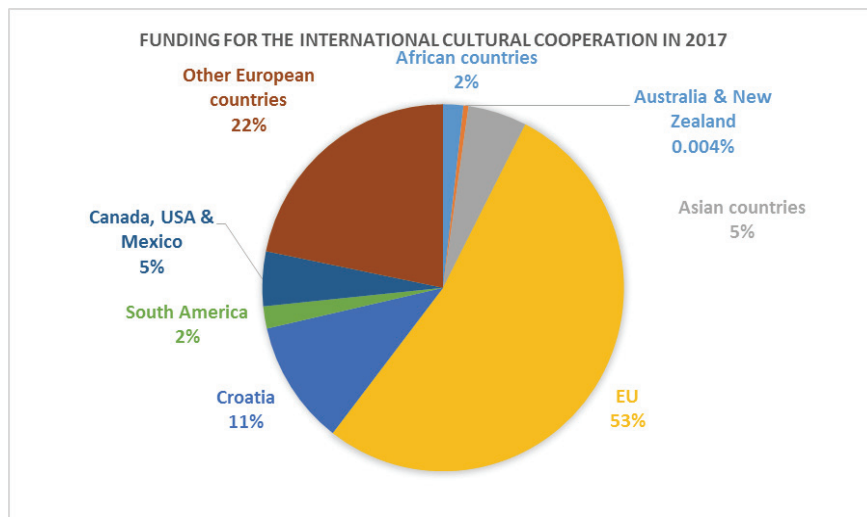
(Source: data received from the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media)

*Chart 2*



(Source: data received from the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media)

*Chart 3*



(Source: data received from the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media)

Thus, we can conclude that the existing bilateral and multilateral agreements, and the support that the Ministry of Culture and Media provides for international cooperation activities represent the main channels through which Croatian arts and culture have been presented in Europe and other countries. However, these seem to mainly follow the logic of “cultural policy of display” (Williams, 1984), given that we can understand them as tools of national self-promotion and less as instruments that foster the development of deeper and long-term international cultural relations.

### **The ASEF, the Anna Lindh and the EU-LAC foundations as platforms for the establishment of cultural cooperation relations beyond Europe**

There are other platforms through which international cultural relations beyond Europe could be furthered if the opportunities they present were to be considered more seriously. Further on, I focus on Croatia’s involvement in three already existing inter-governmentally established international organisations: the Asia-Europe Foundation

(ASEF), the Anna Lindh Foundation, and the EU-LAC (European Union-Latin America and Caribbean) Foundation. The three multi-governmental cooperation platforms have different structures, but they are all established by the EU and the corresponding regional body, where member states are officially represented by their respective ministry of foreign affairs (in the Croatian case, by the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, MVEP). I have tried to find out whether these platforms have been actively promoted in Croatia with a view to introducing Croatian cultural professionals to cooperation opportunities, and whether there are mechanisms in place to provide more systematic support to the development of non-European international cultural relations.

### ***ASEF – The Asia-Europe Foundation***

ASEF is the only permanently established institution of ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting), funded by voluntary contributions made by its member governments. The financing of ASEF's projects is shared with civil society partners across Asia and Europe. It was established in 1997 with the aim of promoting greater mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through intellectual, cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Today, it has 53 member countries. Croatia joined ASEF in 2014. Being the oldest of the three initiatives, ASEF has revisited its objectives and corresponding instruments several times with a view to ensuring efficiency of its actions. Culture has been included in its areas of activities since early on. Today, ASEF's work in culture includes providing information services (e.g., [culture360.asef.org](http://culture360.asef.org) and [asemus.museum](http://asemus.museum) websites), and travel grants for artists and cultural professionals travelling for residency, festival, conference or training purposes (Mobility First!). It also facilitates cultural meetings on the margins of bigger events (e.g., ASEF Unplugged), and provides support to ASEM initiatives in culture (e.g., ASEF@ASEM Culture Ministers' Meetings, ASEM Cultural Festival @ ASEM Summits, and ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meetings).<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See: <https://www.asef.org/projects/themes/culture>.

Croatia's involvement in ASEF began in 2014. Since then, Croatian art and cultural professionals can participate in its activities. Croatia's total contribution to ASEF in the period between 2014 and 2017 was approximately 3200 EUR. Mirroring this modest voluntary membership contribution, cooperation activities have been few. Croatia is formally represented by its Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. In addition, since Croatia joined as a member, the Croatian Ministry of Culture and Media was represented at the Sofia 2018 Summit and the informal meeting of ministers of culture that took place in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 2018. Croatia has no official national coordinator for culture; rather, cooperation relations with ASEF in the field of culture have been established by the Kultura Nova Foundation and the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO). In 2019, for example, the ASEF Unplugged meeting on culture took place in Zagreb, and was hosted by the Kultura Nova Foundation. Through ASEF's cultural mobility programme, so far there has been only one supported grantee from Croatia and only one grantee from Asia that received support to travel to Croatia (in 2018). Cultural cooperation opportunities through this platform seem to slip under the radar of Croatian cultural professionals and policy makers, and there is no organisation tasked with local coordination activities that would further the promotion of ASEF's activities in Croatia.



*Source: presentation from 2019 ASEF Unplugged meeting in Zagreb*



### ***Anna Lindh Foundation (ALF)***

Following the Barcelona Declaration<sup>5</sup> and the establishment of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, at the initiative of the President of the European Commission, in 2003 the High-Level Group on Intercultural Dialogue recommended that a Euro-Mediterranean foundation be set up. Accordingly, the Anna Lindh Foundation<sup>6</sup> was established in 2004, when the ministers of foreign affairs of the Euro-Med Member States agreed on setting up a foundation that would focus on the Mediterranean, and that would promote intercultural and civil society dialogue. Established in each of the 42 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region, the foundation was conceived as a network of national networks. Croatia has been a member since 2009. ALF's work has been carried out through the three main pillars of its intercultural action: 1) influencing policymakers (Anna Lindh Intercultural Trends Report), 2) building a movement for dialogue and exchange in the face of growing mistrust and social polarisation (MED FORUM, Network

<sup>5</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/policy/barcelona\\_declaration.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/policy/barcelona_declaration.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/>.

of National Networks), and 3) empowering young voices (Young Mediterranean Voices).

Even though the Croatian Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs is the member that formally represents Croatia, the practical involvement of Croatia in ALF has been done by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development (NFCSD),<sup>7</sup> which has been coordinating Croatia's ALF network since 2009. The national coordinator provides information on ALF cooperation opportunities to the Croatian network, organises the annual meetings of Croatia's ALF network, participates in the annual meetings of ALF national coordinators, supports Croatia's participation in ALF forums, and provides co-financing of ALF projects, the result of which is a growing national network. Croatia's national ALF network had 158 members in 2019. Croatia has benefited from this membership, and in the period between 2010 and 2016, Croatian participants received diverse support from ALF:

- 2016 – 1 ALF project: Art of Democracy in the Euro-Med Region;
- 2013 – 2 Croatian participants partook in events organised by ALF, 4 Croatian participants partook in an ALF forum;
- 2012 – NFCSD organised a joint Croatian project; 12 organisations participated in the Common Values – Signs of the Human Dimension project;
- 2012 – a Croatian artist was one of the 13 recipients of ALF's Sea of Words award (short story award);
- 2011 – Croatia's ALF network organised the Civil Society of the Mediterranean – A Guarantee of Dialogue and Cooperation conference;
- 2010 – 7 Croatian ALF projects supported.

In 2020, Croatia planned to co-organise the MED FORUM 2020 that was supposed to take place in Šibenik, but due to the COVID-19 crisis, it had to be postponed. The idea was that, by hosting the MED

---

<sup>7</sup> <https://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/>, <https://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/uploads/files/sectionModuleFile/2019/10/04/vqLw4RBes362B8U1JJj9vr0lnudq8xVq.pdf>, <https://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/uploads/files/sectionModuleFile/2020/11/05/stSmspuz3t2jIY-Qhw6w1ygb7GYIuv5GE.pdf>.

FORUM 2020 during Croatia's Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Croatia would emphasise the importance of the Mediterranean region, and the theme of building a partnership between the European Union, and the countries of the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean – in the spirit of solidarity, tolerance, and awareness of all Euro-Med countries needing to jointly face existing challenges (e.g., pollution, uncertainty, political and economic instability, migrant crisis, terrorism, etc.).

### ***The European Union-Latin America and Caribbean Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation)***

The EU-LAC Foundation<sup>8</sup> is the newest initiative of this kind. It was set up in 2010 by the heads of state or government of EU Member States, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). The foundation was entrusted with the mission of strengthening and promoting strategic bi-regional relations, and fostering the active participation of civil societies from the foundation's member states. There are 62 member states, and Croatia joined in 2016.

The foundation's work has been organised into several interconnected action lines.<sup>9</sup> Culture entered into its mandate with the Final Declaration of the 2nd EU-CELAC Ministerial Meeting held in Brussels in July 2018. This document reinforces the role of culture within the framework of bi-regional relations, assigning senior officials of its member states "the task of establishing debate and maintaining consultation with relevant partners on the role of culture and the creative sectors in bi-regional relations." With a view to moving the cultural agenda forward, two events were organised in 2019 by the EU-LAC Foundation: the Proposals and Recommendations for EU-LAC Cultural Initiatives forum, held in Lisbon in March, and attended by prominent cultural players and experts from both regions; and the Reflection Forum on culture and its role in bi-regional partnership, held

---

<sup>8</sup> <https://eulacfoundation.org/en>.

<sup>9</sup> E.g., higher education and knowledge generation; science, technology and innovation; SMEs and competitiveness; sustainable development and climate change.



in Genoa in November, and attended by officials from both regions, a number of cultural experts and managers, and representatives from other relevant organisations and programmes that focus on EU-LAC cultural cooperation.

Since then, the activities of the EU-LAC Foundation in the area of culture have been expected to “promote cultural cooperation between the two regions, contribute to gaining mutual insight into the other region and to understanding the other region better, to serve as a tool for social transformation, and to highlight the potential for making progress with regard to the different commitments of the Action Plan and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).”<sup>10</sup> Considering that culture is the foundation’s newest work area, as it was introduced only in 2019, and bearing in mind that the COVID-19 crisis made international cooperation difficult in 2020, there have been neither any programmes nor any activities developed so far. Yet, this is nevertheless an additional cooperation platform that Croatia should keep in mind when developing cultural cooperation with LAC countries.

