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**JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE
COUNCIL**

Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations

1. CONTEXT

Cultural diversity is an integral part of the values of the European Union. The EU is strongly committed to promoting a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental rights. Accordingly, promoting diversity through international cultural relations is an important part of the EU's role as a global actor. This involves a commitment to both promoting 'international cultural relations', through the support and assistance the EU provides to third countries, and supporting the promotion of the Union and the diverse cultures of EU Member States through 'cultural diplomacy.' As a key partner of the United Nations (UN), the EU cooperates closely with UNESCO¹ to safeguard the world's cultural heritage.

The EU has a lot to offer to the world: diversity of cultural expressions, high quality artistic creation and a vibrant creative industry. It also stands to benefit greatly from increased exchanges with the rest of the world. At the same time, the EU's experience of diversity and pluralism is a considerable asset to promote cultural policies as drivers for peace and socio-economic development in third countries. This Joint Communication outlines the contribution the Union already makes to international cultural relations and proposes ways to develop the EU's international cultural relations in order to advance the Union's objectives to promote international peace and stability, safeguard diversity, and stimulate jobs and growth.

In 2007, the Commission proposed a 'European Agenda for Culture in a globalising world'², which included the promotion of culture in the Union's international relations. Since then, the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty and the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) create a new architecture, which can further enhance the EU's contribution to international cultural relations. In recent years, Member States, the European Parliament and civil society representatives have requested a more coordinated EU approach to international cultural relations.³ In November 2015, the Council called on the Commission and the High Representative to prepare a 'strategic approach to culture in the EU's external relations, outlining for this purpose a set of guiding principles.'⁴ Accordingly, this Joint Communication proposes such principles, as well as a more strategic EU approach towards cultural diplomacy.

As a party to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions⁵, the EU is committed to promoting the diversity of cultural expression as part of its international cultural relations. This reflects and promotes the EU's fundamental values, such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity.⁶ Culture, and in particular inter-cultural dialogue, can contribute to addressing major global challenges – such as conflict prevention and resolution, integrating refugees, countering violent extremism, and protecting cultural heritage. With the 2014 Communication on Cultural Heritage⁷, the EU reaffirmed its commitment to protect cultural heritage, in cooperation with organisations such as the

¹ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

² Communication on 'European Agenda for Culture in a globalising world' COM(2007) 242 final.

³ See: Council Conclusions on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in external relations (2008); European Parliament's Resolution on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external action (2011); 2014 EP Preparatory Action 'Culture in EU external relations' <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/>

⁴ Outcome of 3428th Council Meeting: Education Youth Culture and Sport, 23-4 November 2015

⁵ <http://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention/about/2005-convention-text>

⁶ EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

⁷ Communication 'Towards an Integrated approach to the cultural heritage for Europe' COM (2014) 477 final.

Council of Europe and UNESCO. This work remains urgent in view of the destruction of cultural heritage in conflict zones such as Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan.

Cultural exchanges can also bring economic benefits. Global trade in creative products has more than doubled between 2004 and 2013⁸, whilst culture is a central element in the new economy driven by creativity, innovation and access to knowledge. Cultural and creative industries represent around 3 % of the global GDP and 30 million jobs.⁹ In the EU alone, these industries account for over 7 million jobs.¹⁰ Likewise, in developing countries, the cultural and creative sectors contribute to promoting sustainable development and inclusive growth. Culture can therefore help promote **job creation and competitiveness** both inside the EU and beyond its borders. This is recognised in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development¹¹, which underlines that culture, including world cultural heritage and creative industries, can have an important role in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Culture is therefore one of the important sectors promoted as part of the EU's development cooperation.

Europe's cultural relations with other countries are already strong. Member States already have extensive and long-standing international cultural ties and Europe is highly regarded around the world for its cultural traditions and creation. In line with requests from the Council and the Parliament¹², coordinated EU action, based on 'smart complementarity', can contribute to strengthening these ties by creating synergies, pooling resources, facilitating cooperation and providing more visibility to these cultural exchanges and actions.¹³

This Joint Communication proposes an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations that focuses on advancing cultural cooperation with partner countries across three main strands: supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development; promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations; reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage. In pursuing these objectives, the EU's International Cultural Relations will contribute to making the **EU a stronger global actor** – a major priority for this Commission as well as of the High Representative's forthcoming Global Strategy.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR EU ACTION

The following principles should guide EU action in the field of international cultural relations:

(a) Promote cultural diversity and respect for human rights

The EU is firmly committed to fostering cultural diversity, which can be protected and promoted only if human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed. These fundamental rights constitute essential foundations for democracy, rule of law, peace, stability, sustainable inclusive development and participation in public affairs. States have an obligation to respect, protect and promote the rights to freedom of opinion and expression, including artistic

⁸ The Globalisation of Cultural Trade: A Shift in Cultural Consumption--International flows of cultural goods and services 2004-2013, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 2016.

