

Cultural Diplomacy in the European Union

State and relationship with the EU
strategic autonomy

UOC

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Disclaimer

The information and views set out in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

1. Introduction

This document is the final outcome of my studies on cultural management¹ (*Master on Cultural management by the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and the Universidad de Girona*).

European Parliament (EP)
Council of the European Union (Council)
European Commission (EC)
European External Action Service (EEAS)

Box 1: EU institutions acronyms

My work consists of a critical analysis of the cultural diplomacy of the European Union (EU) and its relationship with the theses of *strategic autonomy*². As will be shown, there is a theoretical gap between the concepts of cultural diplomacy and of strategic autonomy, even more when scoping them to the EU. This work pretends to contribute to bridge this gap focusing on the institutional register and analysing EU supranational policy narrative and design. I have performed this critical analysis taking into account three axis: what is culture and EU foreign cultural policy relates to it, who is involved and in which role, and what are the practical actions (funding) supported EU policies on cultural diplomacy.

Cultural diplomacy is especially relevant for the EU, even more in the current geopolitical state of affairs. Europe has a very influential and important cultural and symbolic capital. As Federica Mogherini³ said during the European Culture Forum 2016:

'Probably no other place in the world has the same cultural "density" as Europe. So much history, so many stories and cultures. We preserve millennial traditions, and we are among the engines of global innovation. We should not be afraid to say we are a cultural super-power.' (2016)

Unfortunately, a certain misunderstood humility and competition between and with member states does not allow the EU to develop its full cultural potential, neither from a political-diplomatic point of view, nor from the industrial one of the creative and cultural industries. Political priorities and the organisation of the EU limits strategic and coordinated action even if there are several cultural diplomacy initiatives in the EU. My aim is to add my analysis to the ongoing conversation about Europe's position in the world.

1 For the itinerary of *analysis, applied studies and consultancy*.

2 The information and views set out in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

3 High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission in 2016.

2. Research questions, hypotheses and objectives

My main research question is *What is the relationship between EU's cultural diplomacy and its strategic autonomy?* To answer this question, I will consider two other ones:

- What is EU's approach to cultural diplomacy?
- What is the EU understanding and approach to strategic autonomy?

See the figure below for a graphical representation of these questions.

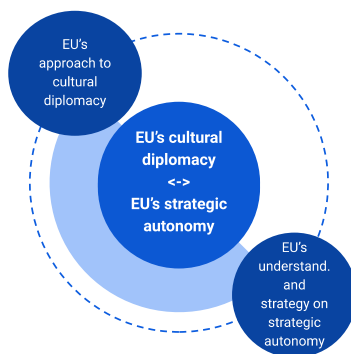


Figure 1: Research questions

As starting hypothesis, I assume that there is no *conscious* relationship between EU's cultural diplomacy and its strategic autonomy since the idea of strategic autonomy has come back to the political discourse quite recently and after the last iteration of EU's policy on cultural diplomacy.

My principal objective is to investigate this relationship between EU's cultural diplomacy and EU's strategy on strategic autonomy. To better understand EU's cultural diplomacy and

contribute to its theoretical debates, I will explore and map the current cultural diplomacy strategies and policies at the EU level against a *model* based on current ideas on cultural diplomacy. The model will come from investigating what is the current conceptual framework for cultural diplomacy and for strategic autonomy. As we will see, the literature has not addressed the relationship between cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy in the EU, this work aims at setting a conceptual framework for better understanding this issue. *The figure below provides a graphical representation of these objectives.*



Figure 2: Objectives

Achieving my main objective should give an updated and objective characterisation of the current EU's cultural diplomacy; it will also map against current academic considerations on cultural diplomacy; and, finally, connect cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy.

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. State of the question

First, I would like to introduce some general ideas coming or derived from Bourdieu which have a very important connection to the relations between cultures (in the anthropological sense of culture) or '*societies or social groups*' as in UNESCO's definition of culture (2002). Although Bourdieu works and concepts are about individuals pertaining to a particular group or society, they can be extrapolated to the relationships between those groups even if only as powerful metaphors.

The first one is that of *symbolic capital*: A possible definition is that of

'economic or cultural capital as soon as they are known and recognized, when they are known according to the perception categories they impose, the symbolic strength relations tend to reproduce and reinforce the strength relations which constitute the structure of the social space' (Bourdieu 2016).

This is a very powerful idea when reflecting on cultural diplomacy: first, the capacity of *cultural capital* to influence the social space and second, that *the structure* of that social space is constituted by *strength relations*. Strength that may be material (as in hard power conceptualisation) or immaterial, symbolic, closer to the soft power view.

Another important idea deriving from the previous one is that of *symbolic violence* or *symbolic power* as '*impose [meanings] as legitimate by concealing... power relations*' (Bourdieu and Passeron 2000:4) These meanings imposed through power relations alter and reinforce those same power relations in the entire quote:

'Every power to exert symbolic violence, i.e. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations.' (2000:4)

These elements from Bourdieu's thinking are very much related to the debates around soft power: symbolic/cultural capital as a *resource* from which to exert power; and the whole discussion around symbolic violence/power connected to realist/constructivist positions. If we focus on *meanings* we may jump to the political-science buzzword *narrative* very much used by both politicians, civil servants and political researchers as well. As Nye puts it, '*narratives become the currency of soft power*' (2013:570) associating all these elements.

The last concept from Bourdieu I will mention here is that of a *field*. Isar and Triandafyllidou define it as

'a "space of play", but it is also "simultaneously a space of conflict and competition". Agents struggle for the forms of capital that are at stake, the possession of which determines the power they are able to wield [...]. The outcome of a struggle between agents depends on the capital each holds, as well as the skill with which they play the game.'

and

'While a field may be a "space of play", the structure of the field itself depends on the "relations of force between players", and the distances, gaps and asymmetries between positions in the field. [...] (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Kloot 2009).' (Isar and Triandafyllidou 2021:396)

Isar and Triandafyllidou go as far as claim that there is empirical evidence as to the utility of these concepts. Without being so bold, I agree that this concept, together with the other ones presented before, constitutes a good foundation to study cultural diplomacy.

After this sociological introduction, we can start exploring what are the current matters of interest for *cultural diplomacy*.

In the figure 3 is shown the evolution of the main concepts linked to cultural diplomacy: *soft power*, *public diplomacy*, *cultural diplomacy* and *cultural relations* according to the Google Books Ngram Viewer⁴.

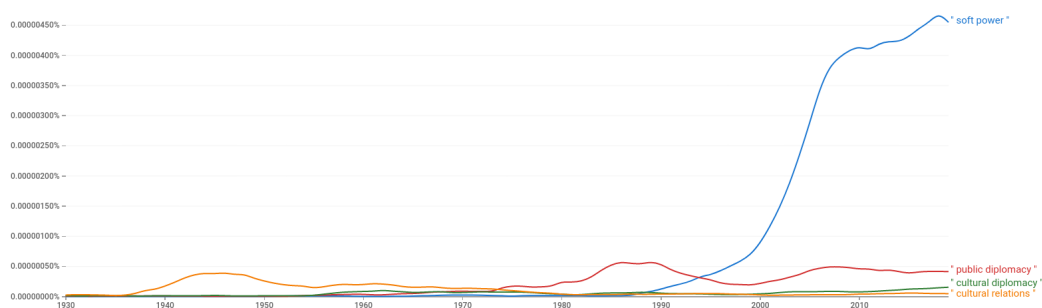


Figure 3: Evolution of key concepts (1)

⁴ [Google Ngram Viewer search](#). From 1930 to 2019. English (2019) corpus. (Michel et al. 2011).

The terms soft power, public and cultural diplomacy appear in the literature in the second half of the XX century: public diplomacy as dominant in the eighties and then soft power as from 1990 dominating the discussion after its appearance. Cultural relations had a very important moment just after World War II, well before the other terms were used.

If we take out soft power, it is clearer the relative evolution of public and cultural diplomacy and cultural relations. See the figure below⁵. We see easier the importance of cultural relations already mentioned and how in the triad public/cultural diplomacy and cultural relations the main term is public diplomacy with cultural diplomacy showing an increase in interest.

