Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals

The Role of the European Union

Gijs de Vries

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

ifa supports the Sustainable Development Goals

Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals

The Role of the European Union

Gijs de Vries

ifa Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

Contents

Foreword

"Transforming our world" is the title of the Agenda 2030 which was adopted by 193 member states of the United Nations in New York on 25 September 2015. It comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with a total of 169 associated targets to fulfill these goals. This is "the most comprehensive and ambitious agenda for development the world has ever seen", states the author Gijs de Vries in this study.

The role of culture for sustainable development is reflected in a cross-cutting manner in many of the targets of Agenda 2030, thus the Agenda is essential to international cultural relations and external cultural policy on EU member states level, but also for the EU's external cultural relations. In addition, the implementation of the Agenda applies to all countries around the world including civil society based on partnerships. Where do we stand today 5 years after the adoption of the Agenda 2030?

Gijs de Vries gives an overview of the current status of the implementation at EU level and points out policy recommendations for the member states, the Commission, the European External Action Service and the European Parliament. This publication forms part of ifa's Research Programme "Culture and Foreign Policy", in which experts address relevant issues of international cultural relations and foreign policy. ifa discusses and documents cultural aspects of global challenges. The aim is to scientifically accompany foreign cultural policy, to develop new concepts in the dialogue between science, culture, politics and the media.

I would like to thank Gijs de Vries for his excellent work and commitment to this research project. In addition, I would like to thank my ifa colleagues Odila Triebel, Sarah Widmaier and Anja Schön for their work on the conception, coordination and editing of this project.

ifa promotes international cultural exchange through exhibitions, civil society empowerment worldwide and research on international cultural relations. With this study we would like to reflect on the cultural dimension of the Agenda 2030, discuss possible policy measures and induce a dialogue among European and non-European stakeholders. We need to include perspectives from outside of Europe to continuously reflect on our perspectives to evolve international cultural relations.

Ronald Grätz
Secretary General
ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)

Abstract

Agenda 2030 is the most comprehensive and ambitious agenda for development the world has ever seen. Culture forms part of this agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals provide pathways for culture to flourish, but culture also helps to drive the SDGs. The European Union and its 27 member states have pledged to deliver on the global agenda. Europe has much to contribute, and much to learn. The purpose of this study is twofold. Its first objective is to take stock of the European Union's progress in reaching the cultural goals and targets of Agenda 2030. Secondly, the paper will explore a limited number of potential policy priorities.

Executive summary

Culture is at the heart of Europe's identity. Culture contributes to prosperity, social cohesion and the well-being of Europeans. It also reinforces Europe's image and influence in the world. EU leaders have pledged to increase their support to cultural cooperation.

Agenda 2030 is the most comprehensive and ambitious agenda for development the world has ever seen. Culture forms part of this agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals provide pathways for culture to flourish, but culture also helps to drive the SDGs. The European Union and its 27 member states have pledged to deliver on the global agenda. Europe has much to contribute, and much to learn.

The EU is well-placed to meet the cultural targets. Several member states lead by example and focus on cultural objectives in their SDG implementation strategies. As the world's leading international donors, the EU and the member states are in a strong position to build global partnerships. COVID-19, with its negative impact on the cultural sector, makes this an even more urgent task.

Various EU policies already contribute to meeting the SDGs but in other areas there is scope for greater alignment. Coordination and collaboration need to be further improved, including between the EU and national capitals. The present EU budget does not reflect culture's importance to society or the EU's ambitions.

Europe's contribution to culture as a dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals could be particularly valuable in five areas:

A first priority for Europe could be to focus on the role of culture in education, including by promoting global citizenship, arts education, and appreciation of cultural diversity (SDG 4).

The cultural and creative industries are drivers of innovation that generate nearly 30 million jobs around the world; in Europe they employ more young people than any other sector. Tourism, which accounts for 10% of EU GDP, also drives jobs and growth. By supporting creative industries and cultural tourism the EU could spur sustainable economic growth (SDG 8).

Third, the EU could do more to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage and mainstream heritage in its upcoming multi-annual budget (SDG 11).

Flooding, earthquakes, heat waves and other manifestations of climate change pose huge challenges to cultural and natural heritage. Disaster-risk prevention must rank among EU priorities in Europe and beyond (SDG 13).

Fundamental freedoms are a cornerstone of sustainable development (SDG 16). However, in many countries freedom of expression is under sustained attack and artists, academics and journalists are being silenced. The EU should step up its support for freedom of expression and the right to culture.

1. Introduction

> "We will invest in culture and our cultural heritage,
> which are at the heart of our European identity."
> European Council, 20 June 2019

Culture is essential to Europe. Culture is at the heart of Europe's identity; it contributes to prosperity, social cohesion, and the well-being of Europeans; and it reinforces Europe's image and influence in the world.[1]

Europe is also important to culture, as European leaders emphasised in the New Strategic Agenda for the EU 2019-2024.[2] On the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome, the leaders of the 27 member states and EU institutions marked their ambition for a Union "which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity" and "where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development and economic growth."[3] In December 2017 the European Council emphasised that "education and culture are key to building inclusive and cohesive societies, and to sustaining our competitiveness" and confirmed that European leaders were willing to do more in these areas.[4]

This commitment by Europe's most senior political leaders matters now more than ever. In Europe and across the world the cultural sector reels under the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Theatres, concert halls, museums, cinemas, monuments and sites had to close their doors. Many cultural institutions cannot sustain the losses and risk going under. The human toll has been unprecedented: countless artists and craftspeople lost their livelihoods. As so often, the poorest and most vulnerable were hit hardest, particularly in the global South. Left unaddressed, the world will emerge from the crisis impoverished spiritually as well as materially.

At the same time, the cultural sector has enormous potential to support the recovery. Culture is not only important in itself (4.4% of the European economy, equal to the ICT sector), it is also critically important to other sectors of society, such as tourism, education, and electronic services. Above all, culture adds spice to life. Culture embodies hope and meaning. To millions across the world the freedom to express oneself individually and

---

[1] "Culture is defined by UNESCO as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, that encompasses not only art and literature but lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs." (UNESCO, Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001).
[2] European Council, A New Strategic Agenda for Europe, 20 June 2019.
[3] Rome Declaration, 25 March 2017.
[4] European Council Meeting 14 December 2017, Conclusions.

collectively, and to enjoy other people's creativity is indispensable to a life worth living. Culture helps us define who we are, and who we want to be.

Agenda 2030 is the most comprehensive and ambitious agenda for development the world has ever seen. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals cover most areas of public policy, from social, economic and environmental sustainability to the protection of fundamental freedoms. Culture forms part of this agenda, albeit not a major part. The European Union and its 27 member states have pledged to deliver on the SDGs.

The EU is well-placed to meet the cultural targets. Heritage and creativity matter to EU citizens. Culture, Europeans say, is the factor that does most to create a feeling of community among them as EU citizens.[5] To many non-Europeans, culture is part of Europe's attractiveness. It is an important component of the EU's largely positive international reputation. As a partner in international cultural development, working on the basis of equality with countries in other regions, the EU could be a major force in delivering on the global agenda. Europe has much to contribute, and much to learn.

The purpose of this study is twofold.

Its first objective is to take stock of the European Union's progress in reaching the cultural goals and targets of Agenda 2030. Five years after the adoption of Agenda 2030, where does the EU find itself? With only ten years left to realise the SDGs, where is the EU heading?

Secondly, the paper will explore a limited number of potential policy priorities. How can the EU and EU member states maximise their impact? Where should the EU focus its efforts?

This exploratory study does not aim at comprehensiveness. Readers interested in a more exhaustive treatment will find suggestions for further examination in the bibliography.

The structure of the paper is as follows. The first section gives an outline of Agenda 2030 and its cultural objectives. The next section assesses the impact of the Corona pandemic (COVID-19) on global development, the SDGs, and the cultural sector. The paper then discusses EU policy in the field of culture, before turning to five areas where Europe's contribution to the global agenda could be particularly valuable. Recommendations are provided throughout the analysis; the final section provides a summary.

---

[5] Standard Eurobarometer 88, Autumn 2017, p. 42.

2.   Culture in the global agenda for sustainable development

What makes culture special? Why is there such a thing as the right to culture? Why should we care about culture?

A particularly moving answer to these questions was given 75 years ago in the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO. Culture matters because "the wide diffusion of culture, and the education of humanity for justice and liberty and peace are indispensable to the dignity of man and constitute a sacred duty which all the nations must fulfil in a spirit of mutual assistance and concern."[6] Indeed, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity confirms, "respect for the diversity of cultures, tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, in a climate of mutual trust and understanding are among the best guarantees of international peace and security." Pronounced in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, these words have lost none of their relevance or poignancy today.

Culture's role, in fact, is even more profound. Not only does culture contribute to peace and security, it is equally important as a driver and enabler of social and economic development. Across the world, culture contributes to employment, sustainable economic growth, social cohesion, and human wellbeing.

Now, for the first time, culture's importance to development has been recognised. As the Preamble of the 2030 Agenda indicates: "We acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development." Several Sustainable Development Goals refer explicitly to culture, but there is wide agreement that culture directly and indirectly contributes to Agenda 2030 as a whole.

The relationship between culture and the SDGs is one of mutual dependence. The SDGs provide pathways for culture to flourish, but culture also helps to drive the SDGs. Economically, culture is a multiplier that drives innovation in ICT, audio-visual production, and other sectors. Socially, cultural heritage and the arts help to foster cohesion. By greening its operations, the cultural sector can reduce its carbon footprint and act against climate change.

