

# THE ROLE OF EUROPEAN CULTURAL CSOS IN FOSTERING THE EU'S EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

**Jeronim Dorotić, PhD, Assistant Professor**

Catholic University of Croatia

Ilica 244, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

jeronim.dorotic@unicath.hr

## **ABSTRACT**

*The main aim of this paper is to explore the role of the European cultural civil society organizations (CSOs) in fostering the EU's external cultural relations. This paper is obtained in the following way. Firstly, the important role culture plays in contemporary international relations is conceptualized as well as the key concepts such as soft power, cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations are outlined. Secondly, the EU's external cultural relations are articulated as an emerging cross-sectoral policy field which is extending between the EU's cultural and external policies. Lastly, the role of the European cultural CSOs in fostering the EU's external cultural relations is assessed in three following steps: firstly, by conceptualizing civil society organizations from general towards the EU's perspective; secondly, by identifying the significance of involving the CSOs within the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations; and thirdly, by providing review and analysis of European cultural CSOs' actions in the field of the EU's external cultural relations. Considering that culture represents an important component of contemporary international relations, this paper indicates that within the EU context cultural CSOs play an increasingly significant role in fostering further development of more comprehensive EU's policy framework for external cultural relations.*

**Keywords:** civil society organizations (CSOs), European Union, EU cultural policy, EU external policy, international cultural relations

## **1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS: INTERSECTING CULTURE, FOREIGN RELATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE EU CONTEXT**

Ever since the political phase of the European integration was completed by the Maastricht Treaty (TEU)<sup>1</sup> in 1992, the Union has been searching more intensively

<sup>1</sup> Treaty on European Union, 7 February 1992, (OJ C 191, 29.7.1992, pp. 1-112) (TEU, Maastricht Treaty).

for both internal and external legitimacy that would guarantee its further development. In this respect, it is interesting to notice the more intensive engagement of the EU decision-makers from that time onwards in three related fields - namely, in the fields of culture, foreign relations and civil society. Speaking firstly about the culture, it can be noted that it explicitly entered the primary legal framework of the Union within the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, after which the EU cultural policy gradually evolved through numerous initiatives supplementing the actions of the Member States in the field of culture.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) also emerged by the Maastricht Treaty, that is, as a "second pillar" within the framework of the Union's "three pillar structure"<sup>3</sup> with broadly defined objectives aiming, in general, to promote peace, security, prosperity and democratic values globally via intergovernmental cooperation at the EU level.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, and with the intention of overcoming the problems of democratic deficit and governance within the EU, the gradual intensification of the Union's relations with civil society actors in the period just before the Maastricht Treaty entered into force is also evident by the EU's initiatives such as Commission's Communication on Open and Structured Dialogue between the Commission and Special Interest Groups<sup>5</sup> (1992), which ultimately resulted in acknowledging the importance of civil society for the European integration process in the Article 11 (TEU) and in the Article 15 (TFEU) of the Lisbon Treaty (2007).<sup>6</sup> Apparently, this brief overview of the emergence of cultural and external policy fields within the EU legislative framework points to the legal basis upon which the EU's external cultural relations evolved as a cross-sectoral policy field. Nonetheless, it can also be asserted that gradual intensification of the Union's relations with civil society is likewise reflected in the context of the evolving EU's external cultural relations, especially after the adoption of the Commission's Communica-

<sup>2</sup> TEU, Maastricht Treaty, Article 128. Culture was initially introduced within the primary EU legal framework within the ex - Article 128 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU, Maastricht Treaty) in 1992, which was later renumbered in current Article 167 TFEU (Lisbon) in 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Cini, M.; Pérez-Solórzano Borragán, N., *European Union Politics*, (4th edition), Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 29-31. The "three pillar structure" of the Union introduced by the Maastricht Treaty was eventually surpassed by the Lisbon Treaty in 2007. Nonetheless, the first pillar referred to the original European Communities (i.e. EC, ECSC and EAEC), the second pillar to Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the third pillar to Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). Also, in general, the first pillar operated under so-called "Community method", whereas second (CFSP) and third (JHA) pillars under intergovernmental cooperation.

<sup>4</sup> TEU, Maastricht Treaty, Article J.1., *op. cit.*, note 2.

<sup>5</sup> Communication from the Commission, An Open and Structured Dialogue between the Commission and Special Interest Groups, December 1992, SEC (92) 2272 final.

<sup>6</sup> Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007, OJ C 306, 17.12.2007.

tion on a European Agenda for Culture in Globalizing World in 2007;<sup>7</sup> therefore, indicating that this emerging policy field is characterized by the involvement of civil society actors in its development.

In line with these remarks, the main aim of this paper is to explore the role of the European cultural civil society organizations (CSOs) in fostering the EU's external cultural relations. Accordingly, to reach relevant findings qualitative methodology will be applied to this inquiry by relying upon primary (i.e. content analysis of the EU's legislation and key documents) and secondary sources (i.e. relevant literature and web sources). More precisely, this paper will be obtained in the following way. Firstly, it will be necessary to conceptualize the important role culture plays in contemporary international relations as well as to articulate the key concepts such as soft power, cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations. Secondly, the EU's external cultural relations will be articulated as an emerging cross-sectoral policy field which is extending between the EU's cultural and relevant external policies. Lastly, it will be needed to assess the role of the European cultural CSOs in fostering the EU's external cultural relations in three following steps: firstly, by conceptualizing civil society organizations from general towards the EU's perspective; secondly, by identifying the significance of involving the CSOs within the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations; and thirdly, by providing review and analysis of European cultural CSOs' actions in the field of the EU's external cultural relations. Accordingly, by analyzing the actions of the representative European cultural CSOs (i.e. European Cultural Foundation (ECF), Culture Action Europe (CAE) and Culture Solutions Europe (culture Solutions)), indicative insights will be provided regarding their contributions to foster further development of the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations. The conclusion will reflect upon the main results of this inquiry.

## **2. CULTURE AS IMPORTANT COMPONENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: FROM GENERAL CONCEPTUALIZATIONS TOWARDS EU PERSPECTIVE**

### **2.1. Culture as a source of soft power**

The important role culture plays in the sphere of international relations has gained increasing academic attention ever since American political scientist Joseph Nye popularized the concept of 'soft power' in 1990.<sup>8</sup> Since then, this analytical con-

<sup>7</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world (COM (2007) 242 final) (European agenda for culture in a globalizing world).

<sup>8</sup> Nye, J. S. Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Basic Books: New York, 1990.

cept characterized by “slightly oxymoronic resonance” has been used in various contexts, but as Nye himself concluded almost 30 years after he coined the term - “it has taken particular root in international relations, and as the European Union developed, more European leaders began to refer to its soft power” while “the term was less used, however, by American political leaders.”<sup>9</sup> Therefore, and prior to consider complementary notions of ‘cultural diplomacy’ and ‘international cultural relations’ in the context of conceptualizing cultural dimension in global affairs, it is first necessary to provide basic insights by referring to Nye who acknowledges that culture represents an important source of what he articulated as soft power in the context of world politics. Accordingly, to define soft power Nye firstly defines power in simple terms as “the ability to affect others to obtain the outcomes you want” as well as he further explains that three main ways this could be achieved are through “threats of coercion (“sticks”), inducements and payments (“carrots”), and attraction that makes others want what you want.”<sup>10</sup> With regards to the last mentioned way directed towards achieving desired outcomes by attraction Nye refers to soft power which according to his views “rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others.”<sup>11</sup> Moreover, as a main three sources of one country’s soft power in the global affairs he distinguishes “its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority).”<sup>12</sup> In line with these thoughts Nye further differentiates soft from the hard power. Thus, according to his views hard power implies “the use of force, payment, and some agenda setting based on them” while soft power entails “agenda-setting that is regarded as legitimate by the target.”<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Nye also argues that soft power “like any form of power (...) can be wielded for good or bad purposes.”<sup>14</sup> This, however, is not surprising since besides states soft power is also being used by various actors in international relations such as “corporations, institutions, NGOs, and transnational terrorist networks” including “even individual celebrities.”<sup>15</sup> Likewise, regarding the outcomes of soft power Nye highlights several problems, including greater control by the target party towards which soft power is directed; then, a longer time it takes for the results of applying soft power