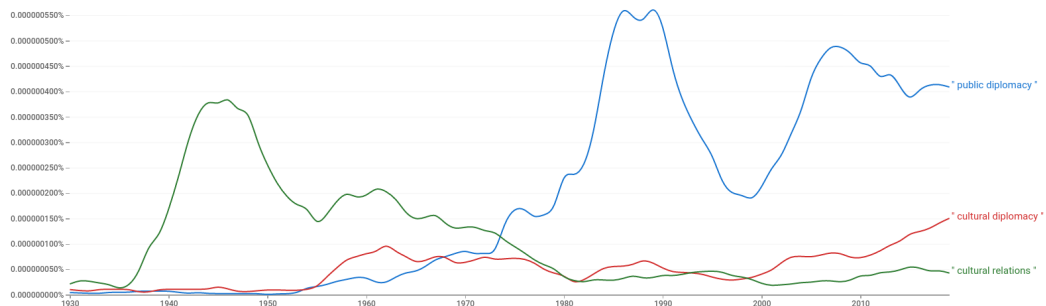


Figure 4: Evolution of key concepts (2)

We can also perform the same analysis in Scopus⁶ to get similar results on research papers instead of books.

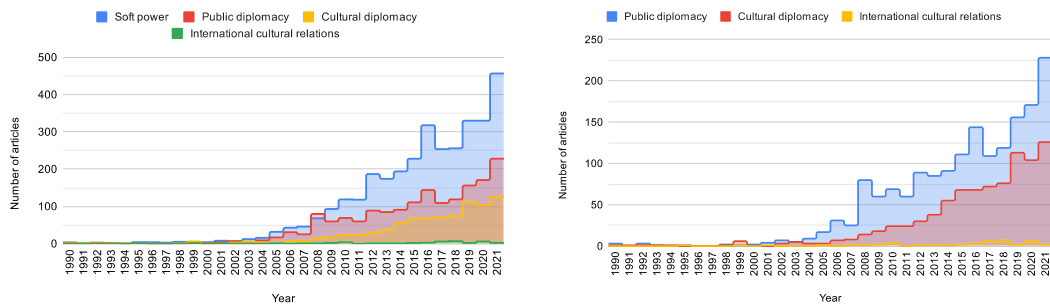


Figure 5: Scopus comparison of soft power (only in left), public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations

5 [Google Ngram Viewer search](#). From 1930 to 2019. English (2019) corpus.

6 <https://www.scopus.com/search/form.uri?display=basic#basic>

This debate evolves into the second one regarding the instrumentalisation of culture in cultural diplomacy. This discussion has its roots in the question on *cultural exception* and how cultural *objects* cannot be equated with conventional mercantile products because of them being '*vehicles of identity, values and meaning*' (UNESCO 2005 Article 1.g). The combination of the special status of cultural objects as symbols or carriers of symbols with the consideration of realist/soft power conceptualisation of cultural diplomacy creates friction in the use soft power seems to predicate on culture (Zamorano 2016).

The last tension line I have identified is that of the actors of cultural diplomacy. Again, this issue can be understood in a more general frame: the change from *club diplomacy* to *network diplomacy* where diplomatic activities are not the sole sphere of states and/or professional diplomats (Heine 2013). Indeed, the pre-eminence of different actors in international relations, diplomacy and public/cultural diplomacy is going to generate another concept in international relations: *international cultural relations* (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021) as the public/cultural diplomacy performed by non-diplomats. Nye brings another angle to this when he stresses the importance of a nation's reputation and, even more, that of its credibility:

'Governments compete for credibility not only with other governments, but with a broad range of alternatives including news media, corporations, NGOs, intergovernmental organizations, and networks of scientific communities.' (2013:570)

The three concepts of public and cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations share some similarities on objectives, stakeholders and means but they differ profoundly on actors (international cultural relations being developed mainly by private parties) or in the one-way/two-way exchanges between societies and states (public vs. cultural diplomacy.) (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021) See also the table 1 from (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021:11).

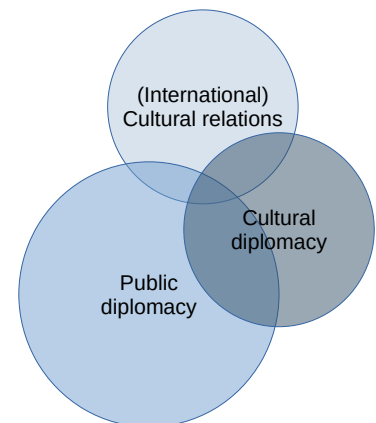


Figure 8: Overlapping of concepts

Cultural diplomacy is usually presented as unilateral communication from the government/foreign ministry of a particular state to the population of another state based on culture (to differentiate from public diplomacy). These activities are performed with the aim of obtaining certain advantages out of the relation between the countries. Cultural diplomacy is continuously distinguished from *propaganda* which may indicate the appreciation of the authors for cultural diplomacy. International cultural relations is usually presented as the other side of the coin: interlocution mainly done by private parties on cultural matters with limited intervention, if any, by the government. (Higgott and Lamonica 2021; Murray and LaMoniCa 2021; Trobbiani and Pavón-Guinea 2020) New ideas on more *conversational/interactive* marketing like the ones in *The Cluetrain Manifesto* (Levine et al. 2001) are not reflected when thinking on national/cultural branding or promotion, yet.

| | <i>State actor</i> | <i>Non-State actor</i> |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Soft power</i> | Cultural (public) diplomacy | <i>NGO diplomacy</i> |
| <i>Argumentation</i> | International cultural relations | <i>Cultural relations</i> |

Table 1 A two-dimensional typology of cultural practices in IR

The research on EU cultural diplomacy treats some of these themes like realism vs constructivism or government vs non-governmental actors. Most authors reviewed agree that the current and preferred approach to EU cultural diplomacy is, and should be, one of *international cultural relations* (Higgott and Lamonica 2021; Isar 2015; Murray and LaMoniCa 2021; Trobbiani and Pavón-Guinea 2020). However, already in this sample, we can appreciate a certain clustering of authors dealing with this topic.

Something else on which most authors agree is on the difficulty of having a coherent EU discourse when taking into account the tension between EU and its member states. The fact that the EU barely has any prerogative in culture, that member states have their own interest in promoting their own culture and cultural industry; or that the EU has no real culture/demos of itself are all issues treated in the reviewed literature as limitations to any EU action.

On this point it is important to make a small clarification to nuance the conflict EU - member states: as much as the EU is a different legal or political entity than their constituent member states, member states and their governments are nevertheless part of the EU. The dichotomy EU/member states could be better expressed as conflicts between the EU institutions and EU members states, or between the EU as represented by the EP or the EC and the Council as representative of the member states.

3.1.1. EU's Strategic autonomy

The other main axis of analysis is *(EU's) strategic autonomy*.

If we perform the same analysis of the Scopus database as a proxy for scholar interest, we can see that, as expected, this has grown in the last years (Figure 9). The continuous debate on the matter at the EU political level and the reflection on the position of EU in the world will foster, and need, that academia is involved in this conversation.

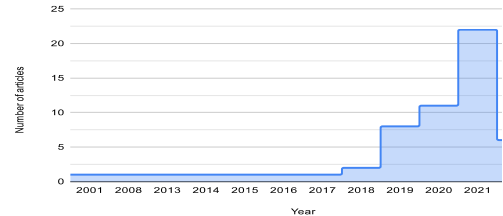


Figure 9: Scopus evolution of EU's strategic diplomacy

As we have seen with *cultural diplomacy*, this is a fluid and contested term. This may be on purpose so that there is a certain flexibility around strategic autonomy to benefit from in national political narratives and in the negotiations taking place in the EU between member states. On the other hand, this undefinition hinders both the political and the academic discussion producing, e.g., apparent conflicts where in reality there may be none (Analysis and research team (ART) 2021).

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) Josep Borrell defined strategic autonomy as '*the capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible*' (Quoted in Borrell Fontelles 2020). Another definition from academia: '*strategic autonomy is about setting objectives, making decisions and mobilising resources in ways that do not primarily depend on the decisions and assets of others*' (Grevi 2019:3). Both definitions are quite similar in spirit although both have specific nuances on the collaboration with partners in the first, while the second one is more detailed on what strategic autonomy entails (*objectives, decisions, resources...*)

This last definition also points to two very important aspects of strategic autonomy; it is not *all or nothing* but a continuous between total dependency and complete autonomy (Analysis and research team (ART) 2021; Grevi 2019); and where we are, can be or aspire to be, very much depends and changes from policy area to policy area (Grevi 2019).