⁹ Cultural Times, report by CISAC and UNESCO, 2015.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/21252030%20Agenda%20for%20Sustainable%20Development%20web.pdf>

¹² <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/>

¹³ Studies suggest the EU should engage in Cultural Diplomacy activities drawing on the very positive perceptions of European and Member States' culture, arts and history. http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/showcases/eu_perceptions_study_en.htm

expression. In this regard, and in line with its obligations under EU and international law¹⁴, the EU is therefore committed to promoting a tolerant, pluralistic approach to international cultural relations.¹⁵

(b) Foster Mutual Respect and Inter-Cultural Dialogue

In order to fully realise the potential bridging role of culture in international relations, it is necessary to go beyond projecting the diversity of European cultures, and aim at generating a new spirit of dialogue, mutual listening and learning, joint capacity-building and global solidarity.¹⁶ Cultural relations should take account of regional differences and local sensitivities, tailoring action to particular cultural contexts and interests. Since people frequently engage across borders using digital tools, communication between peoples should be encouraged to take place under conditions of respect and equality and in a spirit of partnership. Reciprocity, mutual learning and co-creation should therefore underpin the EU's international cultural relations.

(c) Ensure respect for Complementarity and Subsidiarity

The proposed EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations rests within full respect for the respective spheres of competence of the EU and its Member States. According to Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in the area of culture the Union shall have competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States. Article 167 (3) TFEU states that the Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture. Furthermore, according to Article 167 (4) TFEU, the Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties. In development cooperation, the EU and its Member States complement and reinforce each other (Article 208 TFEU). In full respect for the principle of subsidiarity, the EU acts to promote international cultural relations when it can be more effective than action taken at national, regional or local level. Recent Council Conclusions on Culture in the EU's external relations noted that there is 'a need for a better coordination of efforts towards a strategic European approach.'¹⁷ Accordingly, the EU can act as an enabler and contribute by encouraging synergies between and cooperation among national cultural institutes and foundations, as well as private and public enterprises worldwide, as appropriate.

(d) Encourage a cross-cutting approach to culture

Culture is not just about the arts or literature. It spans a wide range of policies and activities, from inter-cultural dialogue to tourism, from education and research to the creative industries, from protecting heritage to promoting creative industries and new technologies, and from artisanship to development cooperation. The proposed strategy therefore encourages opportunities to promote culture within the EU's external policies. Culture is also a key element of sustainable development insofar as the creative sector can promote reconciliation, growth and freedom of expression on which other fundamental freedoms can be built.

¹⁴ Articles 2, 6, 21, 49 of TEU and articles 7, 8, 10, 11, 22 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. All EU Member States are State Parties to ICCPR and ECHR.

¹⁵ See also the EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline (doc. 9647/14).

¹⁶ As recommended by the Preparatory Action on 'Culture in EU External Relations' initiated by the European parliament and published in 2014: <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/main-outcomes/> and by 'A strategy for EU-China cultural relations: report of the expert group on culture and external relations – China' (November 2012).

¹⁷ Council Conclusions on Culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation. 24 November 2015

(e) Promote culture through existing frameworks for cooperation¹⁸

To ensure policy coherence and avoid duplication, the most effective way to promote culture within the EU's external relations is to use existing cooperation frameworks and financing instruments. The EU has developed tailor-made frameworks for thematic and geographic cooperation, along with dedicated financing instruments:

Thematic programmes

- Partnership Instrument (PI): one of its aims is to enhance 'widespread understanding and visibility of the Union... by means of public diplomacy, people-to-people contacts, cooperation in educational and academic matters, think tank cooperation and outreach activities to promote the Union's values and interests.'¹⁹
- European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR): this provides assistance to the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. One of the aims of this instrument is to promote freedom of opinion and expression, including political, artistic and cultural expression.²⁰
- The Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) aims under its human development component to promote cultural diversity and respect for the equal dignity of all cultures. It will also stimulate the contribution of cultural industries to economic growth in developing countries, civil society organisations and local authorities).
- Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP): this aims to promote conflict prevention, crisis response, peacebuilding in order to address global and trans-regional threats: cultural organisations are included within the definition of civil society for funding under this instrument.²¹
- Creative Europe Programme: this aims *inter alia* to 'promote Europe's cultural heritage and strengthen the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors' and the programme is also 'open for bilateral or multilateral cooperation actions with third countries.'²²

Geographic frameworks for cooperation

- **Enlargement Policy:** as candidate countries and potential candidates, the Western Balkans²³ and Turkey have a special place and importance in EU external policies. EU policies in the field of culture are part of the 'EU acquis' that candidates need to implement under negotiating Chapter 26 on Education and Culture. In this context, the region receives support under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA). The EU

¹⁸ Examples of specific actions and projects do not prejudice the implementation of new projects in line with this strategy. On the other hand, references to on-going projects or programmes do not imply their permanent financing.