Last but not least, musicians, writers, filmmakers, actors, museum curators, heritage professionals and others working in creative sectors can harness culture's convening

---

[6] Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 16 November 1945.

power to raise public awareness of the Goals and their promise of a more just and equitable world. Here, too, the cultural sector can be a force multiplier. For example, in July 2017 up to 20,000 authors, intellectuals and engaged citizens met to celebrate the 15th edition of the renowned festival of Paraty, the largest literature festival in the Southern hemisphere. UNDP's Rio Centre for Sustainable Development and the Brazilian League of Printing Houses joined forces to put sustainability and Agenda 2030 at the heart of proceedings.

The Sustainable Development Goals differ fundamentally from the (previous) Millennium Development Goals. Contrary to the MDGs, which applied only to developing countries, the Sustainable Development Goals apply to all countries – rich as well as poor. Nor are the SDGs only about money (or Official Development Assistance). They constitute global partnerships that seek to mobilise all means and actors: civil society as well as the public and private sectors. Thirdly, the SDGs focus explicitly on equity and inclusion; their ambitious aim is to "Leave no-one behind." Last but not least governments set up a follow-up process of voluntary, regular reviews at national, regional, and world level.

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs were agreed by all 193 member states of the United Nations. In signing up to the Agenda, governments committed themselves to implementing it at home as well as abroad.

The SDGs provide an unprecedented opportunity for global cooperation in the field of culture. Agenda 2030's inclusiveness – it addresses all countries equally, and it addresses them as equals – echoes the main principle of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions: all countries have a duty to protect and promote cultural diversity at home and abroad. This duty constitutes not only a moral obligation but a legal one as well. The right to culture is a human right which governments have pledged to uphold. "Everyone has the right to take part in cultural life" (Article 15, International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights).[7]

---

[7] Similarly: "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community." (Article 27, Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Ensuring the human right to take part in cultural life requires from a state party both abstention (i.e., non-interference with the exercise of cultural practices and with access to cultural goods and services) and positive action (ensuring preconditions for participation, facilitation and promotion of cultural life, and access to and preservation of cultural goods).[8] Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals provide governments with an unprecedented opportunity to fulfil this obligation under international law.

Culture in the SDGs

Although culture has not been recognised alongside the economic, social and environmental pillars as the fourth pillar of development, as UNESCO and cultural organisations had proposed, references to culture occur throughout the sustainable development agenda.

- **Agenda 2030**
  In its Resolution "Transforming the World: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development" the UN General Assembly said it envisages a world of "universal respect for human rights and human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination; of respect for race, ethnicity and **cultural diversity**; and of equal opportunity permitting the full realization of human potential and contributing to shared prosperity. [...] We pledge to foster **intercultural understanding**, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility. We acknowledge the **natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development**."

- **SDG 4: Quality Education**
  Target 4.7 states the aim of ensuring that by 2030, all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a **culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development**.

---

[8] Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 21, Right of Everyone to Take Part in Cultural Life, E/C.12/GC/21, 21 December 2009, p. 2.

- **SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**
  Target 8.3 addresses the promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive activities as well as, among others, **creativity and innovation**.
  Target 8.9 requires actors to devise and implement policies to promote **sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products**.

- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**
  Target 11.4 highlights the need to strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's **cultural and natural heritage**.

In addition to these explicit references there are several goals and targets that are generally regarded as directly relevant and significant to culture. Such implicit references include:

- **SDG 4: Quality Education**
  Target 4.4: By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant **skills**, including technical and vocational skills, **for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship**.

- **SDG 5: Gender Equality**
  Target 5.C: Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of **gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls** at all levels.

- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities**
  Target 10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the **social, economic and political inclusion of all**, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

- **SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**
  Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and **public spaces**, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.

- **SDG 13: Climate Action**
  Target 13.1: Strengthen **resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters** in all countries.

- **SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions**
  Target 16.4: By 2030, significantly reduce **illicit financial** and **arms flows**, strengthen **the recovery and return of stolen assets** and combat all forms of organised crime.

  Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect **fundamental freedoms**, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

This short list, which reflects a broad consensus among cultural organisations and experts, could easily be expanded. The 17 goals and 169 targets cover a wide range of subjects, including most areas of public policy. Depending on one's imagination (and stamina) it is possible to argue that virtually all goals and very many targets are relevant to culture, either directly (culture as a driver of sustainable development) or indirectly (culture as an enabler). In fact, many of the goals and targets are interdependent; success in one area often requires progress in others. For example, SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns) in reference to sustainable tourism, and SDG 15 (Life on Land) have straight-forward interconnections with cultural and natural heritage, although this is not explicitly mentioned in the targets.[9] However, a comprehensive assessment of these interconnections and interdependencies would be beyond the scope of this paper.[10] The targets listed above are intended to serve the more modest purpose of providing a starting point for reflection.

Governments, in designing national policies to implement the SDGs, may wish to be even more selective. Not all goals and targets are equally relevant to all countries. Each country needs to select the targets that matter most to its national population. As (financial) means are not unlimited, priorities will have to be set.

At the same time, governments must take account of the special character of Agenda 2030, which invites countries to join forces and work together. Agenda 2030 does not only require countries to adapt their domestic agendas, it includes international obligations as well. SDG 17 explicitly requires international cooperation: "Partnerships for the Goals." By signing up to Agenda 2030, governments have accepted a commitment to provide financial support to developing countries (SDG 17.1).

---

[9] ICOMOS (2019), The Future of our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action (Paris: ICOMOS), p. 9.
[10] For insightful analysis see Danielle Cliche and Yudhisithir Raj Isar (2018), Introduction: Advancing creativity and development, in Re/Shaping Cultural Policies – 2005 Convention Global Report (Paris: UNESCO), and Culture Action Europe (2019), Implementing Culture within the Sustainable Development Goals.

Governments are thus faced with two questions: how to implement the agenda at home, and how to help other countries to do the same.

The European Union, too, will have to answer these questions, including with respect to culture. As one of the world's major political, economic, and cultural forces, the EU needs to decide how it will support implementation of Agenda 2030 within the European Union. Concurrently it will have to decide how it will support implementation in the wider world.

The EU is a pillar of the international system. It has vowed to defend and strengthen multilateral policies and institutions. Together, the EU and its member states are the most important providers of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the world. In 2018 the EU invested €74.4 billion in ODA, with €13.2 billion managed by the European Commission. That is more than the rest of the world combined.[11] The EU is thus in a powerful position to promote the SDGs, including the role of culture as an integral dimension of peace and sustainable development. The Corona-crisis, with its devastating impact on the cultural sector, makes this an even more urgent task.

---

[11] European Commission, 2019 Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions in 2018.

3.   Culture and the impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a serious risk to sustainable development. Many SDGs risk being delayed or derailed altogether. In large parts of the world, economic activity has slumped. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 25 million people could become unemployed and workers could lose $3.4 trillion in income.[12] As un-employment spikes, poverty rises with it. UN-sponsored research finds that COVID-19 poses a real challenge to the SDG 1, the goal of ending poverty by 2030. For the first time since 1990 poverty could increase around the world, reversing approximately a decade of progress. In some regions the adverse impact could even result in poverty levels last seen 30 years ago. Under a scenario of 20% income or consumption contraction, the number of people living in poverty could increase by 420-580 million.[13] The world is at risk of literally being thrown back in time.

Culture, education, and tourism have been hit especially hard.

Schools have closed in 180 countries and over three-quarters of the world's roughly 1.5 billion schoolchildren have been barred from their classrooms. The poorest and least educated have been hit hardest; the impact could last a life-time.

In almost all countries around the world (89%) cultural and natural World Heritage Sites have been closed or partially closed to the public, causing a loss of much-needed in-come. Fully 95% of countries closed or partially closed their museums, to equally disruptive effects.[14] Cultural performances of all varieties have been cancelled; artists and host institutions have seen their revenues evaporate. Estimates suggest that the film industry alone could lose as much as $5 billion this year from losing box office revenue and disrupted production.[15]

Many artists and cultural institutions have tried, creatively and courageously, to reach audiences through social media, but in a world where an estimated 4 billion people re-main totally offline, digital solutions fall short.[16] In some countries two in three people still

---

[12] International Labour Organization (2020), Covid-19 has exposed the fragility of our economies.
[13] Andy Summer, Chris Hoy, Eduardo Ortiz-Juarez (2020), Estimates of the impact of COVID-19 on global poverty, United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research, UNU-WIDER.
[14] UNESCO, Culture & COVID-19 Impact and Response Tracker, issues 1 and 2 (April 2020).
[15] Daniel F. Runde, Christopher Metzger, Hareem F. Abdullah (2020), Covid-19 Demands Innovative Ideas for Financing the SDGs, Center for Strategic and International Studies, p. 3.
[16] World Economic Forum (2016), Internet for All: A Framework for Accelerating Internet Access and Adoption, p. 5.

lack access to the internet.[17] Worldwide, 80% of online content is only available in one of ten languages, which only about three billion people speak as their first.[18] Music, theatre, dance and many other forms of culture need to be experienced "live" for the magic of human interaction to fully manifest.[19]

To make matters worse, politicians around the world have used the pandemic to stifle criticism and silence journalists, artists, and other independent voices. No fewer than 84 countries have enacted emergency laws vesting extra power in the executive. Cambodia's emergency law even allows for unlimited surveillance of private citizens. Jordan, Oman, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates have banned print newspapers, claiming that they might transmit the virus.[20] In Turkey and elsewhere journalists have been arrested on charges of spreading "disinformation" or on the basis of anti-terrorism laws. Serbia ranks 93rd in the World Press Freedom Index; Bulgaria slid from 36th place in 2006 to place 111 in 2020.[21] The international climate for freedom of speech has deteriorated.[22]

The social and economic impact of COVID-19 on Europe far outweighs the damage done by the 2007-2010 financial crisis. As Germany's Chancellor Merkel said, the Corona crisis is the biggest challenge in the history of the European Union. Culture and tourism are among the worst hit. In April 2020 the OECD expected spending on culture and recreation, hotels and restaurants to decline by three-quarters.[23]

To help Europe recover from the social and economic impact of the crisis, the European Commission has proposed a revised multi-annual financial framework for 2014-2020 and an emergency European Recovery Instrument, which would temporarily boost the financial firepower of the EU budget by using the headroom in the EU budget to raise additional financing on the financial markets. One of the measures proposed is REACT-EU, €55 billion in extra spending through the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, and the European Fund for Aid to the Most Deprived. The REACT-EU initiative could be used to support job creation, including in the much-affected culture and tourism sectors. However, member states will be able to decide themselves how exactly to channel the funds.

