International Conference: 'Culture in EU External Relations'
(Bozar, Brussels, 7-8 April 2014)
Discussion Paper

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to set the stage for the international conference 'Culture in EU External Relations' that will be held on 7-8 April, 2014 in Brussels. This conference will be a key moment of the Preparatory Action with the same title proposed by the European Parliament and implemented by the European Commission through a consortium led by the Goethe-Institut.[1] The consortium is close to delivering the results of an inquiry carried out since January 2013 in all the EU Member States as well as 26 third countries. The main purpose of the conference is to debate and enrich these results, contained in the consortium's Draft Report, entitled 'Towards global cultural citizenship'. The gathering will bring together EU and national policy makers, artists, cultural operators, representatives of cultural NGOs and networks and private stakeholders from European as well as third countries. The discussions which will take place at the conference will be fed into the report to nourish and round its recommendations and findings, so your active participation will be of the utmost importance.

As the first key building block of the Preparatory Action, the recently completed inquiry sought to: i) map the external cultural relations policies and practices of diverse stakeholders in EU Member States and at the level of the EU itself; ii) analyse, on the basis of a consultation process carried out in third countries, the policies and practices of diverse stakeholders there as regards cultural relations with EU Member States and the EU and iii) ascertain how third country actors assess these relations and what their expectations are for better future relations. A fourth key aim was to reflect innovatively on the potential added value of a concerted strategic approach to international cultural relations on the part of the EU, its Member States and European civil society stakeholders.

As the second key building block of the Preparatory Action, the forthcoming conference has been designed with a view to i) testing the findings and recommendations of the inquiry as presented in the Draft Report and ii) enriching these findings and recommendations with your views. To achieve these interlinked goals, the conference will unfold in four sequential segments. First, an introductory session in the evening of 7 April at which the findings of the Preparatory Action will be presented. This will be followed on 8 April by three panel discussions, in which the findings will be debated and, it is to be hoped, improved upon.

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[1] http://cultureinexternalrelations.eu/preparatory-action-on-culture-in-the-eus-external-relations/

The first panel discussion, 'Culture in EU external relations: realities and expectations', will explore both what the European Union and its Member States have achieved so far through the deployment of culture in external relations and the expectations for the future of stakeholders in both the EU and in third countries. The second panel discussion will explore the several dimensions of added value that a 'strategic approach' to culture in external relations can bring. The third and final panel discussion, 'Smart choices for the achievement of this added value', will focus on the principles, mechanisms, and projects presented in the recommendations of the Draft Report.

While the Report itself will be made available to all participants after the conference, the present discussion paper contextualise and structure the discussions and presents a selection of the document's key findings.

I.   Key findings

The recently completed inquiry has uncovered the very considerable potential of a more proactive role for culture in Europe's international relations. Covering 54 countries – the 28 EU Member States, 16 countries included under the European Neighbourhood Policy2 and 10 Strategic Partnership countries3 – the inquiry reveals that culture and cultural expression have been deployed by European actors in multiple relationships with their counterparts elsewhere. These relationships have been very diverse. They have been built by European Member States, their various, often autonomous institutions, and cultural actors in their civil societies. The inquiry has confirmed the attractiveness of Europe's diverse cultures amongst many people across the world, in other words the 'soft power' potential of European cultural diversity. This attractiveness of the European 'narrative', to use a currently fashionable term, is also embodied by fundamental values such as freedom of expression, and through the vigour of its cultural and creative industries. Yet the inquiry has also found that many of Europe's privileged international positions face powerful and growing competition from other countries and regions.

As the Draft Report demonstrates, Europe's ties with third countries encompass not only all the domains of the arts and heritage, but also cooperation at the level of higher education, particularly in the field of the humanities. Europeans have already succeeded in projecting to the world an image of their shared space as one of cultural creativity and diversity. However, they can and should go beyond representation alone and engage with the rest of the world through stances of mutual learning and sharing. Adopting such stances would mean adopting a spirit of *global cultural citizenship* that affirms shared cultural rights as well as responsibilities. This kind of approach hinges upon access and participation *for all* in a framework of cosmopolitan solidarity.