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) No 234/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 Establishing A Partnership Instrument For Cooperation With Third Countries.

²⁰ Regulation (EU) No 235/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 Establishing a Financing Instrument For Democracy And Human Rights Worldwide.

²¹ Regulation (EU) No 230/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 Establishing An Instrument Contributing To Stability And Peace.

²² Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020).

²³ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro, Serbia.

has long supported cultural projects in the Western Balkans to promote inter-cultural dialogue, reconciliation and socio-economic development. In the context of the 'Ljubljana Process I and II', an action jointly conducted by the European Commission and the Council of Europe, significant resources were invested in rehabilitating cultural heritage in south-eastern Europe.²⁴ Cultural organisations within the Enlargement countries benefit from EU policy cooperation to build their capacities, as well as from the full participation in the Culture and Creative Europe Programmes.²⁵ The Enlargement Countries are currently facing new challenges, including the integration of newly arrived migrants, where inter-cultural dialogue can promote reconciliation and inclusive and democratic societies, and help counter radicalisation. The EU should continue working closely with Enlargement countries to help protect their cultural heritage, promote the development of their cultural and creative industries, and foster their participation in existing EU cultural programmes.

- **European Neighbourhood Policy:** the ENP governs the EU's relations with 16 of its closest Eastern and Southern Neighbours. A differentiated bilateral approach to each partner country is complemented by regional cooperation initiatives in the Southern Mediterranean²⁶ and Eastern Partnership.²⁷ Political, economic and cultural differentiation and greater mutual ownership are key elements of the renewed ENP.²⁸ Platform 4 of the Eastern Partnership serves as a forum for enhanced cooperation and policy dialogue in fields such as education, youth (including employability), culture and creativity, research and innovation, audio-visual policies and information society, while specific programmes support capacity building. In the Southern Mediterranean, the EU supports cultural cooperation through regional programmes on heritage and audio-visual, but also through bilateral activities. Many ENP countries face protracted challenges such as political tension, economic upheaval, violent radicalisation and migratory flows. Particularly in this context, cultural cooperation and exchange on cultural policies can contribute to stabilisation. For example, the European Neighbourhood Instrument is providing EUR 17 million between 2014 and 2017 to support media and culture for development in the Southern Mediterranean region.²⁹ Furthermore, the preservation of culture and cultural heritage is supported in five Cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes.³⁰
- **Development Cooperation:** The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) aims to reduce poverty and foster sustainable economic, social and environmental development as well as promoting democracy, the rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights.³¹ It includes three specific components: i) geographic programmes supporting cooperation with around 47 developing countries in Latin America, South Asia and North and South East Asia, Central Asia, Middle East and South Africa; ii) the newly established Pan-African Programme to support the strategic partnership between the EU and Africa. Several sections of the DCI Regulation acknowledge the role of culture.

²⁴ EU actions in this field in Bosnia and Kosovo have shown the potential of heritage-based policies for re-conciliation in post-conflict situations, in addition to their contribution to economic development.

²⁵ As envisaged in Article 8.3 of Regulation 1295/2013 of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe programme. List of participating non-EU countries: http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/library/eligibility-organisations-non-eu-countries_en

²⁶ Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine*, Syria and Tunisia.

²⁷ Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.

²⁸ Joint Communication 'Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (18 November 2015). JOIN(2015) 50 final.

²⁹ http://www.enpi-info.eu/mainmed.php?id=486&id_type=10

³⁰ http://www.enpi-info.eu/maineast.php?id=322&id_type=10

³¹ Regulation (EU) No 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 Establishing A Financing Instrument For Development Cooperation For The Period 2014-2020.

- The Cotonou Partnership Agreement signed in June 2000³² provided a twenty-year framework for the EU's cooperation with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Under this agreement, the European Development Fund (EDF) finances cultural programmes that are managed and implemented by the Secretariat of the ACP Group of States. The 9th EDF funded projects to strengthen the technical, financial and managerial capacities of creative industries in ACP countries and more specifically to develop and structure the ACP States cinema and audiovisual industries (EUR 14 million). Thereafter, the ACP Cultures+ (EUR 30 million under the 10th EDF) contributed to the fight against poverty by fostering sustainable cultural industries. The current Intra ACP Programme continues supporting the cultural and creative industries (EUR 40 million under the 11th EDF in the period 2014-2020). The Commission is currently exploring the framework that will govern relations with ACP countries after the expiration of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Preparations for a revised European Consensus for Development are underway.