The strategic autonomy debate is, of course, an international relations one and so some of the tensions mentioned before like realism vs. constructivism also impact this one. Helwig and Sinkkonen (2022:9) propose a very good resume of the intersection between these two matters (*see the table below*):

| | <i>Realism</i> | <i>Liberal Approaches</i> | <i>Constructivism</i> |
|--|--|---|---|
| Assumption and logic | Anarchy and power competition limit depth of cooperation | Shared interests for global cooperation despite anarchy | Identity and social interaction shape international cooperation |
| Strategic Autonomy as a result of ... | Balancing or bandwagoning strategy | A bargaining process between different EU actors | Discursive processes. <i>Othering</i> on the basis of distinct values |
| Strategic Autonomy as a driver for ... | Hard power capabilities | Institutionalization of EU foreign policy | Value based foreign and trade policy |
| Main focus of strategic autonomy in EU's foreign policy | Protecting security and economic interests | Shaping of the multilateral order in line with EU interests | Promotion/protection of norms and values globally |

Table 2: International relations and strategic autonomy

One very sensible point of EU's strategic autonomy is *identity politics* and claims on *European exceptionalism* or *civilization* that create a clear discrimination between *us* and *them, the others* (Analysis and research team (ART) 2021; Helwig 2022; Helwig and Sinkkonen 2022). Besides this possible *us and them* between Europeans and the rest of the world, there is also the standardisation of the various European cultures who partake of that supposed European culture in different degrees and manners. This is particularly relevant for the interrelation with cultural diplomacy which is strongly anchored on anthropological ideas of culture that imply different social groups. EU's strategic autonomy can be understood, or presented, as neo-colonialism. If we take into account that the whole idea of strategic autonomy is deeply subsidiary of a *realist* view of international relations (*zero-sum*); we can expect a narratives battle along this line.

On the other recurrent criticism to strategy autonomy, that *strategic autonomously equals isolation*, Grevi claims that '*strategic autonomy is [about] building a stronger platform for cooperation and partnership.*' (2019:11) Strategic autonomy is the base on which to build more equal and symmetric relationships with EU's partners.

Last, Helwig has developed a synthesis on prevalent EU's self-identities and how they relate to strategic autonomy (see table below) (Helwig 2022:25).

| | <i>Market Power</i> | <i>Normative Power</i> | <i>Realist Power</i> |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Source of identity | Single market | EU's distinct values | Structural shifts |
| Strategic autonomy from | Coercion/unfair trade practices | Authoritarianism, human rights abuse | Military dependence on US |
| Strategic autonomy for | Managing risks in global economy Promoting norms through trade | Protecting <i>European way of life</i> Diffuse norms in external relations | Protecting the EU without need for outside help |
| Related concepts | Open Strategic Autonomy | European civilization | Capacity to Act |
| Key debates | Trade liberalization vs. promotion of norms/security interests | European vs. universal norms | Atlanticism vs Europeanism |

Table 3: The EU's self-conception and strategic autonomy

Of especial interest to this work is the second column on *normative power*, linked to the identity discussion I mentioned before. The first column on *market power* is also important from the point of view of the cultural and creative industry although in this case with the nuance of the *cultural exception* of cultural goods and services.

3.2. Model

Thanks to the literature review performed, I propose the following model as a tool to evaluate current EU approach and practices.

This model does not consider all possible options or views we can find in current research; it is limited to the scope of this work and focalised on EU institutions and policies.

It is my interest to offer this work as an additional element to the policy discussion on the future of EU's cultural diplomacy. In that sense, and taking into account the current thinking on strategic autonomy, this model is biased towards a more realist conceptualisation of international relations.

As the main components of this model, I present a series of definitions to the concepts I will use after. These definitions are of varied origin and are purposely chosen in line with the objective of the work and the already mentioned bias towards a realist view of international relations.

Culture ‘should be regarded as the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of [a] society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs’ (UNESCO 2002)

Diplomacy is ‘the profession, activity, or skill of managing international relations, typically by a country’s representatives abroad.’ (Oxford Languages n.d.)

‘**Diplomacy** can be defined as the conduct of international relations by negotiation and dialog or by any other means to promote peaceful relations among states.’ (Brown 2001)

‘**Diplomacy** is the art of obtaining agreement between countries who need to cooperate to produce results in which each has an interest.’ (Cornago 2008)

Box 2: Other definitions for diplomacy

‘The core idea of **public diplomacy** “is one of direct communication with foreign peoples, with the aim of affecting their thinking and, ultimately, that of their governments” (Malone 1985:199). In terms of content, “it describes activities, directed abroad in the fields of

information, education, and culture, whose objective is to influence a foreign government, by influencing its citizens” (Frederick 1993:229)’ (Gilboa 2000:290–91).

Cultural diplomacy is ‘the deployment of a state’s culture in support of its foreign policy goals or diplomacy.’ (Mark 2009:7)

‘**Cultural diplomacy** involves the systematic intervention of governments in the arts, sciences, and other cultural expressions as the basis of an official categorization of national identity’ (Zamorano 2016:169)

‘**Cultural diplomacy** designates an “essentially interest-driven governmental practice” (Ang et al. 2015:365) and it is characterised by the agency of state actors, which try to foster their strategic interests by projecting well-defined representations by means of rhetoric and strategic communications.’ (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021:9)

Box 3: Other definitions for cultural diplomacy

International cultural relations ‘take place when governmental actors attempt to foster international cooperation in support of the common good. [...] They use an argumentative approach to dialogue and cooperation, empowering international institutions to work at arm’s length from government, building long-term transnational people-to-people relationships based on trust and non-transactional mutuality’ (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021:1).

Strategic autonomy is about ‘setting objectives, making decisions and mobilising resources in ways that do not primarily depend on the decisions and assets of others’ (Grevi 2019:3).

The figure below depicts how the various elements relate to each other through a concept map.

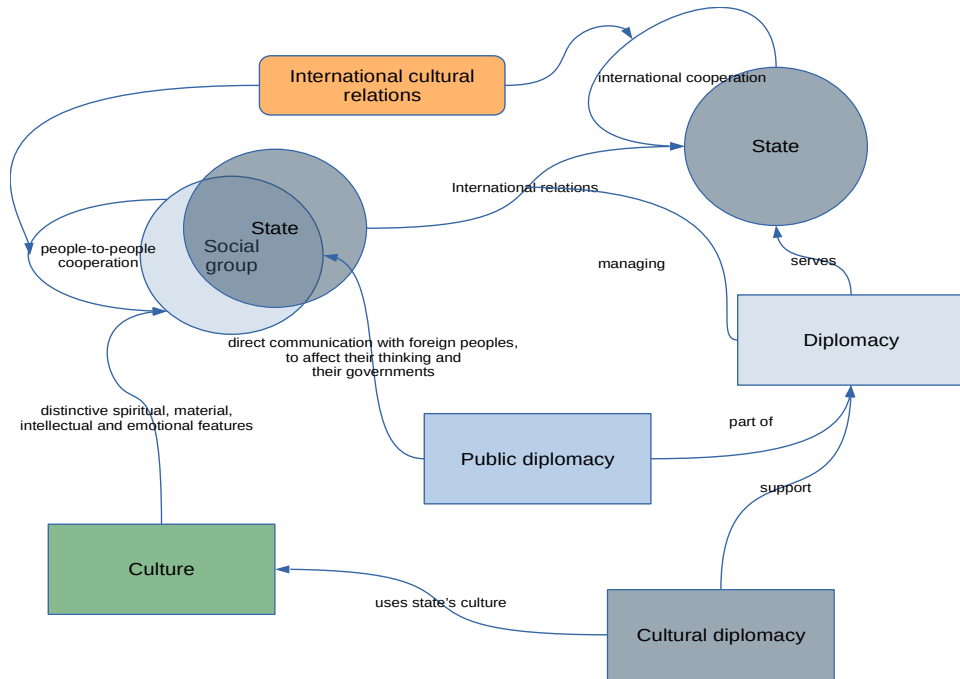


Figure 10: Concept map

4. Methodology

To answer *what is the relationship between EU's cultural diplomacy and its strategic autonomy*, I need to answer first what is EU's policy on cultural diplomacy and what is EU's understanding and strategy on strategic autonomy.