The considerable added value of enhanced European cultural engagement with the rest of the world has is a multi-faceted potential. It would strengthen both intercultural dialogue and global solidarity. It would bolster respect for and the affirmation of cultural diversity. It would also foster trade, investment and competitiveness. Equally, it would promote creativity, innovation and development, as envisaged by the

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[2] The ENP countries are the following: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Moldova, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

[3] The Strategic Partner countries are: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea and the United States of America.

2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

II.   The recommendations

While the major finding of the report is that EU action in culture in external relations, once it is strengthened and better coordinated, offers considerable potential for EU Member States, Europe's civil societies and the EU itself, this potential can only be realised if a clear strategy is designed and implemented. This strategy in turn will need to respect certain key guiding principles.

A. Guiding principles

Guiding principles can be identified at both the value-based and the methodological levels.

1.   Value-based principles

- Cultural relations must take place in a spirit of respect and equality. The stances of reciprocity and mutuality, notably mutual learning, embody these fundamental values and should therefore underpin the entire approach of the EU and its Member States.
- Any future EU strategy should help to protect and promote the diversity of cultures and the foundations upon which they are constructed.
- Any such strategy should reject the idea of cultures as homogeneous and unchanging bounded entities, and seek to combat the resulting stereotypes that still persist, both in Europe about third countries and in third countries about Europe. It should also recognise cultural identities as constructions that are multiple and fragmented, rather than pre-given and natural.
- Sharing values implies open expression, critical reflection and free debate. It requires free spaces of the mind – as well as physical spaces. Most Europeans today are critically aware of the legacies of their histories in both their positive and their negative aspects, including the colonial past. Hence it would be simplistic to try to export European values wholesale to other regions. Mutual understanding will only be improved through a deep knowledge of one's own and others' cultures. Europeans need to take the time to listen to others as much as they communicate freely with them.
- Europeans also need to practice what they preach in cultural terms and, therefore, present their own solutions to present and future cultural challenges in a self-critical manner.
- Europeans should also recognise that there are powerful forces in many third countries that actually reject cherished European values such as peace building, gender equality, freedom of expression and human rights. Without compromising on these values, Europeans practising international cultural relations need to recognise the plurality and evolving nature of the systems of beliefs and conduct that exist across the world.

2. Methodological principles

a. Principles for Europe in the world

- It is essential to balance public responsibility and the autonomous practice of international cultural relations by cultural professionals. Some European Member States have achieved this balance at the national level, through the 'arm's length' principle. This principle also needs to be respected in the realm of international cultural relations.
- Nevertheless, although the latter should be increasingly entrusted to civil society actors, there can be no question of side-lining governments. In many third countries, governments and their agencies are as eager for and in need of better cultural relations with European actors as civil society actors and non-governmental bodies are.
- In the same spirit, third country partners should be involved from the outset in the conception and design of cultural projects and programmes: the joint creation of new projects is the bedrock of deep and lasting ties.
- Successful and meaningful cultural relations unfold in the long term. There are no 'quick fixes' in this domain.
- The long-term perspective also implies that the principle of sustainability must always be kept in mind. Any act of European cultural partnership should be seen as a single moment in a process that unfolds over time.
- Cultural relations should not be limited to the mere presentation or display of European culture to others and vice versa, although this aspect is, of course, important. Third country stakeholders are more interested in interacting with European partners who can share with them the European experiences of cultural capacity building and governance.
- There is no single 'model', no 'one size fits all' solution in international cultural relations. Hence any future strategy must be based on the informed choice and case-by-case consideration of appropriate partners in different settings. As within European Member States themselves, the landscape of cultural actors, officials, and institutions within each country is diverse – and often involves the pursuit of divergent objectives.
- Little benefit will accrue from a more strategic approach to culture in external relations unless procedures concerning applications for EU funding are greatly simplified, made more accessible and based on more transparent selection criteria. An equality of position for all stakeholders is needed – but without artificial bureaucratic procedures or quotas.

