

BACKGROUND AND CHALLENGES OF A CULTURAL DIPLOMACY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Joan Álvarez & Inmaculada Ballesteros,
with Samuel Lillo's documentary contribution

This study has been commissioned by Nacho Sánchez Amor,
Member of the European Parliament for the Socialist and Democrats
(S&D Group)



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(With the documentary contribution of Samuel Lillo)

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Preamble

IF the European Union wants to be a global player, it needs all the tools required to become one; wishing for it is simply not enough. One such tool is its own *soft power*, which has become a useful diplomatic tool and has great potential to promote universal values and democratic principles around the world. Given its role as a bridge to foster mutual understanding in the international community, culture should be a central and integral part of the EU's external action.

Culture is a key driver for addressing major global challenges in international relations. It is also an extremely important instrument for reconciling sometimes conflicting positions. If understood as a free and upward flow of ideas and creations, culture can also become a key enabler for peace and for conflict prevention, as well as a resource for stability and regeneration in any unstable context.

A strategic framework for deepening international cultural relations has been established as a result of the EU's current approach to its international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy. It has served to achieve many goals, including the creation of focal points in EU Delegations. There is a growing need to establish a permanent structural and institutional dimension for the EU's international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy, as well as to strengthen the role of its Delegations.

However, the international scenario has changed. In recent decades, the rise of anti-liberal and authoritarian regimes around the world has jeopardised the EU's cultural relations with these countries and their civil societies. These regimes challenge not only the architecture of the

multilateral international society, but especially the universal values and rights at its heart.

Culture has become yet another bone of contention in the increasing confrontation fuelled by non-liberal and authoritarian regimes, whose insidious understanding of culture does not include those ideas that have become universal, more open, and inclusive over time. These regimes understand culture under a false assumption—the existence of values arising from cultural relativism and hegemonic ethnocentrism that the West tries to impose in a (neo)colonial way.

The EU must adapt to this new reality and commit itself fully. To do so, it needs instruments of its own to represent the cultural face of the EU worldwide and confront these regimes. The EU should be able to have its own common and consolidated cultural image because its cultural and political identity transcends the expression of the identity of its 27 Member States and contributes to strengthening its cultural ties with civil societies in third countries.

Member States have their own national institutes of culture with representation abroad, and the EU collaborates meaningfully with them through EUNIC. Nevertheless, European culture cannot be fully expressed abroad through intergovernmental methods of voluntary and individual actions of the Member States alone. Representing and defining European culture is best done through a common and consolidated embodiment of the EU which goes beyond the image of the particular or fragmented cultures of the EU Member States.

Nacho Sánchez Amor

1.

Introduction

EU cultural diplomacy is not included in the soft power rankings that measure the value of this political practice such as the *ISSF World Soft Power Index*.

European cultural diplomacy programmes—both Creative Europe and Erasmus+, managed by the European Commission and EUNIC’s European Cultural Spaces—have a very powerful impact. By adding material and human resources, and increasing its scope and ambition, the EU’s soft power could be in a leading position. As with other EU policies, its supra- or multinational nature detracts from its visibility in favour of its integrated nations.

The European cultural diplomacy network brings together, among others, the networks and systems of five of the ten highest-rated soft powers in 2022: France, Germany, the United Kingdom (1), Italy, and Spain. Despite the difficulties in gaining recognition, the EU’s cultural diplomacy is a hugely relevant political practice for both governments and cultural agents in the more than 160 countries where it operates.

Perhaps, the only sound and strong competitors are the cultural diplomacy or soft powers of the United States and China. These are two cases as unique as the European one.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, US international cultural relations policy has been defined by its adherence to the liberal dogma of non-interference of the administration in cultural life, letting its cultural

industries be the advocates and spreaders of lifestyle and artistic excellence abroad. Barack Obama had no qualms about suggesting that as long as Hollywood was active, the US administration could save the cost of a cultural diplomacy apparatus.

Meanwhile, China has launched a diplomatic “charm offensive” to spread its language and the most appealing elements of its creativity and cultural heritage inserting itself into a gigantic operation to create infrastructures for trade and strategic capital investment worldwide—the Silk Road.

Defining cultural diplomacy and cultural relations

Before continuing, let us define the field of study to which we refer in this paper. Based on the work by Joseph Nye, soft power can be carried out through three mechanisms, namely public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy, and cultural relations. Regarding the first one, its field of action is the promotion of national interests to positively influence foreign public opinion. Cultural diplomacy seeks those ends using culture, while cultural relations are built by the civil society of the countries without the need for official agents.

For the purposes of this study, we shall use the definitions of cultural relations and cultural diplomacy set forth by Richard Arndt as reference. Accordingly, the field of cultural relations would be one in which different cultures come into contact with each other through their professionals without the intervention of the respective governments. Thus, we can say that cultural relations arise spontaneously and organically. On the contrary, cultural diplomacy is exercised officially through government structures with competencies in this field. Consequently, cultural relations and cultural diplomacy differ in their methodology, objectives, and results.

International Cultural Relations and Cultural Diplomacy in the European Union

According to the classical vision of International Cultural Relations (ICR), they originate from civil society, and governments are left out of much

of their pursuit. Thanks mainly to UNESCO's policies to promote cultural and creative industries, especially in the countries of the Global South, many governments develop direct policy measures to boost the internationalization of "national" cultures, whether or not they are part of each nation's diplomatic plans. In such cases, fiscal or economic incentives are introduced by the government, creating a space of convergence of cultural, economic and country-image strategies.

In turn, cultural diplomacy (CD) is understood as the set of strategies implemented by a government to channel the global or regional movement of works, projects, and narratives that can serve to showcase the national brand. Staff, financial and administrative resources are mobilized to act as "producers" or "editors" of the meaning that is intended to be conveyed to foreign audiences, whatever their profile.

Increasingly, the cultural diplomacy of European countries, and of the European Union itself, has been broadening cooperation, co-production and co-creation, directing diplomatic action toward listening efforts and leaving unilateral projection strategies in the background. Hence, the growing need for using a consistent and lasting design and practice for the specialist training of diplomats and adapting the goals of the action plans that are implemented in each region of the world in which they operate.

The differing leading roles between participants from institutions, businesses and civil society initiatives and the authors and government representatives of each country may be examined to distinguish international cultural relations from cultural diplomacy. Besides these differences in nature, clarifying this question requires considering the widely used concept of "soft power".