<sup>9</sup> Nye, J. S., Jr., Soft power: the origins and political progress of a concept. *Palgrave Communications*. 3:17008 doi: 10.1057/palcomms.2017.8., 2017, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Nye, J. S., Jr., Public Diplomacy and Soft Power. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616, pp. 94-109., 2008, (Nye, Public Diplomacy and Soft Power), p. 94.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>13</sup> Nye, J. S., Jr., *The Future of Power*. New York: PublicAffaires, 2011, (Nye, The Future of Power), p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

to become visible; and the fact that the instruments of soft power are not entirely in the hands of governments who are controlling policy, but also in the hands of civil societies since they are embedding culture and values.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in the context of the application of soft power Nye highlights the importance of credibility as opposed to the manipulation and propaganda that governments sometimes use.<sup>17</sup> However, despite of its obvious impact, Nye also argues that importance of soft power should not be exaggerated,<sup>18</sup> as well as he claims that regardless of its insufficiencies, soft power is a form of power that in this century “marked by global information and the diffusion of power to non-state actors (...) will become an increasingly important part of smart power strategies.”<sup>19</sup> Speaking of smart power it is important to add that Nye developed this term in 2004 as an attempt to explain that soft power is not sufficient for creating an effective foreign policy. In other words, Nye describes smart power “as the ability to combine hard and soft power resources into effective strategies.”<sup>20</sup> Finally, when referring to culture - besides political values and foreign policies - as potentially important source of soft power, Nye provides several complementary explanations. In one of such references Nye refers to culture as “the set of practices that create meaning for a society” with “many manifestations” that can be differentiated “between high culture such as literature, art, and education, which appeals to elites; and popular culture, which focuses on mass entertainment.”<sup>21</sup> Also, in a yet another reference, Nye articulates culture as “the pattern of social behaviors by which groups transmit knowledge and values” and which “exists at multiple levels.”<sup>22</sup> In this context he asserts that “some aspects of human culture are universal, some are national, and others are particular to social class or small groups” as well as he adds that “culture is never static”, which implies that “different cultures interact in different ways.”<sup>23</sup> Consequently, even though Nye argues that “more research needs to be done on the connection between culture and power behavior”,<sup>24</sup> nonetheless, he also accentuates the importance of “direct cultural contacts” as an example of how culture can be used as a positive source of soft power.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>21</sup> Nye, *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power*, *op. cit.*, note 10, p. 96.

<sup>22</sup> Nye, *The Future of Power*, *op. cit.*, note 13, p. 84.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

## 2.2. From public diplomacy towards cultural diplomacy

In line with presented contours of the soft power concept it is also needed to reflect upon its complementary and inevitably interconnected concepts of cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations to provide broader conceptual insights regarding the role of culture in contemporary international relations. Nonetheless, to conceptualize cultural diplomacy, it is first important to point at the relationship between public diplomacy and soft power, since according to Nye soft power resources are being managed through public diplomacy. In other words, by arguing that soft power resources “arise in large part from the values an organization or country expresses in its culture, in the examples it sets by its internal practices and policies, and in the way it handles its relations with others”, Nye further clarifies that “[P]ublic diplomacy is an instrument that governments use to mobilize these resources to communicate with and attract the publics of other countries, rather than merely their governments.”<sup>26</sup> Accordingly, from this perspective it appears that cultural diplomacy represents a sub-field of public diplomacy which is focused on cultural aspects of international relations between countries. However, this is just one of many views on cultural diplomacy, which as a concept predates soft power conceptualization, but still lacks conceptual clarity.<sup>27</sup> In this regard, and with an aim to narrow down wide range of conceptualizations, it appears appropriate to refer firstly to one of frequently cited definitions<sup>28</sup> on the subject matter according to Cummings who views cultural diplomacy as “the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding.”<sup>29</sup> This conceptualization, however, implies that cultural diplomacy is state-driven, and therefore, as Schneider acknowledges by referring to the same definition - cultural diplomacy “provides much of the content of public diplomacy” and as such can be viewed as “a prime example of “soft power”.”<sup>30</sup> Correspondingly, in the context of

<sup>26</sup> Nye, Public Diplomacy and Soft Power, *op. cit.*, note 10, p. 95.

<sup>27</sup> See: Grincheva, N., *The past and future of cultural diplomacy*, International Journal of Cultural Policy, 30:2, 172-191, DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2023.2183949, 2024, pp. 172-173. Accordingly, in the corresponding article Grincheva provides overview of the development of academic field focused on cultural diplomacy through evolving academic literature on the subject matter since the term was firstly defined in 1959.

<sup>28</sup> See: Unesco.org. *Cutting Edge | From standing out to reaching out: cultural diplomacy for sustainable development*, [<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-standing-out-reaching-out-cultural-diplomacy-sustainable-development>], Accessed 15 March 2025 (Unesco.org.). For example, it is interesting to notice that UNESCO on one of its official web pages devoted to cultural diplomacy is also referring to corresponding definition of cultural diplomacy articulated by Cummings.

<sup>29</sup> Cummings, M. C., Jr., *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey*, Washington D.C: Center for Arts and Culture, 2003, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> Schneider, C.P., *Cultural Diplomacy: The Humanizing Factor*, In: Singh, J.P. (eds), *International Cultural Policies and Power*, International Political Economy Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230278011\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230278011_9), 2010, pp. 101-102.

articulating the position of cultural diplomacy in American foreign policy in the post 9/11 era, Schneider views cultural diplomacy as a potent humanizing factor in international relations because “creative expression has the potential to increase understanding and respect between disparate cultures and peoples” which “is not a trivial concern”, since “the reverse produces catastrophic results.”<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, and among many, yet another complementary perspective on cultural diplomacy is provided by Zamorano in the context of his critical analysis concerning the instrumentalization of cultural diplomacy under the soft power theory. Namely, after delivering several definitions of cultural diplomacy according to various authors, Zamorano assumes that “[C]ultural diplomacy involves the systematic intervention of governments in the arts, sciences, and other cultural expressions as the basis of an official categorization of national identity.”<sup>32</sup> Nonetheless, he also asserts that apart from governments in the contemporary international context “cultural diplomacy is characterized by the multiplication of its intervenient agents at different scales and levels and by the growing importance of supra-national organizations.”<sup>33</sup> In this regard, and as a prelude to conceptualization of international cultural relations, two prominent supranational organizations active in the field of cultural diplomacy can be single out - namely, the UNESCO, which views itself as “a global platform for cultural diplomacy”;<sup>34</sup> and the European Union, which aspires to be “committed to promoting Europe’s diverse culture in its international relations.”<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, even though UNESCO is not in the focus of this inquiry, it should be noted here that its main legally binding international instrument in the field of cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations refers to the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, in the context of this paper it is important to note that the EU adopted corresponding Convention in 2006.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>32</sup> Zamorano, M. M., *Reframing Cultural Diplomacy: The Instrumentalization of Culture Under the Soft Power Theory*, Culture Unbound 8 (2): 165–186. doi:10.3384/cu.2000.1525.1608165., 2016, p. 169.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Unesco.org., *op. cit.*, note 28.

<sup>35</sup> Culture.ec.europa.eu. *International cultural relations*, [https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/international-cultural-relations], Accessed 15 March 2025.

<sup>36</sup> Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (adopted 20 October 2005, entered into force 18 March 2007) UNESCO Doc CLT-2005/CONVENTION DIVERSITY-CULT REV.

<sup>37</sup> Ec.europa.eu. FAQ: UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity – a new instrument of international governance, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo\_06\_500], Accessed 15 March 2025.