## **Conclusion**

During the period of Croatia’s accession, as well as after Croatia joined the EU, Croatia’s main focus has predominantly been on establishing closer cultural cooperation between Croatia’s cultural sector and both the EU and other European countries, while establishing international cultural relations beyond Europe has not been in the spotlight.

As in all aspects of cultural policy research, Croatia lacks data that would make systematic analyses possible. The data available from Croatia’s Ministry of Culture and Media, and Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs is rather limited. The list of bilateral cultural agreements signed by Croatia is indicative of Croatia’s geopolitical interests, but there is no documentation available that would provide insight into the activities organised as a result of these agreements. Thus, we can neither evaluate the programmes, nor speculate on the

---

<sup>10</sup> See: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/culture>.

decision-making processes and criteria for Croatia's choice of participants in these cultural cooperation programmes.

The data on public support to international cultural cooperation activities indicates that the Ministry of Culture and Media provides support to individual cooperation projects in the field of arts and cultural organisations. This could be described as a 'bottom-up' approach, where proposals are submitted by cultural operators. However, so far, there have been no specific calls for submission of cooperation project proposals designed for particular regions, nor calls for submission of project or activity proposals that would help cultural operators to enhance their long-term planning activities and adopt a proactive approach in their attempts to establish international cultural ties with peers in other countries. Participation in EU-funded projects within the *Creative Europe* programme, for example, represents a major opportunity for the establishment of long-term international cultural cooperation for cultural operators in Croatia.

Croatia's failed attempt to set up a national cultural institute – the Hrvatska kuća – Croatia House Foundation which was supposed to combine diplomacy and culture to ensure synergy and set up a system that would yield recognisable results through systematic presentations of Croatian culture and arts in the world – indicates that cultural diplomacy is not really a priority for Croatian foreign affairs.

The three existing intergovernmental organisations – that is, the ASEF, the Anna Lindh Foundation and the EU-LAC Foundation, whose focus is on people-to-people exchanges, which facilitate civil society dialogue and cooperation, and which provide support to cultural cooperation projects – could be utilised much better as additional platforms for the development of international cultural relations and for engagement in dialogue with a much broader public, without being limited to governmental actors. This will not happen unless specific national goals are set for particular regions in the field of culture, and unless better coordination is achieved between ASEF/ALF/EU-LAC and Croatia's Ministry of Culture and Media, and Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (including national coordinators) for the specific aims that Croatia looks to achieve.

As Ang, Isar, and Mar (2015: 371) affirm, “[t]he fact that cultural diplomacy is often folded into cultural relations is in itself a reflection of the diminishing authority and capacity of national governments to act as the pre-eminent representatives of *the national interest*”, which cannot be predetermined without considering the common interest of cultural operators. However, state actors have an important role to play, as there is a need for the development of a “policy horizon and terrain for action, as a set of institutions for mobilising resources and forms of expertise” (Ang, Isar, and Mar, 2015: 378). Croatia still lacks adequate instruments both for fostering international cultural relations and for adequately responding to tensions between so-called national interests and the common interests of cultural operators. In other words, we cannot yet talk about a coherent body of policies. Finding an adequate balance between ‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches, built on an understanding of culture as a relational, communicational and social process of co-production of meaning, could be a way forward towards more dialogic, collaborative approaches in the development of Croatia’s future international cultural relations.

## References

- Ang, Ien; Isar, Yudhishtir Raj; Mar, Phillip (2015) “Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest?”, *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21 (4), pp. 365-381, DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2015.1042474
- Dragičević Šešić, Milena (ed.) (2017) *Cultural Diplomacy: Arts, Festivals and Geopolitics*. Beograd: Culture Desk Serbia. Available online at: <http://kultura.kreativnaevropa.rs/calls/CULTURAL%20DIPLOMACY%20web.pdf> (Accessed on 20th January 2018)
- European Commission (2007) *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising world*. Brussels: European Commission. Available online at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF> (Accessed on 20th August 2017)
- European Commission (2016) *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council. Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations*. Brussels: European Commission, JOIN(2016) 29 final. 8th June 2016. Available online at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:-52016JC0029&from=EN> (Accessed on 15th August 2017)

- European Commission (2018) *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. A New European Agenda for Culture*. Brussels: European Commission, COM(2018) 267 final. 22nd May 2018. Available online at: [https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/commission\\_communication\\_-\\_a\\_new\\_european\\_agenda\\_for\\_culture\\_2018.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sites/culture/files/commission_communication_-_a_new_european_agenda_for_culture_2018.pdf) (Accessed on 10th November 2020)
- Isar, Yudhishtir Raj (2015) "'Culture in EU external relations': an idea whose time has come?", *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21 (4), pp. 494-508, DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2015.1042472
- Lovrinić, Barbara (2019) "EU's External Cultural Relations and the Role of National Cultural Institutes" (master thesis), Zagreb: University of Zagreb, Centre for Postgraduate Studies, Postgraduate Specialist Study of Diplomacy and International Relations
- Ministarstvo kulture RH (2019) Godišnje izvješće Ministarstva kulture za 2019., Zagreb: Ministarstvo kulture RH. Available online at: <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//slike/fotogalerija/2020godina/Pregled%20rada%20MK%20u%202019//Godi%C5%A1nje%20izvje%C5%A1%C4%87e%20MK%202019..pdf> (Accessed on 10th November 2020)
- Ministarstvo kulture RH (2018) Strateški plan Ministarstva kulture 2019. – 2021., Zagreb: Ministarstvo kulture RH. Available online at: [https://www.min-kulture.hr/userdocsimages/2005/Strate%C5%A1ki%20plan%20MK%202019.-2021.%20-%20Final%20\(004\).pdf](https://www.min-kulture.hr/userdocsimages/2005/Strate%C5%A1ki%20plan%20MK%202019.-2021.%20-%20Final%20(004).pdf) (Accessed on 10th November 2020)
- Williams, Raymond (1984) "State Culture and Beyond". In: *Culture and the State*. L. Appignanesi (ed.). London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, pp. 3-5

## Web sources

- Anna Lindh Foundation: <https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/>
- ASEF: <https://www.asef.org/projects/themes/culture>
- EU-LAC Foundation: <https://eulacfoundation.org/en>
- Hrvatska kuća – Croatia House Foundation: <http://www.mvep.hr/hr/posebni-projekti/hrvatska-kuca/o-zakladi/>
- Ministry of Culture and Media (list of bilateral agreements): <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/arhiva-344/medjunarodna-suradnja-9816/sluzba-za-bilateralnu-i-multilateralnu-kulturnu-suradnju-19763/bilateralni-sporazumi-koji-su-sklobljeni-izmedju-republike-hrvatske-i-drugih-zemalja/19764>
- NFCSD Yearly Report on EURO-MED Cooperation in 2018: <https://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/uploads/files/sectionModuleFile/2019/10/04/vqLw4RBes-362B8U1JJj9vr0lnudq8xVq.pdf>
- NFCSD – National Foundation for Civil Society Development: <https://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr/>



# INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PROSPECTS OF CROATIA

**Biserka Cvjetičanin**

## **Abstract**

The European Union has been developing a strategic approach to international cultural relations for many years. The framework provided by the *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* (2007), *A New European Agenda for Culture* (2018), *Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations* (2016) and *EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations* (2019) aims to form a more coherent cultural dimension of the EU's foreign policy, progressing from the classical perception of cultural cooperation as a means of presenting oneself to the other/others to a process of intercultural dialogue and interaction. Despite the EU's efforts in its search for new dimensions of international cultural relations and in jointly creating new projects with third countries, the need to build new paths for the circulation of creative ideas and innovations that can generate transnational values and that can convey the European message to partners worldwide based on solidarity and development cooperation – is still insufficiently emphasised. In the case of the EU's youngest member state, Croatia, the extent to which the EU's strategies are incorporated into the Croatian strategy for the promotion of culture in external relations remains unclear.

The rapid changes that mark today's world – such as, the revolution taking place in digital communication and digital economy, the fading of borders between time and space, rapid urbanisation (e.g., 74% of the population of the European Union today lives in urban areas), the rise of social media, changes in cultural values, numerous challenges and conflicts – bring to the fore questions concerning ways in which the interdependence of cultures can be strengthened, and practices of cultural communication and interaction improved.

The present historical moment, burdened by multiple international crises, demands the evaluation and (re)affirmation of the role of Europe in the world. The cultural logic of the European process is to unite, not to divide, West and East, North and South. Today, the position of Europe on the international stage is changing as new global actors and new ways of communication are emerging. This raises the question of the way in which the European Union will respond to these new challenges and the question of whether its response will incite new processes of cooperation, a more intense interaction and partnership with third countries.

### **The EU's strategic approach to international cultural relations**

One of the three fundamental pillars/goals of the first European strategy for culture, the *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* adopted in 2007, is the promotion of culture as a vital element of the European Union's international relations. The EU's strategic approach to international cultural relations has been one of the priorities in the Council of the EU's conclusions, work plans and programmes for culture, as well as in its resolutions on the cultural dimension of the European Union's external relations since 2011 to date.<sup>1</sup>

A joint communication published by the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in 2016 under the title *Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations*

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g., European Parliament Resolution on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions, Brussels, 2011.

sees culture as “an integral part of the external action of the European Union”, as it seeks to strengthen cultural cooperation of the European Union with other regions of the world. This strategy highlights that culture – as a transversal factor – contributes to sustainable development, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental values. It formulates a new model of cultural cooperation between the European Union and other countries of the world. Support for culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development (especially with regard to the contribution of cultural and creative industries to economic growth and employment), and the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations are at the forefront of this model.

Strengthening the EU's foreign cultural relations with the world (*external dimension*) is also one of the three strategic objectives (along with the social and the economic ones) of *A New European Agenda for Culture* adopted in 2018. The Agenda stresses the value and importance of intercultural dialogue across the globe. Aiming to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of the EU's foreign policy by integrating international cultural relations into a range of its foreign policy instruments, in 2019 the Council of the EU adopted the conclusions on an *EU Strategic Approach to International Cultural Relations* and a *Framework for Action* for its member states and EU institutions.