CD is always an exercise associated with government practices and the exercise of power. This is even the case when the relationship between the nations involved in a specific programme or action is an alliance or partnership relationship. The relationship between international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy may be represented by an arc of variation in their proximity or distance. Deeming cultural diplomacy as the "soft power" of a nation is widely accepted among

academics, journalists, and professionals. Soft power is often placed behind or together with military and economic powers. It is one of the three sources of power that underpins the position of hegemony, recognition, or leadership of a nation in the international arena.

It can be stated that using culture as a soft power tool marks the point of greatest distance between cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations. The differences between ICR and CD are substantially reduced when they are considered not from the point of view of their origin and management, but from the point of view of the impact or objectives that a nation achieves from them.

If we assume that the flow of cultural activities is intended to enhance prestige, reinforce admiration, or foster dialogue and mutual understanding, the conceptual difference between ICR and CD becomes greatly diluted. Both international cultural relations—whatever the degree of government intervention—and cultural diplomacy tend to have a similar or homogeneous impact, allowing the effects of one to help achieve the goals of the other. This happens very often.

The difference between ICR and CD in the specific case of the European Union is easily established when analyzing the attribution of competencies in the field of cultural action between Member States and EU bodies.

As we will learn later, the same can be said of what has been the long journey of the actions of EU bodies in the field of cultural policy, from the European Agenda for Culture to the simultaneous declarations of the Parliament and the Council at the end of 2022.

The predominant vision of culture in the European Union today is one that includes at its core the freedom of thought, creation, and expression of individuals. It contains—both in the documentation and practice of governing bodies—a perspective stemming from the Enlightenment, Liberalism and Human Rights. It is understood that culture has enormous power as a creator of behavioral models or lifestyles put into circulation along with other alternatives or competitive models. The confrontation between alternative and competitive models has skyrocketed in the past decade.

The political, technological, social and cultural changes that are taking place are gaining momentum at a time when a major change in the political map is sensed as a result of the upcoming European elections in June 2024. These changes pose major challenges to a New Cultural Diplomacy, which already benefits from a major commitment to its development in the coming years.

EU cultural diplomacy

As it often happens when it comes to the European Union—a project of unparalleled economic, political and cultural unity or alliance—European cultural diplomacy can only be understood on the basis that it is a unique, specific, perhaps post-national and certainly supranational political practice. The EU’s motto “united in diversity” is already sending a clear message to the world.

The strength and prestige of European cultural diplomacy lie in a unique governance model and inside a system of responsibilities and counterweights on which the nations, EU institutions and other cultural civil forces, or even actors from outside the Union itself rely on (as is the case of the UK since Brexit¹).

EU cultural diplomacy is a relatively young reality. It can already be considered a success story that has been gaining personality and prominence mainly during the last four terms.

The Treaty of Lisbon (2009) enabled the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and a dedicated diplomatic corps at the service of the EU. The EEAS is an autonomous body with its own budget and control over EU Delegations around the world. This structure is headed by a High Representative for Foreign Affairs with the appointment as Vice-President of the European Commission.

1 The UK’s departure from the EU takes resources away from European cultural diplomacy. Given that the British Council has remained a EUNIC partner, the relationship between the two parties is in a state that is too difficult assess.

Based on this institutional design, EU cultural relations are developed through a partnership between the European Commission, the EEAS and the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC). Under this collaboration arrangement, work abroad is arranged in clusters made up of local EUNIC offices and cultural focal points in the EU Delegations.

The Cultural Relations Platform (CRP) project has recently joined the EU's international cultural relations system. It is an initiative envisaged to foster collaboration between cultural agents in different areas such as training, cultural action, and cultural policies.

Competencies and political practice

Of the two elements involved in cultural diplomacy, namely culture and external action, the first is considered in the treaties in force and in the *acquis communautaire* as a “supporting competence”. The EU may carry out actions to support, coordinate or complement the actions of the Member States in the field of culture, provided that the necessary consensus exists.

The EU's external action, for its part, includes both its foreign policy and its external relations. While the former is a competence of the Member States coordinated by the High Representative/Vice-President of the Commission with respect to the EU position, the latter enables the EU to implement its cooperation and negotiation of international agreements policies. It should be remembered that the Treaties do not contain a definition of culture because they abide by the definition adopted by the Member States. Moreover, as far as competencies are concerned, the TFEU recognizes that they exist, albeit aimed at “supporting, coordinating or complementing the action of the Member States.” Within this framework, the Commission identifies the main areas for action which are currently: supporting cultural heritage, the socio-economic value of culture, boosting gender equality and diversity in the sector, and measuring the positive impact of culture on society.

As a specific political practice, European cultural diplomacy is the result of an uninterrupted and cumulative process of negotiation.

At an early stage, the few international cultural relations initiatives were managed by national diplomacy, establishing channels for the early and “inconspicuous” promotion initiatives launched by the Commission.

The ambition and success of the Media programme —especially nurtured by France as another element of its policy of internationalisation of French cinema—are very valuable precedents in promoting intra-European co-creation and increasing the international reach of European culture.

The same applies to the defence of the cultural exception within international trade treaties, which was reinforced by the agreements of the second edition of *Mondiacult*, the public cultural policy conference held in Mexico at the end of 2022.

Early on, the EU promoted cultural initiatives and educational programmes to widen the understanding of “common” European history and culture. The consolidation of this line of work can be found in programmes already mentioned such as Creative Europe and Erasmus+, which support cultural projects, student exchanges and the learning of European languages, among other activities.

The draft European Constitution of 2005 initiated a process of reflection between the Commission, the ministers of culture and the cultural sector itself. It focused on the possibilities and functions that culture could play in overcoming certain “shortcomings” of the European Union, thus thinking that culture would become a substantial element of European identity and citizenship. The Commission presented a Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (10 May 2007) including and outlining the results of this reflective process, setting objectives, identifying areas for action, and proposing a working method. Finally, on 16 November 2007, the Council of Ministers of Culture adopted the resolution on the European Agenda for Culture. This Resolution established for the first time in the field of culture, the political commitment of the Member States to design a European cultural action strategy, which pursues three strategic objectives through coopera-

tion with national authorities, dialogue with the cultural sector, and the integration of culture into other EU policies. Cooperation with national authorities is done using the open method of coordination (OMC), a new global mode of cooperation in the field of culture that offers a flexible and non-binding framework and encourages the exchange of best practices. Two other key legal instruments must be cited here: the June 2019 Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action, and the June 2021 Council Conclusions on the EU Approach to Cultural Heritage in conflicts and crises.