3. ADVANCING CULTURAL COOPERATION WITH PARTNER COUNTRIES

As part of the proposed EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations, the Commission and the High Representative propose the following three work streams to advance international cultural relations with partner countries:

- supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development
- promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations
- reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage

3.1. Supporting culture as an engine for social and economic development

(a) Supporting the development of cultural policies

The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions³³ emphasises 'the need to incorporate culture as a strategic element in national and international development policies, as well as in international development cooperation.' The respect for cultural diversity and freedom of expression that is fostered by culture provides important support for democratisation processes and socio-economic development. Accordingly, the EU should help partner countries incorporate culture in national policies. The EU works to advance the ratification and implementation of the 2005 UNESCO Convention by deepening policy dialogues with partner countries and strengthening systems of governance.

- **Share experience with enlargement and neighbourhood countries:** the EU will use existing bilateral or multilateral structures for dialogue to share experiences and results, including initiatives such as the European Capitals of Culture. The Commission will promote the use of instruments such as TAIEX³⁴ and twinning in the area of culture.

³² https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/overview/cotonou-agreement/index_en.htm

³³ <http://en.unesco.org/creativity/convention/about/2005-convention-text>

³⁴ TAIEX is the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission. TAIEX supports public administrations with regard to the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as facilitating the sharing of EU best practices.

- **Strengthen cultural policies:** in the Southern Neighbourhood, Med Culture (2014-2018) supports partner countries in the development of cultural policies and practices, while MedFilm, a new three-year capacity-building programme, helps filmmakers to tackle sensitive issues on a regional level.³⁵

(b) Strengthening cultural and creative industries

As a dynamic economic sector, cultural and creative industries are an important provider of quality jobs and often promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Investments in cultural projects contribute to the competitiveness, attractiveness and social cohesion of cities and regions.³⁶ Over 70 EU regions have chosen culture and creative industries as a priority for their smart specialisation strategies, recognising these industries as drivers of regional growth and local jobs.

In developing countries, UNESCO's Culture for Development Indicators (CDIS) show that culture contributes 1.5 % - 5.7 % of GDP in low and middle-income countries – reflecting differences in the policy and institutional framework, the level of social participation and education and the degree of freedom of expression. For example, in Burkina Faso over 170,000 people (approximately 2 % of the active population), have occupations related to culture. Every country has its strengths: from Nigeria's cinema industry, to music in the Caribbean and to cultural tourism in the Middle East. To support further progress, the EU can share expertise on further developing relevant skills and a sound regulatory framework.

- **Increase economic revenues from creative industries:** The 11th EDF Intra-ACP programme will support the contribution of cultural industries to the socio-economic development of ACP countries (EUR 40 million 2014-2020)
- **Creative hubs and clusters:** in the global cultural industries, co-creation is the way forward. European and other international cultural players should find new ways to grow and win global audiences. Creative hubs and clusters are being set up in different regions including:
 - **The Asia-Europe Foundation**³⁷ is co-funded by the EU and supports Asia-Europe Cultural and Creative Hubs under the 'Creative Networks' Programme.
 - In **the Southern Mediterranean:** the EU is supporting a project to develop clusters in the cultural and creative industries (2013-17) with UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation).
 - In 2016, the EU launched an action under the Creative Europe programme to develop a **European Network of Creative Hubs**³⁸, which includes all countries participating in the 'Creative Europe' programme (including Serbia, Moldova, Turkey, Georgia and Ukraine).
 - From 2016, an EU pilot project is supporting **networking between young creative and cultural entrepreneurs from the EU and third countries.** The platform includes services such as coaching, peer-learning activities, conferences

³⁵ <http://www.enpi-info.eu/medportal/news/latest/45210/MedFilm:-Call-for-proposals-to-promote-development-of-film-industry-in-Southern-Mediterranean>

³⁶ The European Capitals of Culture provide a very good example: each euro of public money invested, for instance, in Lille 2004 (France) is estimated to have generated 8 euros for the local economy.

³⁷ <http://www.asef.org/>

³⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/news/2016/0405-european-network-creative-hubs_en.htm

on specific topics, study visits and meetings with potential investors around the world.³⁹

- **Entrepreneurship and skills development:** the European Training Foundation⁴⁰ will continue working on skills development for cultural and creative industries. The ACP Cultures+ programme aims to build the capacities of culture sector professionals in ACP countries.⁴¹ The EU aims to foster market opportunities for cultural goods and services, encourage innovation and new professions in modern technologies while supporting the training of creative professionals.
- **Support to European Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):** for example, as part of the Gateway programmes launched in 2016, the Commission can support creative SMEs in South Korea and South-East Asia through business missions and support services, including coaching, and logistical and financial support.
- **Structured territorial cooperation frameworks:** there are several examples of how culture can connect diversified regions, contribute to sustainable tourism, preserve the environment and promote energy efficiency.⁴² All strategies address culture as an investment for growth and jobs and as a pillar of economic activity under the European Territorial Cooperation goal.