---

[17] UNESCO, Culture & COVID-19 Impact and Response Tracker, issue 2 (April 2020).
[18] World Economic Forum (2016), Internet for All, p. 10.
[19] IETM (2020), Live arts in the virtualizing world, www.ietm.org.
[20] The Economist, A pandemic of power grabs, April 25th 2020.
[21] Reporters Without Borders (2020), World Press Freedom Index.
[22] A call to arms was sounded by almost 500 leaders from over 100 countries and published by International IDEA (A Call to Defend Democracy, 25 June 2020).
[23] OECD (2020), Evaluating the initial impact of COVID-19 containment measures on economic activity, p. 4.

The Commission took several other steps to assist the cultural sector within the Creative Europe programme, such as €5 million for cinemas in the form of vouchers and redirection towards virtual mobility and digital culture of a €2 million call for projects in a support scheme for cross-border dimensions in performing arts.[24]

To help Europe's cultural sectors – arts, heritage, cultural industries – recover from the crisis the EU (Council and Parliament) needs to decide as quickly as possible on the overall rescue package. National governments (ministries of finance, economics, and culture) would also have to include culture explicitly in their REACT-EU national implementation schemes and help cultural operators access the funding. Equally – if not more – important than the emergency support under REACT-EU would be a Council decision to mainstream culture across all components of the Next Generation EU Plan. Such a culture-related focus would be clearly in line with the priorities identified in the New Strategic Agenda for the EU 2019-2024, adopted by the European Council on June 2019.[25]

Future funding for Creative Europe – the EU's flagship cultural programme – requires adoption of the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. However, at 0.15% of the EU budget[26] the culture programme is little more than a rounding error. Culture's place in the EU budget does not reflect culture's importance to society. Dozens of cultural organisations and the European Parliament have called for an increase in funding. However, in July 2020 the European Council included only €1.642 billion for Creative Europe in its MFF proposal – considerably less than what the cultural sector had called for.

Once again, culture risks being treated as a luxury, something nice to have, instead of as an indispensable dimension of human existence. This would be the more regrettable as the cultural sector could be a vital component of the recovery. At 4.2% of the European economy the cultural sector is not only important in itself, it is also a major economic multiplier. Without creative content, digital industries could not recover; without cultural vibrancy and sustainable heritage, Europe's inner cities would wither; without cultural tourism, the depopulation of rural areas cannot be halted.

Rather than being regarded as a cost, culture should be recognised as an investment. For Europe to recover from COVID-19, culture must be part of the solution.

---

[24] European Parliamentary Research Service, EU support for artists and the cultural sector during the coronavirus crisis, May 2020, p. 9.
[25] See also Europe Nostra, Open letter to all EU Heads of State and Government on Next Generation EU and Cultural Heritage, June 2020.
[26] Culture Action Europe, Open letter to EU leaders on Creative Europe funding, 22 November 2019.

4.   The European Union's cultural policies

What, in practical terms, could the EU do to meet the global cultural targets?

The EU is well-placed to lead the world in realising Agenda 2030. The EU is one of the most prosperous regions of the world and EU governments would be able to lead by example. As mentioned, EU member states and the Commission are also the world's leading donors of Official Development Assistance (ODA). In its 2018 peer review of EU development policy the OECD concluded that the EU has "shown leadership" in its efforts to reach global agreements on sustainable development and climate change.

Under Agenda 2030, countries are required to report to the UN (High Level Political Forum) how they implement the Sustainable Development Goals. As only some SDGs explicitly refer to the cultural sector, it is not surprising that relatively few countries used their Voluntary National Reviews to report on their cultural policies.[27] Among the countries that did report on culture, however, several EU member states stand out positively.

- Cyprus, for example, mentions it has established a special Office of Cultural Heritage in the Cyprus Police whose principal objective is the repatriation and return to their lawful owners of historical and cultural items that have been destroyed or looted (SDG 16.4: reduce illicit financial flows).
- Finland reports it will focus on global civic skills and competencies for sustainable development in adult education (SDG 4.7: global citizenship).
- Greece details its policies to foster culture and creativity as drivers of sustainable development. Greece's Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework, the main strategic plan for growth in Greece, mainstreams culture in practically all sectoral and regional operational programmes. Cultural projects have a multiplying effect of 3.44 on the Greek economy, and cultural heritage, tourism, and the cultural and creative industries are among the national economic priority sectors. Greece announces steps to implement the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage: it will promote Tinian marble craftsmanship, wooden shipbuilding, and the Mediterranean diet (SDG 8: jobs and growth, and SDG 11: sustainable communities and heritage protection).
- Italy says it will address heritage protection in post-conflict situations and following natural disasters (SDG 11: heritage and SDG 13: climate action). It will also launch pilot projects to promote greater public understanding of natural heritage.

---

[27] For an analysis of national VNRs see Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda: A Report by the Culture 2030 Goal Campaign (2019).

- Latvia draws attention to its understanding of culture as the enabling environment that makes Latvia attractive for life, work, and leisure.
- Portugal highlights its work to reduce disparities in public access to cultural assets, to combat exclusion and discrimination, and foster cohesion (SDG 10: reduced inequalities).
- Romania mentions its partnership with UNESCO to develop indicators that reflect culture's contribution to development.
- Spain highlights the leading role of local governments, which in Spain account for the major part of public spending on culture.

Other European countries, such as the UK, still have some distance to go in their implementation of the SDGs. In its review of the British VNR, the House of Commons criticised the British government's approach. Although the VNR process had resulted in increased awareness of the SDGs "in pockets across the government departments," it was clear that "initially the bar was very, very low, with some departments having virtually no knowledge of the agenda at all." In view of the importance of the SDGs for Britain's domestic policies, MPs said that placing the responsibility for implementation of the SDGs in the Department of Development was "simply wrong."[28]

Cultural policy in the European Union is primarily a national competence. However, article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union mandates the European Union to coordinate, supplement and support member state action in the field of culture, including at international level.

A little over ten years after the first European Agenda for Culture (2007), the EU adopted a New European Agenda for Culture.[29] The New Agenda has three main objectives: (a) foster the cultural capability of all Europeans, (b) encourage the mobility of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors, and (c) protect and promote Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource to raise awareness of Europe's common history and reinforce its sense of common European identity. The Agenda has an external dimension: to support culture as an engine for international development, to promote intercultural dialogue, and to reinforce cooperation on heritage. The subsequent Council conclusions emphasised culture's potential to foster sustainable development and peace.[30]

---

[28] House of Commons International Development Committee, UK progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Voluntary National Review, Twelfth Report of Session 2017-19, 16 July 2019, p. 3.
[29] COM (2018) 267 final.
[30] Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, 7 December 2018.

The challenge for the EU and the member states is how to adapt these policies to the global objectives on culture which they have pledged to implement. This will require concerted action with timetables extending to 2030 across internal and external policy areas. The EU's effectiveness will depend, above all, on coordination: more effective coordination between the EU and the member states, and better coordination between the services of the Commission and the EEAS.

Budgets, too, will require appropriate tailoring. Spending on cultural cooperation has traditionally not been one of the EU's priorities. Its flagship cultural programme Creative Europe makes up one sixth of a percent of the multi-annual budget. As a component of national development aid, cultural aid has fallen. Data from 2015 for the OECD as a whole show that both the share of ODA to support creativity in developing countries and the share of ODA spent on culture have *declined* since 2010.[31] The total amount of cultural ODA being donated has fallen from US$ 465.9 million in 2005 to US$ 354.3 million in 2010, and to US$ 257 million in 2015, a decrease of 45% in ten years. The top ten recipients of cultural ODA in 2015 were Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Mexico, Morocco, South Africa, Turkey, Vietnam, the West Bank and Gaza Strip – not the poorest countries in the global South. Like other high-income countries, EU member states and the EU still have some way to go to implement the Council's commitment to mainstream culture in development policy.[32]

EU governments have emphasised repeatedly that culture should form part of national and European development cooperation. "Culture," the Council has stated, "is an essential part of the EU's international relations."[33] Paragraph 35 of the European Consensus on Development (2017) reads:

> "Culture is both an enabler and an important component of development and may facilitate social inclusion, freedom of expression, identity building, civil empowerment and conflict prevention while strengthening economic growth. Emphasising that the EU is guided by the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights, the EU and its Member States will promote intercultural dialogue and co-operation and cultural diversity, and will protect cultural heritage, boost the cultural and creative industries and will support cultural policies where these would help achieve sustainable development, while taking local circumstances into account."

---

[31] Avril Joffe (2018), The integration of culture in sustainable development, in UNESCO, Re/Shaping Cultural Policies (Paris: UNESCO), p. 171.
[32] Council of the European Union, Conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation, Doc. 14443/15, 24 November 2015, p. 6.
[33] Council Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations, 23 May 2017, p. 4.

The EU and the member states are strongly committed to implementing Agenda 2030. The Council confirmed they will do so "in a full, coherent, comprehensive, integrated and effective manner" and underlined that the EU and its member states "will act as **frontrunners** in this respect."[34]

On several occasions the Council of Ministers also emphasised the need for greater European **coordination and collaboration** in the field of culture.