Besides these precedents and any specific actions in the field of international relations, the birth of the most powerful tool of external cultural action of the political EU can be traced back to 2006. That year the cultural institutes of six EU countries—British Council, Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danish Cultural Institute, Goethe Institut, Institut Français and SICCA, predecessor of Dutch Culture—decided to set up the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) in Brussels. Established as an international non-profit association (AISBL) under Belgian law, four years later EUNIC approved the engagement with directorates-general and other governmental bodies of EU countries that did not have institutions with the relative autonomy of the institutes.

EUNIC brings together organisations from all 27 EU Member States and adds value through its global cluster network. By pooling the resources and expertise of its members and working together in areas of common interest, EUNIC has become a recognised partner of the EU. It is also a partner for the definition and implementation of EU policy on culture within and outside the Union.

Since its inception in 2006, EUNIC has evolved into a strong network offering transnational collaborative projects worldwide through its current 36 members and 103 clusters. Members are national cultural institutions and organisations. Clusters are established collaboration platforms where at least three local EUNIC member offices work together. They can do it in the whole country or just in one city. A EUNIC cluster represents EUNIC as a whole and not just the members present in one country or location.

On 16 May 2017, during the Danish presidency of EUNIC, the association and the EU signed an Administrative Agreement outlining joint principles, values, and objectives for cooperation, as well as practical provisions for its implementation.

The strategy underpinning cultural diplomacy in the last two terms has consolidated an original and innovative political practice. Its outcome to date is a leading position with an original model that works within a unique architecture and provides a highly valuable experience in the landscape of cultural diplomacy in the 21st century.

Since its early days, European cultural diplomacy has been able to incorporate the idea of culture as a social activity from which many positive effects arise: the growth of the workforce, social integration, support for personal well-being, enhanced creativity, increased trade, the strengthening of EU consensus, and support for collective identity.

This is a very different concept from the predominant one in the 60s and 70s when culture was considered an obstacle to the modernisation of nations.

It has also benefited from the growing interest of the governments of the South in including culture in their agendas—with greater or lesser modesty—as one of the inherent dimensions of foreign relations, understanding it as a space in which the collective identity should be preserved.

The development of cultural and creative industries globally has also been significant thanks to the support of international organisations such as UNESCO and the EU itself. This has consolidated a cultural ecosystem in which diplomacy is entrusted with the mission of accompanying the commercial journey where cultural exception, cooperation, reciprocity, and co-creation should fit in.

In this context, EU cultural diplomacy—from shared actions and from national programmes—welcomed a reflection and a change of behaviour, incorporating the second great wave of digital transformation with the expansion of Internet connectivity and the emergence of social media.

Somehow, the success of this first stage of EU Cultural Diplomacy crystallised in 2016 with the Joint Communication of the Commission

to the European Parliament and the Council. The communication stresses, for the first time, the need to translate the cultural diplomacy capital accumulated in the 2006-2017 period by addressing the necessary reforms to adopt a new model leveraging all available resources and defining a new strategy with the engagement of all stakeholders.

The launch of a platform for such EU cultural diplomacy and the concurrence of EUNIC clusters and EU Delegations in many of the nations that fall within the geography of European diplomacy have been important steps in this direction.

Paradigm shift

The landscape of international cultural relations is changing at a fast pace. It involves important forces such as China's policy to position itself at the top of the pyramid of power on the international stage, or the de-globalisation movement and the division of the world into regions with different leaderships.

A striking but not yet well identified feature in the analysis of the new dynamics of the "change of era" we are experiencing, according to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, is the change in the status of cultural diplomacy in the international arena and at an internal level among the 27. It is a change of era in which culture wars and the political and social management of repertoires related to the dynamics of identities gain more prominence.

The increase in the number and prominence of communities of non-European origin in almost all EU countries has led to a major change in the blending of ways of life. It has also brought changes in the cultural references and in the process of polarisation which has a huge impact on educational models and cultural consensus. It is increasingly difficult to refer to a French, German, Swedish or Spanish culture—to cite four very diverse but overlapping cases in this respect. This has a noticeable influence on the parallel processes of building a European culture that can travel through the globe as such.

Given the current situation, cultural diplomacy is a highly competitive playing field. In contrast to what happened when the first major EU Cultural Diplomacy document was reached thanks to the Commission Communication of 2018² towards the end of the previous legislative period, cultural diplomacy has expanded. It includes more resources and visions; above all, it is being used vigorously by China and by top-tier powers such as India, Russia, South Korea, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia.

To keep a positive relationship or to reverse a negative relationship with many of the countries of the so-called Global South, it is necessary to produce new knowledge that brings us closer to conceptual frameworks different from those that we regard in Europe as indisputable progress benchmarks. It would be about generating influence with others, not over others.

Bearing in mind the gains and losses, the European Union's cultural diplomacy is currently facing great demands and major challenges. The adoption of a New European Agenda for Culture, the launch of the Cultural Diplomacy Platform and the increase in funding of key programmes such as Creative Europe, Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ in the 2021-2027 budget forecast are significant achievements, but it remains to be seen whether they deliver the expected results.

A good sign of this new sensitivity to the EU's international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy is the European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2022 on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations. Among other things, this resolution encourages engaging in open processes such as greater collaboration between EUNIC and the EU Delegations by identifying a focal point that will facilitate joint management or the management of cooperation funds as perfectly valid for financing joint EUNIC-Delegation policies. It also urges to advance in updating

2 European Commission (2016). Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations. Retrieved from: OINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations

resources and programmes and the philosophy or paradigm that underpins these practices. It also includes an obligation for the Commission to complete the drafting of a strategy for EU international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy by 2026. The international cultural relations dimension of the EU and its cultural diplomacy in this Resolution is largely informed by the Opinion of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs integrated into this Resolution.³

In view of the elections for the European Parliament scheduled for June 2024 and the mandatory renewal of the distribution of power, we may contribute with an overview of what has been the construction of the political practice of an original and innovative cultural diplomacy that will be useful in the immediate future to finalize the design of an appropriate architecture, programme, and paradigm.