(c) Supporting the role of local authorities in partner countries

The European Capitals of Culture and the World Cities Culture Report 2015⁴³ demonstrate the significant return - in terms of growth and social cohesion - for cities and other local authorities that invest in culture. The Commission's Joint Research Centre is developing a tool for monitoring cultural and creative initiatives at city level, which will support more targeted investments and learning from best practices. A recent external study which maps current and prospective cultural actions for development⁴⁴ confirmed that cultural activities boost local development dynamics, not least in rural areas where traditional skills and arts can help alleviate poverty.

The EU's approach to sustainable urban development recognises the central role of culture and considers the availability of public space for all citizens as essential. For example, in Latin American countries, the EU has promoted the distribution of audio-visual programmes to tackle social issues arising from inequalities in urbanised regions. Another example in Africa illustrates how art and architecture can make urban development inclusive and sustainable⁴⁵.

- **Innovative partnerships:** funded under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), this initiative with local authorities has a special focus on least developed countries including fragile democratic contexts or countries where cultural rights are threatened. Another project under the Multiannual indicative programme for Latin America aims to develop the role of culture and the arts in support of social cohesion in Latin American

³⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/culture/calls/general/2015-eac-s11_en.htm

⁴⁰ www.etf.europa.eu/

⁴¹ This Intra-ACP Support Programme is funded under the European Development Fund (EDF): <http://www.acpculturesplus.eu/?lang=uk>

⁴² These include: the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) of 10 June 2009, COM(2009) 248; the EU Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR) of 08 December 2010, COM(2010) 715; the Action Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic area, Delivering smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, of 13 May 2013, COM(2013) 279; the EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) of 17 June 2014, COM(2014) 357; and the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) of 28 July 2015, COM(2015) 366.

⁴³ http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/creative-europe/actions/capitals-culture_en.htm and <http://www.worldcitiescultureforum.com/publications>

⁴⁴ The study notably identifies suggestions for the 'Global Public Goods and Challenges Programme' (30 million).

⁴⁵ EU-African Union Project 'Visionary Africa'.

cities. The project facilitates exchanges and joint actions between the EU and Latin America to better integrate cultural policies and initiatives in urban development strategies, building on successful projects supporting social cohesion.

- **Support cultural city twinning:** the Commission promotes the role of cities as hubs of innovation and best practice by twinning towns and cultural sites that share similar social, economic and environmental problems to explore potential opportunities for development. The Commission plans to launch regional programmes with Latin America (particularly with the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, CELAC), promoting social cohesion through culture and the arts in large cities.⁴⁶
- **Share Capitals of Culture:** the Commission will share with partner countries experiences regarding European Capitals of Culture, which enhance cultural heritage and thereby support local and regional development.
- **Urban strategies in historic towns:** funded under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the EU supports municipalities in developing urban strategies for the rehabilitation of historic towns.

3.2. Promoting culture and inter-cultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations

Inter-cultural dialogue, including inter-religious dialogue, can help promote the building of fair, peaceful and inclusive societies that value cultural diversity and respect for human rights. By establishing common ground and a favourable environment for further exchanges, intercultural dialogue can defuse tensions, prevent crises from escalating, promote national reconciliation, and encourage new narratives to counter radicalisation. This section outlines how the EU can directly promote inter-cultural dialogue through international cultural cooperation projects, co-creation, people-to-people exchanges, social debate and peace building.

(a) Support cooperation amongst cultural operators

Cooperation, dialogue and mobility amongst cultural operators, artists are key aspects of inter-cultural dialogue. The circulation of works of art and cultural productions between countries spreads new ideas, establishes direct and indirect ties, and fosters innovation. Strengthened cultural cooperation with the EU's partners can help open the 'European cultural space' to new cultural players and audiences.

- **Encourage participation in Creative Europe:** while all Enlargement countries can already participate, the Commission encourages all ENP countries to join the Creative Europe programme (Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine already participate)⁴⁷. Creative Europe enables cultural and creative operators from ENP countries to work together with counterparts from all over Europe and access funding for cooperation projects and join European cultural networks.
- **Promote Culture within the Eastern Partnership:** following the success of Programme I that ran from 2011-2015, the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme II (involving Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine) will further develop the

⁴⁶ 'Culture and Arts supporting social cohesion in Latin America cities'.

⁴⁷ To participate fully in the MEDIA sub-programme a country must meet the requirements set out in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive

cultural operators' skills and capacities during a three-year period. It seeks to support regional initiatives in which culture contributes to economic development, social inclusion, conflict resolution and intercultural dialogue.