As the scope covered by my research question is quite large, I have limited my work to EU institutions and their policies from 2011 until the present. I have chosen 2011 as the starting date as it corresponds to the adoption by the EP of a very important *resolution on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions (2011)*. As for confining my work to the EU institutions it is a practical matter: all the possible interactions between the EU, national and subnational level governments/governance, or the interaction private/public along those same axes is a considerable endeavour that can only be studied part by part. To be able to provide value out of this work, I must concentrate on a certain *spatial* scope: the EU institutions in this case.

To perform my research, I have used both a qualitative and quantitative methodology. The main technique I have used is document analysis supported by interviews.

Even if I cannot claim this analysis to be one of *digital humanities*, I have used a very common digital humanities tool, *Voyant Tools* (Sinclair and Rockwell 2016), to further explore the reference documents and their relationships. The *corpus* analysed through this tool is that of the main EU texts I am discussing (*see below*) plus the UNESCO Convention of 2005 because of its relevance and continuous reference by the EU documents. Voyant Tools offers many different components both to analyse and to visualise texts: the principal ones I have used are *Collocates graphs (Links)*: network graphs where keywords are shown connected to collocates; and *Trends* which are graphs showing the distribution/frequency of a term in the corpus or in a particular document⁷.

'Digital humanities (DH) is an area of scholarly activity at the intersection of computing or digital technologies and the disciplines of the humanities. It includes the systematic use of digital resources in the humanities, as well as the analysis of their application.' (Wikipedia contributors 2022)

Voyant Tools is a text analysis environment which provides different analysis and visualisation tools.

Box 4: Digital humanities

The more concrete embodiments of EU policies and discourse are the formal texts produced by the EU Institutions: *Reports* from the EP, *Conclusions* from the Council and *Communications* from the EC. They are valuable resources to understand the political priorities of the EU on a particular moment and matter; and, for my intent, to extract the EU's views and approach on culture and its role in international relations and diplomacy. Those more relevant, and in the scope of my research, appear in the timeline below:

⁷ I have also explored non-obvious correlations in the corpus with the *Correlations* (between two terms) tool although it has not yield any meaningful result as all the correlations were obvious.



Figure 11: Timeline of the main EU texts

My initial plan was to conduct interviews with several relevant stakeholders in the EU institutions working, directly and indirectly, in cultural diplomacy⁸ to get a confirmation of my investigation, to cover gaps in my understanding and to discover new ideas and resources. Finally, I have only been able to perform one interview which has provided very relevant information and broadened my views on this matter. *More details on the outcome of this interview in the Analysis section.*

For the quantitative part I have used public statistics on the use of EU funds related to cultural support outside of the European Union and/or with an extra-EU commercial interest. I use this data as a proxy to gauge the importance that EU institutions give to cultural diplomacy compared to other foreign policy priorities. The main EU programme concerned is Creative Europe and its predecessors although there are cultural aspects also in other programmes and policies like the industrial or the development policies. I have used the *Financial Transparency System of the EU (n.d.)*, the *EU Aid Explorer (n.d.-a)* and the report *Creative Europe: monitoring report 2020 (2021)*.

Last, I have conducted a bibliography review to improve my knowledge of the field and document the *state of the art* regarding cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy, too.

⁸ I.e., those responsible for public and cultural diplomacy in the EEAS or those supporting culture under both the development and cooperation angle, and the cultural and creative industries one.

5. Analysis

As mentioned above, I have limited my analysis to the strategies, policies and texts produced by the main EU institutions from 2011 until now; these documents are:

- European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on **the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions** (European Parliament 2011)
- JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL **Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations** (European Commission 2016)
- Council conclusions **on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations** (Council of the European Union 2017)
- COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS **A New European Agenda for Culture** (European Commission 2018)
- Council conclusions on **an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action (Council of the European Union 2019)**

(See timeline above in Figure 11.)

These documents conform a dialogue between the EP, the EC and the Council as they continuously refer to each other. *See below in figure 12. As the UNESCO Convention of 2005 (2005) is also mentioned in most of these documents as a reference in cultural matters, I have included the convention in the diagram.*

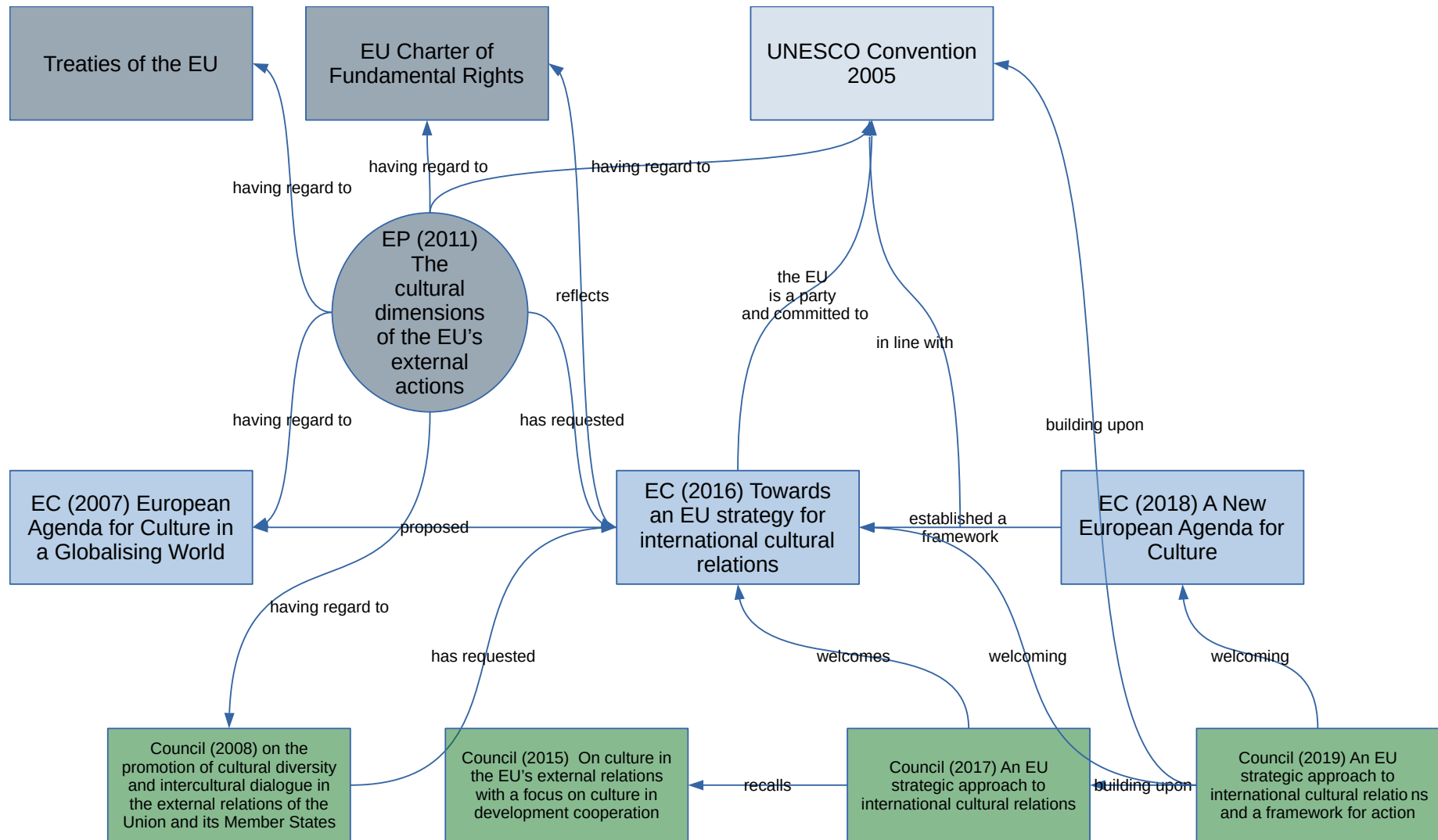


Figure 12: Relations between the main legal texts

5.1. Documents' context

The **European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions** is the first (chronologically) document in the set I have studied. From a procedural point of view, it is an *own-initiative report* by the EP⁹. In this kind of documents, the EP usually request the EC or other EU institutions to conduct certain actions. This is evident through the multiple sentences where the EP *urges, states, supports, encourages* or *calls* diverse entities to perform appropriate actions, e.g., '*Urges the streamlining of internal operations in the Commission in the various DGs which focus on external relations (foreign policy, enlargement, trade, development), education and culture and the digital agenda*' (2011:138).