All of the above-mentioned documents demonstrate the efforts to develop a more coherent cultural dimension of the European Union's foreign policy, which has been progressing from the classical perception of cultural cooperation as a means of presenting oneself to the other/others to a process of intercultural dialogue and cultural interaction.<sup>2</sup> These processes are in line with the EU Cultural Diplomacy Platform (2016-2020), which was founded to support the implementation of strategic efforts in international cultural relations. The Platform focused

---

<sup>2</sup> The report on the “Intensification of Cultural Exchange between African Cities and Europeans Capitals of Culture” panel discussion and workshop, which were held during the conference in Rijeka, pointed out that “cultural exchanges have the potential to overcome stereotypic approaches from both continents and to contribute to a new culture of relationship” (Amann, S. 2019: 2).



on strategic partners, encouraged networking (e.g., networks of young creative and cultural entrepreneurs from the EU and third countries), and advocated a peaceful and prosperous Mediterranean, Middle East and Africa, the development of stronger partnerships with Latin America and Asia, and a greater contribution to sustainable development, peace and mutual understanding in the world.<sup>3</sup>

## **Cultural cooperation**

The European Union is making efforts to strengthen cultural cooperation by being strongly committed to cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, and by emphasising the existence of a significant potential for a more active role of culture in Europe's external relations. The EU has been implementing numerous cultural cooperation and exchange programmes with third countries, particularly in the past twenty years. Let us illustrate this through some examples.

The *Creative Europe* programme (2014-2020) comprises hundreds of European cultural cooperation projects, platforms and networks: in 2017, cultural organisations from third countries were involved in 174 Creative Europe grants. A series of programmes in third countries (e.g., the Ethical Fashion Initiative in West Africa since 2013, the Action Programme for the Caribbean and Cuba mobilising cultural heritage and creative industries, the EU-Western Balkans Culture programmes, the Silk Roads Heritage Corridors in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran programme, to mention but a few) represent an important effort to intensify intercultural dialogue and cooperation.

Cultural cooperation is one aspect of the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2004, covering 16 countries in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, and promoting cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

---

<sup>3</sup> In 2020, the EU launched the 3-year Cultural Relations Platform (CRP) project, designed to support the EU in engaging in international cultural relations. Having worldwide coverage, the CRP is in many aspects related to the earlier EU Cultural Diplomacy Platform (2016-2020).

Within the framework of the EU-Latin American Strategic Partnership (Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, EULAC), EU's efforts are oriented towards strengthening cultural cooperation with Latin American countries. To that end, a Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council was adopted: *European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean – Joining Forces for a Common Future* (2019). The communication underlines partnering for resilience to: "... promote cultural cooperation by fostering people to people exchange programmes, holding intercultural dialogue and supporting co-production and partnership (joint) research projects in the cultural and creative sectors".

The European Union and the ASEAN (Association of South East-Asian Nations) have a long tradition in dialogue relations. The EU has been a strong supporter of the ASEAN's socio-cultural initiatives. The ASEAN-EU Plan of Action for 2018-2022 promotes greater cultural understanding and awareness between the ASEAN and the EU, and the exchange of experience and expertise in public policy in the field of culture.

According to the 2019 Annual Action Programme – Action Document for Support to the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) this inter-governmental organisation which brings together the peoples of Asia and Europe will continue to promote and strengthen EU-Asia cultural relations. The ultimate goal is to enhance the EU's role as an international actor, and to help promote the EU's relevance and commitment to Asia and Asian partners at a time of numerous regional and global geo-political changes.

These examples highlight the EU's efforts to strengthen international cultural relations with the world. However, the EU's common foreign policy in international cultural relations is poorly visible to the rest of the world. One could even talk about an 'invisibility of cooperation'. Despite the European Union's efforts in its search for new dimensions of international cultural relations and in jointly creating new projects with third countries, the need to build new paths and spaces for the circulation of creative ideas and innovations that can generate transnational values and that can convey the European

message to partners worldwide based on solidarity and development cooperation – is still insufficiently emphasised. The European Union’s difficulties in international cultural relations are “a lack of political vision, coordination, transparency and its corollary poor human and financial resources” (Kern, 2020: 7). In external cultural relations, an inter-sectoral/transversal approach has become increasingly important, because it connects different activities or areas and opens up space for new actors from other sectors. However, cultural cooperation with third countries includes an insufficient number of different areas of creativity and work that have a direct or indirect impact on social development processes (e.g., the exchange of different development experiences, the exploration of cultural and social changes, or education). There is a lack of cross-sectoral cooperation, and the involvement of educational, scientific, technological and other potentials in cultural cooperation is weak. Cross-sectoral cooperation should foster the potential that culture has in bringing about transformation processes and partnerships based on the principle of co-creation.

The focus is, therefore, on creative and innovative collaborations and partnerships with third countries, in whose realisation digital culture and civil society in culture play an important role.

### ***Digital culture and partnership in the digital domain***

The cultural sector has gone through a number of changes in the digital age. Digital culture has reduced the barriers and difficulties emerging in communication/cooperation, such as those linked to time and space. Moreover, the digital revolution has transformed the cultural field, encouraging new forms of intercultural communication, participation and cultural co-creation, thus offering a new perspective on partnership. Nevertheless, “the area of digital in (EU’s) external cultural relations remains underexplored” (McNeilly, Helly, Valenza, 2020: 1). The EU should focus on developing partnerships with third countries in the digital domain, bearing in mind that cooperation takes place within the context of the division of the world into rich or developed and mostly poor or developing countries. Digital

transformation in the EU's international cultural relations can result in significant changes in its cooperation with developing countries, primarily through digital cultural networks. Through their openness, their non-hierarchical, heterogeneous and horizontal character, digital cultural networks support cultural diversity and facilitate intercultural dialogue. Cultural networks embrace people from across the world whose fields of interest and levels of experience are different, whose beliefs and backgrounds are different, and who share a commitment to intercultural communication and exchange. Today, the entire field of international cultural relations involves the activities of transnational and transcultural digital networks. Most of these networks conduct important joint research projects and activities, such as ENCATC's Academy on Cultural Relations, which was designed in 2012 to prepare researchers, practitioners, policy makers, artists and students to deal with the challenges that emerge in the cultural relations between the North and the South.

The European Union could play an important part in re-balancing the relationship between the North and the South, in a situation where their cultural relations are often inadequate and insufficient in the development of digital partnerships. Suffice it to say that some 700 million people in sub-Saharan Africa still have no internet access and that – at the same time – digital literary culture originating from the African continent has been rapidly developing in the 21st century. “Europe and Africa must redouble efforts to forge a stronger – and mutually beneficial – partnership in digital domain” (Friends of Europe, 2020). Both sides – the developed and those in development – could profit from cooperation in the digital domain. “Digital transformation and ICT occupy a very minor place in the EU's discussion concerning international cultural relations and this seriously undermines the range, durability and overall impact of such an approach” (Trobbiani and Pavón-Guinea, 2019: 9).

The digitisation of non-digital cultural content outside of Europe is also an important potential cooperation area, as proposed by McNeilly, Helly and Valenza (2020: 4).

### ***Civil society: promotion of intercultural dialogue***

The contribution of civil society to culture is important in the planning and implementation of international cultural cooperation activities. Today, civil society networks are understood to be “a central feature of the world of the 21st century”. The involvement of European civil society coalitions of cultural diversity and intercultural communications was decisive in the preparation and implementation of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). When the Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue was established in 2006 at the initiative of civil society organisations in culture, its central focus was on including intercultural dialogue in EU policy as a permanent goal. This platform was transformed in 2008 into the Platform for Intercultural Europe, and intercultural dialogue has remained at the heart of the European Union’s strategies, resolutions and programmes, and has encompassed the EU’s increasingly strong foreign relations with third countries.

The number of participants in cooperation projects has been growing, particularly the number of civil society organisations in culture that act locally and globally, as well as horizontally and transversally. Awareness of the fact that cultural cooperation and exchange affirm the most diverse approaches and historical experiences of all societies, and that they encourage tolerance and solidarity has been raised. It was, for example, in this direction that civil society organisations campaigned under the motto “The Future We Want Includes Culture” (2014), which is a direct reference to “The Future We Want” resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the UN in 2012. Advocating for a new global partnership in support of creativity, innovation and research, this was an effort on the part of civil society organisations to have culture included in the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in 2015 under the title *Transforming Our World*.<sup>4</sup> The view that the EU’s international cultural relations

---

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, culture is mentioned only in four of the 169 global targets of the Agenda.

should strive to intensify relations with civil society actors in third countries and facilitate the networking of non-governmental partners is emphasised: “EU’s international cultural relations should focus on creating a partnership of cultures” (Higgott and Langenhove, 2016: 9).

In recent years, the EU has been exposed to new challenges, such as the impact of Brexit on cultural relations where both sides are at a loss, the rise of populism and nationalist politics in Europe, anti-immigration sentiments, etc., which the European Union’s international cultural relations must face. The involvement of civil society organisations and actors in overcoming these challenges is decisive.

### ***Implementing a new approach***

A new approach can be developed only in contact with others, based on all participants actively involved and interacting. Interaction introduces new ideas, new forms and ways of cooperation into international relations, above all an awareness of the developmental interdependence of cultures. The development of innovative international cultural relations is always a challenge. New international relations must strengthen the role of international cultural relations in the EU’s foreign, neighbourhood and sustainable development strategies by improving the capacity to integrate culture into international development cooperation actions and projects. The EU has yet to articulate/define a European cultural policy. Culture is mainly within the competence of individual member states, with the EU’s role being only supplementary at best (the principle of subsidiarity). “Activating the interest and participation of national and local cultural actors in the emergence of a new European cultural policy is fundamental for its definition and successful implementation” (Trobbiani and Pavón-Guinea, 2019: 14). At the same time, the implementation of a new approach to international cultural relations will also represent the affirmation of a unique European cultural policy.