b. Principles regarding the interplay among different European policy actors

- Both the imperatives of diversity *and* European commonalities need to be combined in new ways. This requires more strategic communication and coordination. Common action requires effectiveness and efficiency in the trans-national dimension rather than new layers of bureaucracy. 'Cultural civil society' composed of NGOs and networks need to be involved at all stages of the work, from planning to implementation.
- New combinations of actors to make collaboration in third countries work better will require commonly selected high-incentive triggers. These could be found:

- by the selection of key partner countries for specific actions and the most adequate consortia of partners;
- by the selection of leading themes of common interest;
- through calls for action in key sectors such the cultural and creative industries, based on the complementary comparative advantages of different partners;
- through Europe-wide calls for and the application of multiplier strategies using tools such as the new media.

- The EU must strive for coherence and synergies amongst its different tools and instruments and the entities and actors responsible for them. Transparent and participative decisions must be taken as regards the role of different institutional players within the EU framework.

B. Key preconditions and required overarching mechanisms

The sound management of the many expectations aroused or heightened by the Preparatory Action itself will also be a key precondition. Within the EU, some players would like to proceed very rapidly, while others prefer a more cautious approach. Given this variegated picture – and the limited resources available – it would be wise to pitch ambitions prudently. A sensible timeline will need to be established. Efforts should be made step-by-step with a small number of pilot projects that can be evaluated as they unfold, so as to be able to report on their success (or lack thereof) before the mid-term review of the European Financial Framework. The watchwords should be gradualism and flexibility. Close cooperation with the European Parliament as well with all European stakeholders will be essential as well.

1. A strategic framework and dedicated staff

Progress will depend on the wise balancing of a *strategic framework* and *autonomy* for cultural actors. Given that competencies for external relations will remain principally anchored to Member States, progress will also depend on the achievement of what is often called *subsidiary complementarity*: ways in which the European institutions support Member States, their experts and expert organisations, in delivering tools for cooperation, communication, leverage and information exchange for 'European' projects that are more than just the sum of many national projects, but are conceived in ways that generate trans-national added value and transmit the overarching European message in their content.

Such a strategy would require the key policy actors (Council, EU institutions, the European Parliament) to agree upon a small, but sufficiently strong coordination mechanism within the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) that could work across all relevant departments, communicating and liaising with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders as well as with cultural civil society.

Personnel with cultural knowledge and experience would need to enable, facilitate and coordinate cultural relations. Although these professionals could be placed in the EU Delegations, the findings of the Report have shown that more confidence and trust is placed in arm's length organisations by cultural actors and civil society organisations. We have already emphasised the importance of case-by-case consideration of appropriate partners in different settings thus we would recommend testing and piloting a variety of models for resourcing and staffing.

2. Funding

Another precondition will be adequate funding. One option would be to set aside an identified percentage for the cultural portfolio in the budget assigned to the EU's external relations. The target figure could be based for on a certain proportion of culture-related funding to structural funds and within external relations budgets. The average of 1.7% in structural funds, to be matched in funding for external relations, could be a basic starting point. Another option – for the longer term, after the initial pilot phase has been completed – would be the establishment, as of 2021, of a dedicated budget line for culture in external relations in the EU budget for external action.

In any events, as is already the case throughout the cultural sector itself, both in Europe and third countries, measures including co-funding, pooled funding, the development of public-private partnerships, the blending of grants and loans, and the establishment of trust funds would need to be applied. The role of the private sector, of philanthropic organisations, private sponsors and other independent funding organisations would have to be reassessed regularly and on the basis of experience, to identify best practices in innovative and cooperative funding mechanisms.