- **Support the Anna Lindh Foundation:** the Anna Lindh Foundation and its network of over 4,000 civil society organisations throughout the 42 countries of the Union for the Mediterranean benefits from EU policy support and tools for the promotion of cultural exchange.

(b) Fostering Peace-building through Inter-Cultural Dialogue

Inter-cultural dialogue is an important tool in the prevention of conflicts and the promotion of reconciliation and mutual understanding in post-conflict societies. The EU supports pragmatic cooperation and inter-cultural dialogue between different cultures and societies. It also supports processes of reconciliation between peoples and minorities. Particularly successful examples are Bosnia-Herzegovina's progress towards EU integration and the pragmatic agreements reached as part of the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue.

- **Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)** – the EU will enhance its support for inter-cultural dialogue in pre- and post-conflict situations.
- **Youth inter-cultural dialogue:** the EU will facilitate inter-cultural dialogue among youth organisations in Europe and elsewhere (including through programmes such as the Neighbourhood Civil Society Fellowships). In particular, the EU will support the second phase of the Young Arab Voices programme (now expanded to cover the Euro-Mediterranean region) to deepen the dialogue between young leaders and civil society representatives and counter extremism and violent radicalisation.
- **Training for observers of Election Observations Missions and staff to be deployed in civilian stabilisation missions:** to ensure full awareness of the prevailing local cultural sensitivities, training courses will be provided.
- **Promoting cultural rights:** including local identity and indigenous rights, as well as the role of cultural rights defenders, in line with the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights⁴⁸, including the rights of indigenous peoples as defined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)⁴⁹.

3.3 Reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is an important manifestation of cultural diversity that needs to be protected. Rehabilitating and promoting cultural heritage attracts tourism and boosts economic growth. Cooperation on cultural heritage plays an important role in international relations and in development policies as outlined in the Commission Communication: "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe."⁵⁰ Given the growing global demand for expertise, and the fact that many Member States are willing to share their knowledge, there are opportunities for joint action with partner countries to develop sustainable strategies for heritage protection through training, skills development and knowledge transfer.

⁴⁸ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

⁴⁹ http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

⁵⁰ COM(2014)477final.

Cultural heritage is fragile and often threatened by natural disasters, man-made destruction such as wars, looting and pillaging, sometimes motivated by sectarian hatred. Looted artefacts are often sold and the revenues generated by these transactions can be used to support terrorist activities: this impoverishes the world's cultural heritage. The EU has adopted restrictive measures towards Syria and transposed UN sanctions against Daesh/ISIL and Al-Qaida, as well as the UN sanctions regime for Iraq: these include a ban on illegal trade in cultural and archaeological artefacts.⁵¹

- **Research on cultural heritage:** Horizon 2020 supports research and innovation for cultural heritage activities through multinational, interdisciplinary projects that also engage local and regional authorities, businesses and civil society, aiming at new solutions for the preservation and management of cultural heritage in Europe that is jeopardised by climate change. Participation from non-EU countries is encouraged.
- **Combat trafficking of heritage:** the Commission is planning a legislative proposal to regulate the import into the EU of cultural goods, based on the results of a recently launched study to identify gaps in national legislation. The Commission will consider a wider response to combatting terrorist finance via illicit trafficking in cultural goods – whatever the country of provenance. Potential action includes the introduction of a certification system for the import of cultural goods into the EU coupled with guidance to stakeholders such as museums and the art market.⁵² The EU intends to support the training of customs officers at border controls to promote the early detection of stolen artefacts and encourage cooperation among art market professionals in the fight against illicit trafficking. The EU will also enhance cooperation with partner countries to combat the trafficking of cultural goods.
- **Protect heritage:** The Commission will contribute to international efforts, led by UNESCO, to set up a rapid reaction mechanism for the protection of cultural heritage sites. The Commission will also share with UNESCO, *inter alia* through the Copernicus Emergency Management Service, satellite imagery of cultural heritage sites at risk in order to evaluate damage and plan possible reconstruction. The EU will include expertise to assess damages to cultural heritage as part of post-disaster and post-conflict recovery measures. The EU Regional Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis will also contribute to protecting cultural heritage and promoting cultural diversity.

4. A STRATEGIC EU APPROACH TO CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

To advance successful cooperation with partner countries in the three work streams proposed, it is important for the relevant EU stakeholders to join forces to ensure complementarity and synergies. This includes government at all levels, local cultural organisations and civil society, the Commission and the High Representative (through EU Delegations in third countries), Member States and their cultural institutes.⁵³ The 2007 Communication on Culture

⁵¹ EU transposed UNSC sanctions regime against ISIL (Daesh) and Al-Qaida (as set out in UNSCR 1267) and subsequent resolutions, including UNSCR 2253 (2015). Since archaeological artefacts are to be considered economic resources for ISIL/Da'esh, the purchase of those items from ISIL/Da'esh is unlawful. The Council has transposed the UN sanctions regime against Iraq (which contains a trade ban on illegally removed archaeological artefacts) and has adapted the autonomous EU sanctions regime and restrictive measures against Syria to specifically include the trade ban on archaeological artefacts illegally removed from Syria.