## **Croatia in international cultural cooperation**

From 1991 when it gained independence, Croatia was preoccupied with its accession negotiations with the European Union. As of 1st July 2013, Croatia has participated as a full member in the EU's decision-making processes, proposals and the transmission of its own vision of Europe 2020 and 2030. The extent to which Croatia has integrated the fundamental strategic guidelines of the *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World*, the *New European Agenda for Culture*, and the *EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations* into its own strategy for the promotion of culture in international cultural relations remains non-transparent. The official documents of the Ministry of Culture and Media of the Republic of Croatia state that "international cultural cooperation is among the priorities of the cultural development of Croatia."<sup>5</sup> Has Croatia affirmed the developmental role of culture, secured the pluralism of cultural orientations and values, promoted intercultural dialogue, and incorporated, for instance, exchanges of development experiences and the joint creation of new projects into its international cultural relations?

Starting from our own region, i.e. South-East Europe, analyses show that, in the course of the past two decades, the region has been opening up to global communication processes, while, at the same time, regional communication and regional cooperation have been developing only slowly. As research conducted by the Institute for Development and International Relations in Zagreb shows, gaining an understanding of and cooperating with other South-East European countries needs to help support one's own international competence and one's contribution to cooperation of EU member states with neighbouring countries. Cooperation does exist amongst cultural networks or cultural artistic associations, for example, in the performing arts and in film co-productions – let me make mention here of the cooperation between the Croatian Kultura Nova Foundation and cooperation platforms in

---

<sup>5</sup> For instance, one of the three specific aims mentioned in the 2019-2021 Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Culture and Media is "... strengthening the presence of Croatian art and culture in the world".

South-East Europe. The nature of this cooperation is, however, often sporadic, which means that it contributes insufficiently to the vision of South-East Europe as a stable and modern, dynamic European region, as a partner equal to other regions in the European Union. The region of South-East Europe requires more joint development projects, particularly if it wishes to be more functionally involved in international European and world cooperation.

For years, the Mediterranean has been experiencing crises, conflicts and refugee tragedies. Instead of building bridges, it has turned into one of the most conflict-ridden regions of the world. In their development strategy documents, the European Union, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, the Arab League, and other international governmental and non-governmental organisations advocate a broader scope of cooperation and dialogue. Croatia should get more strongly involved in multilateral projects which engage countries along the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, that is, it should jointly instigate and work on new Mediterranean development projects. The number of bilateral agreements and programmes with countries of the South Mediterranean is limited. This is insufficient if Croatia, as a Mediterranean country itself, looks to participate in the creation of a new Mediterranean identity.

Croatia's cooperation efforts need to expand further to include other continents within the framework of the European Union's international cultural cooperation. What do we know today about the transformation and development processes of cultures in developing countries, about African culture, arts and literature, about the scope of Asian or Latin-American cultural development? Owing to the enthusiasm and effort of individuals (e.g., in publishing, the music industry, performing or visual arts), of civil society associations in the field of culture, and of the media, Croatia has the opportunity to gain insight into the cultural and artistic achievements of other continents. Although the cultural ties that the state establishes can never be as strong and vital as the ties established by individuals and non-governmental associations, the government does need to fully support and promote them. It needs to define the strategy, a vision of the kind of cooperation that Croatia



looks to develop with other continents. Numerous questions need to be answered, one of which pertains to the ways in which Croatia's creative, digital and intercultural cities can strengthen and enhance their involvement in international communication.

There are countries that Croatia actively cooperated with in the 1970s and the 1980s, such as India, Brazil, Egypt, Mexico, many African and Asia countries, within the framework of former Yugoslavia. These countries are amongst the European Union's partners in its international relations today. That was in the era of the Non-Aligned Movement, which sought key development solutions and had a vision of cooperation that aimed to affirm very diverse approaches and experiences of different cultures. At that time, Croatian scientists argued that intercultural communication was a stimulus to the creation of new cultural values and that cultural cooperation could develop and permeate virtually all areas of human activity.<sup>6</sup> Croatia's focus on its accession negotiations with the European Union, on the one hand, and the re-traditionalisation of Croatian society, the growth of nationalism and populism, on the other, have resulted in its neglect of cooperation efforts with third countries in the past two decades. However, it is precisely today – at a time when the European Union has increasingly been turning towards partners on other continents, and towards its eastern and southern neighbours in terms of its international cultural relations – that Croatia has a chance to get more actively involved in the co-creation and development of new forms of intercultural communication and cooperation through its knowledge and competence.<sup>7</sup>

All cultural policies, including those of Croatia, face two great challenges – cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, which have moved to the centre stage of the world of the 21st century (largely owing to mobility, migration and refugee movements), and which need to be

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf.: *La Culture et le Nouvel Ordre Economique International*, UNESCO, Institut pour les pays en développement, Zagreb et Institut Culturel Africain, Dakar, 1984.

<sup>7</sup> The efforts of the Kultura Nova Foundation, of the Croatian Platform for International Citizen Solidarity – CROSOL, of Croatian architects and urban planners in third world countries, of young teachers and scientists from Croatian institutions, etc., have gone in this direction.

understood as a fundamental development resource, as a common value of our only planet. Traditionally, Croatia has always been a multi-ethnic society, and, as such, it should understand the potential value of the above and make room for it in its practice of its own cultural policy while relying on European cultural policy. However, as has above been stated, cultural policy is not in the decision-making domain of the European Union, leaving foreign cultural policies in the hands of each member state. In other words, the principle of subsidiarity is applied, whereby each member state sets its own goals while, nevertheless, looking to harmonise the two levels (i.e., the level of the state and that of the Union) by using the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). For Croatia, this implies paying continued attention to developing an interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approach in its international relations. Special emphasis should be placed on developing a stronger interconnection of culture and art with education. This is so because, at a time when the world is undergoing fundamental social changes, cultural education should be amongst the priorities of education, rather than be continually reduced, as is the case in the education system of Croatia. Croatia also has problems with the inter-sectoral approach, as questions related to culture also relate to other public policies, such as those on economics, the media, and taxes. Thus, a transversal approach – one that connects several different activities or areas, and opens the field to new actors from other sectors – should gain in importance in Croatia's foreign relations.

In short, Croatia must understand that the cultural dimension of international relations and cooperation, through which different experiences and achievements of all nations and societies are expressed and affirmed, is decisive in attaining development goals, solidarity and democratic values.

## **References**

- A New European Agenda for Culture. Brussels, European Commission EU COM (2018) 267 final  
<https://ec.europa.eu/culture/document/new-european-agenda-culture-swd2018-267-final>

- Amann, Sylvia, Valeria Marcolin (2019) “Intensification of Cultural Exchange between African Cities and European Capitals of Culture”. Report on panel discussion and workshop for the European Commission, Rijeka – European Capital of Culture 2020, 17 pages  
[https://www.khh25.de/sites/default/files/2019-06/ECOC\\_African\\_Cities\\_Rijeka\\_Programme\\_08\\_05\\_2019.pdf](https://www.khh25.de/sites/default/files/2019-06/ECOC_African_Cities_Rijeka_Programme_08_05_2019.pdf)
- Annual Action Programme – Action Document for Support to the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF), 2019  
[https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/sites/fpi/files/annex\\_24\\_support\\_to\\_the\\_asia-europe\\_foundation\\_asef.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/sites/fpi/files/annex_24_support_to_the_asia-europe_foundation_asef.pdf)
- ASEAN-EU Plan of Action 2018-2022 (3rd socio-cultural cooperation)  
<https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/2018/09/28/asean-eu-plan-of-action-2018-2022/>
- Carlos, Jérôme, Biserka Cvjetičanin, Alpha Oumar Konaré, Nada Švob-Đokić (1984) *La Culture et le Nouvel Ordre Economique International*. UNESCO, Institut pour les pays en développement, Zagreb and Institut Culturel Africain, Dakar, 196 pages
- Communication on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World. Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture, Brussels, European Commission, EU COM (2007) 242 final  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0242:FIN:EN:PDF>
- Creative Europe Programme 2014-2020  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/627127/EPRS\\_STU\(2018\)627127\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/627127/EPRS_STU(2018)627127_EN.pdf)
- Draft Council Conclusions on an EU Strategic Approach to International Cultural Relations and a Framework for Action, Brussels, Council of the European Union, 2019  
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/04/08/international-cultural-relations-council-adopts-conclusions/>
- EU Cultural Diplomacy Platform (2016-2020)  
<https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/category/archive/archive-cdp-2016-2020/>
- EU Cultural Relations Platform (CRP) (2020-2022)  
<https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/about-us/>
- EU Strategy on Connecting Europe and Asia – Human Dimension (advanced co-operation in education, research, innovation, culture and tourism)  
[https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu-asian\\_connectivity\\_factsheet\\_september\\_2019.pdf\\_final.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu-asian_connectivity_factsheet_september_2019.pdf_final.pdf)
- European Commission and EEAS. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean – Joining Forces for a Common Future. JOIN/2019/6 final <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019JC0006>

- Friends of Europe. Africa's Digital Revolution: Towards an EU-Africa Digital Partnership (14th January 2020)
- Higgott, Richard and Luk Van Langenhove (2016) Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations: An Initial, Critical but Constructive Analysis. Policy Paper. Brussels, Institute for European Studies, 17 pages  
<https://www.ies.be/files/EL-CSID%20Policy%20Paper%202016-01%20Cultural%20diplomacy.pdf>
- Kern, Philippe (2020) For a Cultural European Union. From a Policy to Build an Internal Market to a Policy to Build a Union. Brussels, KEA European Affairs  
<https://keanet.eu/opinions/for-a-cultural-european-union/>
- McNeilly, Nicole, Damien Helly and Domenico Valenza. Digital Change and EU International Cultural Relations. cS Brief #5, 2020  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341679460\\_Digital\\_change\\_EU\\_international\\_cultural\\_relations](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341679460_Digital_change_EU_international_cultural_relations)
- Resolution on the Cultural Dimensions of EU External Actions (2011) European Parliament, Document A7-0112/2011  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2011-0239\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-7-2011-0239_EN.html)
- Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations (2016) Brussels, European Commission, JOIN (2016) 29 final  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN>
- Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Sustainable Development, 2015-2030  
<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>
- Trobbiani, Riccardo and Andrea Pavón-Guinea (2019) Culture in EU External Relations: Strategic Reflections and Future Scenarios. Brussels, Institute for European Studies, 17 pages  
<https://cris.unu.edu/sites/cris.unu.edu/files/EL-CSID%20Policy%20Paper%202019-16.pdf>