This resolution being fundamental for the understanding of EU's cultural diplomacy, it also has to be read in a stream of work done by the EU institutions. It mentions, e.g., the *Audiovisual Media Services Directive* (2010), the *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* (2007), the programme *MEDIA Mundus 2011–2013*; or the Council Conclusions on *the Work Plan for Culture 2011 – 2014* (2010) or those on *the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue in the external relations of the Union and its Member States* (2008). By 2011, the EU institutions have already done an important reflection on the role of culture in EU's external relations. The EP also links broadly with United Nations, through the United Nations Millennium Declaration (2000), United Nations resolutions *Keeping the promise: united to achieve the Millennium Development Goals*; and *Culture and Development*.

The European Council: Heads of state or government of the member states, the European Council President and the President of the EC. Defines the general political direction and priorities of the EU. It does not negotiate or adopt EU laws.

The Council of the European Union: Single legal entity which meets in 10 different 'configurations' per subject. Attended by ministers or equivalent. Negotiates and adopts legislative acts. Coordinates member states' policies in specific fields, e.g. education, culture, youth and sport. Also defines and implements EU foreign and security policy following the guidelines set by the European Council.

Box 5: European Council vs Council of the European

The next two documents to contextualise are the **Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations** (2017); and **on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action** (2019).

Before presenting these documents it is important to understand the difference between the Council of the European Union and the European Council. A summary can be found in the adjacent box and a longer description of both institutions can be found in Annex II.

⁹ In certain areas, the EU treaties give the EP the right of initiative implying that its committees may draw up a report and ask for a resolution of the EP.

The first one was adopted by the Council in May 2017 by the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council. It dialogues mainly with the text of the EC of 2016. This document also continues a previous position of the Council of 2015 (2015) to which the EC's communication is an answer. The EP report of 2011 is not mentioned neither in this text nor in the one from 2015. It is a very short document which main proposal is the exchange of knowledge by experts from diverse policy areas.

The conclusions from 2019 are a more developed document better inserted into the web of official documents discussing EU's cultural diplomacy: UNESCO convention, former Council conclusions and both EC communications. The EP report, or any mention to the EP, are missing again. This document was adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council in a meeting held on 8 April 2019. The main points discussed during that meeting were '*the latest developments in Libya. The Council had an exchange of views on Afghanistan and on the Eastern Partnership. Foreign ministers discussed the situation in Venezuela.*' (2019). From the outcomes of the meeting, it can be reasoned that the document was approved without discussion thanks to the work done before the meeting by *political-technical* staff.

There are two main elements to remark just after this very brief presentation: the change in the Council *configuration* from *Education, Youth, Culture and Sport* to *Foreign Affairs* as the proponent of the text. This may indicate a change in views from inside the Council on the balance between *culture* and *foreign policy* regarding this file. It is also remarkable the absence from the EP in Council documents which can be interpreted as part of the constant negotiation of competences between the EU institutions by continuously (re)interpreting the different powers and responsibilities assigned to each by the EU treaties. Even if the EP references several Council conclusions in its own report from 2011, there is no substantive content whatsoever.

Last, we have the two *communications* from the EC: **Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations (2016)** and **Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions A New European Agenda For Culture (2018)**. The first one is a joint communication between the EC and the EEAS. It is headed by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which is the usual title for the head of the EEAS from a Council point of view. It is a communication to the EP and the Council. This document refers to the EC communication of 2007: *A European Agenda for Culture in a globalising world*. The EC acknowledges the demands from the EP on cultural diplomacy along with those of member states and civil society although it addresses specifically the Council conclusions from 2015, to confirm that this EC's communication it is a response to the Council's request.

The second communication is done alone by the EC. This one is addressed to more parties than the first one, additionally we have the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. This communication treats culture in a general way including social, economic and external dimensions. Cultural diplomacy mainly appears in this external dimension. One singular aspect of this communication is the collocation of culture and education. This may give a hint on the more prosaic and detailed origin of the communication if we take into account that there is a Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC) in the EC. *We also find here the interrelation and tension between culture and foreign affairs proper to cultural diplomacy. Not only at national level there is a dialectic relation between culture and foreign affairs ministries; we observe the same in the EU institutions like the Council (as in the described change from configuration) or in the EC.*

5.2. Cultural diplomacy themes

In this subsection I present how the analysed documents present or formulate the various elements presented in the (section) *Theoretical framework*. The figure below presents how these elements, and some others, are related (*collocated*)¹⁰.

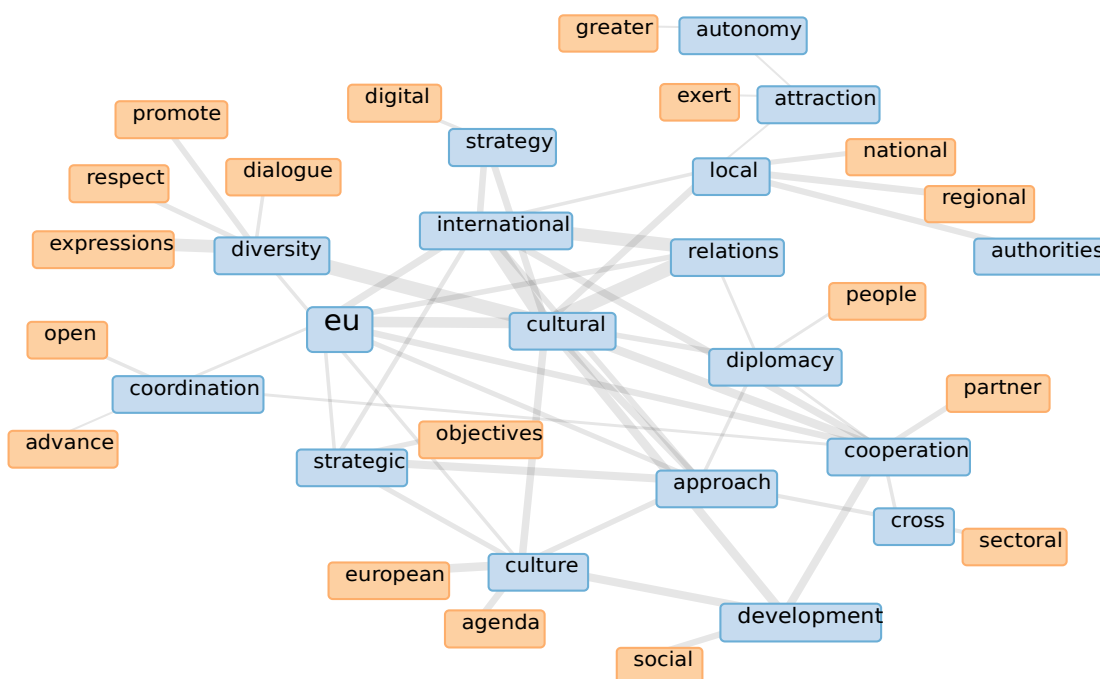


Figure 13: Collocations of some of the main terms

10 The width of each line represents the strength of the relation between the two connected (collocation) terms, the blue ones are the main terms (author choice) and the term *eu*, bigger, is specially frequent.

5.2.1. Culture

The first concept to examine is *culture*. The EP's report does not define *culture* although presents its views on it:

'culture has intrinsic value, enriches people's lives and fosters mutual understanding and respect'

'culture can and should be a facilitator for development, inclusion, innovation, democracy, human rights, education, conflict prevention and reconciliation, mutual understanding, tolerance and creativity'

'cultural goods, including sports, contribute to the EU's non-material development and economy, fostering the realisation of a knowledge-based society, through, in particular, cultural industries and tourism' (2011:137).

The Council conclusions from 2017 does not define culture either and, again, presents some specific benefits or uses for it: *'the role of culture in the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in general and in particular in areas such as counter-terrorism, societal resilience and conflict settlement'* (2017:38).

In the second Council's conclusions we find mostly the same situation:

'culture has positive socioeconomic effects, it improves the quality of life'; 'cross-cutting approach to culture that includes cultural and creative industries, arts, science, education, tourism and cultural heritage, etc.' (2019:7)

'the role of culture as a horizontal enabler for Sustainable Development Goals'; and 'the role of culture and cultural heritage in bringing peace to conflict and post-conflict areas' (2019:8).