- In 2015 it invited the member states and the Commission to participate in an ad-hoc task group hosted by Luxembourg tasked with preparing "a concrete, evidence-based, shared and long-term approach on culture and development cooperation."[35]
- In 2017 the Council invited member states to enhance collaboration between the relevant ministries, "particularly Ministries for Culture and Foreign Affairs."[36]
- In 2019 the Council called on the member states, the Commission and the High Representative to strengthen coordination in international cultural relations.[37]

These decisions partly still await implementation.

In 2011 the Council pledged to implement **joint programming** at recipient country level to reduce aid fragmentation and promote harmonisation.[38] The Commission reports that in 20 countries such joint programming documents have meanwhile been agreed.[39] Information on whether cultural cooperation has been integrated in the EU's joint programming is not publicly available.

Several Council resolutions contain detailed references to culture as a dimension of EU external relations, and to culture as part of the EU agenda to implement the SDGs.

---

[34] Ibid., p. 6.
[35] Council Conclusions on culture in the EU's external relations with a focus on culture in development cooperation, Doc. 14443/15, 24 November 2015, p. 7.
[36] Council Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations, 23 May 2017, p. 4.
[37] Council Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework of action, 8 April 2019, p. 7.
[38] Council of the European Union, EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, 14 November 2011, p. 3.
[39] European Commission, Global State of Play 2020 Joint Programming, www.capacity4dev.

- The Council has urged the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to create a **single web contact point** to enable greater visibility of EU international cultural policy.[40]
- It called on the Commission and the EEAS to designate "**cultural focal points**" and ensure adequate capacities for culture in EU delegations.[41] A similar call to appoint a cultural attaché in each EU representation in non-EU countries was made by the European Parliament.[42]
- The Council agreed to "step up efforts to promote the cultural dimension in sustainable development and to **integrate cultural policies** and perspectives **into national sustainable development strategies.**"[43]
- It invited the Commission to prepare, in coordination with the member states, an **action plan** on the cultural dimension of sustainable development.[44]
- It decided to set up an **Open Method of Coordination** working group on the cultural dimension of sustainable development.[45]

To sharpen the EU's international profile and impact as a driving force behind Agenda 2030's cultural commitments, the Council may wish to review progress in implementing these conclusions.

Reference should also be made to the call by the Council on the Commission to elaborate "without further delay" a **comprehensive implementation strategy** outlining timelines, objectives and concrete measures to reflect 2030 Agenda,[46] and the call by the Council on the Commission to **attribute the responsibility for the implementation of the Agenda 2030 to a member of the College**.[47] The European Council had already issued a similar appeal in October 2018. At the time of writing the Commission had not acted on these requests.

---

[40] Council Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations, 23 May 2017, p. 4, and Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework of action, 8 April 2019, p. 6.

[41] Council Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework of action, 8 April 2019, p. 6.

[42] European Parliament resolution of 19 January 2016 on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values.

[43] Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Cultural Dimension of Development, 22 November 2019, p. 6.

[44] Ibid., p. 7.

[45] Ibid., p. 6.

[46] Council Conclusions on Building a sustainable Europe by 2030, 10 December 2019, p. 11; see also the Council conclusions of 22 November 2019.

[47] Council Conclusions on Building a sustainable Europe by 2030, 10 December 2019, p. 10.

The Commission and the EEAS have yet to fully implement the call for **cultural focal points** (attachés) to be appointed across the board and ensure adequate capacities for culture in the EU delegations. In EUNIC's experience, staff in EU Delegations commonly lack awareness of the strategic approach to EU international relations. In many countries there is no regular dialogue between the EU's cultural counsellor and the counterparts from member states' embassies. In some EU delegations contacts with EUNIC (national cultural institutes) are managed by a development counsellor while contacts with the cultural counsellors of member states' embassies are managed by the press unit. Lines of accountability can be blurred as cultural programme managers are required to report both to the Head of Cooperation (Commission) and to the ambassador (EEAS).[48]

The EEAS could also step up its efforts to harness the power of culture in **bilateral diplomacy**. EU diplomats could, for example, make more active use of the international days on culture and freedom of speech to sharpen the EU's profile as a partner in cultural dialogue. Some EU Delegations and EUNIC clusters already host joint European cultural activities to celebrate World Creativity and Innovation Day, World Press Freedom Day and similar UN International Days. Other Delegations are much less involved.

The Court of Auditors has pointed out that the Commission does not systematically report on the **contribution of the EU budget**, programmes or policies to achieving the SDGs, except in the area of international relations.[49] However, its reporting in the area of external relations does not refer to any (sic) of the SDG-targets that relate to culture.[50] This is all the more remarkable in light of the EU's ambitious international cultural policy, as proposed by the Commission and the High Representative in 2016.[51] With respect to culture the Commission is not yet implementing Agenda 2030 in a full, coherent, comprehensive, integrated and effective manner.

---

[48] EUNIC, Report on the current state of the partnership between EUNIC clusters and EU Delegations, 2018.
[49] European Court of Auditors, Reporting on sustainability, June 2019.
[50] SWD(2018) 444 final.
[51] Joint Communication 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations', JOIN(2016) 29 final.

5. The European Union and the global targets on culture

As mentioned, the SDGs consist of interdependent and mutually reinforcing goals and targets. Culture is mentioned only in some sections, but most sections are relevant to culture. As the purpose of this paper is limited to illustrating the scope and potential of culture as a dimension of EU policy to implement the SDGs, a limited number of goals (5 out of 17) and targets (8 out of 169) have been selected for discussion.

5.1 SDG 4: Quality Education

Target 4.7: By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, **global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development**

Education is both a human right in itself and an indispensable means of realising other human rights. SDG 4 sets ambitious objectives: ensure that, by 2030, all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Many EU member states provide educational aid as part of their development policies. The EU also supports cooperation in education, including through the Development Cooperation Instrument (developing countries) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession (candidate countries). Erasmus is open to students from Iceland, Liechtenstein, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, and Turkey. Conditional access is given to students from the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro), Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine), the Southern Mediterranean (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia) and Russia.

EU funding will be needed to meet SDG 4, but the EU could also seize this opportunity to engage its foreign partners in dialogue and processes of mutual learning. The SDGs invite countries to enter into partnerships. These mutual commitments should include European initiatives to improve knowledge of the non-Western world in Europe itself. History curricula in Europe mostly teach national history, with a smattering of European history; the history and social reality of other parts of the world still gets surprisingly little attention. The age of colonialism is long past but Eurocentrism still permeates

European education.[52] For Europe to promote partnership in education, a good way to start would be to bring a more global perspective to national education.[53]

Another promising area for dialogue and mutual learning is the role of culture in education. Culture and education are closely connected. When mainstreamed in education, culture builds confidence and encourages dialogue. Artists help society to reflect on the human condition and improve it. Cultural expressions are essential for the development of young people: they build self-confidence and critical skills, helping them to achieve better educational results.[54] Researchers in the UK found that participation in structured arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%, and that students from low-income families who took part in arts activities at school were three times more likely to get a degree.[55]

A third promising area for partnerships is citizenship education. Global citizenship education and promoting the arts in education can be mutually reinforcing. Both are about developing creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and self-confidence: attitudes, skills and values that are essential to a life lived in freedom and responsibility. Promoting global citizenship is one of the objectives of Agenda 2030 (SDG 4.7). The EU could promote the implementation of the Council of Europe Reference Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture to boost global education practice.[56]

The EU also has opportunities to strengthen citizenship education within the European Union itself. Europeans still know little about each other's history, social reality, and cultural diversity. Much of Europe's history is shared history, but most national history school curricula remain focused on national narratives, notwithstanding excellent efforts to change this such as the Council of Europe's Shared Histories project.[57] Europeans also know little about the European Union, as opinion surveys have shown for many years. EU

[52] Dominic Sachsenmaier, "European Historical Identities and the World", in Brian Carvell (ed.) (2014), *Shared Histories for a Europe without Dividing Lines* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe), pp. 597-602.
[53] See also Gijs de Vries (2019), Cultural Freedom in European Foreign Policy (Stuttgart: ifa), pp. 57-60.
[54] UNESCO, UNFPA and UNDP (2015), Post-2015 Dialogues on culture and development, p. 27.
[55] Cultural Learning Alliance (2017), The Case for Cultural Learning: Key Research Findings.
[56] Council of Europe (2019), Global Education Guidelines.
[57] Council of Europe (2014)*,* Shared Histories. For a Europe without dividing lines.

ministers have called for a stronger European dimension in national citizenship educa-tion.[58] In 2014 and 2019 the Council also issued calls for multilingualism.[59] Unfortunately, in 13 member states, including Germany and Italy, the trend in language learning is flat or even downward.[60]

Today's generation of Europeans cannot exercise citizenship responsibly without knowledge and understanding of the evil perpetrated by previous generations. Anti-semi-tism is still haunting Europe. Once again it takes on virulent shapes. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel remarked: "Unfortunately there is to this day not a single syna-gogue, not a single day-care centre for Jewish children that does not need to be guarded by German policemen."[61] The situation in other EU countries is no less troublesome.

Understanding of the role Europeans have played in the Holocaust is vital to under-stand the European responsibility to counter antisemitism and other forms of prejudice. As UNESCO observes, the identification of groups as "others," their stereotyping, stigma-tisation, de-humanisation and ultimate destruction can be seen not only in the treatment of Jews and Roma by the Nazis, but also in the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda (1994) or the genocide in Cambodia (1975-1979). At a time when intolerance and prejudice against ethnic and religious minorities are once again rising in Europe, and even entering the po-litical mainstream, teaching and learning about the Holocaust can sensitise students to the position of minorities and help them realise the importance of accepting and appreciating diversity.[62]

5.2   SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, de-cent job creation, entrepreneurship, **creativity and innovation**, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.
Target 8.9: By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote **sustainable tourism** that creates jobs and promotes **local culture and products**.