## **Recollections / Reminiscences**



## CULTURELINK AND I

Gao Xian

I am a retired professor of 92 from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). My area of academic interest is mainly Third World development theories, which dates back to China's years of reform and opening-up when I was assigned a job at CASS's Institute of Latin American Studies. At the time, Latin America was, no doubt, the focal point for development theories and the trial ground of development strategies. I welcomed all kinds of ideas for comparison and further studies, and began to translate and introduce some related works to China. Thus, the propositions of Raúl Prebisch's Latin American developmentalism, Theotonio Dos Santos's dependency theory and A. G. Frank's *Development of Underdevelopment* attracted me very much. On the other hand, W. W. Rostow's stages of economic growth also caught my attention. The study of the development question by the international academia was expanding and deepening in theoretical exploration, which was followed by a corresponding evolution in theoretical structure. More doubt was expressed about theories on economic growth. The lessons of Third World countries proved that such theories centred on the aims and models of Western Powers, and did not adapt to the reality of developing countries. A growth in economic indicators could not alleviate poverty and improve the living conditions of the majority of people. So, growth did not equal development. Hence, the emergence of development economics, which tackles items other than growth targets as the essentials of development. At the same time, an increasing number of scholars explained that development should



not concern economic targets alone, and that social targets as well as other conditions were to be equally emphasised. Thus, the theory of integrated development became the centre of attention for many people. That is, a multi-disciplinary integration of development, including aspects of economic, social, political, cultural, environmental, as well as international relations. We have come to increasingly believe that human and cultural fulfilment should be a top priority and value of genuine development. I was made Secretary-General of the Chinese Centre for Third World Studies in the mid-1980s, which helped to promote my international contacts and academic exchanges.

I found Culturelink Network publications interesting, publications such as: *Culturelink Review*, *Culturelink Joint Publications Series*, and *Culturelink C-News*. Culturelink has made a great effort and valuable contributions to worldwide cultural research and cooperation. Their coverage of a wide range of topics and close link with various related institutions and scholars helped to cement firm academic unity. All those yielding activities and effective results reflected much more than culture in the narrow sense; they also reflected wide and all-inclusive culture in the macro and holistic sense, as well as a connection to other related disciplines and areas. This fully aligns with my belief in human and cultural fulfilment needed for development. So, I gladly joined as one of the first members of Culturelink. I attended its conference (Second World Culturelink Conference in Zagreb in June 2005) and contributed my paper entitled “Harmony with Diversity: Orientation of World Development and the Case of China”. Some of my other papers were published in the *Culturelink Review* and its *Special Issues*. For instance, “Culture and Development: Macro-Cultural Reflections on Development” (*Special Issue* No. 20, 1996), “Culture and Development: The Sustainability of Sustainable Development” (*Special Issue* No. 24, 1998), “Culture and Development: A Sustainable World in the Twenty-First Century” (*Special Issue*, 2000), and “Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development” (*Special Issue*, 2002/2003). Additionally, *Culturelink C-News* published some of my other papers, such as an article commemorating the 100th anniversary of the 1911 Chinese Revolution (*C-News*, January 2012) and “Bandung Spirit and Global-

ization” (*C-News*, June-July 2015). They even kindly published my little poem “Home-coming” accompanied by an encouraging editor’s note (*C-News*, October 2014).

My participation in Culturelink Network activities is still rather limited, yet they have helped greatly in strengthening understanding and building friendships with international scholars, particularly when people realise what I fight for and against, what I like and dislike, what my major concern regarding development is, and why I value macro-culture so highly, etc. At the same time, thanks to such activities, I have come to understand and greatly appreciate the importance of Culturelink, its leaders and management collective. Culturelink was initially but a small seed planted in soil, which has, over time, grown into a big plant with rich foliage spreading healthy coverage in the world.

Congratulations!



## **‘HOSTPITALITY’: ENGLISH AND THE LANGUAGE OF DIPLOMACY**

**Aidan O’Malley**

The late French philosopher Jacques Derrida coined the term *hostpitality* in his book *Of Hospitality* (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 2000: 45). It emerges from his reflections on Émile Benveniste’s seminal study, *Indo-European Language and Society*, specifically on the exposition there of the term *hostis*, which designates “*one who repays my gift with a counter-gift*” (Benveniste, 1973: 71). This is the etymological root not just of ‘hospitality’ but also of ‘hostility’. In short, no matter how freely or openly hospitality is offered, it is never devoid of obligations; inscribed within hospitality, in other words, is a demand for reciprocation, and this, for Derrida, constitutes the element of hostility that is always already in the pact of hospitality. Traces of this etymological knot can be unearthed in Romance languages, amongst other places, where the word for host and guest is the same – *hôte* in French, and *ospite* in Italian, for instance. If, on a surface level, this might be taken to suggest an amicable equality between these roles, it also describes a site of contestation. Without a host and a guest hospitality is unnecessary, and this relationship is inevitably hierarchical, even, or perhaps especially, when it appears to want to disavow this fact, or level it out, through a form of complete hospitality indicated in a phrase like, *mi casa es su casa*: offering hospitality, claiming the role of host, is not just an act of generosity, but also establishes a power relationship. *Hostpitality*, therefore, is a term that looks to articulate this ambivalent dynamic of hostility in hospitality and, as such, describes

a scene of ethical decision: the hostility in hospitality means that hospitality does not denote a straightforward, conclusive act; instead, it is a more dynamic and open-ended process, as the accommodation it affords comes about through a series of choices made in a series of negotiations between the host and the guest.

Viewed in this light, the processes of hospitality have much in common with the work of diplomacy, which essentially involves seeking an accommodation with the other. It is an act of communication across borders, and traces of *hospitality* can be charted in its operations; indeed, the power relations that obtain between the protagonists are often very clear. But what is of particular interest here is the fact that many of these transactions now take place in English, which is not simply a neutral site that facilitates communication: the pact of hospitality it offers those who use it inevitably involves entering into a hierarchical arrangement that is not confined to the relationship between the interlocutors, but also between them and an Anglo-American worldview. Derrida has also taught us to pay attention to the language in which the question of language is raised, and the considerations here come from the perspective of a native Anglophone speaker based in Croatia. While these comments will directly address this context, they do so in the conviction that they also speak to a broader phenomenon. Indeed, the conference upon which this volume is based was conducted almost entirely in English, even if that was the first language of very few of the contributors; not only was this not surprising, it went almost unquestioned. After Brexit, only one member state – Malta – will have English officially as a (shared) first language (Irish is officially the first language of Ireland, even if almost all life there is conducted in English). Nonetheless, it is hard to imagine that, despite the efforts of the French in particular, English will be displaced as the language in which most of the business of the European Union is conducted.

English functions, in other words, as a *lingua franca* in so many different ways in the world today that it appears to be an entirely de-racinated language. However, one need only look at the history of a previous European *lingua franca*, Latin, to see how its continued usage centuries after the decline of direct Roman power served to embed

concepts of Roman law and ideas of empire into European discourses to this very day, to say nothing of how it functioned as the means through which the Roman Catholic Church spread its message. English has a much wider, global, reach, but it can be seen to be emulating the experience of Latin, as it is an essential element in establishing Anglo-American perspectives – on politics, society, culture, and religion – in a hegemonic position. In the current conjuncture, this is particularly problematic, considering that the politics of the United States and Britain are dominated by the Scylla and Charybdis of Trumpism and Brexit. Devoid of logic, these names signify nothing more than the entry of far-right-wing tactics into mainstream politics, at the heart of which lie racist conceptions of society. As a result, English itself is being constantly debased – blatant, unapologetic, lying is the currency of Donald Trump and Boris Johnson – while also serving, seemingly paradoxically, as the medium through which hostility to otherness is being spread across borders.

At the same time, English has become, more generally and internationally, an index of cultural status, and this gives rise to other modes of *hospitality*. Many Croatians, for instance, take quite a degree of pride in the fact that they speak English exceptionally well. Considered in comparison with many other non-English-speaking peoples, this ability can be presented as a form of international cultural mastery that may be lacking in other larger and more influential countries like, say, Italy, that have more traditional sources of cultural capital. Using English as a standard for this comparison, however, inevitably ascribes to it an elevated cultural status, and privileges Anglophone culture, more generally. Where I have seen this manifest itself most clearly has been in the students I have taught English literature to at the universities of Rijeka and Zagreb.

To be sure, the context I am drawing on here is rather specific, and is not necessarily representative of a general Croatian experience. Having said that, these are some of the people who will be expected to further and nurture the future cultural capital of this country, and it is very striking how immersed these students are in Anglophone culture. The majority of them have hardly read any Croatian literature, and many

of those who write creatively say they prefer to do so in English. It is simply impossible to imagine a comparable situation in an Anglophone country. The students' misgivings about Croatian are often linked to the ways in which it seems to be tied to more reactionary outlooks – nationalism and Catholicism – or perhaps they see it, more simply and superficially, as an uncool language in comparison to English. The secondary school syllabus, my students inform me, manages to perpetuate the false notion that Croatian literature is composed of dull, pious, and nationalist texts. Viewed in terms of the dynamics of *hospitality*, this describes a scene of excessive hospitality, where the guest (English culture) is undermining the Croatian host: I have been told that Croatian has begun to degenerate, as English syntax and grammar have invaded the language, and that this is by no means confined to our students of English literature, but can be seen in a lot of contemporary journalism.

Of course, languages are not fixed entities, and they all mutate and assimilate other cultural influences. But languages also wither, and become unused, even in their own countries, as the Irish experience testifies. And, as George Steiner noted, when a language atrophies and dies, a whole unique way of apprehending life is lost: “[e]ach human language maps the world differently. [...] Each tongue [...] construes a set of possible worlds and geographies of remembrance. [...] When a language dies, a possible world dies with it.” (Steiner, p. xiv) There is no suggestion here that Croatian is doomed, nor is this paper suggesting a practicable alternative to English as a *lingua franca*; rather, it is simply drawing attention to the fact that the use of English involves entering into a *hostpitabile* relationship with Anglo-American culture. If this is more explicit in a situation in which one of the interlocutors has English as a first language, the hegemony of English means that it also shapes transnational exchanges between non-native English speakers: it works to make the foreign seem more similar to the local, as both are being viewed through a lens that is tinted with Anglophone norms. In other words, it can work to blunt an appreciation of cultural difference, and just as the negotiation of the inherent hostility in hospitality renders the act of hospitality ethical, so the task of finding an accommodation,

not a dismissal, of difference lies at the ethical heart of any form of cultural dialogue.