³ European Parliament. (2022). Opinion of the Committee on Foreign Affairs for the Committee on Culture and Education on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU. Retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/AFET-AD-734199_EN.pdf

2.

Identity is a narrative, the narrative is an identity

THE history of European culture has been used as a narrative of identity by the European Union in certain contexts. In cultural terms, the EU has recognized and fostered the diversity and richness of the different cultures of its Member States as part of its common identity. Some highly regarded scholars such as Jürgen Habermas and Clauss Offe have proposed a specific model of identity—far from what is considered to be a more or less orthodox process of “production” of a nation according to Benedict Anderson’s vision—as constitutional patriotism. That is to say, as a collective identity that is nourished by the contents of the political or legal-political community agreed upon in the framework of the fundamental law.

Throughout the intricate history of the construction of the European Union—it virtually started in Napoleon’s time and during his conquest of the continent under the flag of French-style Progress—culture has been showcased as a very powerful source of shared identity. However, neither the references to Greco-Latin classicism nor to Christianity nor to the Enlightenment have the right profile to fill the whole space of a story shared by the citizens of a utopian European nation in the 21st century.

Looking closely, the successive attempts to reach a consensus on the identity that would be offered to the citizens of the current and future

members of the EU, which have been reflected in the Treaties and in the draft Constitution, offer a clear picture of the values that determine a way of life and, above all, a way of organizing politics and the rights and obligations of the public sphere.

The history of European culture, with its achievements and contributions in various fields such as art, literature, music, philosophy and science, has been used to highlight the values and traditions shared by Member States. It is important to bear in mind that European identity is diverse and complex; not all EU Member States share the same cultural history or views on European identity. The EU recognises and respects this cultural diversity, encouraging the display and promotion of different national and regional cultures within its framework of unity and cooperation.

European culture is largely rooted in what is often referred to as “common cultural heritage”. There have been a great number of views to address the issue. It is difficult to form a single and global idea of European culture. Nevertheless, there are core elements that are generally accepted as the cultural basis of modern Europe. A list of these elements would include:

- A common cultural and spiritual heritage derived from Ancient Greece and Rome, Christianity, Judaism, the Renaissance and its Humanism, the political thought of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, and the developments of the modern period.
- A rich and dynamic material culture that has spread to other continents.
- A specific conception of the individual expressed by the existence of and respect for a legality that guarantees human rights and freedom of expression.

The concept of European culture is usually linked to the classical definition of the Western world. According to this definition, Western culture is the set of literary, scientific, political, artistic, and philosophical principles that distinguish it from other civilizations. The term has also ap-

plied to countries whose history has been strongly marked by European immigration or settlement during the 18th and 19th centuries, such as the Americas and Australasia. It is not limited to Europe.

Europe's cultural capital is at the core of the EU's international cultural relations policies and cultural diplomacy. Joseph Nye, the most renowned cultural diplomacy theorist of our time, considered Europe in his classic book *Soft Power* (2004) as "America's closest competitor in soft power resources". Nye argues that the European Union itself "as a symbol of a united Europe is heavily loaded with soft power." Its heritage and cultural capital give shape to a narrative that goes beyond the borders of the geographical reality of the current Union, although in some aspects it causes dysfunctions by containing elements that distort the history of its Member States. This situation also leads us to controversial questions. This has been the case in recent years with restitution policies and with the questioning of the narratives that gave conceptual foundations to the great museums and other key institutions in the cultural reality of Europe.

However, the success of the EU's international cultural relations and its cultural diplomacy must be attributed to the debate established between the international management of culture by the Member States and the progressive implementation of a common cultural policy of international scope with shared objectives, drawing on the extraordinary heritage of European culture and multiplying the creativity of the artistic and cultural sector of the Member States.

3.

Background and models

CULTURAL diplomacy as a specific political practice was born in the last quarter of the 19th century in France, Italy, and Germany. As highlighted by Gregory Paschalidis' classic essay, it emerged as an initiative of groups of patriots in the time of European imperialism who created an extensive network of centers to export the teaching of the language—French, Italian, or German. This came forth along with what could be considered the conceptual kit that sustains a patriotic feeling or a national identity.

The *Alliance Française*, the *Società Dante Alighieri*, and the *Auslandsschule* were designed and launched with the aim of serving the language, accepting socialization, and nurturing patriotism in the diaspora. They gradually became a privileged option mainly for the elites in the African or Asian colonies who were offered the possibility of entering the educational system of the metropolis.

Cultural diplomacy also proves to serve to achieve, preserve, or increase national prestige, influence, reputation, leadership or power through culture and education. Language—one of the languages of the handful of “civilized” languages—was the best gateway to what some observers consider an acculturation process.

During the 20th century, cultural diplomacy made its way into the structure of governments with the creation of directorates for external cultural action. This is the case of the French government, which serves

as a model for others such as the Spanish and Mexican governments. The use of propaganda and the first governmental cultural management policies meant a leap in the ideology and management of cultural diplomacy. This happened mainly in Europe, where they were another resource of the array of tools embedded in the ideological confrontations during the 10s, 20s and 30s.

Cultural diplomacy experienced a turning point when the United States and the Soviet Union entered into the Cold War. It is in this context that a specific policy was developed, and later theorized by Joseph Nye as “the soft power of nations”. From that moment on, cultural diplomacy was understood as a power of nations that complemented military and economic power. It is the ability of states to make other states follow their will or support their policy without resorting to war or buying it by economic means.

Cultural diplomacy took different directions until reaching the wide range of approaches that exist today in which the economic aspects of the “country brand” come into play or other policies of international scope are explored, such as those developed with the support of UNESCO.

One of Europe’s earliest and most outstanding contributions in this long journey is the invention of the “Cultural Institute” model as a formula for excellence. It was a model with greater or lesser autonomy from the respective governments and with a greater or lesser dedication to language teaching.

Linked to the cultural institute formula, European cultural diplomacy is not an obstacle to the promotion of the national cultures that engage in it. An interesting research paper by Professor Yudhishtir Raj Istar of the American University of Paris highlights the difficulties of its development. It also considers its value as a special approach to understanding intercultural relations and bringing cultural exchange closer to practices that could prove to be an appropriate training method for cosmopolitan humanism.