### 2.3. From cultural diplomacy towards international cultural relations in the EU context

In order to articulate international cultural relations, it is firstly needed to point at the conceptual modification of cultural diplomacy beyond being perceived merely as a state-driven instrument of soft power, which is apparently echoed in the current EU approach to external cultural relations. Namely, in the EU context this became especially evident since the Joint Communication titled Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations was adopted in 2016, according to which the EU expressed its “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.’”<sup>38</sup> In other words, the EU approach towards new modes of cultural diplomacy can be more clearly illustrated by referring to Triandafyllidou and Szucs - who in a Policy Brief devoted to the EU cultural diplomacy after the corresponding Joint Communication was adopted - differentiate between “more traditional” and “more self-reflexive” definitions of cultural diplomacy. Specifically, the first “more traditional” definition implies that “cultural diplomacy is a soft power tool through which states and/or international organisations pursue foreign policy objectives”, whereas the second “more self-reflexive” definition “conceives it as a policy area on its own right, which promotes quality of life, the arts, joint capacity building, economic growth and social cohesion by engaging citizens, both as producers and consumers of cultural activities.”<sup>39</sup> Notably, in a light of provided definitions authors further indicate the intentions of evolving international cultural relations in the context of cultural diplomacy by emphasizing that: “[W]ithin the cultural diplomacy domain, an organic development of international cultural relations aims at engaging national governments, international and regional organisations as well as civil society actors into a constructive dialogue based on equality and mutual respect, over and beyond socio-economic and power inequalities between the different countries and actors involved.”<sup>40</sup> Accordingly, and based on these conceptual clarifications, Triandafyllidou and Szucs are highlighting that “[T]he new cultural diplomacy model embraced by the EU combines elements of both definitions” as

<sup>38</sup> Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (JOIN/2016/029 final) (Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations).

<sup>39</sup> Triandafyllidou, A. and Szucs, T., *EU cultural diplomacy: challenges and opportunities*, Policy Briefs, 2017/13, Global Governance Programme, Cultural Pluralism - <https://hdl.handle.net/1814/46904>, 2017, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

well as it “responds both to pragmatic and altruistic motives at the same time.”<sup>41</sup> However, and in line with these reflections, it is interesting to notice that provided “self-reflexive” definition of cultural diplomacy largely corresponds with an idea of international cultural relations. In this regard it is appropriate to refer to Higgott who in order to provide analysis of the role of culture in the EU’s external relations conceptually distinguishes cultural diplomacy (i.e. CD) from international cultural relations (i.e. ICR) by claiming that: “CD relies on the mobilization of culture to activate soft power while ICR tries to foster culture to build consensus and a common knowledge on the international stage based on argumentation.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, according to his view cultural diplomacy “can be seen as part of wider public diplomacy and strategic communications as the key to a state’s soft power effort”, whereas cultural relations “do not aim to mobilise soft power and do not pursue strategic interests other than those of the internationalisation agendas of the individual stakeholders involved.”<sup>43</sup> Therefore, according to Higgott this differentiation between cultural diplomacy (i.e. CD) and international cultural relations (i.e. ICR) corresponds to two different, but coexisting approaches to culture in the EU’s external relations.<sup>44</sup> Nonetheless, he concludes that cultural diplomacy (i.e. CD) approach “is more aligned with contemporary realist trends than ICR and therefore has a better chance of surviving.”<sup>45</sup>

### 3. OUTLINING THE EU’S POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

#### 3.1. The EU’s external cultural relations in the context of the EU’s primary legislation and beyond

The EU’s actions in the field of external cultural relations have been gradually evolving through both primary and subsequent EU legal acts mostly in the fields of the Union’s cultural and relevant external policies and instruments, therefore, outlining the current contours of its more comprehensive, but still evolving policy framework. Accordingly, the primary legal basis for the EU’s external actions in the field of its cultural policy is rooted in the Article 167 TFEU (Lisbon), which besides defining Union’s internal actions<sup>46</sup> guided by the principle of subsidiar-

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Higgott, R., *The Role of Culture in EU Foreign Policy: Between International Cultural Relations and Cultural Diplomacy*, Økonomi & Politik, bd. 94, nr. 4, april 2022, p. 103.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103, 108.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>46</sup> See: Article 167(1)(2)(4) TFEU (Lisbon).

ity, also specifies its intention to provide supportive activities in the cultural field externally by emphasizing that “[T]he Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture.”<sup>47</sup> In addition, the Article 6 TFEU (Lisbon) also indicates that among other specified policy areas, the Union has competences to pursue supporting actions to its Member States in the field of culture, which besides internal, as well implies external cultural actions.<sup>48</sup> However, even though there is no explicit reference to culture within the General Provisions on the Union’s External Action and Specific Provisions on the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Lisbon Treaty (TEU, Title V); still, it can be asserted that from broader perspective the Article 21 TEU (Lisbon) implicitly - and among various forms of international cooperation - also encompasses cultural cooperation, and therefore, is linked to the EU’s external actions, including CFSP.<sup>49</sup> More precisely, corresponding Article 21 TEU (Lisbon) emphasizes Union’s intention to pursue “a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations” with several aims including the objective to “foster the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty” which, likewise, may imply international cultural cooperations.<sup>50</sup>

Accordingly, in the broader context of further explicating the Union’s intent to consider cultural aspects in other policy fields including its external policies, it is needed again to refer to Article 167 TFEU (Lisbon) which indicates that “[T]he Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties.”<sup>51</sup> Moreover, in order to provide a comprehensive, but due to the limited format of this paper - still concise overview of the primary legal framework which enables integration of cultural aspects within relevant EU’s external policies and instruments, it is important to add that such legal provisions are also inherent to the EU’s international development and cooperation policy,<sup>52</sup> its neighborhood<sup>53</sup> and enlargement<sup>54</sup> policies, including the propositions concerning the role of the Union’s Delegations in third countries and at international organizations.<sup>55</sup> Lastly, in this context it is also important to add that the EU’s external cultural

<sup>47</sup> Article 167(3) TFEU (Lisbon).

<sup>48</sup> See: Article 6 TFEU (Lisbon).

<sup>49</sup> See: Article 21(2) TEU (Lisbon).

<sup>50</sup> Article 21(2)(d) TEU (Lisbon).

<sup>51</sup> Article 167(4) TFEU (Lisbon).

<sup>52</sup> See: Articles 208-211 TFEU (Lisbon).

<sup>53</sup> See: Article 8 TEU (Lisbon).

<sup>54</sup> See: Article 49 TEU (Lisbon).

<sup>55</sup> See: Article 221 TFEU (Lisbon).

actions are aiming to be promoted mostly through already existing instruments in the fields of the Union's cultural (e.g. through the Creative Europe Programme) and relevant external policies (e.g. through Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) within the EU's enlargement policy or through the European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) within the EU's neighborhood policy).<sup>56</sup>

### 3.2. Approaching the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations

In line with provided insights, the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations has been gaining more comprehensive contours by the Union's and Member States' subsequent initiatives since the first decades of the 2000s. Namely, this manifested noticeably within the Commission's Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world adopted in 2007, which as pivotal document in shaping further development of the EU's cultural policy, among its three main objectives explicitly included "promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations."<sup>57</sup> However, it is important to note that already in 2006 a group of prominent Member States' cultural institutes<sup>58</sup> have established the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) which embodies "the European network of organisations engaging in cultural relations."<sup>59</sup> Accordingly, since then, EUNIC represents important stakeholder in fostering development of the EU's external cultural relations as a platform which "advocates a prominent role of culture in international relations and is a strategic partner of the EU, actively involved in the further definition of European cultural policy."<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, after the adoption of aforementioned European agenda for culture in a globalizing world, what followed was a series of Union's soft law initiatives (e.g. conclusions, resolutions, reports, strategies) which incrementally formed the current policy framework for the EU's external cultural relations.

<sup>56</sup> See: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations, *op. cit.*, note 38, pp. 5-6.

<sup>57</sup> European agenda for culture in a globalizing world, *op. cit.*, note 7, p. 8. Namely, three objectives of this document refer firstly to "promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue"; secondly to "promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs"; and thirdly to "promotion of culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations."

<sup>58</sup> EUNIC was established by six following Member States' cultural institutes: Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, British Council, Danish Cultural Institute, Goethe-Institut, Institut français and SICA (the predecessor of DutchCulture).