C. Instruments and specific mechanisms

Additional instruments will be needed in order to optimize the added value of a 'joined up' EU strategy. These instruments do not need to be numerous, nor do all of them need to be new, but they should all follow the principle of lean administration and high flexibility. Such instruments would include the following:

1. Pooled resources for 'smart' complementarity

Given the scale of demand for cultural relations and the impact of the financial crisis in Europe, the only realistic way to envisage stronger action in this field is for the European cultural sector to pool its ideas, space and personnel. This implies mutually agreed cooperation between Member States, notably their cultural institutes and attachés abroad, as well as across a multitude of cultural civil society linkages and networks that operate in parallel to governments.

2. Better communication

The need for the EU to communicate better across the board is widely acknowledged. In the cultural field, this means sharing the outcomes of European societies' commitment to the flourishing of their cultural sectors and explaining why the EU itself is committed to increasing the role of culture in its external relations. The online platform 'Capacity4Dev' established by DG DEVCO is a good example of the use of new tools to enhance communication, the sharing of experience and collaborative participation. The EU's public diplomacy ought to communicate more imaginatively to diverse audiences as regards the cultural relations opportunities offered by the EU, the Member States and other actors/institutions. These audiences range from people in very poor and fragile societies to those in the flourishing BRICs economies. Cultural actors in many strategic partner countries do not lack funds to practice international cultural relations, but the EU has

many competitors for their interest and attention. For this reason, the key policy actors in these countries need to be made aware of the added value for them of intensified cultural exchange with the EU. As a corollary, cultural relations with the strategic partner countries should be promoted at the highest political level.

3. Multilingualism

Linguistic diversity is as important globally as it is within the EU; hence the latter's key messages should be made available in different languages, particularly in countries where several different languages are used.

4. Eliminating barriers to mobility

Intensified cultural relations mean denser flows of creative people. Yet this aim is still thwarted by stringent restrictions on the granting of visas by European Member States to third country cultural actors. Some third countries make access almost as difficult for Europeans. Talking boldly of strengthening cultural ties while restricting physical access to cultural actors from elsewhere is an example of the double standard, wherever it may occur. Furthermore, in the case of Europe, it gainsays the commitment made by EU Member States – and indeed of many others in different regions of the world – when they ratified the 2005 UNESCO Convention. Hence reviewing the visa regime applicable to cultural actors must be a priority for both the EU Member States and third countries.

5. Strengthening civil society

Cultural processes and values have played a key role historically in the nurturing of robust civil societies, notably over the past few decades, in the 'transition countries' of Europe after the demise of the Communist regimes in the 1990s. It is now Europe's turn to share this positive experience with civil society cultural actors in third countries where major social and political transformations are occurring. It is clearly important to deploy more resources through non-governmental channels, at the 'people-to-people' level.

6. A better fit with the cultures of young people

Most cultural relations as they are practiced at the official level are far removed from the interests and practices of young people. They are 'out of synch' with the ways they already communicate with each other and create communities of interest and engagement internationally, notably through digital tools and the social media. For this reason, no EU strategy can hope to succeed if it is not constructed squarely within the cultural environment in which young people construct their aspirations and dreams and if it is unwilling or unable to promote the new cultural forms and voices that are emerging. By the same token, the EU should also elaborate more exchange programmes for young people in both education and culture. Moreover, since in many third countries young people – particularly girls – cannot travel easily, the EU should also ensure that such programmes are provided within the countries themselves. It is also at the elementary school level that the seeds should be sown of building European knowledge and awareness of other cultures.

7. A focus on cities and towns

Several of the European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) programmes, whether in large or medium-sized cities, have led to the establishment of new platforms for international cooperation and co-creation. The ECOC accolade has also served as an opportunity to develop city cultural infrastructure to serve both domestic and international uses. The programme has also brought the cultural dimensions of regional developments outside Europe into focus, and has promoted new types and channels of mobility. Its lessons could be applied at the trans-continental level with the support of the European Commission and if funded by an appropriate EU scheme. This could occur even more effectively and sustainably than in the existing scheme if the criteria and the selection process carried out by the board of experts and the Council clearly reflect the strategic priorities formulated in the European Agenda for Culture.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Many institutional initiatives fail due to a lack of tools to identify roadblocks and wrong turnings. In other words, robust systems of monitoring and evaluation should be developed. The need for them would be particularly strong in the case of any newly launched EU strategy for culture in external relations, hence their design and elaboration must be made part and parcel of the process.