## **References**

- Benveniste, Émile (1973) *Indo-European Language and Society*. J. Lallot, trans., London, Faber & Faber
- Derrida, Jacques and Anne Dufourmantelle (2000) *Of Hospitality*. Rachel Bowlby, trans., Stanford, California: Stanford University Press
- Steiner, George (1992) *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*. 2nd ed., Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press





# **INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS: CANADA AND THE EUROPEAN UNION PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

**D. Paul Schafer**

The nineteen seventies were exciting times to be involved in the arts and culture in Europe, Canada, and many other countries and parts of the world.

The decade commenced with the first world conference ever held on cultural policies – the Intergovernmental Conference on Institutional, Administrative and Financial Aspects of Cultural Policies – convened by UNESCO in Venice in 1970. Not only was Venice the perfect place to hold a conference of this type, but also the conference created a great deal of enthusiasm among the member states of UNESCO and other countries around the world. At long last, the commitment made to rebuilding the devastated economies of countries involved in the Second World War was coming to an end, and countries and governments were starting to turn their attention to other matters, one of which was international relations.

The historic conference in Venice was followed by the Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Europe held in Helsinki in 1972. By this time, a great deal of attention was being focused on international cooperation and what was called the “twin engines” of cultural development – democratization and decentralization – and making these engines the foundations and driving forces of cultural policy.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Augustin Girard, *Cultural Development: Experience and Policies* (Paris, UNESCO, 1972), Chapter 8, pp. 129-145. Also see Herbert Shore, *Cultural*

Not only was it necessary to democratize arts organizations to broaden and diversify the character, composition, and size of their audiences and let some fresh air in, but also it was necessary to prevent artistic and cultural activities from accumulating in Europe's largest cities and get them out into smaller towns, cities, and rural areas, as well as to other parts of Europe and the world.

Since Canada was defined as "part of Europe" for geographical and political purposes by UNESCO, it was included in the regional conference in Helsinki. As a result, democratization and decentralization became buzzwords in Canada and not only in Europe, so much so that what was going on in Europe at that time was also going on in Canada. A big push was made to liberate the arts and arts organizations from control by powerful and wealthy elites and expand audiences to include a much broader cross-section of the Canadian population, as well as to move artistic and cultural activities out of Canada's largest cities and spread them more evenly across the country. Governments and politicians were especially enthusiastic about this because democratization and decentralization fitted perfectly with their mandates and agendas, most notably in terms of convincing Canadians that spending their tax dollars on the arts and culture was legitimate and justified.

I was also swept up in the excitement at this time because I was involved with several others in creating the first academic program for training arts administrators and cultural policy-makers in the world at York University in Toronto in 1968 and 1969, and then in teaching the first two courses on arts administration, and Canadian and international cultural policy at this university from 1970 to 1974. Moreover, my document on *Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy/Aspects de la politique culturelle canadienne* was published in Paris by UNESCO in 1976 as part of its series of studies and documents on cultural policies for member states. It was the first comprehensive publication ever written and published on cultural policy in Canada.

---

*Policy: UNESCO's First Cultural Development Decade.* Washington: U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, 1981, for an assessment of the period from 1969 to 1980 and the key role that UNESCO played during this time through its international and regional conferences in Venice, Helsinki, and other regions in the world.

By this time, I had left York University, was self-employed, and had become keenly interested in Canada's international cultural relations. I was so interested in them that I drove to Ottawa on several occasions to try and convince authorities at the Department of External Affairs – later the Department of International Trade and Foreign Affairs, and now Global Affairs Canada – that I should be contracted to research and write the first full-fledged document on Canada's international cultural relations. I felt this publication was badly needed because the Department was doing some important work in this field and very few people in Canada, Europe, and other parts of the world seemed to know anything about it.

Unfortunately, researching, writing, and publishing a document like this seemed pointless to authorities at the Department of External Affairs. It did not take long to discover the reason for this. Virtually all countries and governments in the world were deeply immersed in operationalizing the economic interpretation of history by this time, and were busy dividing their societies up into “economic bases” and “non-economic superstructures”, and giving a high priority to the economic bases and a low priority to the non-economic superstructures. This practice was intensified and strengthened even more when C. P. Snow's book *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* was published in 1959.<sup>2</sup> In this book, Snow claimed that the western world was divided into two cultures – the artistic-humanistic culture and the scientific culture – and that far more attention should be given to the scientific culture and far less attention to the artistic-humanistic culture in educational institutions in the western world because this was necessary to come to grips with the world's most urgent, pressing, and persistent problems at that time.

What started out as a division of all subjects in educational institutions in the western world into “hard subjects” and “soft subjects” eventually ended up as a division of all activities in all parts of the world into “hard activities” and “soft activities”. Consistent with the

---

<sup>2</sup> C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959.

economic interpretation of history but in a much more pointed and specific way, hard activities were activities that were concerned with the “fundamentals in life”, such as economics, agriculture, industry, technology, science, and trade, while soft activities were concerned with the “frills in life”, primarily the arts, humanities, and leisure-time pursuits. It did not take long for this practice to find its way into international relations and foreign policy, where a similar distinction was made between “hard diplomacy” and “soft diplomacy”, but with precisely the same priorities, implications, and consequences.

However, back to Canada’s Department of External Affairs for a moment longer. I was so persistent with authorities at the Department that finally the sky cleared and the sun came out. A senior official at the Department heard about my proposal, arranged a meeting with me in Ottawa, and ended up hiring me to research and write the first detailed document on Canada’s international cultural relations ever produced. Not surprisingly, it was called *Canada’s International Cultural Relations/Les relations culturelles du Canada avec l’étranger*. It was published in English and French in 1979, and distributed to Canadian embassies and diplomatic posts abroad, as well as to a selection of people in Canada concerned with this matter.

No sooner was I contracted to research and write this document than I set out to determine who the leaders in this field were and what they were accomplishing. As a result, the first chapter of the publication was devoted to tracing the ascendancy of international cultural relations generally and specifically after the Second World War, providing a great deal of information on France, Great Britain, and Germany as the principal leaders in this field by far, and proposing a set of principles that should govern international cultural relations in general and Canada’s international cultural relations in particular. Included among these principles were: why cultural relations are an integral component of international relations and foreign policy; why cultural relations constitute a legitimate area of political activity and governmental responsibility, and produce countless economic, political, social, artistic, academic, and other benefits; and why cultural relations

constitute an essential element in international relations in their own right, as well as a fundamental aspect of foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

The first chapter of this publication began with a well-known and inspiring statement by Rabindranath Tagore: “We must prepare the field for the cooperation of all the cultures of the world where all will give and take from each other. This is the keynote of the coming age.” The chapter was entitled “A Strategic Investment” because I felt this is what international cultural relations are really all about, and I was aware by this time that governments usually follow the example provided by other governments and the leaders in the field, rather than the theories, ideas, and ideals of academics, consultants, and practitioners.

The nineteen seventies were a very exciting time to be involved in researching and writing about cultural relations between Canada and Europe as well. Due to the vast number of Europeans who had emigrated to Canada and had become Canadian citizens several centuries prior to this, international relations were well established between Canada and virtually all European countries by this time. As far as international *cultural* relations were concerned, they covered a vast array of activities – the arts, the mass media, education, science, the crafts, youth, recreation, the environment, sports, multicultural affairs, and so forth – which were all documented in detail in the aforementioned publication.<sup>4</sup> As a result of these developments, and others, there was an intimacy between Canada and Europe – Canadians and Europeans – at this time that was cherished, rare, valued, and appreciated on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Unfortunately, things started to move in a different direction on both sides of the ocean shortly after this. This was due to many economic, political, technological, trade, and other developments during the nineteen eighties, nineteen nineties, and the first decade and a half of the new millennium. Included in these developments were: a much greater emphasis on developing the economies of these two parts of

---

<sup>3</sup> D. Paul Schafer, *Canada's International Cultural Relations/Les relations culturelles du Canada avec l'étranger*. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1976, Chapter I, pp. 1-11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter III, pp. 27-38.

the world, as well as all activities related to this; major shifts in political policies, practices, and ideologies; the election of a number of conservative governments; uncertainties over future needs, prospects, and possibilities; cuts in budgets for foreign affairs and international relations; and a great deal else.

In specific terms, Europe as a whole and many countries in Europe were strongly influenced by the creation of the European Union that came into existence in 1993 following the signing and implementation of the Maastricht Treaty. This treaty focused much more attention – and understandably and rightly so – on the needs of EU countries and the possibility of new members joining the union in order to ensure the success of the EU and the Maastricht Treaty. Moreover, the EU in general and Greece, Italy, Spain, and a number of other EU countries in particular were experiencing severe financial, fiscal, and employment problems at this time that required a great deal of attention and strengthened the need to focus on Europe in an internal sense rather than other parts of Europe and the world in an external sense.

Canada was also engaged in a number of specific problems at this time that required a great deal of introspection and deflected attention away from Europe and external matters. This is especially true for the patriation of the Canadian Constitution, and the passage of the Constitution Act and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, as well as for the cultivation of much closer ties and stronger relations with the United States. This commenced with the trade agreement that was signed between Canada and the United States – the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement (CUSFTA) in 1988 – which ultimately led to the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1994 that included Mexico as well. Somewhat ironically, this propelled Canada, Europe, and the European Union further apart, despite the fact that the NAFTA agreement was modelled largely on the success of the European Economic Community from 1957 to 1993. However, it had the effect of drawing Canada much more fully into the orbit of the United States and Mexico, thereby reducing Canada's relations with the EU, Europe, and other parts of the world.

Despite the fact that international relations between Canada and the European Union were headed in different directions, had their ups and downs, and were concerned largely with internal rather than external matters between 1980 and 2015, a number of important partnership agreements and working arrangements were created in areas of mutual concern between these two parts of the world during the final decade of the twentieth century and the first decade and a half of the twenty-first century. Among other developments, this included the commencement of negotiations towards a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) in 2009, the Declaration on EU-Canada Relations signed at the Ottawa Summit in 2014, and sustaining many existing cultural relations that had been established years earlier. Nevertheless, the biggest development of all occurred in 2017 when Canada and the EU finalized CETA that was provisionally applied and removed 98% of the prevailing tariffs between these two essential parts of the world.