<sup>59</sup> Eunicglobal.eu. European Union National Institutes for Culture, [<https://www.eunicglobal.eu/about>], Accessed 20 March 2025.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

In this regard, it is adequate to chronologically first single out the Council's Conclusions on the Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States adopted in 2008, which was aiming at the EU level towards "strengthening the place and the role of culture in the policies and programmes conducted within the framework of external relations and promoting cooperation with third countries and international organisations with responsibility in the field of culture."<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, in the context of providing insights regarding the important stakeholders involved in development of the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations, it is important to signify that in 2010 was established the European External Action Service (EEAS) under the provisions of Lisbon Treaty;<sup>62</sup> as unifying EU's diplomatic service led by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.<sup>63</sup> Namely, the significance of the EEAS reflects in its increasingly pivotal role in fostering development of the EU's external cultural relations in partnership with the European Commission and the EUNIC which is "[A]t the heart of EU international cultural relations."<sup>64</sup> Subsequently, the significance of this partnership was reflected already in Resolution on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions adopted in 2011, in which the European Parliament called "on the EEAS and the Commission to coordinate the strategic deployment of the cultural aspects of external policy" as well as it encouraged "the EEAS, when developing its resources and competences in the cultural sphere, to cooperate with networks such as EUNIC."<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, it is important to add that within the corresponding document the European Parliament explicitly expressed its position regarding the important role of culture in the EU's external relations by stating that it „[U]nderlines the cross-cutting nature and the importance of culture in all aspects of life, and believes that culture needs to be taken into consideration in all EU external policies, in line with Article 167(4) TFEU."<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States, (OJ C 320, 16.12.2008, p. 10–12) (Conclusions on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue), p. 10.

<sup>62</sup> See: Article 27 TEU (Lisbon).

<sup>63</sup> Eeas.europe.eu. About the European External Action Service, [[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service_en)], Accessed 20 March 2025.

<sup>64</sup> Eeas.europe.eu. Culture – Implementing EU international cultural relations, [[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/culture-%E2%80%93-implementing-eu-international-cultural-relations\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/culture-%E2%80%93-implementing-eu-international-cultural-relations_en)], Accessed 20 March 2025 (Eeas.europe.eu.).

<sup>65</sup> European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions (2010/2161(INI)) (European Parliament resolution on the cultural dimensions).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

Furthermore, in 2014 the European Commission published a report titled Preparatory action ‘Culture in external relations’: engaging the world: towards global cultural citizenship, as a product of inquiry conducted by several prominent European cultural organizations.<sup>67</sup> In general, this report has made significant impact on the further development of the EU’s external cultural relations since it “has uncovered a very considerable potential for culture in Europe’s international relations and has also explored the ways in which culture and cultural expression have been deployed already by European actors in multiple relationships with their counterparts elsewhere.”<sup>68</sup> Moreover, in 2015 the Council of the European Union has adopted Conclusions on culture in the EU’s external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation as yet another important EU initiative in framing its external cultural relations based on the Councils’ view “that culture needs to form part of a strategic and cross-cutting approach to the Union’s external relations and development cooperation given its substantial capacity to reinforce these policies by contributing to the building of long-term relationships based on people-to-people exchange, mutual understanding, trust and credibility.”<sup>69</sup>

### **3.3. Further steps towards more comprehensive EU’s policy framework for external cultural relations**

Eventually, the above-presented actions have led towards previously mentioned Joint Communication Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations<sup>70</sup> in 2016, by which the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy provided a more comprehensive policy framework for the EU’s external cultural relations. In other words, the Joint Communication is based on several guiding principles (i.e. to promote cultural diversity and respect for human rights, to foster mutual respect and inter-cultural dialogue, to ensure respect for complementarity and subsidiarity, to encourage a cross-cutting approach to culture, and to promote culture through existing frameworks for cooperation);<sup>71</sup> as well as it is proposing three work streams to advance international

<sup>67</sup> The European Commission entrusted the Preparatory Action to the following organizations which were led by the Goethe Institute: the British Council, the European Cultural Foundation, the Danish Cultural Institute, the Institut français, the ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), KEA European Affairs and BOZAR (Centre for Fine Arts, Brussels).

<sup>68</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Preparatory action ‘Culture in external relations’: engaging the world: towards global cultural citizenship*. Publications Office, 2014. (Preparatory action ‘Culture in external relations’) p. 7.

<sup>69</sup> Council Conclusions on culture in the EU’s external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation, (OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 41–43) (Conclusions on culture in the EU’s external relations), p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations, *op. cit.*, note 38.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3–7.

cultural relations with partner countries (i.e. supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development, promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations, and reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage);<sup>72</sup> and it provides a strategic EU approach to cultural diplomacy.<sup>73</sup> Subsequently, the Joint Communication was endorsed by the Council of the European Union<sup>74</sup> and the European Parliament<sup>75</sup> in 2017. However, in 2016 the EEAS has published A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy in which it has been recognized that besides energy and economic diplomacy, new fields of joined EU external actions also include cultural diplomacy.<sup>76</sup> Likewise, it is important to note that significance of more coherent partnership between the European Commission, the EEAS and EUNIC was further emphasized in 2017, by signing administrative agreement between three corresponding parties in order for them "to enhance cooperation in the field of culture, both at the level of Headquarters and at the local level in partner countries."<sup>77</sup> Moreover, based on this agreement, the first joint guidelines articulated to further strengthen this relationship were published in 2019, and were later on updated in 2021.<sup>78</sup>

Nonetheless, roughly ten years after the first Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world was adopted, the European Commission presented A New European Agenda for Culture in 2018 as currently leading document guiding further development of the EU's cultural policy. Namely, A New European Agenda for Culture consists of three strategic objectives which contain social, economic and external dimensions.<sup>79</sup> Accordingly, the third strategic objective with external dimension is directed towards "[S]trengthening international

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-12.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>74</sup> Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations, OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 38–39.

<sup>75</sup> European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2017 on Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (2016/2240(INI)), OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 112–123.

<sup>76</sup> European External Action Service, *Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe: a global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy*. Publications Office; 2016, p. 49.

<sup>77</sup> European External Action Service, *Administrative arrangement for activities to be developed by the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) in partnership with the European Commission Services and the European External Action Service jointly referred to hereinafter as "the two Sides"*, (16 May 2017), 2017, p. 1.

<sup>78</sup> Eeas.europe.eu. *Partnership between EUNIC, the EEAS and the European Commission: Joint Guidelines updated*, [<https://eunic.eu/news/joint-guidelines-updated>], Accessed 20 March 2025.

<sup>79</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A New European Agenda for Culture, (COM/2018/267 final) (A New European Agenda for Culture). Namely, three strategic objectives of this document refer to: Social dimension - harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being; Economic dimension - supporting

cultural relations” and, in this regard, aims to “[S]upport culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development”, as well as to “[P]romote culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations” and to “[R]einforce cooperation on cultural heritage” in international context.<sup>80</sup> Nevertheless, by relying on the above-mentioned EU initiatives, in 2019 the Council of the European Union has adopted Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action which are, in general, aiming to “strengthen the effectiveness and impact of EU foreign policy by integrating international cultural relations in the range of its foreign policy instruments, especially with a long-term perspective.”<sup>81</sup> In this context, it is important to signify that according to the EEAS the corresponding Council’s Conclusions along with Joint Communication Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations “serve as strategic basis and framework for action” in the field of the EU’s international cultural relations.<sup>82</sup> Also, among specified EU initiatives it is also needed to include current EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, since its fourth priority area titled - “Culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations” - explicitly indicates the Union’s dedication to further foster its external cultural relations.<sup>83</sup> Lastly, it is important to add that in accordance with presented initiatives, the EU has eventually supported a number of activities in the field of its external cultural relations, among which can be singled out Cultural Relations Platform (ex. Cultural Diplomacy Platform)<sup>84</sup> and European Spaces of Culture (ex. European ‘Houses’ of Culture).<sup>85</sup>

---

culture-based creativity in education and innovation, and for jobs and growth, and External dimension - strengthening international cultural relations.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>81</sup> Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action, ST/8361/2019/INIT, OJ C 192, 7.6.2019, p. 6–10 (Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach).

<sup>82</sup> Eeas.europe.eu., *op. cit.*, note 64.

<sup>83</sup> Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026 2022/C 466/01, ST/15381/2022/INIT, OJ C 466, 7.12.2022, p. 1–18 (Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026). Four priority areas of the EU’s Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 are titled as it follows: a) Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors, b) Culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society, c) Culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture, and d) Culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations.

<sup>84</sup> See: Cultureinexternalrelations.eu *About us*, [<https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/about-us/>], Accessed 25 March 2025 (Cultureinexternalrelations.eu). Cultural Relations Platform initiative is led by the Goethe-Institut Brussels, in partnership with the European Cultural Foundation, the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts and the University of Siena.

<sup>85</sup> See: Europeanspaceofculture.eu, *European Spaces of Culture*, [<https://europeanspaceofculture.eu/about/>], Accessed 25 March 2025. European Spaces of Culture initiative is led by the EUNIC.