D. Towards alternative modes of practice

Demands for change emerged very clearly from the consultation process and these need to be seriously heeded. At a general level, these concern basic attitudes, modes of practice and funding with respect to cultural relations. In particular, there is a need to adapt rules, regulations and procedures to the realities on the ground. Hence alternatives to the existing schemas or 'models' through which the EU's cultural relations take place are needed.

This is a challenge of both content and methodology. It concerns rules of financing, accountability, etc.) and administrative processes. Political considerations often come into play, such as limitations to funding in specific crisis situations. In effect, the EU has at best very limited capacities for rapid intervention in crises, unlike both public and private actors in other regions, notably North America, who are able to react very quickly. On a more general level, proposals involving third country actors are all too often drafted in a predominantly European perspective. EC calls for proposals have an over-determining effect, since themes as well as strict conditions of participation are set out in advance. Unproductive *ex ante* standardisation of projects is often seen to be the outcome, allowing little space for innovative forms of cooperation and restricting the range of eligible projects. Strategic planning and local empowerment should be combined, through relations of trust forged in a spirit of tailored cooperation, and by optimizing the comparative advantage that exists on both sides.

It has been observed that there is no built-in structural commitment to cultural relations in the EU Delegations. The degree of interest shown by them has been mostly *ad hoc*, depending on the goodwill of particular individuals. For this reason, EU Delegations need to be equipped to take non-political decisions at arm´s length and on the basis of cultural expertise, rather than function within the framework of patterns of

diplomacy governed by political agendas.

New forms of practice are required in several areas: trans-national peer-to-peer learning, financing of projects and the empowerment of local actors. In each of these areas, pilot projects could be developed on the basis of careful further reflection.

1. New models of trans-national peer-to-peer learning

'Eye-to-eye' forms of collaboration independent of power relations as a form of 'cultural fair trade' and could provide valuable mutual learning experience. These collaborations could involve artists, cultural managers, journalists, writers, etc.

2. New models of financing cultural relations projects

Since budgets for culture in external relations are limited, new models of funding and EU leverage for them are going to be needed. There is no evidence whatsoever that private philanthropy or investment will step in to replace public subsidy any day soon. Yet there has been a shift from a vision of grant making or subsidy for deserving cultural projects to the idea of 'investing' in cultural projects that are in a sense 'bankable'. Hence there is scope for the forging of public/private partnerships to complement traditional funding sources. The potential is most obvious in fields such as the cultural and creative industries, and in clusters of 'incubators' in areas of need such as urban neighbourhoods. Another area of demand is for re-granting through local institutions. The EU could work through local service providers in implementing projects across a larger area involving several (smaller) cultural actors on the ground, rather than operating on an individual project basis.

As regards grants, smaller ones need to be made available. Cultural operators are often totally overstretched – even the process of filling in applications is daunting – by the sheer size of EU grants. Quick access to small grants is also needed for project development. Many operators observe that the creation of local foundations to channel funds could help avoid cumbersome bureaucratic processes. Equally recurrent was the idea of targeting new players, mostly private investors. It was suggested that the EU could test brokering platforms with the finance community so that cultural projects become part of the profile for investment; it could also broker public incentives for private cultural investment (e.g., in African and Arab countries) or facilitate the creation of local funds independent of government influence and managed by local players.

3. New ways of empowering local actors

Many examples of collaboration between established cultural organisations and/or foundations and local actors were cited during the consultation. There are potential models using different kinds of expertise. The EC could attempt to develop such new modes of cooperation and elaborate a pilot project for this purpose.

Crisis-related cultural interventions are among the biggest challenges in international cultural relations. There is widespread evidence that cultural aspects are not taken into account at all or sufficiently in crisis

and post-crisis situations, including in refugee camps in particular. However, there is enough good practice in this domain already that could be tested out through a specially designed pilot project.