---

[58] Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European di-mension of teaching, 22 May 2018.
[59] Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, 23 May 2019; Council Conclusions on multilingualism and the development of language competences, 20 May 2014.
[60] Peter Teffer, 'Fewer EU pupils being taught two languages,' EUObserver, 23 February 2017.
[61] Editorial, 'The Guardian view on German responses to antisemitism: frankness and honesty,' The Guardian, 29 May 2019.
[62] UNESCO (2013), Why Teach About the Holocaust?.

Cultural and creative industries

In addition to being a vibrant force of human development, joy, and fulfilment, cultural and creative industries (which include architecture, books and publishing, design, advertisement, film business, music business, radio & TV, software and games, and performing arts) have become powerful international drivers of innovation, job creation, and urban development. Worldwide, the CCIs generate 3% of GDP and 29.5 million jobs; global revenues exceed those of the telecommunications sector. Their importance to social cohesion is increasingly being recognised. In many countries women play a leading role in the creative economy, from arts and crafts, interior design and fashion to the music industry.[63] In the Ivory Coast women own 80% of textile factories. African, Caribbean and Pacific ministers reminded the EU that "culture is an essential factor for the empowerment of youth and women in ACP countries".[64] In Europe, the cultural and creative industries employ more young people than any other sector.[65]

Across the world, local authorities are well aware of the power of culture. UNESCO's Creative Cities Network currently consists of 180 member cities from 72 countries that have recognised creativity as a strategic factor of development. Working together in seven fields (crafts and folk art, design, film, gastronomy, literature, literature, media arts, and music) UCCN's member cities harness the transformative power of culture to implement the SDGs. Many suggestions for local action on culture and the SDGs have been made by UCLG (United Cities and Local Governments).[66] The EU's Creative Europe programme supports cultural and creative industries in Europe. Its Partnership for Sustainable Cities programme promotes urban development partnerships between local authorities from EU member states and partner countries across the world. The programme supports cultural development as a means of ensuring social inclusiveness.

Several European aid initiatives also focus on the CCIs as drivers of sustainable development. In Cuba the EU is currently helping to set up a Cultural Training Hub to strengthen the capacities of CCIs in the Caribbean region. The centre will foster mobility, skills and capacities among youth and professionals in the cultural and creative sectors. Other EU development projects focus on cultural heritage.

---

[63] Patrick Kabanda (2015), Work as Art: links between creative work and human development (New York, UNDP).
[64] Brussels Declaration of the 4th Meeting of ACP Ministers of Culture, 10 November 2017.
[65] EY (2015), Cultural Times: The First Global Map of the Cultural and Creative Industries (Paris: UNESCO).
[66] UCLG (2018), Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A guide for local action.

Several EU governments also support CCI's in the global South. Germany has initiated projects to support cultural and creative industries in six partner countries in Africa and the Middle East (Iraq, Jordan, Kenya, Lebanon, Senegal, South Africa). Spain has run more than 200 cultural heritage projects since 1988 (ACERCA – Patrimonio para el Desarollo). France, Italy, the Netherlands and other member states also contribute to cultural development.

The United Nations has declared 2021 as the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development. In its 2019 Resolution, sponsored by Indonesia and other countries, the UN General Assembly stressed that the creative economy can contribute to the three dimensions of sustainable development and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The Resolution and the Year provide EU member states and the EU with an excellent opportunity to reach out to partners worldwide on a basis of equality and strengthen Europe's role and visibility in international cultural cooperation.

Culture and tourism

Tourism accounts for 10% of EU GDP.[67] Europe's rich cultural heritage is a main competitive advantage. It is estimated that cultural tourism accounts for 40% of all European tourism – 4 out of 10 tourists choose their destination based on its cultural offering.[68]

In 2010, the European Commission adopted a Communication on tourism which set out a strategy and action plan. Four priorities for action were identified:
1. To stimulate competitiveness in the European tourism sector
2. To promote the development of sustainable, responsible, and high-quality tourism
3. To consolidate Europe's image as a collection of sustainable, high-quality destinations
4. To maximise the potential of EU financial policies for developing tourism.[69]

Europe's tourism industry is facing increasing global competition. It has also been hit hard by the Corona pandemic. As the Communication recognised, Europe must offer sustainable and high-quality tourism, playing on its comparative advantages, in particular,

---

[67] Eurostat (2013), Tourism industries – Statistics explained, Statistics in focus no. 32.
[68] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/tourism/offer/cultural_en.
[69] COM(2010) 352 final; in 2020 the Commission issued a Communication on Tourism and transport, COM(2020) 550 final.

the diversity of its countryside and its extraordinary cultural wealth. The action plan pro-
posed to strengthen cooperation with countries that could provide a source of visitors to
European destinations as their standard of living increases.

By depicting non-EU countries mostly as competitors and sources of inward tourism,
the 2010 strategy perhaps reflected the spirit of the times. It did not focus on ways for the
EU to support cultural tourism as a vector of sustainable growth in developing countries.
Agenda 2030 now commits the EU to this goal. The UNESCO World Heritage and Sus-
tainable Tourism Programme offers many opportunities for European leadership and
partnerships with developing countries. Detailed suggestions have been put forward by
the World Tourism Organization.[70]

An updated version of the EU action plan on tourism could be part of Europe's strat-
egy to implement SDG 8.9. This would also allow for a comprehensive response to the
damage inflicted by the Corona pandemic on cultural tourism in Europe and the world.

The 38 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe are a powerful symbol of European
interconnection and shared cultural heritage. They offer much potential to strengthen cul-
tural cooperation, heritage, and tourism, and strengthen Europe's cultural identity. The
Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has invited member states to further de-
velop the potential of the Cultural Routes through, *inter alia*:

▪   encouraging innovative actions implementing the main principles promoted by
    the conventions related with the Cultural Routes (i.e. European Cultural
    Convention, European Landscape Convention, Faro Framework Convention,
    UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of
    Cultural Expression 2005) along each Cultural Route;
▪   increasing local communities' awareness of the value of their cultural heritage
    and encouraging them to promote their own culture;
▪   promoting creative platforms which include local businesses, cultural and
    creative industries, media, tourism stakeholders and educational organisations,
    aiming to devise cultural products and to promote sustainable tourism;
▪   encouraging synergies with other programmes and activities of the Council of
    Europe, in particular in the fields of cultural heritage, education and youth
    policies;

---

[70] World Tourism Organization (2018), Tourism for Development, Vol. 1: Key Areas for Action (Madrid:
UNWTO).

- ▪ ensuring participation of young people as well as the development of active education programmes, communication channels and tourism products that specifically target young audiences;
- ▪ reinforcing European and international co-operation with organisations such as UNESCO, UNWTO and the EU.[71]

The Cultural Routes have benefited from (limited) EU support in the past. Their potential as drivers of sustainable development could be developed further.

5.3   SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Target 11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's **cultural and natural heritage**

Target 11.7: By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and **public spaces,** in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

> Target 11.4 includes an indicator (indicator 11.4.1). Efforts to meet the target could be measured, *inter alia*, by total expenditure (public and private) per capita spent on the preservation, protection and conservation of all cultural and natural heritage, by type of heritage (cultural, natural, mixed and World Heritage Centre designation), level of government (national, regional and local/municipal), type of expenditure (operating expenditure/investment) and type of private funding (donations in kind, private non-profit sector and sponsorship)

   In December 2019, the Inter-agency and Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) upgraded indicator 11.4.1 to Tier 2 status, confirming that the indicator is conceptually sound and has an internationally established methodology. However, although many countries have public expenditure data, the extent of data on heritage expenditure differs widely across the world. In many countries the national office of statistics lacks adequate resources; sometimes mandates and skill sets also fall short. Cultural statistics are not usually a priority. However, without adequate baselines and indicators, progress towards the goals will be very difficult to assess. As the saying goes, "what gets measured gets done." Capacity-building by the EU and member states could help to reduce the gap and improve data availability.

---

[71] Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on the 30th anniversary of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, 27 September 2017.

Cultural and natural heritage are essential to Europe culturally, economically, socially, and politically. In the eyes of its citizens and in the eyes of the world, Europe's heritage is a central component of European identity. The Council of Ministers has underlined that cultural heritage is a "strategic resource for a sustainable Europe."[72]

Latvia's report to the United Nations' High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) eloquently presents culture's importance to society:

> "Latvia's inhabitants and guests … perceive nature not as capital, but as the enabling environment that makes Latvia attractive for life, work and leisure. Culture in Latvia is understood not only in terms of historical heritage and fine arts that promote creativity, but also as relations among the people – such as mutual cooperation, trust, public participation and integrity."[73]

The European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage (2018) sets out for the first time an integrated approach to cultural heritage at European level.[74] It built on the successful European year of Cultural Heritage which attracted 10 million participants. The Year brought together all EU member states and nine neighbouring countries as well as a broad array of cultural stakeholders.

The European Framework is based on five pillars:

- Cultural heritage for an inclusive Europe: participation and access for all;
- Cultural heritage for a sustainable Europe: smart solutions for a cohesive and sustainable future;
- Cultural heritage for a resilient Europe: safeguarding endangered heritage;
- Cultural heritage for an innovative Europe: mobilising knowledge and research;
- Cultural heritage for stronger global partnerships: reinforcing international co-operation.