## 4. ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL CSOS IN FOSTERING THE EU'S EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

### 4.1. Conceptualizing civil society organizations: From general towards the EU's perspective

Prior to providing insights into the relevant CSOs' actions in the field of the EU's external cultural relations, it is first needed to deliver concise definition of the civil society concept, and consequently, to approach conceptualizations of the civil society organizations (CSOs) from the EU's perspective. Therefore, in order to narrow down the wide range of often inconsistent definitions of civil society, it is adequate to refer to A dictionary of civil society, philanthropy and the non-profit sector, where despite claiming that „there is little agreement on its precise meaning“ Anheier and List still indicate „that modern civil society is the sum of institutions, organizations and individuals located between the family, the state and the market, in which people associate voluntarily to advance common interests.“<sup>86</sup> In other words, according to same authors “[C]ivil society is primarily about the role of citizens and the society they constitute in relation to that of both the state and the market” and as such it may be approached from different, but “often complementary” perspectives (e.g. from macro-sociological, individualistic or institutional viewpoints).<sup>87</sup> Additionally, and in line with these formal conceptualizations, it is suitable to further refer to Rifkin who accentuates the significance of civil society in the context of the EU governance by pointing that “[P]olitics in the nation-state era operates along two poles - market and government” whereas “EU politics, by contrast, operates between three nodes - commerce, government, and civil society.”<sup>88</sup> Accordingly, he also provides broader conceptual insights concerning the civil society by indicating that it “is composed of all the activities that make up the cultural life of individuals and their communities”, and as such it “includes religious institutions, the arts, education, health care, sports, public recreation and entertainment, social and environmental advocacy, neighborhood engagement, and other activities whose function is to create community bonds and social cohesion.”<sup>89</sup> Moreover, Rifkin further recognizes growing importance of CSOs at the national and international levels of governance by emphasizing that “CSOs have pushed for greater representation in every country as well as at global institutions such as the

<sup>86</sup> Anheier, H. K.; List, R. A., *A dictionary of civil society, philanthropy and the non-profit sector*, Routledge, London, 2005., p. 54.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>88</sup> Rifkin, J., *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004, p. 234.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

United Nations, World Bank, IMF, and World Trade Organization.”<sup>90</sup> However, even though Rifkin asserts that in general participation of CSOs is mostly “advisory in nature”;<sup>91</sup> when speaking further about the Union’s approach towards the CSOs, he argues that EU has different perspective on this matter by claiming that “[T]he EU has become the first government to formally acknowledge CSOs as fullfledged partners in public policy networks” and which “has recognized the civil society as the “third component” of European Union governance.”<sup>92</sup>

Although these insights reveal that CSOs play significant role in the EU politics, it is important to indicate that their growing importance in the EU context became noticeable in the two following EU documents adopted at the turn of millennium - namely, in the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe<sup>93</sup> adopted in 1999; and in the Commission’s White paper on European governance<sup>94</sup> adopted in 2001. In this respect, the corresponding Opinion provides conceptual insights about the civil society which according to the document “can be defined only loosely, as a society that embraces democracy”, and which is composed out of components determined by culture such as pluralism, autonomy, solidarity, public awareness, participation, education, responsibility and subsidiarity.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, according to the same document CSOs “can be defined in abstract terms as the sum of all organisational structures whose members have objectives and responsibilities that are of general interest and who also act as mediators between the public authorities and citizens.”<sup>96</sup> Also, corresponding document recognizes that players in civil society organizations include labor-market players, organisations representing social and economic players, NGOs (non-governmental organisations), CBOs (community-based organisations) and religious communities.<sup>97</sup> Subsequently, with regards to the role of CSOs at the EU level, it can be singled out from the same document that “[O]ne common feature of these civil society organisations at European level is the intermediary role which they have taken over from the national level“ as well as they „have the important task of contribut-

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on ‘The role and contribution of civil society organisations in the building of Europe’ (OJ C, C/329, 17.11.1999.), p. 30 (Opinion on ‘The role and contribution of civil society organisations).

<sup>94</sup> European governance - A white paper (COM/2001/0428 final), OJ C 287, 12.10.2001., pp. 1–29, (European governance - A white paper).

<sup>95</sup> Opinion on ‘The role and contribution of civil society organisations, *op. cit.*, note 93, p.32.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33–34.

ing to a public and democratic discourse.<sup>98</sup> On the other hand, the Commission's White paper on European governance refers to civil society in the context of proposing its better involvement in both shaping and implementing EU policies. In this regard, the corresponding document emphasizes that "[C]ivil society plays an important role in giving voice to the concerns of citizens and delivering services that meet people's needs."<sup>99</sup> Also, according to the same document it is recognized that "[C]ivil society increasingly sees Europe as offering a good platform to change policy orientations and society", but this also implies that "[C]ivil society must itself follow the principles of good governance, which include accountability and openness."<sup>100</sup> Lastly, the recognized need to involve CSOs more intensely in the EU governance was eventually reflected within the EU's primary legislation, that is, in the Article 11 (TEU)<sup>101</sup> and in the Article 15 (TFEU)<sup>102</sup> of the Lisbon Treaty.

#### **4.2. Identifying the significance of involving the CSOs within the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations**

In order to approach the CSO's actions in the field of the EU's external cultural relations, it is also needed to point out that many of the previously presented EU documents which constitute the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations (i.e. in chapter 3) emphasize the significance of involving the CSO in the corresponding policy field. Therefore, it is interesting to note that already in the European agenda for culture in a globalizing world it is indicated that "[T]his agenda is to be shared by all stakeholders (the Commission, Member States and involving civil society and the European Parliament)."<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, the Council of the European Union in its Conclusions on the Promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States as well emphasizes the need to "encourage the involvement of artists, cultural professionals, and, more broadly, civil society, in both Member States and partner countries, in drawing up and implementing external cultural policies."<sup>104</sup> Also, the European Parliament in its Resolution on the cultural

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>99</sup> European governance - A white paper, *op. cit.*, note. 94, p. 11.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>101</sup> Article 11(2) TEU (Lisbon) emphasizes the following: „The institutions shall maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society.“

<sup>102</sup> Article 15(1) TFEU (Lisbon) emphasizes the following: „In order to promote good governance and ensure the participation of civil society, the Union's institutions, bodies, offices and agencies shall conduct their work as openly as possible.“

<sup>103</sup> European agenda for culture in a globalizing world, *op. cit.*, note 7, p. 3.

<sup>104</sup> Conclusions on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, *op. cit.*, note 61, p. 12.

dimensions of the EU's external actions is recognizing that "the Union and its Member States, citizens, businesses and civil society both in the EU and in third countries are key actors in cultural relations."<sup>105</sup> Moreover, the Preparatory action 'Culture in external relations' in one of the key messages deriving from its findings and recommendations explicates that "EU institutions, national cultural relations agencies and cultural civil society need to work together to build a strategy that is both transversal and 'joined up' across different sectors and that also respects the ideas and ideals of global cultural citizenship: reciprocity, mutuality and shared responsibility."<sup>106</sup> Likewise, the Council of the European Union in its Conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation is encouraging "a bottom-up approach that fosters national and local ownership, involves partner countries and engages all stakeholders, in particular NGOs, civil society and the private sector."<sup>107</sup> Subsequently, in the context of outlining a strategic EU approach to cultural diplomacy it is emphasized in the Joint Communication Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations that "[T]o 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" which „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."<sup>108</sup> In addition, with regards to implementing A New European Agenda for Culture the European Commission is relying on cooperation with the Member States, but also aims to further enhance structured dialogue with civil society by "going beyond topics examined under the Open Method of Coordination, making more of online collaboration opportunities, and opening up to relevant organisations outside cultural and creative sectors on a case-by-case basis."<sup>109</sup> Correspondingly, the Council of the European Union in its Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action is also recognizing the need for "a new spirit of dialogue, mutual understanding and learning, which entails the cooperation with local stakeholders and civil society at all levels (planning, design, implementation) and on an equal footing, aiming at bottom-up and people-to-people approach, local empowerment, participation and co-creation."<sup>110</sup> Also, in the context of the fourth priority area of the current EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 - that is devoted to „strength-

<sup>105</sup> European Parliament resolution on the cultural dimensions, *op. cit.*, note 65.

<sup>106</sup> Preparatory action 'Culture in external relations', *op. cit.*, note 68, pp. 13-14.