Both documents link culture in external relations to conflict resolution; the second one also recognised the role of culture with regards to economy and society, or UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The EC communication from 2016 continues in the say fashion, just some examples:

'Culture, and in particular inter-cultural dialogue, can contribute to addressing major global challenges – such as conflict prevention and resolution, integrating refugees, countering violent extremism, and protecting cultural heritage' (2016:2);

'Culture can therefore help promote job creation and competitiveness both inside the EU and beyond its borders. This is recognised in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which underlines that culture, including world cultural heritage and creative industries, can have an important role in achieving inclusive and sustainable development' (2016:3);

or

'Culture is not just about the arts or literature. It spans a wide range of policies and activities, from inter-cultural dialogue to tourism, from education and research to the creative industries, from protecting heritage to promoting creative industries and new technologies, and from artisanship to development cooperation' (2016:4).

Commission's second communication from 2018, having a broader scope and a strong *internal* EU emphasis expands the possible functions of culture while maintaining certain common themes as conflict resolution:

'Culture promotes active citizenship, common values, inclusion and intercultural dialogue within Europe and across the globe. It brings people together, including newly arrived refugees and other migrants, and helps us feel part of communities. Culture and creative industries also have the power to improve lives, transform communities, generate jobs and growth, and create spill over effects in other economic sectors' (2018:2);

or

'Culture is a transformative force for community regeneration' (2018:4).

We can conclude that the EU institutions present a different aspect of culture than the UNESCO definition quoted. All of them view culture mainly from a utilitarian point of view although both the EP and the Council recognise culture's *intrinsic value* (Council of the European Union 2019:7; European Parliament 2011:137).

Only the EP briefly touches on the question of cultural exception assuming it and asks the EC to *'take proper account of the dual nature of cultural goods and services when negotiating bilateral and multilateral trade agreements'* (European Parliament 2011:140). This is also one of the two messages on trade of cultural goods: this one, the need to respect their *dual nature*; the other one being around combating the illicit trafficking of cultural goods (European Commission 2016:12).

5.2.2. (Public|Cultural) Diplomacy

The term *diplomacy* in its own is practically missing from all the texts analysed. It mainly appears as *cultural diplomacy* and never, but for a quote, as *public diplomacy*. The most significant reference to diplomacy is the EP mention of '*the cultural aspects of diplomacy*' (2011:139). *Diplomats* are also virtually missing but for some references like in '*artists act as de facto cultural diplomats*' (European Parliament 2011:137). In both the EP and Council documents there are some references to *EU delegations* (the EU's diplomatic representations) in the line of ensuring '*adequate capacities for culture in EU delegations*' (Council of the European Union 2019:8). The EC connects in a stronger way EU delegations and cultural diplomacy although without expressing any particular *diplomatic* role to these delegations. From the cultural diplomacy standpoint, there is a request for cultural-aware personnel in EU delegations, *cultural focal points*, both by the EP (2011:140) and the Council (2019:8). In 2016, the EC proposes the role these focal points will play: '*Cultural focal points in major EU delegations will disseminate best practice (sic) and provide training on the cultural dimension of development and external relations for staff.*' (2016:13) while the 2018 communication confirms the ongoing training of those focal points (2018:8).

As already stated, there is no single reference to *public diplomacy*, not even indirectly. As for *cultural diplomacy*, there is no clear definition in any of the documents either. The closest is an open and component-based definition by the EP: '*cultural cooperation and cultural dialogue, which are building blocks of cultural diplomacy*' (2011:137). Even if neither of these terms are clearly defined in the documents analysed, we can find their objectives all around them. Let us remind ourselves of the previous definition for both terms: Public diplomacy as aiming at *affecting the thinking of foreign people* or cultural diplomacy in *using state's culture in support of its foreign goals*. The utilitarian treatment of culture that permeates the positions of the EP, the Council or the EC situates all these proposals squarely in the realm of public/cultural diplomacy. E.g.; on expanding democracy to countries and cultures who currently do not have it or in preventing conflict that some societies may find needed and justified.

On the continuum from cultural diplomacy/realism to international cultural relations/constructivism all institutions are definitively on the side of international cultural relations.

The EP presents a decided *constructivist* approach to cultural relations, e.g., already quoted '*culture can and should be a ...*' or

'culture as a force for tolerance and understanding and as a tool for growth and more inclusive societies' or '*cultural cooperation and cultural dialogue, which are building blocks of cultural diplomacy, can serve as instruments for global peace and stability*' (2011:137).

That said, the EP text has a realist moment when proposing the use of cultural diplomacy in *'advancing and communicating throughout the world the EU's and the Member States' interests and the values that make up European culture'* (emphasis by the author) although this is not repeated. To nuance this statement, the following paragraph says: *'EU's external actions should focus primarily on promoting peace and reconciliation, human rights, international trade and economic development, without neglecting the cultural aspects of diplomacy'* (2011:139) EU's interests are lost.

There are only two statements on the *promotion of European culture*, both in the EP resolution: the first one is on EP's request to have one person in each EU delegation *'responsible for the coordination of cultural relations and interaction between the EU and third countries and for the promotion of European culture'* (2011:139). The other one is *'a coherent EU strategy for the international promotion of European cultural activities'* (2011:141). The text does not make any important point of the industrial or market aspects of culture. The only mention is *'cultural goods [...] contribute to the EU's non-material development and economy, [...] through, in particular, cultural industries and tourism'* (2011:137).

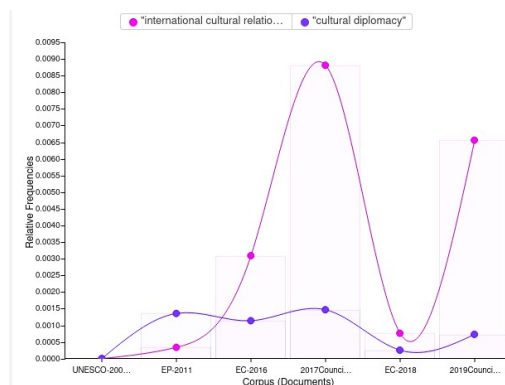


Figure 14: Relative frequencies of *'cultural diplomacy'* and *'international cultural relations'*

ministries of foreign affairs and culture (the Council).

The Council and EC positions are also clearly on the side of international cultural relations. There is no single mention to the economic, political or diplomatic interests of the EU. Also, figure 14 shows how the Council stresses the importance of international cultural relations, while the EC does not really mention neither one term nor the other. The emphasis on international cultural relations can be read in the frame of the tension between the EU and its member states, or more appropriately, between the EU institutions (EP, EC, EEAS) and the member states governments,

5.2.3. Actors

To consider the actors mentioned in these texts, I start by investigating the roles of the EU institutions in them.

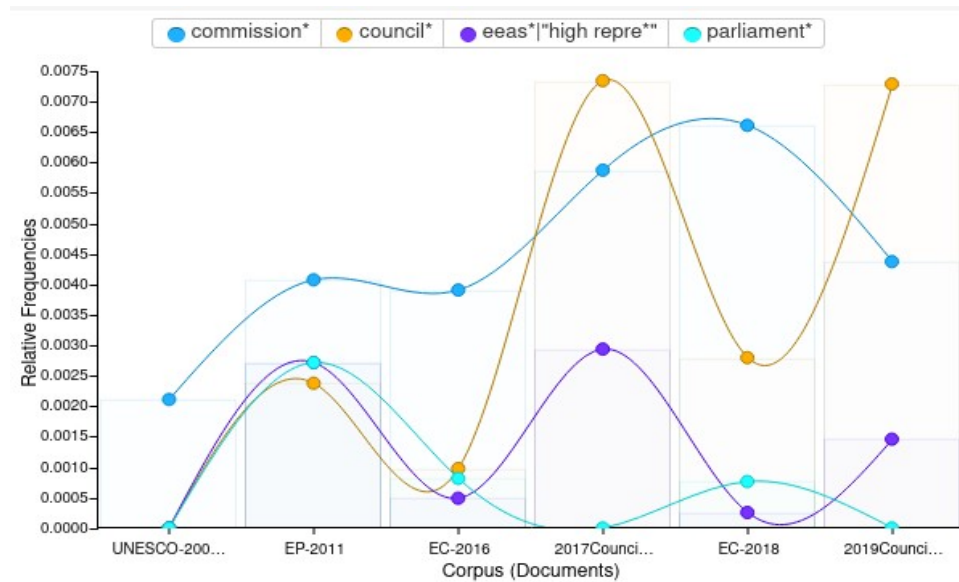


Figure 15: Relative frequency of EU institutions names in the corpus

Out of the above chart we can make several remarks: the EP is barely mentioned, just in its own resolution, lightly by the EC and nothing by the Council. The EC communications do not mention EEAS much, even in the joint communication by the two entities; the EP and the Council both mention EEAS more. The EP refers to the Council as much as EEAS or itself. Finally, the EC is the entity that appears more in any of the documents analysed.