Then, in 2018, the annual Report on the State of the EU-Canada Relationship was released and revealed that the European Union and Canada had committed to developing “a set of common values and priorities such as sustainable development, gender equality, progressive free and fair trade (which was influenced by the protectionist policies of Donald Trump in the United States), and to jointly shape globalization to ensure the benefits are more equitably distributed.” The report also included “the determination of the EU and Canada to work through their closer bilateral cooperation to preserve the rules-based international order and to strengthen the multilateral system”.<sup>5</sup>

This was accompanied by the EU-Canada Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA) that emphasized comparable commitments to deepen and broaden bilateral cooperation on such matters as human rights, democracy and the rule of law, international peace and security, counter-terrorism, nuclear non-proliferation, sustainable economic and environmental development, science, technology, and innovation, dealing with climate change, relations with specific countries and areas of

---

<sup>5</sup> Annual Report of the State of the EU-Canada Relationship. Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2018.



the world, and others. This indicated that things were getting back on track as far as EU-Canada relations were concerned, despite the fact that there was very little specific information on how these matters with strong *cultural* implications and overtones could be worked out between these two parts of the world.

Generally speaking, this is where matters stand at present with respect to relations between the EU and Canada. Most of the energy and enthusiasm is focused on developing stronger economic, trade, industrial, manufacturing, technological, and political relations and ties, sustaining a number of cultural relations in areas that were established earlier, and following up on commitments to a number of areas and ideals that have profound cultural implications – such as sustainable development, gender equality, human rights, democracy, free and fairer trade, and international peace – but with few indications or clues concerning how these areas and ideals can be developed in fact. This is especially important for Canada as it tries to escape from the “staples trap” it is in at present, lessen its dependency on the United States, and develop relations with other countries and parts of the world.

And this brings us to the future. How should cultural relations between the EU and Canada be cultivated and conducted in the years and decades ahead?

There is no doubt that, over the next few years, the EU and Canada will be totally preoccupied with recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and the disastrous effect it has had on jobs, income, employment, and economies, catastrophic declines in stock market prices, and drastic plunges in the value of financial assets and real estate, and rapid escalations in the size of public and private debts, as governments and citizens alike struggle to come to grips with the consequences of these and other complex and debilitating problems. This will require strong actions in both Canada and EU countries to rebuild their devastated economies and generate the economic activity, expenditures, and investments that are necessary to recover from this dreadful situation and reverse it in the future. And this is not all. Waiting in the wings after recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is the need to come to grips with climate change, global warming, and the environmental

crisis that will also require a great deal of action and attention, albeit in a very different way.

While these two problems have had devastating economic effects on the EU, Canada, and other countries, neither of these problems can be solved by the international system as it is presented because it is designed to produce goods, services, and material and monetary wealth, and is not designed to deal with problems as multidimensional, universal, vast, and life-threatening as this. And what is true for these two problems is also true for other problems that will confront humanity and the world in the future, such as the intermingling of people and populations with very different worldviews, values, value systems, customs, traditions, and beliefs, as well as conflicts and tensions between the diverse races, religions, ethnic groups, countries, and cultures of the world.

Problems like this were foreseen some time ago by three distinguished cultural scholars – Paul J. Braisted, Soedjatmoko, and Kenneth W. Thompson. Here is what they had to say about situations like this in their book *Reconstituting the Human Community*:

“Mankind (humankind) is faced with problems which, if not dealt with, could in a very few years develop into crises world-wide in scope. Interdependence is the reality; world-wide problems the prospect; and world-wide cooperation the only solution. As a tool for sensitizing people to the reality and the prospect, stimulating them to attempt the solution, and creating the kind of empathy and understanding essential to both sensitivity and stimulation, *cultural relations are, and will increasingly become, a decisive aspect of international affairs.*”<sup>6</sup>

Why is this so essential? As the aforementioned authors went on to explain, it is essential because:

“... cultural relations cannot be seen apart from the setting in which they occur. Put more broadly, the setting itself is part of the problem,

---

<sup>6</sup> Paul J. Braisted, Soedjatmoko, and Kenneth W. Thompson, (eds.), *Reconstituting the Human Community*, A Report of Colloquium III, held at Belagio, Italy, July 1972, for the program of inquiries *Cultural Relations for the Future* sponsored by the Hazen Foundation, New Haven, Connecticut: The Hazen Foundation, 1973, p. 14 (insert and italics mine).

especially because now it is becoming clear that the setting has become dangerously unstable. It is no exaggeration to say that all systems on the basis of which the world is organized are facing a dead end, at least if present trends are allowed to continue. And insofar as they do not face a dead end, they are on a collision course.”<sup>7</sup>

This goes right to the heart of the matter because it has to do with the *context* within which all international relations – cultural and otherwise – are situated and the dire need to change it. But where do we find the clues that are necessary to achieve this? There is no doubt that Johan Huizinga put his finger on the crux of this matter when, following his assessment of many different cultures in the world, he said:

“The realities of economic life, of power, of technology, of everything conducive to man’s (people’s) well-being, must be balanced by strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic values.”<sup>8</sup>

Why is this remarkable insight into the human condition and domestic and international affairs so imperative in going forward into the future? It is imperative because what has been occurring in the world over the last seven or eight decades has been antithetical to this. In the process of dealing with the “realities of economic life, of power, of technology, of everything conducive to man’s (people’s) well-being,” we have not cultivated “strongly developed spiritual, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic values.” In fact, the more attention has been paid to the former area, the less attention – not the more, the less – has been paid to the latter area. This is confirmed by numerous developments throughout the world, such as declining attendance at many religious services in different parts of the world, educational systems that are committed to preparing people for consuming more goods and services, and accumulating more material and monetary wealth, drastic cuts in arts educational budgets and artistic activities in many parts of the world, and a decline in moral values. These developments were

---

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> Karl J. Weintraub, *Visions of Culture: Voltaire, Guizot, Burckhardt, Lamprecht, Huizinga, and Ortega y Gasset*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1966, p. 216 (insert mine).

so evident in the world that the World Commission on Culture and Development made the need for “A new global ethics” the first chapter of its report entitled *Our Creative Diversity* in 1995.<sup>9</sup>

Like many outstanding cultural scholars over the course of human history, such as Cicero, Voltaire, Tylor, Burckhardt, Sorokin, Mead, Benedict, Williams, Hall, Campbell, Soyinka, and others, Huizinga provided us not only with an incredible insight into what is needed to come to grips with the present situation in the world, but also with a specific way of achieving this in the future when he said:

“The balance exists above all in the fact that each of the various cultural activities (stated above) enjoys as vital a function as is possible in the context of the whole. If such harmony of cultural functions is present, it will reveal itself as order, strong structure, style, and rhythmic life of the society in question.”<sup>10</sup>

Herein lies the key to the challenge in international relations that confronts the EU, Canada, and all other countries in the world in the future. The context of these relations must be changed so that the destructive division between “hard and soft activities” and “hard and soft diplomacy” is ended and replaced by a context that is holistic rather than polarized. Hopefully, this will also bring to an end the practice of subdividing societies into economic bases and non-economic superstructures, giving the former area a central priority and the latter area a marginal priority in the overall scheme of things, assuming that if we look after economies properly everything will turn out for the best. This could possibly mean that even Gandhi’s idea – that “a nation’s culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people” – may become a reality.

This would mean that, in the future, international relations between countries would be treated in a holistic manner, and that all challenges, problems, and possibilities would be addressed according to what

---

<sup>9</sup> World Commission on Culture and Development, *Our Creative Diversity*, Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development. Paris: UNESCO, 1995, Chapter 1, pp. 24–51.

<sup>10</sup> Karl J. Weintraub, op. cit., p. 216 (insert mine).

tools, techniques, and vehicles are most appropriate and effective in confronting and dealing with specific challenges, problems, and possibilities, regardless of whether they are economic or non-economic in nature. This would give international relations – and with these international *cultural* relations – a unity, equality, and parity that do not exist at present but are of vital importance in the future. A step in the right direction in this regard may be found in a report released in Canada by the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade in 2019 – *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy* – which concluded that cultural diplomacy should be a “main pillar of Canada’s foreign policy” in the future as its first and foremost recommendation.

Over the long term, this may also provide the key to seeing all relations between countries from a cultural rather than an economic perspective. Paul J. Braisted had something profound and powerful to say about this at another exceedingly difficult time in history:

“Cultural cooperation is so directly a national interest that it should furnish the fundamental motivating principle in governmental foreign service, replacing or reordering all lesser motives. It should become the controlling principle in personnel selection and training, in the establishment of new standards of service, and fresh criteria of effectiveness.”<sup>11</sup>

And this bring us, via a rather circuitous but persistent chronological route, to the EU and Canada and their role in all this in the future. Given the strong “historical continuities” that have existed between European countries and Canada for many centuries and have begun to assert themselves once again through specific relations between the EU and Canada over the last few years, surely it is time for the EU and Canada to step up and intensify their relations in this field, as well as to provide the leadership, networks, and examples that are needed by all countries and that can be both adopted and emulated in all parts of the world. Without doubt, this would make a remarkable contribution

---

<sup>11</sup> Paul J. Braisted, *Cultural Cooperation: Keynote of the Coming Age*. New Haven: The Edward W. Hazen Foundation, 1945, p. 25.

to international relations, global development, and human affairs at a crucial time in the history of humanity and the world.