<sup>107</sup> Conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations, *op. cit.*, note 69, p. 43.

<sup>108</sup> Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations, *op. cit.*, note 38, p. 12.

<sup>109</sup> A New European Agenda for Culture, *op. cit.*, note 79, pp. 9-10.

<sup>110</sup> Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach, *op. cit.*, note 81, p. 7.

ening the cultural dimension of EU external relations“ - it is highlighted that „Europe’s cultural richness and freedom, the EU’s bottom-up approach rooted in civil society and the EU’s strong engagement in co-creation are strong assets for international relations from the perspective of building sustainable partnerships on an equal footing.“<sup>111</sup> Lastly, in accordance with presented views which signify the importance of involving CSOs in the EU’s external cultural relations, it is important to add that in order to enhance structured dialogue with the civil society in the framework of the EU’s cultural policy, the European Commission has organized an initiative titled Voices of Culture (VoC) in the period from 2015 until 2023, which among various covered themes, also resulted in a report concerning international cultural relations.<sup>112</sup>

#### **4.3. Review and analysis of the European cultural CSOs’ actions in the field of the EU’s external cultural relations**

Given that there are numerous European cultural CSOs, this review and analysis will focus on those that, within the framework of their activities, also intensely participate in initiatives (e.g. advocacy actions, publications, events, networks, projects, etc.) in the field of the EU’s external cultural relations. Likewise, this approach will provide illustrative (i.e. at the level of selected examples), yet indicative insights into their contributions in fostering the EU’s external cultural relations. In other words, the selection of representative CSOs is based on the following criteria - first, that they are prominent organizations active in the field of the EU’s external cultural relations; second, that they have a strong European dimension inherent to their mission; and third, that through their actions they are not just aiming to implement, but also effectively influence further development of policies in the field of the EU’s external cultural relations. Accordingly, the selected organizations are the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), Culture Action Europe (CAE) and Culture Solutions Europe (culture Solutions).

##### **4.3.1. European Cultural Foundation (ECF): Civil society at the heart of the emerging EU’s external cultural relations**

Accordingly, one of the most important CSOs in this regard is the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) from Netherlands, which since 1954, and therefore, in line with the beginning of the European integration process, “promotes a Euro-

<sup>111</sup> Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026, *op. cit.*, note 83, p. 4.

<sup>112</sup> See: Culture.ec.europa.eu. *Dialogue with cultural and creative sectors and industries*, [<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/cultural-policy-cooperation-at-the-eu-level/dialogue-with-cultural-and-creative-sectors-and-industries>], Accessed 25 March 2025.

pean sentiment through developing and supporting cultural initiatives that let us share, experience and imagine Europe.”<sup>113</sup> In general, the ECF “has always focused on programs and grants enabling mobility and the exchange of ideas, education through culture, and capacity-building” as well as it has “initiated and developed dozens of programmes, supported thousands of Europeans with grants and exchanges and helped put culture and cultural policies on the European agenda.”<sup>114</sup> Consequently, with regards to its contributions to development of the EU’s external cultural relations, the ECF played important role in advocating its emergence since the early 2000s. More precisely, the ECF has published several studies on the subject matter already in 2006<sup>115</sup> and 2007;<sup>116</sup> as well as it was involved in former advocacy initiative titled More Europe - external cultural relations<sup>117</sup> (i.e. which was active in the field of promoting the EU’s external cultural relations for roughly ten years since 2011).<sup>118</sup> Moreover, in the following years the ECF has also participated as a member of consortium led by the Goethe Institute in preparing and delivering previously mentioned Preparatory action ‘Culture in external relations’ published in 2014, which had profound impact on the further development of the EU’s external cultural relations.<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, in the context of its more recent involvement in the field of the EU’s external cultural relations, it should be noted that in wake of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, the ECF along with Culture Action Europe (CAE) and Europa Nostra - as another two prominent European cultural CSOs - has initiated the ongoing campaign articulated in a form of a joint statement titled Cultural Deal for Europe. Namely, through this campaign corresponding CSOs have “called on the European Union to fully integrate culture and cultural heritage into its actions and policies, making it an overarching strategy in analogy to the Green Deal.”<sup>120</sup> Accordingly, one of the main points of this joint statement is titled “Culture is key for the EU’s external relations” by which corre-

<sup>113</sup> Culturalfoundation.eu. *ECF in One Paragraph*, [https://culturalfoundation.eu/about/our-story/], Accessed 25 March 2025.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> See: Dodd, D.; Dittrich Van Weringh, K., *A cultural component as an integral part of the EU’s foreign policy?* Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, 2006.

<sup>116</sup> See: Fisher, R., *A cultural dimension to the EU’s external policies. From policy statements to practice and potential.* Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies and European Cultural Foundation, 2007.

<sup>117</sup> See: Ifacca.org. *The More Europe initiative has published its final publication to memorize ten years of work*, [https://ifacca.org/news/2023/03/06/more-europe-initiative-has-published-its-final-pub/], Accessed 25 March 2025.

<sup>118</sup> See: Preparatory action ‘Culture in external relations’, *op. cit.*, note 68, pp. 15-16.; Isar, Y. R., ‘Culture in EU external relations’: an idea whose time has come? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 21(4), 494–508., [https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2015.1042472], 2015, pp. 498-500.

<sup>119</sup> Preparatory action ‘Culture in external relations’, *op. cit.*, note 68, p. 7.

<sup>120</sup> Culturalfoundation.eu. *Cultural Deal for Europe*, [https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cultural-deal-for-europe/], Accessed 25 March 2025.

sponding CSOs are explicitly calling for further development of the EU's external relations in the following words: "We reiterate the need to strengthen the role of international cultural relations in the EU's foreign, neighborhood and sustainable development policies. Culture is key to peace, mutual understanding and trust, it contributes to democratic, free, and sustainable societies. International relations boost opportunities for interconnecting cultural communities."<sup>121</sup> Also, it is important to note that the ECF is currently a part of consortium led by Goethe Institute in implementing previously mentioned EU initiative titled Cultural Relations Platform (ex. Cultural Diplomacy Platform) along with the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts and the University of Siena.<sup>122</sup> Accordingly, in this regard it is necessary to clarify that Cultural Relations Platform is actually "an EU-funded project that connects cultural practitioners worldwide for dialogue, exchange and co-operation" as well as it "provides expertise to the European Union (EU) in the field of international cultural relations."<sup>123</sup> Lastly, it is important to add that through current initiatives such as the European Cultural Deal for Ukraine,<sup>124</sup> the ECF continues to further contribute to the EU's external cultural relations according to its core values.

#### **4.3.2. Culture Action Europe (CAE): Civil society reflecting and advocating for further development of the EU's external cultural relations**

On the other hand, the Culture Action Europe (CAE) is CSO from Belgium which forms a network of cultural organization active in the field of cultural policies at the EU level since 1994. More precisely, the CAE represents "the major European network of cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics and policymakers", and as such it "is the political voice of the cultural sector in Europe, the first port of call for informed opinion and debate about arts and cultural policy."<sup>125</sup> In general, the CAE is pursuing its goals through campaigns, advocacy, networking, projects and events in various fields within the framework of European cultural sector, including the activities in the area of the EU's external cultural relations. In this regard, it can be noticed that as the EU's policy framework for ex-

<sup>121</sup> Culture Action Europe, European Cultural Foundation, Europa Nostra. *A cultural deal for Europe: a central place for culture in the EU's post-pandemic future*, 2020, [https://cultureactioneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Cultural-Deal-EU-Statement\_2020.pdf], Accessed 25 March 2025 (A cultural deal for Europe).

<sup>122</sup> Cultureinexternalrelations.eu., *op. cit.*, note 84.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>124</sup> See: Culturalfoundation.eu. *Public Policy*, [https://culturalfoundation.eu/public-policy/], Accessed 25 March 2025.