The experience of European cultural diplomacy not only depends on multinational cooperation. Experiences of bilateral cooperation are constantly being developed within the European Union itself. This is

the case with the policies for the creation of Franco-German cultural institutes (ICFA), a priority project under the Treaty of Aachen which strengthens cultural cooperation between the two countries.

In 2021, the first ICFA opened in Palermo, Sicily. Nine others will be added to the cultural action cooperation network. The next one will be the Iraqi Kurdistan ICFA, due to open in 2023 in the Erbil Citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The innovative ICFA consolidates the friendship between France and Germany and offers new perspectives to EU cultural diplomacy by reinforcing the EUNIC-European Commission project of opening Houses of Europe or European Culture in the geography of the already established clusters.

The same applies to cross-border cooperation policies, which have proven to be an excellent way of rooting cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue practices that can be exported to all territories.

Moreover, European programmes acquire a particular nuance depending on the location in which they are deployed. In this regard, the results of the collaboration with the neighboring countries of the Mediterranean area or of Eastern Europe and Asia are particularly interesting.

Given that it is a complex practice, the models mentioned can play an important role. Even more so at a time like the present, when classical diplomacy has been overwhelmed by the shift in the sense of nation or post-national alliance. There has been an increase in contacts and exchanges between nations and a multiplication of stakeholders creating image, prestige, reputation or “soft power” within each country or alliance with the *ad hoc* governance of their relations beyond the political sphere or the intervention of governments.

In general terms, it can be said that cultural diplomacy as a consistent policy of a nation or group of nations is rapidly expanding. The vast majority of the nearly two hundred states that are part of the UN have a policy and institutional architecture to achieve the objectives of prestige, image, reputation, or soft power by mobilising their cultural re-

sources, idiosyncrasy and peculiarities in the international context in a broad sense. The several models at play use similar tools but have many different objectives and diverse governance. It happens if we compare the cases of China, India, France, Norway, Ethiopia, Spain, and Jamaica. The European Union model emerges as a unique, specific and unparalleled proposal.

4.

Architecture and Governance

THE practice of cultural diplomacy in the European Union, as in most nations and states, rests on a specific institutional architecture involving a myriad of actors. It involves the national authorities in charge of cultural diplomacy in each country, including EUNIC, the European Commission, programmes such as Erasmus + and Creative Europe, the EU Delegations around the world, and the Foreign Service.

The architecture of EU cultural diplomacy developed as a specific interpretation of cultural policy was consolidated as the EU's supporting competence for its Member States. In this regard, some important milestones should be highlighted, such as the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations", particularly promoted by Federica Mogherini.

The wealth of experience, the heterogeneity of the interests involved and the variability of the successive approaches have gradually shaped a unique configuration of the cultural programmes under the brand or umbrella of the European Union in the rest of the world. This applies to initiatives such as the European film festivals organised jointly by a number of EU Delegations in different countries, the unique programmes of the EUNIC clusters and the most recent programme Spaces for Culture, which next year will celebrate its third edition and can be considered the most ambitious initiative developed by EUNIC and promoted by the European Parliament. In parallel, Creative Europe, Media Mundus and the highly

successful Erasmus+ programmes are also important resources for the EU's international cultural relations and its cultural diplomacy.

A comprehensive view of cultural diplomacy, as reflected in Joseph Nye's opinion, should include the extraordinary value and projection of European institutions around the world, the prestige of its contemporary creators, and the admiration that its heritage provokes. Governing these assets as resources of European cultural diplomacy is one of the most interesting challenges facing institutions, governments, and civil society.

The variety of resources available to the European Union for developing comprehensive cultural diplomacy is huge. Adjusting the conceptual framework or paradigm in which its strategies are justified or can be justified requires understanding which institutions and agencies are involved in the production and implementation of the external action, as well as the different administrative frameworks in which they are found.

At the first level, it is essential to highlight those institutions and departments that are part of the structure of the European Union linked to the area of Foreign Affairs and Culture associated with the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, and the European Parliament. It is true that their role and competencies are different, and a hierarchy must be established in their participation in the process of developing cultural diplomacy. There are also transnational actors linked to the EU itself whose role has increased in recent years due to their capacity and influence in the development and expansion of European cultural policies abroad, establishing networks with different institutions at different administrative levels on all continents.

On the other hand, the participation of EU Member States in the decision-making process means adding a national layer to the study of the EU's international cultural relations and European cultural diplomacy. The countries themselves have institutions dedicated to the cultural projection of each Member State, which translates into national cultural projects. At the same time, they engage in European cultural initiatives and their work involves the projection of European values and image.

Another key point in this analysis is to address some of the most important cultural projects implemented by the European Union globally.

This enables understanding of the characteristics of its international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy developed in recent decades and any alternatives that could be developed building on initiatives already implemented.

Finally, it is worth highlighting those private bodies and associations that are linked to the European Union through specific cultural projects. While analysing the number of associations and their initiatives is beyond the scope of this study, it is necessary to acknowledge their existence and their work by showing some examples. It is also key to understanding the potential role they can play in European cultural projection.

The main institutions in charge of developing cultural diplomacy within the EU are:

- Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). This configuration of the Council of the European Union is made up of the ministers of each Member State responsible for this ministerial office; it also includes those in charge of defence, development, and trade. The Council is headed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and convenes once a month. Its role is to ensure the unity, coherence, and effectiveness of European external action. It may carry out actions for the management of external affairs and take the necessary steps to implement European policies. It is the body with the greatest influence on the development of the EU foreign policy of the Council of the European Union as it brings together the foreign policy representatives of each Member State. It establishes the main objectives and goals of European external action, thus setting the geographical and diplomatic priorities. Led by the High Representative together with the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture and EEAS, it has become the major promoter of the development of EU external cultural relations since 2017.
- Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC). This European Commission department is responsible for

the development and implementation of European policy on education, youth, sport and culture. The main objectives of its current agenda are a green deal, a digital strategy, a job creation plan, and three external aspects, namely strengthening Europe's role in the world, promoting its values, and protecting its democracies. This body is primarily responsible for establishing and managing European cultural programmes and projects such as Erasmus+, Creative Europe and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. It engages in the development of European cultural policies abroad and initiatives to consolidate current cultural diplomacy, developing different projects and programmes in line with the guidelines established by the High Representative, the FAC and the EEAS.