At play here are the normal dynamics between the EP, the Council and the EC where the two first ones have a need to defend or conquer new prerogatives in the governance of the EU while the EC is the main executor even if having its own mind. The EP makes different requests from the EC and EEAS; at the same time the Council and the EC conflate the EC and EEAS (usually referred as the *High Representative*) in demands and proposals. Finally, the Council also refers to member states and involve them in their proposals.

Another interesting visualisation shows how the various EU institutions *pull* the documents toward themselves¹¹.

The EP addresses mostly all possible sectors as actors and stakeholders with respect to cultural relations: *'the Union and its Member States, citizens, businesses and civil society both in the EU and in third countries'* although recognises a special role to artists as *de facto cultural diplomats*. The EP goes beyond *central governments* and *'calls for cooperation with the regions in each Member State'* (2011:137). It is the main one doing this. Both the Council and the EC mention the cultural private sector, specially EUNIC by the Council. However, as for the involvement of EU regions in EU's cultural diplomacy, it is only the EP who considers that.

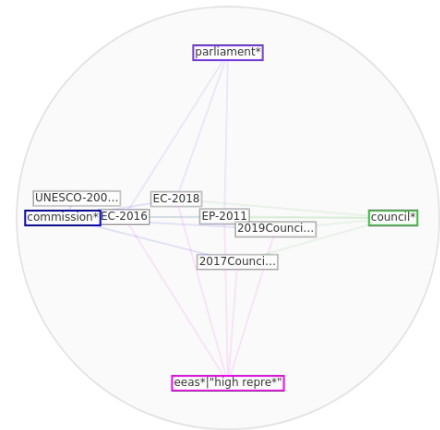


Figure 16: 'Mandala' of the EU institutions and the corpus

There are two actors especially mentioned in these texts: EUNIC (n.d.) and the Cultural Relations Platform (n.d.).

EUNIC is the European network of national cultural institutes. It counts 38 members and they operate in about 100 countries worldwide.

It is proactively involved in EU's cultural policy both from the external and internal standpoints. They are a strong advocate of the international cultural relations approach and claim to base themselves on its principles. They also claim to view culture in very similar to that of the EU institutions including development cooperation, education or sports. However, its main activities are linked to the more conventional understanding blending culture and arts.

EUNIC is supported (funded) from the EU since 2014.

Box 6: EUNIC

EUNIC appears in all texts studied, the Council assigns a strong role to EUNIC. The EP *'Encourages the EEAS [...] to cooperate with networks such as EUNIC'* (2011:140) while the Council:

'pilot projects [...] with the involvement of local cultural actors, local and regional authorities, relevant NGOs, national cultural institutes, EUNIC clusters and EU delegations.' (2017:39);

'AIMING TO [...] seek synergies and complementarity between the activities undertaken by the EU and its Member States in third countries, including their

diplomatic and consular representations and the EUNIC network';

'EUNIC and the cooperation between diplomatic and consular representations';

11 *'Mandala is a conceptual visualization that shows the relationships between terms and documents. Each search term (or magnet) pulls documents toward it based on the term's relative frequency in the corpus.'* (Sinclair and Rockwell 2016)

or

'particular effort into the implementation of common projects and joint actions in third countries [...] developed at local level by the Member States, their diplomatic and consular representations, their cultural institutes, EUNIC, EU delegations and local stakeholders' (2019:7, 8 and 9)

The figure below presents how EUNIC is related (*collocated*) to other significant terms in the corpus.

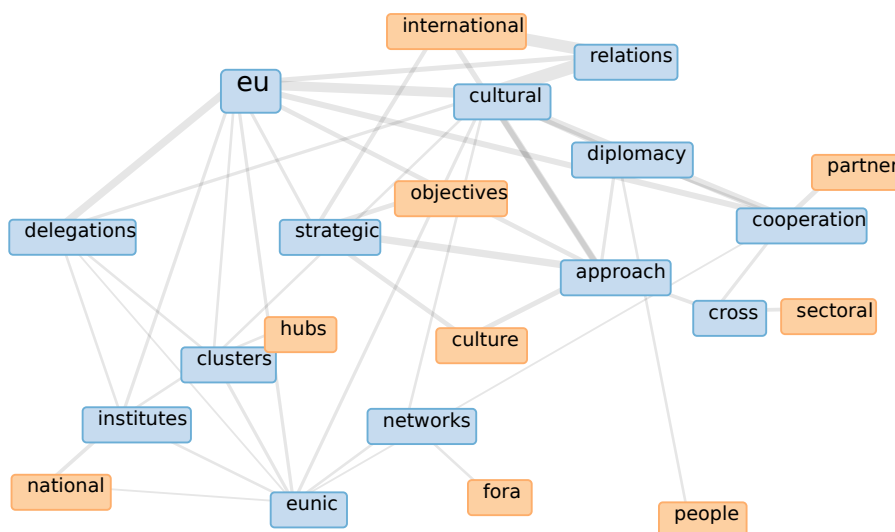


Figure 17: EUNIC collocations in the corpus

As for the Cultural Relations Platform, this is the continuation and inheritor of both the (EC) *Cultural Diplomacy Platform* (2016-2020) and the (EP) *Preparatory Action on 'Culture in EU External Relations'* (2013-2014).

The Cultural Diplomacy Platform was created in February 2016 with funding from the Partnership Instrument. Its main partners were national cultural institutes.

The Cultural Relations Platform is an EU-funded project that provides expertise and advise to the EU on international cultural relations by providing a platform for professionals to exchange and cooperate.

The project is run by the Goethe-Institut Brussels, the European Cultural Foundation, the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts and the University of Siena.

Box 7: The Cultural Relations Platform

Among its aims was '*contribute to the development of the EU's international cultural relations*' (European Commission 2016:13). The Council also mentions it and stresses its knowledge exchange role (2017:2). Meaningfully, the Cultural *Diplomacy* Platform was asked to contribute to EU's *international cultural relations*. The last incarnation of this platform has been rebranded as *the Cultural Relations Platform* confirming the international cultural relations choice of the EU institutions.

Regarding the tension already discussed on *club diplomacy vs. network diplomacy*, this analysis confirms that current EU's views on cultural diplomacy as those of network diplomacy. The variety and number of actors, the limited responsibilities of the EU professional diplomats (EEAS), the role of entities like EUNIC or the Cultural Relations Platform and the inclusion of the cultural sector as part of EU's cultural diplomacy makes clear this conclusion. Besides, this posture is coherent with the international cultural relations position that gives a great emphasis to network diplomacy and non-diplomatic agents.

Again, this conclusion can be read in the frame of the ongoing discussion between EU institutions (EP, EC, EEAS) and the member states governments (the Council). We observe the lack of the EP in the Council conclusions or the insistence by the Council on subsidiarity or on the role of the EC framed by the treaties (e.g., (2017:38) or (2019:all). Stressing the role of EU professional diplomats would redistribute the power and responsibility on foreign matters and representation towards EEAS and the EU/EC/EEAS. A multi-stakeholder strategy implicating strongly EUNIC, an European network composed of national representatives, maintains the very important matter of foreign relations mostly in the Council.