<sup>125</sup> Cultureactioneurope.org. *About us*, [https://cultureactioneurope.org/about-us/], Accessed 25 March 2025.

ternal cultural relations has been gaining more comprehensive contours after the adoption of the Joint Communication Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations in 2016, so did the involvement of the CAE intensified towards providing advocacy, strategic reflections and participation on the subject matter. Therefore, already in 2017, the CAE has articulated reflections on the corresponding Joint Communication, by welcoming this initiative, yet among other points, underlying a need for “a clear governance on EU level” regarding the subject matter, as well as accentuating “the importance to involve civil society actors in the field of culture on all sides in the planning of the strategy and future exchanges.”<sup>126</sup> Moreover, in 2020 the CAE along with the ECF and other 20 prominent European cultural organizations have signed an open letter (initiated by More Europe - external cultural relations) titled *Culture in EU's External Relations - The Way Forward?*. In general, in this open letter the CAE along with corresponding signatories urged “the European Commission and the European Parliament to give proper consideration and strengthen international cultural relations within future policy frameworks including in foreign and sustainable development policies; as well as in the upcoming EU financial framework.”<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, it is important to signify once more that in 2020 the CAE, along with the ECF and Europe Nostra, have initiated the ongoing campaign *Cultural Deal for Europe*, by which they have been urging the EU to integrate cultural aspects into its policies including external relations by emphasizing that “Culture is key for the EU's external relations.”<sup>128</sup> Nonetheless, in the context of numerous challenges the EU is currently facing, the CAE among its recent activities in 2025 again accentuated the importance of including cultural aspects into Union's actions by sending “a letter to the European Commission advocating for the integration of culture into the EU's policies on defence, security, preparedness, and democracy.”<sup>129</sup> Moreover, with regards to the EU's external cultural relations the CAE in the same letter also explicitly urges “for updating the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations and allocating 2% of Russia's frozen assets for Ukraine's cultural recovery.”<sup>130</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Cultureactioneurope.org. *CAE reflection: towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*, [https://cultureactioneurope.org/advocacy/cae-reflection-towards-an-eu-strategy-for-international-cultural-relations/?utm\_source=chatgpt.com], Accessed 26 March 2025.

<sup>127</sup> Cultureactioneurope.org. *Open Letter | Culture in EU's External Relations*, [https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/open-letter-culture-in-eus-external-relations/?utm\_source=chatgpt.com], Accessed 26 March 2025.

<sup>128</sup> A cultural deal for Europe, *op. cit.*, note 121.

<sup>129</sup> Cultureactioneurope.org. *Culture for a stronger, more secure and resilient EU*, [https://cultureactioneurope.org/advocacy/culture-for-a-stronger-more-secure-and-resilient-eu/], Accessed 26 March 2025.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

#### 4.3.3. Culture Solutions Europe (culture Solutions): Civil society in front of further developments of the EU's external cultural relations

Finally, the Culture Solutions Europe (culture Solutions) is CSO from France which, as the youngest of the above-presented CSOs, operates since 2018 as “an independent social innovation group contributing to the excellence of EU international cultural relations” and with a clear goal “to help to develop a stronger trust in the European project.”<sup>131</sup> Accordingly, the culture Solutions is focused on several priority themes (i.e. cultural action and legitimacy, digital and internet governance, cultural relations, cultural diplomacy, and intercultural coexistence and language skills), as well as it provides various services (i.e. information sharing, open space for dialogue, policy analysis, training, implementation support) and also participates in, or organizes events concerning the EU's external cultural relations.<sup>132</sup> Therefore, even though the culture Solutions is relatively new organization, it is specifically oriented towards fostering the EU's external cultural relations, and as such until today has produced a number of publications (e.g. briefs, reports, proposals) and podcasts, as well as it has participated in the events tackling directly up-to-date issues on the subject matter. In this context, and due to the limited format of this paper, it is adequate just to signify at the level of examples, that some publications of the culture Solutions have been, so far, covering topics ranging from financing and digital change to climate change and heritage protection aspects of the EU's external cultural relations.<sup>133</sup> In this regard, it can be asserted that the culture Solutions represents the CSO which is aiming specifically to be in front of further developments, and therefore, make its contribution in fostering the EU's external cultural relations. Since this intention is in line with the EU views too, then it can be expected that from such mutual interactions the EU's policy framework for external cultural relations will continue to further evolve.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The main aim of this paper was to explore the role of the European cultural CSOs in fostering the EU's external cultural relations. Accordingly, the results indicate that within the EU context cultural CSOs play an increasingly significant role in fostering further development of more comprehensive EU's policy framework for external cultural relations. Therefore, and in line with provided conceptual

<sup>131</sup> Culturesolutions.eu., *About us*, [<https://www.culturesolutions.eu/about-us/>], Accessed 26 March 2025.

<sup>132</sup> Culturesolutions.eu., *Our work*, [<https://www.culturesolutions.eu/our-work/>], Accessed 26 March 2025.

<sup>133</sup> See: Culturesolutions.eu. *Publications*, [<https://www.culturesolutions.eu/publications/>], Accessed 26 March 2025.

insights regarding the cultural dimension in global affairs it can be concluded that even though cultural activities have been shaping relations between the people and nations throughout the history, their significance has been acknowledged and formalized in present days through evolving cultural diplomacy; and therefore, has justifiably gained increasing academic attention ever since the concept of soft power has been introduced in the field of international relations. In this context, the concept of soft power has accentuated that international relations are not just shaped by economic, political or security considerations, but also by seemingly intangible value-based influences among which culture - in all of its manifestations, plays a significant role. For these reasons, it is not surprising that soft power concept dominates academic debate focused on culture in international relations as well as it complements inevitably interconnected concepts of cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations. In this regard, provided conceptual insights signify current shifts towards new modes of cultural diplomacy or international cultural relations, which are not predominantly driven by the state interests, but are characterized more by “self-reflexiveness” and interactions between broad range of actors among which supranational organizations such as the EU and CSOs play increasingly important role.

Moreover, the insights provided regarding the emerging EU’s policy framework for external cultural relations indicate that due to internal and external dimensions of the EU cultural policy enshrined within Article 167 TFEU (Lisbon), the EU’s external cultural relations have been steadily developing in the context of fostering not just social and economic, but also the external dimension of the EU cultural policy; as well as they have been evolving in the context of recognizing the importance of cultural aspects within relevant EU’s external policies and instruments (e.g. within the CFSP, including the EU’s international development and cooperation policies, and its neighborhood and enlargement policies). In this regard, and due to the overall growing significance of CSOs in the EU context at the turn of the millennium, the involvement of the European cultural CSOs also gained relevance in terms of their influence on not just internal, but also external aspects of the EU cultural policy. Therefore, it can be asserted that these CSOs have been complementing further development of the EU’s policy framework for external cultural relations along with other key actors in the field (i.e. the European Commission, the EEAS and the EUNIC).

Lastly, in accordance with the insights provided regarding the role of the European cultural CSOs in fostering the EU’s external cultural relations, it can be concluded that CSOs play a significant role in the context of EU governance, which besides Member States’ governments and representatives of private sector, equally includes civil society actors. In general, it can be asserted that this intention to

involve civil society in the EU governance springs from the quest of the EU to gain legitimacy so necessary for its long-term success. Subsequently, the presented insights indicate that this intention is further reflected in the context of the evolving EU's policy framework for external cultural relations. In other words, this is not just evident from the EU documents which constitute this policy framework, but also at the level of involvement of the European cultural CSOs in emergence and further development of the corresponding policy field. Moreover, presented insights reveal that the relationship between the EU and the CSOs in this field is based on close and open interactions, which are guided from the above (i.e. by the EU), but implemented, and often initiated from the below (i.e. by the CSOs). Nonetheless, since the current governance of the EU's external cultural relations is still fragmented between the European Commission, the EEAS and the EUNIC, it can be emphasized that CSOs should continue to support them by providing limited, but still valuable inputs on the subject matter through their actions (e.g. via advocacy, campaigns, publications, events, networks, projects, etc.), therefore, contributing to further development of more comprehensive EU's policy framework for the external cultural relations.