⁵² Action Plan for strengthening the fight against terrorist financing, COM(2016) 50/2.

⁵³ A recent example in Tunisia demonstrates close cooperation between the EU Delegation, a Member State's cultural institute and the local authorities: the Commission launched a EUR 10 million programme to strengthen the audio-visual/media sector in Tunisia. Another project (EUR 4million), managed by the EU Delegation with the support of the British Council, will be launched later this year to promote cultural involvement at local level.

advocated the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the field of culture, as a light but structured way for EU Member States cooperate at European level.⁵⁴ In 2012, a Member States expert group, co-chaired by the Commission and the European External Action Service, explored the development of a strategic approach to culture in the EU's external relations. The report of the expert group highlighted the benefit of EU cultural engagement with partner countries through new, strategic ways of working together with the Member States.⁵⁵ The European Parliament subsequently initiated the Preparatory Action 'Culture in EU external relations', which advocated a 'smart complementarity' based on mutually agreed cooperation between Member States, notably via their cultural institutes and attachés abroad, and with civil society.⁵⁶ The EEAS now runs 139 EU Delegations and Offices operating around the world, which represent the EU and its citizens globally. The potential for cooperation and coordination to advance the EU's cultural diplomacy is considerable.

(a) Enhanced EU Cooperation

A concerted approach would allow European actors to pool resources and achieve economies of scale by working together in non-EU countries. A recent study by the European Parliament demonstrated the many benefits of close cooperation for the EU delegations, cultural institutes and EUNIC clusters⁵⁷: joint projects are less risky, have greater impact and are more visible, with greater opportunities for learning.⁵⁸

- **A Cultural Diplomacy Platform:** this was established in February 2016 and funded by the Partnership Instrument (PI). It is operated by a consortium of Member States' Cultural Institutes and other partners.⁵⁹ It will issue advice on cultural policy, facilitate networking, carry out activities with cultural stakeholders, Member States and EU delegations, develop training programmes for cultural leadership, and contribute to the development of the EU's international cultural relations.
- **Enhanced cooperation with Cultural Institutes:** following consultation with all relevant stakeholders, the Commission will propose later this year a new type of partnership between the EEAS, Commission services, national cultural institutes and their umbrella organisation (where mandates allow), setting out the principles of pan-European cooperation and the values that underpin it.
- **Enhanced role of EU Delegations:** delegations will act as local platforms for cultural institutes and other stakeholders in facilitating coordination and cooperation. The EU Delegations can help identify local needs and opportunities, ensuring that actions fit with local cultural contexts, while simultaneously serving the EU's strategic objectives. Cultural **focal points** in major EU delegations will disseminate best practice and provide training on the cultural dimension of development and external relations for staff.
- **Establishing European Culture Houses:** they would be based on a partnership between the EU and the partner country in question and would enable cultural institutes and other stakeholders to come together and provide services to the local

⁵⁴ Since 2008, OMC groups have worked on issues such as: Cultural and Creative Industries (including new business models and export strategies); mobility of artists and culture professionals; mobility of works of art; improving access to culture via digital means.

⁵⁵ The report was also the basis for the EU Ministers of Culture's debate on culture as a soft policy option on 17 May 2013.

⁵⁶ <http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/>

⁵⁷ EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture) is an umbrella network. It counts 34 Cultural Institutes amongst its members from 28 countries and 100 clusters spread around the world. <http://www.eunic-online.eu/>

⁵⁸ European Parliament study – European Cultural Institutes Abroad, January 2016.

⁵⁹ EEAS and Commission are part of the Steering Committee. See http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/announcements/news/20160401_1_en.htm.

population, engage in joint projects and offer scholarships, cultural and educational exchanges.

- **Promoting active civil society:** many stakeholders (e.g. civil society, artists, cultural operators, grass roots organizations) are involved in cultural relations between the EU and third countries. In bilateral relations and appropriate thematic programmes, the EU will therefore seek to strengthen its support to civil society organisations active in the cultural field in partner countries in order to build up their capacity and facilitate exchanges.
- **Joint EU cultural events:** supporting joint European cultural activities is an excellent way to enhance the visibility of the EU in third countries. A new two-year scheme with a budget of EUR 1.5 million to organise EU film festivals in a more coherent and strategic way will be launched in 2017 (following a study published in 2015) under the new PI action for Global Public Diplomacy.⁶⁰ At present, over 75 EU delegations are involved in running film festivals and other activities, such as the European Day of Languages, with different levels of cooperation with national cultural institutes.
- **Focus on strategic partners:** many of the EU's strategic partners have strong cultural diplomacy strategies⁶¹ and the EU has strong cultural cooperation with several partners. The Euro-American Cultural Foundation⁶² was established in 2013 to provide more structured funding to EU cultural programmes and strengthen cultural bonds between the USA and EU (including the Delegation and Member States). In South Africa, the EU is supporting young artists, audio-visual producers, musicians and sportspeople. Bilateral relations with China have included the people-to-people dimension since 2012.⁶³