E. Pilot Projects

These recommendations should be tested by the design and launch in 2014 of a few pilot projects. The following have been outlined in the Draft Report:

1. Joint cultural strategy workshops

In many third countries important new initiatives have been taken by and/or funded independently of governments, notably by individual cultural activists. Others have been community-driven or have emerged from the marketplace. Hence the need for joint reflection among different categories of stakeholders with a view to developing more systematic arts and culture strategies through the efforts of different stakeholders. Most of these will be working not just with governments, but also in addition to them. In view of the valuable experience of many European Member States in this domain, a process of joint reflection may be envisaged. This process could take the form of *learning workshops* that compare European best practices with realities on the ground with locally observed and studied realities. European experts could be invited to work together with counterparts in third countries; they would focus on critical factors and solutions relevant in Europe and assess their appropriateness in other settings. The learning workshops could be followed by a *reflexive workshop* in each third country selected, also with the participation of European experts, whose outcomes could include the following:

- A strategic vision for the cultural sector (all stakeholders);
- A roadmap for the self-development of cultural organisations in a spirit of entrepreneurship and networking.

The pilot project should envisage the above workshop process either in sub-regions or in selected third countries.

2. Joint translations programme

Such a programme would seek to facilitate and/or promote the translation – on a joint EU-third country basis – of contemporary literary works as well as significant new writing in the humanities and social sciences. Respecting the spirit of mutuality and pooling of resources, the programme would aim at reaching readers in both the EU and the third countries. In the case of the latter, it would target a priority readership of young people. The translations would be made available online as well as in printed form and work should be produced as cost-efficiently as possible. The project would concern Arabic-speaking third countries and would be based on Euro-Mediterranean partnerships between publishers, distributors, bookshops, educational institutions and governments. It would aim to create and/or consolidate a readership that would be given the opportunity to understand the diversity of responses to shared individual and/or socio-cultural issues. Project partners would be invited to suggest works for translation. Their proposals should be validated by a selection committee, according to clearly defined criteria. The works selected could also compete for a translations 'label' that is jointly conceived and awarded by the EU and the third country

concerned or for financial support no greater than 25% of the cost of production and distribution. Each work so proposed should be accompanied by a detailed justification and business plan covering production and distribution costs in the Arab-speaking world. One or more labels could be awarded each year and the works selected could be presented at diverse book fairs, literary festivals or translation days organised on university campuses and other educational or commercial institutions working in tandem with publishers and distributors.

3. European Creative Hubs

This would be a project in either Brazil or China designed to support the establishment of European creative hubs in these emerging markets. The creative hub would seek to strengthen the international position of the European cultural and creative industries. It would seek to assist artists, producers and companies in entering third country markets, building long-lasting international partnerships and focusing on local demand. In addition to hosting space and providing support to European as well as local cultural and creative industries, each hub would also be a platform for discussion, dialogue and shared learning with local stakeholders, aiming at the facilitating of trade missions and the organisation of matchmaking events. The European Commission could be instrumental in this regard. A good example is the Dutch DFA project, a four-year strategic programme (2009-2012) of the Dutch government for their design, fashion and architecture sectors.

4. Business skills and Internationalisation for the cultural and creative industries

The cultural and creative industries sector in the EU is made up principally of small businesses (with less than 10 employees), micro-businesses and self-employed/free-lancers. These businesses require more robust business skills in order to be competitive internationally. They also need to be able to operate with the most up-to-date digital technologies, notably to create new audiences and consumers for the goods and services they produce. A pilot project could be developed between business schools, European trade associations representing the sector and national cultural institutes to develop training modules for the internationalisation of Europe's cultural and creative industries. Also a programme to train the trainers could be set up to make the training modules widely available and ensure that they can be shared with third countries interested in promoting business cooperation in the culture and creative sector with the EU.