## REFERENCES

### BOOKS AND ARTICLES

1. Anheier, H. K.; List, R. A., *A dictionary of civil society, philanthropy and the non-profit sector*, Routledge, London, 2005
2. Cini, M.; Pérez-Solórzano Borrágán, N., *European Union Politics*, (4th edition), Oxford University Press, 2013
3. Cummings, M. C., Jr., *Cultural Diplomacy and the United States Government: A Survey*, Washington D.C: Center for Arts and Culture, 2003
4. Dodd, D.;Dittrich Van Weringh, K., *A cultural component as an integral part of the EU's foreign policy?* Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies, 2006
5. Fisher, R., *A cultural dimension to the EU's external policies. From policy statements to practice and potential*. Amsterdam: Boekmanstudies and European Cultural Foundation, 2007
6. Grincheva, N., *The past and future of cultural diplomacy*, International Journal of Cultural Policy, 30:2, 172-191, DOI: 10.1080/10286632.2023.2183949, 2024
7. Higgott, R., *The Role of Culture in EU Foreign Policy: Between International Cultural Relations and Cultural Diplomacy*, Økonomi & Politik, bd. 94, nr. 4, april 2022
8. Isar, Y. R., 'Culture in EU external relations': *an idea whose time has come?* , International Journal of Cultural Policy, 21(4), 494–508., <https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2015.1042472>, 2015
9. Nye, J. S., Jr., *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power*. The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616, pp. 94-109., 2008

10. Nye, J. S., Jr., *Soft power: the origins and political progress of a concept*. Palgrave Communications. 3:17008 doi: 10.1057/palcomms.2017.8., 2017
11. Nye, J. S., Jr., *The Future of Power*. New York: PublicAffaires, 2011
12. Nye, J.S. Jr., *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*. Basic Books: New York, 1990
13. Rifkin, J., *The European Dream: How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*. New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin, 2004
14. Schneider, C.P., *Cultural Diplomacy: The Humanizing Factor*. In: Singh, J.P. (ed.) *International Cultural Policies and Power*. International Political Economy Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230278011\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230278011_9), 2010
15. Triandafyllidou, A.; Szucs, T., *EU cultural diplomacy: challenges and opportunities*, Policy Briefs, 2017/13, Global Governance Programme, Cultural Pluralism - <https://hdl.handle.net/1814/46904>, 2017
16. Zamorano, M. M., *Reframing Cultural Diplomacy: The Instrumentalization of Culture Under the Soft Power Theory*, *Culture Unbound* 8 (2): 165–186, doi:10.3384/cu.2000.1525.1608165., 2016

## INTERNATIONAL LAW

1. Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (adopted 20 October 2005, entered into force 18 March 2007) UNESCO Doc CLT-2005/ CONVENTION DIVERSITY-CULT REV

## EU LAW

1. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, A New European Agenda for Culture, (COM/2018/267 final)
2. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world (COM (2007) 242 final)
3. Communication from the Commission, An Open and Structured Dialogue between the Commission and Special Interest Groups, December 1992, SEC (92) 2272 final
4. Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States, (OJ C 320, 16.12.2008, p. 10–12)
5. Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action, ST/8361/2019/INIT, OJ C 192, 7.6.2019, p. 6–10
6. Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations, OJ C 189, 15.6.2017, p. 38–39
7. Council Conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation, (OJ C 417, 15.12.2015, p. 41–43)

8. Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026 2022/C 466/01, ST/15381/2022/INIT, OJ C 466, 7.12.2022, p. 1–18
9. European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Preparatory action 'Culture in external relations': engaging the world: towards global cultural citizenship*. Publications Office; 2014
10. European External Action Service, *Administrative arrangement for activities to be developed by the European Union National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC) in partnership with the European Commission Services and the European External Action Service jointly referred to hereinafter as "the two Sides"*, (16 May 2017), 2017
11. European External Action Service, *Shared vision, common action: a stronger Europe: a global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy*. Publications Office; 2016
12. European governance - A white paper (COM/2001/0428 final), OJ C 287, 12.10.2001., p. 1–29
13. European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions (2010/2161(INI))
14. European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2017 on Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (2016/2240(INI))
15. European Parliament resolution of 5 July 2017 on Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (2016/2240(INI)), OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 112–123
16. Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (JOIN/2016/029 final)
17. Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on 'The role and contribution of civil society organizations in the building of Europe' (OJ C, C/329, 17.11.1999.), p. 30
18. Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community, signed at Lisbon, 13 December 2007, OJ C 306, 17.12.2007.
19. Treaty on European Union (Consolidated Version 2016), OJ C 202, 7.6.2016.
20. Treaty on European Union (TEU, Maastricht Treaty), 7 February 1992, (OJ C 191, 29.7.1992, pp. 1-112)
21. Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Consolidated version 2016), OJ C 202, 7.6.2016.

## WEBSITE REFERENCES

1. Culturalfoundation.eu. *Cultural Deal for Europe*, [<https://culturalfoundation.eu/stories/cultural-deal-for-europe/>], Accessed 25 March 2025
2. Culturalfoundation.eu. *ECF in One Paragraph*, [<https://culturalfoundation.eu/about/our-story/>], Accessed 25 March 2025
3. Culturalfoundation.eu. *Public Policy*, [<https://culturalfoundation.eu/public-policy/>], Accessed 25 March 2025
4. Culture Action Europe, European Cultural Foundation, Europa Nostra. *A cultural deal for Europe: a central place for culture in the EU's post-pandemic future*, 2020,

- [[https://cultureactioneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Cultural-Deal-EU-State-ment\\_2020.pdf](https://cultureactioneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Cultural-Deal-EU-State-ment_2020.pdf)], Accessed 25 March 2025
5. Culture.ec.europa.eu. *Dialogue with cultural and creative sectors and industries*, [<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/cultural-policy-cooperation-at-the-eu-level/dialogue-with-cultural-and-creative-sectors-and-industries>], Accessed 25 March 2025
  6. Culture.ec.europa.eu. *International cultural relations*, [<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/international-cultural-relations>], Accessed 15 March 2025
  7. Cultureactioneurope.org. *About us*, [<https://cultureactioneurope.org/about-us/>], Accessed 25 March 2025
  8. Cultureactioneurope.org. *CAE reflection: towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*, [[https://cultureactioneurope.org/advocacy/cae-reflection-towards-an-eu-strategy-for-international-cultural-relations/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://cultureactioneurope.org/advocacy/cae-reflection-towards-an-eu-strategy-for-international-cultural-relations/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)], Accessed 26 March 2025
  9. Cultureactioneurope.org. *Culture for a stronger, more secure and resilient EU*, [<https://cultureactioneurope.org/advocacy/culture-for-a-stronger-more-secure-and-resilient-eu/>], Accessed 26 March 2025
  10. Cultureactioneurope.org. *Open Letter | Culture in EU's External Relations*, [[https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/open-letter-culture-in-eus-external-relations/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/open-letter-culture-in-eus-external-relations/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)], Accessed 26 March 2025
  11. Cultureinexternalrelations.eu. *About us*, [<https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/about-us/>], Accessed 25 March 2025
  12. Culturesolutions.eu. *About us*, [<https://www.culturesolutions.eu/about-us/>], Accessed 26 March 2025
  13. Culturesolutions.eu. *Our work*, [<https://www.culturesolutions.eu/our-work/>], Accessed 26 March 2025
  14. Culturesolutions.eu. *Publications*, [<https://www.culturesolutions.eu/publications/>], Accessed 26 March 2025
  15. Ec.europa.eu. *FAQ: UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity – a new instrument of international governance*, [[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo\\_06\\_500](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_06_500)], Accessed 15 March 2025
  16. Eeas.europa.eu. *About the European External Action Service*, [[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/about-european-external-action-service_en)], Accessed 20 March 2025
  17. Eeas.europa.eu. *Culture – Implementing EU international cultural relations*, [[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/culture-%E2%80%93-implementing-eu-international-cultural-relations\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/culture-%E2%80%93-implementing-eu-international-cultural-relations_en)], Accessed 20 March 2025
  18. Eeas.europa.eu. *Partnership between EUNIC, the EEAS and the European Commission: Joint Guidelines updated*, [<https://eunic.eu/news/joint-guidelines-updated>], Accessed 20 March 2025
  19. Eunicglobal.eu. *European Union National Institutes for Culture*,

- [<https://www.eunicglobal.eu/about>], Accessed 20 March 2025
20. Europeanspaceofculture.eu. *European Spaces of Culture*, [<https://europeanspaceofculture.eu/about>], Accessed 25 March 2025
  21. Ifacca.org. *The More Europe initiative has published its final publication to memorize ten years of work*, [<https://ifacca.org/news/2023/03/06/more-europe-initiative-has-published-its-final-pub/>], Accessed 25 March 2025
  22. Unesco.org. *Cutting Edge | From standing out to reaching out: cultural diplomacy for sustainable development*, [<https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/cutting-edge-standing-out-reaching-out-cultural-diplomacy-sustainable-development>], Accessed 15 March 2025