(b) Inter-cultural exchanges of students, researchers and alumni

The EU's mobility and inter-university cooperation programmes are invaluable instruments for establishing lasting academic and cultural ties, which simultaneously promote the EU in partner countries. A 2014 survey⁶⁴ carried out by the Executive Agency Education, Audiovisual and Culture (EACEA) showed that 54 % of students and staff who benefitted from Erasmus Mundus mobility rated the experience as having the biggest influence on their intercultural skills and competences.

International research cooperation uses the universal language of science to maintain open channels of communication and enable researchers to exchange ideas regardless of their cultural, national or religious backgrounds. Horizon 2020, the world's largest multilateral research and innovation programme, funds research and innovation on cultural relations, science diplomacy and cultural heritage. Horizon 2020 also helps partner countries to maximise the contribution of education to growth, social stability and development.

Youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service⁶⁵, training for young people and youth workers and networking between them involve mobility for young people between the EU and neighbouring countries. In 2015, over 33,000 young people and youth workers

⁶⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-agenda/en/news/european-film-festivals-unique-opportunity-eu-cultural-diplomacy>

⁶¹ Examples include China, Japan ('Cool Japan') and South Korea (with the Korean new wave 'Hallyu').

⁶² <http://e-acf.org/>

⁶³ http://ec.europa.eu/education/international-cooperation/china_en.htm

⁶⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/evaluations/docs/education/mundus2012-summary_en.pdf

⁶⁵ https://europa.eu/youth/EU/voluntary-activities/european-voluntary-service_en

participated in these joint activities: about 40 % were from neighbouring countries. The Commission is exploring how cooperation in the field of sport can contribute to international relations, through a high-level group expected to deliver its report in June 2016.

- **Promote mobility of researchers:** through the Marie Curie-Sklodowska Actions, the EU intends to fund 65,000 researchers between 2014 and 2020. This includes 25,000 doctoral candidates and will enable 15,000 researchers from outside Europe to begin or pursue their careers in Europe by 2020.
- **Exchange of students and staff and new joint projects:** the EU intends to finance over 150,000 scholarships for students and staff involving Europe and other parts of the world between 2014 and 2020. It will fund about 1,000 joint projects involving EU and non-EU universities and youth organisations between 2014 and 2020.⁶⁶
- **Alumni and EU studies networks:** the Commission will support the establishment of Erasmus+ alumni groups in partner countries and cooperation between these groups and EU delegation. It will combine networking efforts at national and European level and support the integration of EU Centres in the 450 Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence, and promote networking between them. Worldwide, EU studies will reach over 250,000 students every year through teaching and outreach activities.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The global cultural landscape has changed rapidly over the last few decades. Demand for exchanges and inter-cultural cooperation has increased in pace with the digital revolution. In a world faced with many challenges and conflicts, culture has great potential to overcome divisions, strengthen fragile societies, and improve international relations. Europe is perceived in the world as a continent rich in cultural heritage, and vibrant creative forces. Culture should therefore be an integral part of the external action of the European Union.

This Joint Communication proposed three pillars to advance work towards an EU Strategy for international cultural relations. First, the proposed guiding principles for EU action aim to ensure that EU action in this area promotes human rights, diversity, inter-cultural dialogue while respecting subsidiarity and complementarity and retaining policy coherence by promoting culture within existing partnership frameworks. The second pillar proposed three main strands to provide a focus for advancing cultural cooperation with partner countries, including: i) supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development; ii) promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations; iii) reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage. The third pillar proposes a strategic EU approach to cultural diplomacy: including enhanced European cooperation (notably between EU Member States and EU Delegations) and inter-cultural exchanges to promote the diverse cultures of the EU.

Building on the above three pillars, proposed as part of an 'EU strategy for international cultural relations', will help further develop channels of communication between peoples and societies. It will help create a conducive environment for cultural and creative industries to continue expanding, creating growth and employment. It will strengthen the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, stimulate inter-cultural dialogue and peace-building, support cultural production and tourism as drivers of development and economic growth, and use

⁶⁶ <http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/>

education, research and science as agents for dialogue and exchanges. These actions should contribute to making the European Union a stronger global actor, a better international partner and a stronger contributor to sustainable growth, peace and mutual understanding.