The framework has not been accompanied by additional funding. Existing sources of financial support for cultural heritage include the EU Structural Funds, Horizon 2020, the international aid instruments, and Creative Europe. The rules, procedures, timetables and

---

[72] Council Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe, 20 May 2014.
[73] Government of Latvia (2018), Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals: Report to the HLPF.
[74] SDW(2018) 491 final.

requirements of these instruments differ, which complicates access by the cultural sector. The revision of the Multi-annual Financial Framework offers an opportunity to adapt the legislation, and to mainstream culture in the new European Recovery Instrument ("Next Generation EU")[75] and in the future Neighbourhood, Development and International Co-operation Instrument (NDICI).

European foreign and development policy supports the protection of heritage in conflict situations outside Europe, including in Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen. France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and other member states also operate international protection schemes for cultural heritage at risk. Coordination of efforts and exchange of lessons learned could further enhance the effectiveness of these schemes.[76]

The EU currently has no policies that specifically address SDG 11.7 (universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities).

Culture is a fragile possession and its protection and promotion must be firmly rooted in law. At the heart of Europe's efforts to protect, conserve, promote and enhance cultural and natural heritage are the Cultural Conventions of UNESCO and the Council of Europe:

Council of Europe
- European Cultural Convention, 1954
- Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe, 1985
- European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised), 1982
- European Landscape Convention, 2000
- Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, 2005

UNESCO
- Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954
- Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural property, 1970

---

[75] Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing a European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, COM (2020) 441 final/2.
[76] For a (critical) comparative analysis, see Paolo Foradori, Serena Giusti, and Alessandro Giovanni Larmonica (2018), 'Reshaping Cultural heritage Protection Policies at a Time of Securitisation: France, Italy, and the United Kingdom,' The International Spectator 53, pp. 86-101.

- Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, 1972
- Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, 2001
- Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003
- Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005

Most of these Cultural Conventions have been signed and ratified by all EU member states, but not all. Ratification of these instruments of international law by all EU member states would be a strong signal of the EU's commitment to culture and to the rule of law. This would also strengthen the EU's hand in global cultural diplomacy. European diplomacy, jointly pursued by national foreign ministries and the European External Action Service, could be instrumental in promoting the universal ratification of the UNESCO Conventions, including by all EU member states and neighbouring countries.[77]

5.4 SDG 13: Climate Action

Target 13.1: Strengthen **resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters** in all countries.

Climate change is the fastest growing threat to natural World Heritage. The IUCN's World Heritage Outlook revealed that the number of sites where climate change is a high or very high threat nearly doubled in just three years. Significant impact is now visible in 62 sites, nearly a quarter of all 241 natural sites listed as World Heritage. These include coral reefs, glaciers, wetlands, low-lying deltas, and permafrost and fire sensitive ecosystems. Climate change is also by far the largest potential threat, with 55 sites that risk seeing high or very high impacts in the future.[78]

Natural World Heritage sites contribute to global climate stability by storing significant amounts of carbon. Two-thirds of these sites are crucial sources of water and around half help prevent natural disasters such as floods or landslides. World Heritage sites are major, irreplaceable sources of civic pride and cultural identity. They also generate jobs and income, including in economically deprived areas. At least 93 countries and territories

---

[77] For the current state of ratification of UNESCO Conventions by EU Member States and EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries, see the annex.
[78] IUCN (2017), World Heritage Outlook 2.

benefit from tourism associated with coral reefs, and in 23 of these, reef tourism accounts for more than 15% of gross domestic product (GDP).[79]

Flooding, earthquakes, heat waves, and other manifestations of climate change cause equally enormous damage to cultural heritage, such as historic buildings, urban areas, museums, libraries and archives. The risks to European heritage are growing. Researchers at Kiel University have warned that 37 of the 49 UNESCO World Heritage sites located on the Mediterranean's coasts can now expect to flood at least once a century.[80]

Artists, heritage professionals, and creative industry professionals have much to contribute to climate action under SDG 13. With their unequalled visibility and closeness to their public, musicians, writers, actors and other cultural practitioners can help to raise awareness of the need, the urgency, and the steps required to shield heritage from the worst effects of climate change and to improve its resilience. Archaeologists, architects, historians, museum curators, librarians, natural scientists and social scientists, teachers and other cultural professionals also have invaluable knowledge and insights to share.

Some promising civil society initiatives are already underway. In 2019 the newly formed international Climate Heritage Network released its first action plan to drive climate action and support the transition by communities towards low-carbon, climate resilient futures.[81] Some 70 film-makers and other organisations endorsed the Creative Industries Pact for Sustainable Action.[82] Europa Nostra, the European voice of civil society committed to heritage, is working with ICOMOS to produce a European Heritage Green Paper. These are promising initiatives but much remains to be done.

Lack of resources, including financing, personnel, training and capacity-building represents the greatest barrier to effective management of heritage sites.[83] The most vulnerable sites must be identified, and all cultural and natural heritage sites must take steps to reduce the risks of natural hazards. Governments around the world need to improve site-level monitoring, improve research, and establish thematic, regional and international cooperation to design, fund and implement mitigation and adaptation measures. Public authorities need to involve cultural professionals, including financially.

---

[79] UNESCO, Union of Concerned Scientists and UNEP, World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate (Paris: UNESCO, 2016).
[80] The Economist, August 17th 2019, p. 18.
[81] www.climateheritage.org.
[82] https://creativeindustriespact.com.
[83] Ibid., p. 28.

The European Commission initiated a platform to promote collaboration between governments and non-governmental organisations to promote resilience in cultural heritage (Increasing Resilience of Cultural Heritage). The Commission also issued Guidelines on Disaster Risk Management to the member states that include references to cultural heritage and encourage governments to report, map and inform on the potential impact of disaster risks on cultural heritage.[84] As the Court of Auditors remarked, "it remains to be seen how these guidelines will be implemented by the member states."[85] In 2020 the Council invited the Commission to consider producing an EU handbook on risk management in the area of cultural heritage.[86]

To protect heritage from disaster, governments need to develop national disaster loss databases and improve their capacity to prevent and respond to disasters. The United Nations Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reductions provides ways for countries to work together to reduce climate-related and other disaster risks. Under the Framework, the EU could increase technical aid and operational guidance to help partner countries outside the EU to strengthen their capacity for disaster risk reduction in the cultural sector.

The task is huge. The World Heritage sites, whether in Europe or elsewhere, represent only a fraction of the world's natural and cultural heritage. Small sites can be just as important to local communities as large and prestigious sites. But sites of lesser renown usually face an even harder task of generating the technical and financial means to manage their future sustainably.

It is here that European governments and the EU could play a critical and decisive role. Public support for climate-related heritage protection differs widely across Europe. Lessons learned in one country or sector are not easily shared with across national or sectoral borders. Many of the support schemes for cultural and natural heritage – including from the European Union – can be difficult to find, to access, and operate. And Europe's role as a globally recognised provider of heritage-related aid and expertise in international heritage management is still underdeveloped.

In these respects, SDG 13 could potentially be a game-changer.

---

[84] Official Journal, OJ C 428, 20.12.2019, pp. 8-33.
[85] European Court of Auditors, EU investments in cultural sites, Report 08/2020, p. 38.
[86] Council Conclusions on risk management in the area of cultural heritage, 25 May 2020.

5.5 SDG 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions

Target 16.4: By 2030, significantly reduce **illicit financial** and arms **flows**, strengthen the recovery and **return of stolen assets** and combat all forms of organized crime.

Target 16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect **fundamental freedoms**, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

SDG 16 includes two targets that are important from a perspective of cultural policy.

- Target 16.4 calls for a significant reduction in illicit financial flows. These flows include revenues from the illicit trade in art and antiquities.
- Target 16.10 calls for the protection of fundamental freedoms in accordance with international law. These freedoms include freedom of expression and the other components of the right to culture. Progress is to be measured, *inter alia*, by a reduction of the number of cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists (Indicator 16.10.1).

Illicit financial flows

At over \$63 billion of sales (2016) the licit global art and antiques trade is big business.[87] So, unfortunately, is the illicit art trade. International trade in looted antiquities is known to be a source of terrorist financing to groups such as IS, and Interpol estimates that today's black art market rivals the markets in drugs, weapons, and counterfeit goods. Europe is the main destination market, together with the USA. Following the destruction and pillage by IS/Da'esh of cultural sites in Syria and Iraq, the EU took measures to restrict the illegal trade in cultural goods. A 2019 regulation subjects imports of legal cultural goods older than 250 years to a system of licencing as soon as the necessary electronic system will be in place (which might not be until 2025).[88] Europol and Eurojust have helped to dismantle international organised crime groups involved in trafficking looted archaeological items.

There is concern, however, that European measures such as import licences can only be effective if the source countries create and maintain up-to-date inventories of relevant artistic objects and antiquities. Technical assistance and joint programmes by member states and the EU can help to close the loopholes and reduce illicit trafficking.

---

[87] European Commission, Impact assessment of the Regulation on the imports of cultural goods, SWD(2017) 262 final.

[88] Regulation (EU) 2019/880 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the introduction and the import of cultural goods.

Human rights

In 1946 the very first session of the UN General Assembly declared that freedom of expression "is the touchstone of all the freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated."[89] Freedom of opinion and expression is essential for a range of other rights, including freedom of association and assembly, the right to education, and the right to take part in cultural life.[90] Cultural rights, conversely, are an integral part of human rights, which are universal, indivisible and interdependent.[91] The EU Council of Ministers has emphasised that the realisation of fundamental rights is a precondition for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.[92]

In many countries, freedom of expression and the right to culture are under sustained attack. Governments use censorship and economic pressure to silence cultural expression, online as well as offline. In Kuwait the Virgin Records Store had to close after the ministry of information had banned 60% of its products, including music albums from Lady Gaga, Britney Spears and Eminem.[93] South Korea stopped support for cinemas screening independent films, giving the money instead to those showing movies recommended by a state-financed film council.[94] In Hungary the National Opera House cancelled 15 of 44 performances of the musical Billy Elliot after it was pilloried in the pro-government newspaper Magyar Idok as gay propaganda.[95] The UN Special Rapporteur in the field of Culture warned that in Poland, the term "anti-Polish" is being applied to Poles who express views different from those of the government or ruling party, including through art and culture.[96] Many other examples could be given.