- European External Action Service (EEAS). EU diplomatic service headed by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission. It is responsible for conducting the EU's diplomatic relations with third countries and implementing the Union's foreign and security policy. There are several internal sub-units that analyses needs, objectives and challenges on a regional and thematic basis. The Strategic Communication and Foresight division, which includes the Communication Policy and Public Diplomacy unit should be highlighted. The division dedicated to the Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations (specializing in International Relations and European Political Studies) should also be mentioned. The main points that define European cultural diplomacy raised in the strategies of the 2030 Agenda are addressed here. These include human rights, the green transition, multilateral relations, etc. Abroad, its main tool is the network of EU Delegations that function as embassies whose role is to represent the EU in different countries.
- European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EEACEA). It is a division of the European Commission that is directly responsible for the administration of funds for some of the most prominent programmes linked to DG EAC such as Erasmus+, Creative

Europe, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV), European Solidarity Corps, Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme, and Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions. The budgets for each programme for 2021-2027 are: €5.699 billion for Erasmus+, €2.242 billion for Creative Europe, €877 million for CERV, and €117 million for the European Solidarity Corps. This body is responsible for the processes of programme development such as application evaluation, selection, monitoring, and logistical support. It provides feedback to the European Commission for improvement.

- Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS). This Council of the European Union configuration is made up of the ministers of each Member State responsible for the several areas involved. They meet three or four times a year, twice with all members. It is a council for the exchange of information and experiences on the various sectors, the monitoring of cultural policies, and the adoption of legislative measures in these areas at EU level. Culture competencies include preserving Europe's cultural heritage, supporting cultural and creative sectors, and encouraging the mobility of students and teachers. This council is not the main institution for the development of cultural external action and its work is focused on actions at the EU level. Nevertheless, the presence of state representatives in this area shows the influence at the national and supranational levels of the decisions taken in this body, articulating the main cultural paradigms on which EU cultural policies are based.

EUNIC's role should be examined separately given its semi-public transnational dimension. European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) is a European network of organisations and institutions in charge of cultural relations. It is a platform for sharing knowledge and establishing a dialogue between member countries and foreign countries. It has three main objectives, namely to strengthen international cultural relations; to advocate for culture in international relations as an EU strategy; and to enhance its capabilities as a network. EUNIC has more than 130 clusters worldwide. It develops, in coordination with local stakeholders, EU Delegations and Member States' diplomatic missions, three-year work pro-

grammes that they jointly implement. It is linked to the EU institutions because part of its funding comes from DG EAC through the Creative Europe programme. With the aim of shaping a strategic partnership, EUNIC, the EEAS and the Commission signed an Administrative Agreement in 2017. The joint guidelines provide more practical details to this partnership in terms of designing effective working relationships. Consequently, the EEAS and the Commission maintain close and regular contact with EUNIC. It has collaborated and continues to collaborate with DG EAC and EEAS as showcased by the cultural activities held in several non-member countries taking advantage of EUNIC networks and EU Delegations, as well as by projects and programmes with several countries such as Jordan, Sudan, Cuba, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is currently involved in the European Spaces of Culture project, which was initiated by the European Parliament and implemented through EUNIC, EU Delegations and local centers in order to establish models of cultural collaboration and develop projects with several countries and regions. In addition, it has joined the Cultural Relations Platform proposed by EEAS in 2021.⁴

There are a number of other departments, directorates-general, commissions and bodies of EU institutions that are directly and indirectly engaged in drawing up and developing a European cultural action, whether through cooperation, technical coordination, fund management, contacts with neighboring countries or in the areas of communication and digital media. The main ones are listed below:

- Directorate-General for International Partnership (DG INTPA). It is a Directorate-General of the European Commission responsible for formulating the policy on EU international partnerships, development and cooperation aimed at reducing poverty, ensuring sustainable development, and promoting democracy, human rights and respect for European laws and values throughout the world. This department manages the development aid and coop-

4 EUNIC. (2021). Joint Statement between EUNIC and the European External Action Service. Retrieved from <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/media/site/6f1903e5aa-1623678525/jointstatement-eunic-eeas.pdf>

eration agenda programmes. It is informed by the EEAS guidelines, acting in developing countries through the EU Delegations. Some of the cultural programmes set up by DG EAC in Africa and South America have been evaluated together with this DG to achieve the EU's common objectives, such as the European Solidarity Corps and the Academic Mobility Strategy across Africa.

- Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR). It is a Directorate-General of the European Commission that deals with the EU's neighborhood and enlargement policies. Its role is to support reforms and democratic consolidation in neighboring countries and to promote European values and interests in the different neighboring regions, as well as to guide the candidate countries to meet the criteria for membership. Culturally, it carries out important work to establish cooperation plans with neighboring countries in order to promote European values. It works closely with DG EAC and EEAS, implementing policies for the preservation of culture and cultural heritage, as well as educational and research projects with different countries.
- Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). It is a remnant of the former Directorate-General for Foreign Affairs that was absorbed by the EEAS. It is a service of the European Commission to implement the EU's foreign policy in accordance with the guidelines already laid down. Its work ranges from responding to foreign policy needs to building alliances around the world, supporting and monitoring democracies, coping with crises, and dealing with security threats. It is responsible for the operational and financial management of the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy. It works closely with the EEAS as a complementary body, carrying out important work linked to areas such as the defense of peace, human rights, and democracy. It also plays a leading role in the Commission's goal of "a stronger Europe in the world" by participating in the development of strategies to widen the EU's influence abroad with the advancement of public diplomacy.

- Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG Connect). It is a Directorate-General of the European Commission whose work focuses on the development and implementation of policies to make Europe fit for the digital age. Its digital transformation objectives and the relationship with the media make this DG a key area for external projection. There is a division dedicated to media policy that involves the entire apparatus associated with the media, the audiovisual industry, media support programmes and international cooperation for developing information and communication technologies. This entails an important control over one of the most widely used tools of public diplomacy in the 20th and 21st centuries.
- European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT). It is a committee responsible for the dissemination of culture, cultural heritage, and cultural and linguistic diversity, as well as education, audiovisual and information policies. One of its functions is to supervise the cultural programmes developed in the Member States and the right development of the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Its specific competencies are: improving the knowledge and dissemination of culture; protecting and promoting cultural and linguistic diversity; preserving and safeguarding cultural heritage, cultural exchanges and artistic creation; the Union's education policy; audiovisual policy and the cultural and educational aspects of the information society; youth policy; information and media policy; cooperation with third countries in the fields of culture and education; and relations with the competent international organisations and institutions.
- European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET). Its functions are the promotion, implementation, and monitoring of the EU's foreign policy, as well as the funds allocated to it. It is the committee responsible for adopting international agreements with third countries, ensuring respect for the values that the European Union upholds, such as democracy, prosperity, and security. In addition to overseeing the EU's foreign policy

and the work of the EEAS, one of the competencies closest to the cultural sphere is the strengthening of political relations with third countries through comprehensive cooperation and aid programs, and partnership and cooperation agreements.