5. Young Creative Entrepreneurs Networking Programme

There is real interest among young entrepreneurs and players in the creative industries in third countries to network and engage with their European counterparts and leading practitioners in their sectors. A specific programme could be designed to encourage promising younger creative people (say under 35) to make connections with professionals in Europe and help a new generation to accelerate their professional development. There is already a well-established model for this: the British Council's Young Creative Entrepreneur Scheme that provides tailored visits to the UK for entrepreneurs in the design, fashion, film, interactive, music, performing arts, visual arts etc. However, this is directed at young creators in developing economies. Modest EU funding is also available through the ACP programme to assist creative industry entrepreneurs in some of those countries to break into international markets. However, it is also evident

that there is demand from cultural and creative industry players in third countries with developed economies (e.g. Japan) to establish long-term collaborative relations with Europe. A pilot initiative could be developed to run for two years from 2015.

6. Cultural Management Training Programme(s)

A programme enabling European actors to share their experience in the management of cultural institutions and projects would be relevant both for strategic partners that want to open up new markets for their products as well as to neighbourhood countries seeking skills and expertise. Its curricula and teaching modules should be developed cooperatively between specialised institutes in the Member States and counterparts in third countries. All cultural institutions within in the EU able to offer management training based on this curriculum should be allowed to participate and to invite young people from third countries to receive training in Europe. This 'personal' training should be accompanied by a (supranational) e-learning programme that allows the young managers to continue their studies at home.

7. City-to-city cooperation programme

To better exploit the potential of cities as autonomous cultural actors as well as the interest many city cultural officials in third countries express for cooperation with the European counterparts, a new city-to-city programme should be established. The EU programme focussing on the role Europeans have played in the cultural life of cities all over the world and vice-versa. In alternating years, a city within Europe and a city outside Europe could serve as examples for exchanges in fields such as of architecture, design and urban planning. The EU should find ways to open the 'European Capitals of Culture' programme to third countries such as the Ukraine and Israel in order to encourage a focus on shared histories within the context of exhibitions, workshops, exhibitions, concerts and the like.

8. On-line cultural relations tool

As cultural relations with third countries are hampered by insufficient information on both sides as regards their respective cultural systems, policy frameworks, etc., a dedicated online information portal should be established. It could collect information on such things as prospective partners, presenters, venues, artists' residencies, touring circuits for live music, festivals, small scale theatre and dance, museums and galleries interested in co-curation, audio-visual companies interested in co-productions, sources of funds for international collaboration etc. A model already exists, namely the *Culture 360* portal developed under the auspices of the Asia-Europe Cultural Foundation, with guidance from culture and information specialists in both continents. Not only has this mechanism stimulated cultural co-operation between Asia and Europe, but also within Asia. For a pilot scheme such a portal might be developed between Europe and Africa (where work has begun on gathering information in the visual arts).

9. Structured EU Film Festival Scheme

While certain EU Delegations (e.g. New Delhi and Beijing) have organised European film festivals, they have done so on a shoestring budget and with limited human resources. Most of these festivals have not been presented in traditional cinema circuits. Some have shown films that are not representative of the

richness and diversity of European film production. Some of the films selected are unknown even to Europeans. There is need for a far more ambitious and structured scheme to bolster the initiatives so far organised and funded by the EU Delegation itself or by European embassies or consulates with the support of the EU Delegation and Chambers of Commerce. Such a project could contribute significantly to projecting a positive image of Europe and to contributing to intercultural dialogue. Under the project, EU Delegations that wish to organise such festivals would be provided with a selection of say 10 European films of the previous years. Criteria of quality and significance would have to be elaborated to guide the selection process. Sufficient funding would be made available to ensure that the selected films are marketed and distributed as effectively as possible so that wider publics may see them, rather than just limited elite audiences. A mutual learning component could be built into each festival through the organisation of workshops for film makers, producers, cinema funding agencies, distributors, etc. Film distribution in commercial circuits is a challenging marketing and management task. Therefore, ways will have to be found to involve professional expertise from the local cinema industry. The project may be entrusted to a consortium of national film agencies and/or national cultural institutes, together with producers and international distributors who are competent to work commercially with local distributors.