Often the attacks on cultural freedom pose an even more sinister threat. In 2019, for example, Uganda jailed popstar and opposition politician Bobi Wine. Turkish poet Ilhan Çomak has been in prison for 26 years. Amjad Sabri, Pakistan's favourite qawwali singer,

---

[89] UNGA Resolution 59(1). See also the Human Rights Committee's General comment 34, 'Article 19: Freedom of opinion and expression', CCPR/C/GC34, 12 September 2011.
[90] EU Human Rights Guidelines on Freedom of Expression Online and Offline, 12 May 2014, para. 2.
[91] Article 4, UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, 2001. See also UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General comment No. 21, 'The right of everyone to take part in cultural life.' 2009.
[92] Council Conclusions on building a sustainable Europe by 2030, 10 December 2019.
[93] Abrar Alshammari,' Koweït. La police de la pensée renforce son contrôle,' 23 Novembre 2018, https://orientxxi.info.
[94] The Economist, January 28th, 2017, p. 50.
[95] Valerie Hopkins, 'Combative premier Orban sends a chill through Hungarian culture,' Financial Times, 22 September 2018.
[96] Report of the Special Rapporteur in the field of cultural rights, Visit to Poland, A/HRC/43/50/Add.1, 21 February 2020, p. 7.

was killed in 2016 by the Taliban for "blasphemy." Shady Habash, a 24-year old filmmaker who had mocked president al-Sisi, died in 2020 in an Egyptian prison. In Bagdhad, almost every member of the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra has received anonymous threats for playing classical music.[97] Reporters Without Borders report that in China more than 100 journalists and bloggers are currently detained in conditions that pose a threat to their lives.[98]

Academic freedom, too, is being rolled back in different parts of the world. Scholars at Risk has documented 324 attacks on higher education communities in 56 countries between September 1, 2018 and August 31, 2019.[99]

Several member states operate national schemes to provide temporary shelter to artists, academics and journalists facing oppression. Closer cooperation and European networks could help enhance the interconnection and visibility of these schemes.

Sometimes authoritarian leaders claim that their culture does not allow for human rights. Egyptian President al-Sisi has alleged that "Western" human rights are not applicable to Egypt.[100] However, cultural diversity may not be invoked to infringe upon human rights guaranteed by international law or limit their scope.[101]

The EU frequently uses political dialogues ("quiet diplomacy") to defend cultural rights and freedom of information. Occasionally it also takes a public stand. In February 2020, the EU joined Sweden in urging China to give consular access to Gui Minhai, a dissident book publisher who was sentenced to 10 years in prison. In May, High Representative Josep Borrell published a declaration on the occasion of World Press Freedom Day. Initiatives such as these allow the EU to demonstrate its commitment to fundamental rights, including under SDG 16.

Fortunately, the picture is not all bleak. Notwithstanding the challenges to universal human rights and the right to culture, there has also been significant progress.

---

[97] Katrin Sandmann, 'In war, art is not a luxury,', in Raphaela Henze and Gernot Wolfram (eds.) (2014), Exporting Culture (Wiesbaden: Springer).
[98] Reporters Without Borders (2020), 'China', https://rsf.org/en/china.
[99] Scholars at Risk, Academic Freedom Monitoring Project, Free to Think 2019.
[100] Gabriel Samuels, 'Egyptian president says 'Western' human rights don't apply to his country', The Independent, 5 May 2016.
[101] UNESCO (2001), Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

In 2016 the International Criminal Court broke new ground. It sentenced Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi to nine years imprisonment for the war crime of intentionally directing attacks against religious and historic buildings in Timbuktu, Mali, in 2012. For the first time, the Court established that destruction of cultural heritage can constitute a war crime. Noting the ICC judgment, the UN Security Council adopted a Resolution affirming that perpetrators of unlawful destruction of cultural heritage can be prosecuted for war crimes.[102]

The EU has always strongly supported the International Criminal Court as a cornerstone of the international rule of law. All EU member states have ratified the ICC's Rome Statute. The EU has decided to advance universal ratification of the Rome Statute and to support the independence and effectiveness of the ICC.[103] In the coming years, violent groups are likely to continue targeting cultural heritage as a tactic of war. This makes it all the more important that the ICC should have universal support as an instrument of accountability and of justice for victims. Many look to the EU to step up its support to the ICC in the spirit of SDG 16 – Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. EU diplomacy could be instrumental, particularly in Africa and Asia, to encourage more countries to accept the jurisdiction of the ICC as a deterrent to cultural war crimes.

---

[102] UNSCR 2347 (2017).
[103] Council Decision 2011/168/CFSP of 21 March 2011 on the International Criminal Court.

6.   Recommendations

European Commission

- Support the UNESCO/UNODC Initiative on Global Citizenship Education; identify and promote good practices in European citizenship education (SDG 4.7)

- Develop programmes which support the competiveness of Europe's cultural and creative industries and that build equitable and sustainable partnerships with CCIs in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (SDG 8.3)

- Improve public awareness of the European Union cultural prizes[104] and the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe; strengthen the EU's contribution to heritage education and cultural tourism (SDG 8.9)

- Together with the European Heritage Alliance, develop a multi-annual programme to protect and safeguard natural and cultural heritage both within the EU and in the wider world (SDG 11.4) and to provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities (SDG 11.7)

- Strengthen capacity-building support to statistical offices in partner countries, including in the field of culture (SDG 11.4)

- Initiate a programme to strengthen the resilience and adaptive capacity of the cultural sector to climate-related hazards and natural disasters (SDG 13.1)

- Initiate a European network supporting the national initiatives to protect artists, journalists, and academics facing persecution and to host artists in residence (SDG 16.10)

- Initiate programmes with measurable indicators that harness the power of the arts and heritage to address Europe's legacies of antisemitism and improve understanding of the Holocaust, including in education (UNGA Resolution on Agenda 2030; SDG 4.7)

- Initiate programmes with measurable indicators that harness the power of the arts and heritage to address Europe's colonial legacies, including in education (UNGA Resolution on Agenda 2030; SDG 4.7)

- Promote the implementation of the Council of Europe Reference Framework on Competences for Democratic Culture (SDG 4.7)

---

[104] European Union Prize for Literature; EU Moves Europe; EU Prize for Contemporary Architecture; Young Talent Architecture Award; European Heritage Awards, European Heritage Label; European Parliament LUX Prize.

- Include objectives on cultural cooperation and the relevant SDGs in the future EU-Africa Partnership[105] and in the frameworks for cooperation with Asia and Latin America
- Include a chapter on cultural rights in the annual report on human rights (SDG 16.10)
- Report annually to the Council and the European Parliament on the EU's contribution to culture as part of the SDGs, both within the EU and globally
- Charge a Member with coordinating Commission work on culture and the SDGs

European External Action Service (EEAS)
- Strengthen the European Union's diplomatic role as a global cultural partner in keeping with the spirit of the SDGs (SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals)
- Prioritise diplomatic initiatives to defend and promote cultural rights, including freedom of expression for artists, journalists, and academics (SDG 16.10)
- Promote and support the universal ratification of UNESCO's Cultural Conventions and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
- Appoint Contact Points for Culture in each of the EU's External Delegations, harmonise their administrative status, and provide them with adequate mandates and resources
- Improve donor coordination in the field of culture between the EU and the member states in third countries (joint programming and joint implementation; SDG 17.1)
- Improve dialogue and cooperation with the EUNIC clusters in third countries
- Initiate joint European cultural activities to celebrate World Creativity and Innovation Day, World Press Freedom Day and similar UN International Days
- Include a section about cultural cooperation on each EU Delegation's website

Council of Ministers
- Adopt a Recommendation on the role of the EU in promoting culture as part of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Invite the national statistical institutes and EUROSTAT to improve the collection and collation of cultural statistics (SDG 17.19)

---

[105] JOIN(2020) 4 final.

- Initiate a peer review of national implementation of the Council conclusions on Multilingualism,[106] EU citizenship,[107] and the European Dimension of Education[108] (SDG 4.7)
- Invite the Secretary-General of the Council to charge an official with coordinating Council work on culture and the SDGs ("institutional memory")

Council of Ministers and European Parliament

- Earmark a minimum of 0.3% of the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2011-2027 for the Creative Europe programme (up from 0.15% in the current MFF)[109]
- Include culture explicitly in the new European Recovery Instrument ("Next Generation EU")[110] and in the future Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)[111]
- Increase multi-annual funding for the EU's successful Erasmus programme to €30bn as proposed by the European Commission (MFF 2021-2027)
- Strengthen support to civil society organisations by adopting the proposal for a Regulation establishing the Rights and Values programme;[112] earmark multi-annual funding of €1.8bn as proposed by the European Parliament (MFF 2021-2027)

National governments

- Uphold, defend and promote the right to culture as recognised by international law[113]
- Ratify and implement the Council of Europe's and UNESCO's Cultural Conventions

---

[106] Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages, 23 May 2019; Council conclusions on multilingualism and the development of language competences, 20 May 2014.

[107] Council Conclusions on Democracy, 14 October 2019; Council conclusions on the EU Citizenship Report 2017, 11 May 2017.

[108] Council recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching, 22 May 2018.

[109] Proposal for a Council Regulation laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027, COM(2018) 322 final, as amended by COM(2020) 443 final.

[110] Proposal for a Council Regulation establishing a European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, COM(2020) 441 final/2.

[111] Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), COM(2018) 460 final.

[112] COM(2018) 383 final.