- European Parliament's Committee on Development (DEVE). It is responsible for promoting, implementing, and monitoring the EU's cooperation and development policies. It is also responsible for legislating, programming and scrutinizing any actions and policies related to developing countries and areas. The follow-up and oversight of the legislative work for cooperation in less developed regions of the planet connect the work of this committee with the activities carried out by the DG for International Partnerships (INTPA).
- European Committee of the Regions (CoR). This committee works to bring European citizens closer to the European Union, seeking to bridge the gap between the work of the institutions and their citizens by involving regional and local representatives. The committee has a Commission for Social Policy, Education, Employment, Research and Culture (SEDEC) with key competencies in the educational and cultural area aimed at developing digital competencies in schools, promoting university strategies for establishing transnational higher education cooperation, supporting the cultural sector, implementing the New European Bauhaus programme, defending freedom of expression, and promoting European values through culture and education.

The involvement of representatives of the Ministries of Culture and Foreign Affairs of the various Member States in the development of cultural diplomacy and cultural policies, as well as the engagement of national cultural institutions/institutes in EUNIC, make it possible to approach ministries and/or institutes as actors for EU cultural outreach. The following is a list of these centers by country:

- Germany Goethe Institute (Goethe Institut) - Institute for Foreign Affairs (ifa - Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen).

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- Austria Ministry of International and European Affairs / Österreich Institute (Österreich Institut).
- Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and Federal Cultural Institutions / Wallonie-Bruxelles International - Flanders Department of Foreign Affairs.
- Bulgaria Ministry of Culture (International Cooperation) / Bulgarian State Institute for Culture (attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- Cyprus Organisation for Cultural Relations and European Programmes (attached to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth).
- Croatia Ministry of Culture and Media.
- Denmark Danish Cultural Institute (Dansk Kultur-Institut - Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- Slovakia Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Slovenia Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Spain Instituto Cervantes - Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID).
- Estonia Estonian Institute (Eesti Instituut - Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- Finland Finnish Academic and Cultural Institute (Suomen kulttuuri- ja tiedeinstituutit - Ministry of Culture and Education).
- France Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs / Foundation of French Alliances (Foundation des Alliances Françaises) - French Institute (Institut Français).
- Greece Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Hellenic Foundation for Culture.
- Hungary Ministry of Culture and Innovation.
- Ireland Culture Ireland (Cultúr Éireann).
- Italy Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation / Dante Alighieri Society (Società Dante Alighieri).
- Latvia Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (Latvijas Investīciju un Attīstības Aģentūras - Ministry of Economy).
- Lithuania Lithuanian Institute of Culture (Lietuvos Kultūros Institutas - Ministry of Culture).
- Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs.

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- Malta Arts Council Malta (Arts Council Malta - Ministry of Culture).
- Netherlands Dutch Culture (Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- Poland Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Adam Mickiewicz Institute (Instytut Adama Mickiewicza - Ministry of Culture and National Heritage).
- Portugal Camões - Institute for Cooperation and Language (Camões - Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua - Ministry of Culture and Foreign Affairs).
- Czech Republic Czech Centres (Ceská Centra - attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs).
- Romania Romanian Cultural Institute (Institutul Cultural Român - Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

It is necessary to mention separately partner or collaborating members of EUNIC, but which are not members of the European Union:

- United Kingdom British Council (Foreign and Commonwealth Office).
- Ukraine Ukrainian Institute (Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

It is also pertinent to include certain cultural programmes with important global resonance under this heading:

- Creative Europe is a programme connected to the European Commission with funding of €2.242 billion for the period 2021-2027 from several European funds. It aims to safeguard, develop, and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, and to increase the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors. New features include transnational creations, co-financing of projects, EU-level cooperation to boost the audiovisual sector globally, the mobility of art professionals and the expansion of artistic sectors in a concrete way. This programme includes several initiatives such as the European Capital of Culture, the European Heritage Label and several European prizes for literature, architecture, film, and music.

- Erasmus+ is a programme managed through the European Commission with the specific work of the Education, Audio-visual and Cultural Executive Agency (EACEA) for certain elements; national agencies and institutions are also involved in the process. Its budget for the 2021-2027 period amounts to €5.699 billion. Its goal is student training and exchange. It has facilitated the movement of thousands of students throughout the continent. It has a global projection to attract young people from the rest of the world to the European continent.
- Citizens Equality, Rights and Values (CERV), is a programme developed by the European Commission, with a budget of €1.55 billion for the period 2021-2027. It seeks to protect and promote the rights and transnational levels through social organisations. While it mainly focuses on the continent to increase citizens' awareness of European culture, cultural heritage, identity, and history in order to strengthen the historical memory and ties of European citizens with the EU, it also aims to develop European networks to promote European values outside the continent.
- Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme is a programme developed by the European Commission and managed by the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) with a budget of €1.8 billion to foster academic exchanges and learning opportunities throughout the African continent. It also aims to improve cooperation between higher education institutions and private companies. In the long term, its goal is to create synergies with the Erasmus+ programme by linking and expanding educational exchanges between regions.
- European Spaces of Culture is a programme initiated by the European Parliament and assigned to EUNIC by the European Commission. Its objective is to seek new forms of collaboration in cultural relations by establishing projects between European organisations or institutions and local agents outside the EU. There are already several cultural projects underway in Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, China, Colombia, India, Kenya, Moroc-

co, Algeria, Egypt, Palestine, Benin, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, the United States and Uruguay, among others.