## References

- Braisted, Paul J. (1945) *Cultural Cooperation: Keynote of the Coming Age*. The Hazen Pamphlets, New Haven: The Hazen Foundation
- Braisted, Paul J. (1976) *Towards a New Humanism: Some Value Perspective in Emerging Cultural Relations*. New Haven: The Hazen Foundation
- Braisted, Paul J., Soedjatmoko, and Kenneth W. Thompson (eds.) (1973) *Reconstituting the Human Community*. A Report of Colloquium III, held at Bellagio, Italy, 17-23 July 1972, for the program of inquiries. *Cultural Relations for the Future*, sponsored by the Hazen Foundation. New Haven: The Hazen Foundation
- Canada's Foreign Policy: Principles and Priorities for the Future. *The Position Papers* (1994) Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons on Reviewing Canadian Foreign Policy, November 1994. Ottawa: Department of Foreign Affairs. See especially: John Ralston Saul, *Culture and Foreign Policy*
- Girard, Augustin (1972) *Cultural Development: Experience and Policies*. Paris: UNESCO
- Haigh, Anthony (1974) *Cultural Diplomacy in Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe
- Mitchell, J. M. (1986) *International Cultural Relations*. London: Allen and Unwin. Published in association with the British Council
- Schafer, D. Paul (1976) *Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy/Aspects de la politique culturelle canadienne*. Paris: UNESCO
- Schafer, D. Paul (1979) *Canada's International Cultural Relations/Les relations culturelles du Canada avec l'étranger*. Ottawa: Department of External Affairs
- Schafer, D. Paul (1996) *Canada's International Cultural Relations: Key to Canada's Role in the World*. Markham: World Culture Project
- Shore, Herbert (1981) *Cultural Policy: UNESCO's First Cultural Development Decade*. Washington: U.S. National Commission for UNESCO
- Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade (2019) *Cultural Diplomacy at the Front Stage of Canada's Foreign Policy*. Ottawa: Government of Canada
- Weintraub, Karl J. (1966) *Visions of Culture: Voltaire, Guizot, Burckhardt, Lamprecht, Huizinga, and Ortega y Gasset*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press



## **Notes on the authors**





**Biserka Cvjetičanin** is a Senior Scientific Researcher at the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) in Zagreb, Croatia. Her research areas include cultural development, cultural policies, cultural diversity and intercultural communication. She is the author of numerous books, studies and articles. She was a member of the UNESCO Administrative Council of the International Fund for the Promotion of Culture (2004-2008) and a member of the Advisory Committee for the World Report on Cultural Diversity (2006-2009). She is the coordinator of the Network of Networks for Research and Cooperation in Cultural Development – Culturelink established in 1989 by UNESCO and the Council of Europe, and situated in IRMO. She was awarded the French *Légion d'honneur* in 2003.

**Jean-Pierre Deru** est titulaire d'une licence en droit de l'Université de Louvain, Belgique (U.C.L.). Il a enseigné à la Faculté Ouverte de Politique Economique et Sociale de l'U.C.L. Il est directeur de l'Association Marcel Hicter pour la Démocratie Culturelle et directeur du Diplôme européen en administration de projets culturels qui a formé plus de 600 opérateurs culturels de toute l'Europe, du Moyen-Orient, d'Afrique, etc., actifs dans la gestion de projets de coopération culturelle. Il est membre de divers réseaux culturels européens, notamment Oracle, the European Network on Cultural Management and Policy (ENCATC), Culturelink et the European House for Culture.

**Cristina Farinha** is an independent policy expert and researcher specialised in heritage, culture and the creative industries. For the last 24 years, she has been extensively involved in the conception, implementation, reporting and evaluation of diverse policies, programmes, projects and organisations from local and regional to international

level. She has collaborated with diverse entities, ranging from the European Commission, UNESCO, the Portuguese Ministry of Culture to ADDICT – Creative Industries Agency Portugal. She has been lecturing and participating as speaker and moderator at various universities, public discussions, academic conferences and workshops across Europe, the USA, North Africa and the Middle East. Her fields of interest include: the strengthening of the role of culture and creativity in governance and development; the promotion of international cooperation and mobility; and the development of sector operators' capacity, advocacy and entrepreneurship.

**Mercedes Giovinazzo** is the Director of Interarts, a private agency specialised in culture and cooperation for development. Previously, she was the Director of Services and Deputy Director of Customer Services at the Universal Forum of Cultures in Barcelona, Spain; an administrator at the Division of Culture and Cultural and Natural Heritage at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France; and Director of the Mastère Européen Management des Entreprises Culturelles at the Burgundy School of Business (École Supérieure de Commerce de Dijon), France. She is the President of the Biennale des Jeunes Créateurs de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée; was a Board Member of the Teatro di Roma (2013-2016); the President of Culture Action Europe (2008-2015) where she promoted the “culture2015goal” international campaign for the inclusion of culture in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the President of the Access to Culture Platform of the European Commission (2008-2011).

**Yudhishtir Raj Isar** is currently the Education Director of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and Emeritus Professor of Cultural Policy Studies at the American University of Paris. He was a co-founding co-editor of the Cultures and Globalization Series, SAGE London; lead writer of the United Nations Creative Economy Report 2013; team leader of the EU's “Culture in EU External Relations” inquiry; and editor of UNESCO's 2015 and 2018 Re|Shaping Cultural Policies reports. Between 1973 and 2003, he was the Executive Secretary of

the World Commission on Culture and Development at UNESCO. He was also the President of Culture Action Europe.

**Vjeran Katunarić** is a retired full professor of sociology (University of Zagreb, 1978-2010, University of Zadar, 2010-2019). He was the co-editor (with Biserka Cvjetičanin) of the Cultural Policy in Croatia. National Report (1998), and of the Strategy of Cultural Development – Croatia in 21st Century (2002). In 2002-2003, he was engaged by the Council of Europe as a cultural policy consultant to write expert reports on cultural policies in a number of European countries. His publications dealing with cultural development and cultural policy include: *The Quest for a Liberal-Socialist Democracy and Development: Against the Behemoth* (2018), *Dancing and Calculating: Culturally Sustainable Development and Globalization in Light of Two Paradigms of Socio-Cultural Evolution* (2014), *Toward the New Public Culture* (2004), *Global Perceptions of Cultural Policy* (2000), *Masters and Servants: Critical Thought and the New Class* (1999).

**Barbara Lovrinić** is a Research Assistant at the Department of Culture and Communication of the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) in Zagreb, Croatia. She holds a Post-graduate Degree in Diplomacy and International Relations (2019) from the University of Zagreb, and is currently doing a PhD in Cultural and Media Management at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade, Serbia. Her research interests include digital culture, heritage management and cultural diplomacy.

**Lupwishi Mbuyamba** is currently the Executive Director of the Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa (OCPA) and President of the African Music Council. He held a professional leadership role in several public institutions in his country, the Democratic Republic of Congo in Africa, and at international level. In particular, his successive presidential mandates at the International Music Council, the International Society for Music Education, and the International Federation for Choral Music should be singled out. He was also the Director of

the National Institute of Arts, leader of the UNDP/UNESCO project on designing and launching the International Centre of the Bantu Civilisations in Gabon, before he took on responsibilities at UNESCO as Regional Cultural Advisor for Africa and as UNESCO's Representative in Southern Africa. He is the author, co-author and editor of several scientific and cultural publications.

**Aidan O'Malley** holds a PhD from the Department of History and Civilisation, European University Institute, Florence, Italy. He is a professor at the Department of English, University of Rijeka. His research interests focus on languages in contact.

**Jean-Pierre Saez** is the Director of the Observatory of Cultural Policies (*Observatoire des politiques culturelles*) in Grenoble, France, and editor-in-chief of *L'observatoire*, a journal of cultural policy issues. He teaches at the Grenoble Institute of Political Studies, and is also the President of the International Centre for Nomadic Music – Les Détours de Babel. He has notably published the following: *Identities, Cultures and Territories* (ed.), 1995; *Contemporary Art: Artistic Fields, Criteria, Reception* (ed.), 2000; *Culture and Society. A Link to Rebuild* (ed.), 2008; *Intercultural Dialogue in Europe: New Perspectives* (co-ed.), OPC Publishing, 2009; *New Challenges of Cultural Policies. European Perspectives* (co-ed. with G. Saez), 2012; *For a Right to Artistic and Cultural Education. Franco-German Advocacy* (co-ed. with W. Schneider, M. C. Bordeaux, C. Hartmann-Fritsch), Grenoble, OPC, 2014.

**D. Paul Schafer** has worked in the arts and cultural field for more than fifty years as an educator, advisor, author, administrator, and researcher. He is the founder and director of the World Culture Project based in Markham, Canada. Schafer is the author of many books and articles on culture and the arts in general, and Canadian culture and creativity in particular. Amongst his published books and articles, the following may be mentioned: *Culture: Beacon of the Future*; *Revolution or Renaissance: Making the Transition from an Economic Age*

*to a Cultural Age; The Age of Culture; Aspects of Canadian Cultural Policy; Culture and Politics in Canada: Towards a Culture for All Canadians; Will This Be Canada's Century?; and The True North: How Canadian Creativity Changed the World.*

**Nada Švob-Đokić** is a Researcher Emerita at the Department of Culture and Communication of the Institute for Development and International Relations in Zagreb, Croatia. Her research interests include: cultural development and diversity (multiculturalism, intercultural communication), cultural globalisation, transformation and transition, mediatization of culture, and cultural and media policies. Her professional experience includes: leadership and participation in a number of research projects (including EU FP6 and FP7 programmes), Croatian projects on creative and knowledge industries, and projects on the impact of global influences on local cultural changes. She is the author of over 300 works published in Croatian, English, French and other languages.

**Françoise Taliano-des Garets** is a professor of Contemporary History at Sciences Po Bordeaux, where she is the Head of a Master's Programme in Cultural Project Management and Territorial Development. She specialises in cultural history and works on urban cultural policies. She has just completed the "European Capitals and Culture since 1945: Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris" research project. She is a full member of the CHS Mondes contemporains de Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne.

**Aleksandra Uzelac** is a Research Advisor at the Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO) in Zagreb, Croatia, where she is Head of the Department of Culture and Communication. She holds a PhD (2003) in Information Science from the University of Zagreb, and has over 25 years of professional experience in the area of cultural research on issues of digital culture, cultural policies, cultural cooperation, cultural heritage, cultural and social sustainability. She has been a member of different cultural networks and expert groups,

and has provided her research expertise in the form of research studies and issue papers for the Council of Europe, the European Commission and the European Parliament. Her work has been published in international and Croatian scientific journals and books. In 2018, she co-edited (with Jaka Primorac and Paško Bilić) the *European Union and Challenges of Cultural Policies: Critical Perspectives* special issue of the Croatian International Relations Review.

**Gao Xian** is a retired professor from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). He is an expert in development theories and development strategies. His work mostly focuses on Latin American countries and international relations, including international cultural relations.