[113] United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 21, Right of everyone to take part in cultural life (Art. 15.1a of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights), 21 December 2009 and subsequent reports by the United Nations Special Rapporteur in the Field of Cultural Rights.

- Include culture in the national implementation plan of the new REACT-EU scheme
- Include a section on cultural policy in the Voluntary National Review of national implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Adopt and strengthen national policies and legislation to promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the arts, heritage, and creative industries (SDG 5.C)
- Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status (SDG 10.2)
- To counter the illegal trade in arts and antiquities, speed up implementation of Regulation 2019/880 of the European Parliament and the Council of 17 April 2019 on the introduction and the import of cultural goods (SDG 16.4)
- Invite the national cultural institute to dedicate a minimum of 10% of its budget to European cooperation, including in the framework of EUNIC

European Parliament

- Invite the Committees on Culture and Education (CULT), Foreign Affairs (AFET) and Development (DEVE) to prepare a Report on the European Union's policies to include culture in its implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Invite the national parliaments of the member states to a dialogue on mutual learning and cooperation between the EU institutions and the member states in this policy area

Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals – a select bibliography

Council of Europe (2019), Global Education Guidelines
https://rm.coe.int/168070eb85

Council of Europe (2014), Shared Histories. For a Europe without dividing lines
https://www.coe.int/en/web/history-teaching/2010-2014-shared-histories-for-a-europe-
without-dividing-lines

Culture Action Europe (2019), Implementing Culture within the Sustainable Development
Goals
https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/implementing-culture-within-the-sdgs/

Cultural Learning Alliance (2017), The Case for Cultural Learning: Key Research Findings
https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/evidence/key-research-findings-the-case-for-cultural-
learning/

Cliche, Danielle and Yudhisithir Raj Isar (2018), Introduction: Advancing creativity and devel-
opment, in Re/Shaping Cultural Policies – 2005 Convention Global Report (Paris: UNESCO)
https://en.unesco.org/creativity/global-report-2018

Cultural 2030 Goal Campaign (2019), Culture in the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda
http://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/culture2030goal_high.pdf

De Vries, Gijs (2019), Culture and development: a priority for the EU? https://eu-
ropa.eu/capacity4dev/culture-and-development-international-cooperation/search-
group?f%5B0%5D=c4m_vocab_topic%3A341&items_per_page=50

EY (2015), Cultural Times: The First Global Map of the Cultural and Creative Industries
https://en.unesco.org/creativity/files/culturaltimesthefirstglobalmapofculturalandcrea-
tiveindustriespdf

Foradori, Paolo, Serena Giusti, and Alessandro Giovanni Larmonica (2018), Reshaping Cul-
tural heritage Protection Policies at a Time of Securitisation: France, Italy, and the United
Kingdom, The International Spectator 53
https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/reshaping-cultural-heritage-protection-policies-time-
securitisation-france-italy-and

ICOMOS (2019), The Future of our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action
https://www.icomos.org/en/what-we-do/image-what-we-do/77-articles-en-francais/59522-
icomos-releases-future-of-our-pasts-report-to-increase-engagement-of-cultural-heritage-in-
climate-action

IUCN (2017), World Heritage Outlook 2
https://www.iucn.org/theme/world-heritage/our-work/iucn-world-heritage-outlook

Kabanda, Patrick (2015), Work as Art: links between creative work and human development
http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/work-art-links-between-creative-work-and-human-development

Reporters Without Borders (2020), World Press Freedom Index
https://rsf.org/en/2020-world-press-freedom-index-entering-decisive-decade-journalism-exacerbated-coronavirus

UCLG (2018), Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: A guide for local action
https://www.uclg.org/en/media/news/culture-sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-guide-local-action

United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 21, Right of Everyone to Take Part in Cultural Life, E/C.12/GC/21, 21 December 2009
https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/679354?ln=en

UNESCO (2019), Culture and Public Policy for Sustainable Development
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371488

UNESCO (2019), Culture 2030 Indicators
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000371562

UNESCO, Culture & COVID-19 Impact and Response Tracker
https://en.unesco.org/news/culture-covid-19-impact-and-response-tracker

UNESCO, Union of Concerned Scientists and UNEP (2016), World Heritage and Tourism in a Changing Climate
https://whc.unesco.org/en/tourism-climate-change/

UNESCO, UNFPA and UNDP (2015), Post-2015 Dialogues on culture and development
https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000232266

World Tourism Organization (2018), Tourism for Development, Vol. 1: Key Areas for Action
https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419722

Annex: Ratification of UNESCO Conventions by EU Member States and EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries

Category	Country	1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict	1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting & Preventing the Illicit Import, Export & Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property	1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	2005 Convention on the Protection & Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
European Union	Austria	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		Ratification	Ratification
	Belgium	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification
	Bulgaria	Accession	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Croatia	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Ratification	Ratification	Approval
	Cyprus	Accession	Ratification	Acceptance		Ratification	Ratification
	Czech Republic	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession		Acceptance	Accession
	Denmark	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		Approval	Ratification
	Estonia	Accession	Ratification	Ratification		Approval	Approval
	Finland	Accession	Ratification	Ratification		Acceptance	Acceptance
	France	Ratification	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification	Approval	Accession
	Germany	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		Acceptance	Ratification
	Greece	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		Ratification	Ratification
	Hungary	Ratification	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Ireland	Ratification		Ratification		Ratification	Ratification
	Italy	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Latvia	Accession	Ratification	Acceptance		Acceptance	Accession
	Lithuania	Accession	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification	Ratification	Accession
	Luxembourg	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		Approval	Ratification

The title of the table reads:

Ratification of UNESCO Conventions by EU Member States and EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries
(list made by 9 March 2020)

		1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict	1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting & Preventing the Illicit Import, Export & Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property	1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	2005 Convention on the Protection & Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
	Country						
	Malta			Acceptance		Ratification	Accession
	Netherlands	Ratification	Acceptance	Acceptance		Acceptance	Accession
	Poland	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		Ratification	Accession
	Portugal	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Romania	Ratification	Acceptance	Acceptance	Acceptance	Acceptance	Accession
	Slovakia	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Slovenia	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Spain	Ratification	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Sweden	Accession	Ratification	Ratification		Ratification	Ratification
	European Union						Accession
	United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification			Ratification
Candidate countries	Albania	Accession	Acceptance	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Accession
	Republic of North Macedonia	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession		Ratification	Ratification

The table title (spanning the header): **Ratification of UNESCO Conventions by EU Member States and EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries** (list made by 9 March 2020)

The leftmost column header: **Category**

		1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict	1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting & Preventing the Illicit Import, Export & Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property	1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	2005 Convention on the Protection & Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
Category	**Country**						
	Montenegro	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Serbia	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession		Ratification	Ratification
	Turkey	Accession	Ratification	Ratification		Ratification	Accession
Potential Candidate countries	**Bosnia and Herzegovina**	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Kosovo						
	Armenia	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession		Acceptance	Accession
	Azerbaijan	Accession	Ratification	Ratification		Ratification	Accession
Eastern Partnership countries	**Belarus**	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		Approval	Approval
	Georgia	Notification of succession	Notification of succession	Notification of succession		Ratification	Approval
	Moldova	Accession	Ratification	Ratification		Ratification	Ratification
	Ukraine	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Algeria		Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Approval	Ratification
	Egypt	Ratification	Acceptance	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
Southern Neighbourhood countries	**Israel**	Ratification		Acceptance			
	Jordan	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Lebanon	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Acceptance	Acceptance	
	Libya	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification		

Ratification of UNESCO Conventions by EU Member States and EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries (list made by 9 March 2020)

Category	Country	1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict	1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting & Preventing the Illicit Import, Export & Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property	1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage	2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage	2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage	2005 Convention on the Protection & Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions
			Ratification of UNESCO Conventions by EU Member States and EU Enlargement and Neighbourhood Countries (list made by 9 March 2020)				
	Morocco	Accession	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Palestine	Accession	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification
	Syria	Ratification	Acceptance	Acceptance		Ratification	Accession
	Tunisia	Accession	Acceptance	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification	Ratification

Source: UNESCO

About the author

Gijs de Vries is a senior visiting fellow at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). He is a former member of the Dutch government and of the European Parliament. He has served as a board member of the European Cultural Foundation and was a founding member of the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Imprint

Further ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy Publications

De Vries, Gijs:
Cultural Freedom in European Foreign Policy, Stuttgart: ifa, 2019 (ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy)

Reuter, Thomas:
German Cultural Diplomacy in Indonesia: Building Cooperation in a Changing World, Stuttgart: ifa, 2019 (ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy)

Weigel, Sigrid:
Transnational foreign cultural policy - Beyond national culture: prerequisites and perspectives for the intersection of domestic and foreign policy, Stuttgart: ifa, 2019 (ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy)

O'Connor, Justin:
Resources of Hope? Creative Economy and Development in the Global South, Stuttgart: ifa, 2019 (ifa Input)

Available online: *ifa-publikationen.de*

Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals

The Role of the European Union

Agenda 2030 is the most comprehensive and ambitious agenda for development the world has ever seen. Culture forms part of this agenda. The Sustainable Development Goals provide pathways for culture to flourish, but culture also helps to drive the SDGs. The European Union and its 27 member states have pledged to deliver on the global agenda. Europe has much to contribute, and much to learn.

The purpose of this study is twofold.
Its first objective is to take stock of the European Union's progress in reaching the cultural goals and targets of Agenda 2030. Five years after the adoption of Agenda 2030, where does the EU find itself? With only ten years left to realise the SDGs, where is the EU heading?
Secondly, the paper will explore a limited number of potential policy priorities. How can the EU and EU member states maximise their impact? Where should the EU focus its efforts?

ifa supports the Sustainable Development Goals