- Global Cultural Relations Programme (GCRP). It is an initiative that, in line with the conclusions on culture in the context of the external relations of the EU⁵ seeks to reinforce the EU's overall strategic approach in the field of international cultural relations, strengthen cultural relations between EU Member States, promote cultural diversity, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. While the 2016 initiative was entitled Global Cultural Leadership Programme (GCLP), and exchanges between creative and cultural industries were one of its main interests, the programme shifted slightly in focus in 2020. From then on, it was mostly focused on building strong relationships and peer learning. The GCRP offers resources and activities such as artist residencies, cultural events, training and research programmes and policy analysis that foster cultural exchange, collaboration between artists, cultural professionals and institutions from around the world, dialogue and learning regardless of borders, age, and sociocultural backgrounds.
- Partnership Instrument (PI): One of its goals is to promote EU visibility and understanding among nationals by encouraging contact between people, educational and academic cooperation, collaborative work with think tanks and carrying out activities that promote the values of the Union.
- European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR): It is a programme focused on aid for the advancement of democracy, human rights, and civil liberties, but it also includes the promotion of political, artistic and cultural expressions in any country that requires it.

⁵ Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relation and a framework for action. (2019). *Official Journal*, C 192, 6-10. CELEX: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0607\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0607(01))

- Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI): This programme has a section dedicated to promoting cultural diversity and dignifying all cultures equally. It also contributes to the development of cultural industries in developing countries.

There is a large network of private organisations and associations working with the European Commission in the field of culture. Its work is closely linked to the internal cultural development of the European Union, but its international projection is clear.

- European Cultural Foundation is an organization created in 1954 with the aim of developing a European sentiment through cultural cooperation. It is currently involved in important institutional projects such as Erasmus+, but also promotes and develops initiatives with neighboring countries to support the spread of European values.
- Europa Nostra. It is a European network aimed at raising awareness of the value of cultural heritage for Europe, advocating for the integration of heritage into EU policies, actively contributing to the European political debate on culture, and participating in the policy-making process. The network includes more than 40 countries and a hundred public and private organisations linked to the network. One of the projects in which it collaborates is the European Cultural Heritage Agora: “Empowering Europe; Civil Society Movement for Heritage” under the Creative Europe programme.

5.

The need for a common cultural image of the EU

DESPITE the existence of all the instruments described above, the EU lacks the visibility in international cultural relations that its Member States possess. The latter have their own national institutes of culture, which are represented abroad, such as the *Alliance Française*, the *Goethe-Institut*, the *Instituto Cervantes*, the *Societa Dante Alighieri* or the *Instituto Camões*, among many others.

However, the EU's cultural and political identity transcends the expression of the identities and cultures of its 27 Member States, helping to strengthen cultural ties with civil societies in third countries. European culture could definitely be better represented and identified through a common and consolidated embodiment of the EU worldwide. In this regard, the EU needs to develop a new diplomatic instrument to take on this role. This idea is already contained in the European Parliament resolution on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations, and particularly in the contribution of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to this resolution.

In April 2023, driven by MEP Nacho Sánchez Amor, the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs proposed the creation of a new EU instrument for its international cultural relations and cultural

diplomacy. The proposal pursues the aforementioned common and consolidated representation of the EU worldwide. Different places, routes, and cultural symbols of Europe, which have become cultural references worldwide and are identified as references of European culture in third countries, such as “Camino de Santiago”, “Ventotene”, “Via Carlomagno”, among other equally relevant references, could be regarded as the cultural image of the EU in the world.

Among the different European cultural references, the proposal points out the “Toledo School of Translators”. Since the 14th century, the School undertook different processes of translation and interpretation of classical Greek-Latin Alexandrian texts, which had been translated from Arabic or Hebrew into Latin. In this vein, it proposes to develop an EU publishing and cultural repository/storage mechanism, as well as a label focused on translation and inspired by the tradition of the “Toledo School of Translators” that will go beyond the borders of the EU. This publishing mechanism would support translations of the main books on European culture and history into the languages of different third countries or regions and, at the same time, of the main books on the culture and history of a third country or region into several European languages.

The proposal would also enable the EU to promote co-creation and provide technical and material capacity building and financial aid to the creative, cultural and innovative sector and civil society industries in third countries, in collaboration with EUNIC and other European instruments.

6.

Challenges

Changing trends in the world stage of cultural diplomacy

1. Growth and strengthening of competitive diplomacy: China, Russia, India, Japan, South Korea, Turkey, Mexico. The particular case of the United States.
2. Dissolution of the consensuses that have given basis to a cultural canon or identity with the rise of the polarisation they feed; the spread of the anti-progressive virus deserves special attention.
3. New diplomatic scenarios that change the status of cultural diplomacy. Special relevance of the expelling of Goethe's staff from Russia or the persisting limitations to the expansion of Cervantes in China.
4. Advances in digital emperor diplomacy: Elon Musk in China, Sam Altman on a world tour with AI.
5. The revolution of the journey of cultural relations parallel is to the advances of networks and the fourth wave of digital transformation. The metaverse, AI, the new digital status of culture.

Recommended actions

1. To develop greater coordination and a specific training curriculum for the specialization of career or experienced diplomatic staff, both in the Member States and in the future permanent European Diplomatic School.
2. To strengthen the role of the EU Delegations in this area.
3. To clarify cultural identity, the set of values, the common heritage, management expertise, creative excellence as major resources of the European Union.
4. To harmonize the public and private spheres. To widen the space of non-commercialized culture. The value of cultural exception and culture as an exchange of gifts.
5. To rethink culture linked to language teaching.
6. To continue exploring programmes for a resolutely innovative EUNIC.
7. To reflect on the values-collective identity dialectic.
8. To use the digital space for the exercise of cultural diplomacy, complementing activities in the physical space.

7.

About the authors

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Researcher of the Chair of Cultural Diplomacy at the European Institute of International Studies and director and/or coordinator of different international cultural projects such as the Biennial of African Photography (2022) and the South Series International Festival (2023) in Cadiz. He has just edited the collective book *Cien años de diplomacia Cultural española* (One Hundred Years of Spanish Cultural Diplomacy), commissioned by the Ramón Areces Foundation. He was director general of the Spanish Film Academy (2017-2018) and directed the Cervantes Institute's headquarters in Stockholm and Casablanca (2010-2017). He created and directed the Foundation for Audiovisual Research and the "Luís García Berlanga" Screenwriters' Training Centre at the Menéndez Pelayo International University in Valencia. He has been deputy director of the Reina Sofía Art Centre in Madrid and advisor to the Minister of Culture, Carmen Alborch. He has written more than two thousand articles on cultural journalism and a dozen scripts for film and television in different formats.

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