5.2.4. Other matters

In this section, I briefly present some other elements of importance. To continue with the previous topic on actors, the first one is that of *fragmentation*. The EP already points to the '*fragmentation of external EU cultural policy and projects*' and asks the EC to streamline its '*internal operations*' (2011:138). The Council is also conscious of the same issue and, e.g., *encourages 'consistency and coherence of efforts'* (2017:38) although it does not point to any specific EU institution in doing so and even enlarges the scope by including the Council of Europe and UNESCO. The second Council's conclusions repeat and reinforce the idea. The EC acknowledges the issue and defends the current architecture on cultural (diplomacy) funding:

'To ensure policy coherence and avoid duplication, the most effective way to promote culture within the EU's external relations is to use existing cooperation frameworks and financing instruments. The EU has developed tailor-made frameworks for thematic and geographic cooperation, along with dedicated financing instruments' (2016:5)

The only programme exclusively for culture is Creative Europe which, as we will see in the next section *EU funding for cultural diplomacy*, does not contribute much to cultural diplomacy.

The second request from the Council is from 2019, after the EC communication just quoted, and there is no comment or remark to fragmentation or streamlining in the last EC communication. It can be assumed that the issue remains.

The other point I will treat here is that of *exchanges*. According to Nye exchanges, among other similar activities like scholarships, allow '*the development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years or even decades*' (Nye 2013:571). The EP dedicates almost a whole section to this claiming that '*cultural and educational exchanges can potentially strengthen civil society, foster democratisation and good governance, encourage the development of skills, promote human rights and fundamental freedoms and provide building blocks for lasting cooperation*' (2011:138). After that, the EP supports and requests to foster exchange programmes focused on the youth and on cultural professionals. The Council does not extend so much on this but also supports the '*mobility of artists and cultural professionals*' (2019:8) both intra and extra the EU. Last, the EC also treats exchanges at length. There is short mention to mobility linked to already running cultural programmes like Creative Europe and also dedicates one section specifically to *Inter-cultural exchanges of students, researchers and alumni* (2016).

5.3. EU funding for cultural diplomacy

The number of EU programmes associated with cultural diplomacy is very important. As we can read in (European Commission n.d.-b), the funding is organised along the various geographic programmes of the EU: For candidate and potential candidate countries there are, e.g., the Creative Europe Programme; the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance. The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe consolidates several previous programmes and includes European neighbourhood countries and all others. There are other smaller programmes centred around a specific geography like the ACP-EU Culture programme *Toward a viable cultural industry*, the Creative Industry Financing initiative or TransCultura among others.

As it is always the problem with cultural statistics (see *Cultural statistics*), it is very difficult to find the relevant information out of these programmes as culture is not usually, ever, tagged as such and there is no direct and easy way to get the information. As mentioned in the methodology section, I have studied the information coming from the following sources: the Financial Transparency System of the EU, the EU Aid Explorer and Creative Europe: monitoring report 2020. The last one has not any information on cultural diplomacy.

The Financial Transparency System of the EU provides information on EU funding from the point of view of beneficiaries. For this work I have limited myself to data from the previous EU multi-annual financial framework (2014-2020)¹². The expenditure by the EC departments for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (EAC) and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) plus the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) can be seen in the figure below:

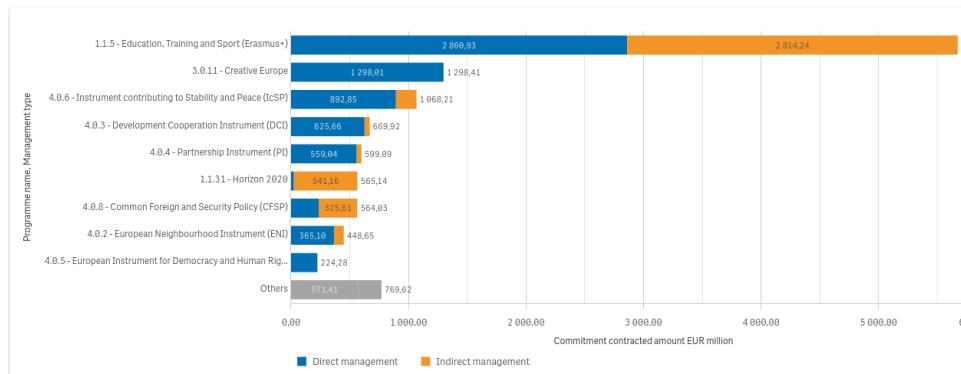


Figure 18: 2014-2020 programmes used by EAC, FPI and EACEA

More interesting is the diagram showing the intensity of investment geographically (Figure 19):

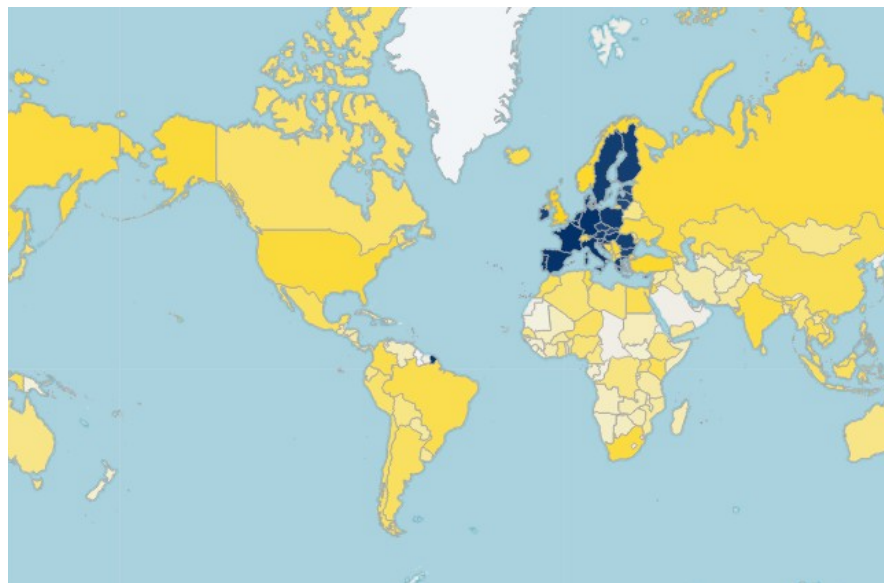


Figure 19: 2014-2020 EAC, FPI and EACEA expenditure by country

The cultural funding is mainly destined to EU's member states although the combination of cultural and foreign policy programmes extends the scope of EU funding to mostly every country in the world. Even in this case, the funds managed by EAC, FPI and EACEA reach mainly entities in the EU.

12 'The Financial Transparency System publishes only the beneficiaries of the following sources of funding: EU budget directly administered by the Commission's departments, its staff in the EU delegations, or through executive agencies; EU budget implemented indirectly by international organisations or non-EU countries ('indirect management'); European Development Fund.' (n.d.)

If we examine Creative Europe only, it has a strong emphasis on EU's member states and pre-accession/neighbourhood countries.

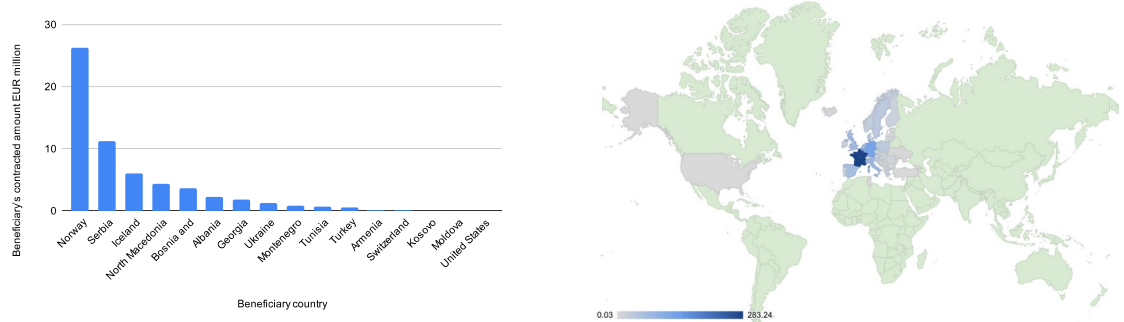


Figure 20: Creative Europe worldwide distribution (2014-2020)

Although Creative Europe is presented as a programme supporting culture in EU's foreign relations, its impact can only be very small. Another example of the limited consideration to cultural diplomacy in Creative Europe is the lack of any substantive mention to it in the *Creative Europe : monitoring report 2020 (2021)* which presents the whole programme implementation.

The other source explored is the EU Aid Explorer. It supplies data on international development projects funded by the EU and its member states. The following graph is obtained for the years 2014 to 2020, the sector *Culture and recreation* and the donor *European Commission*: the amount of money is small and highly distributed around the world.

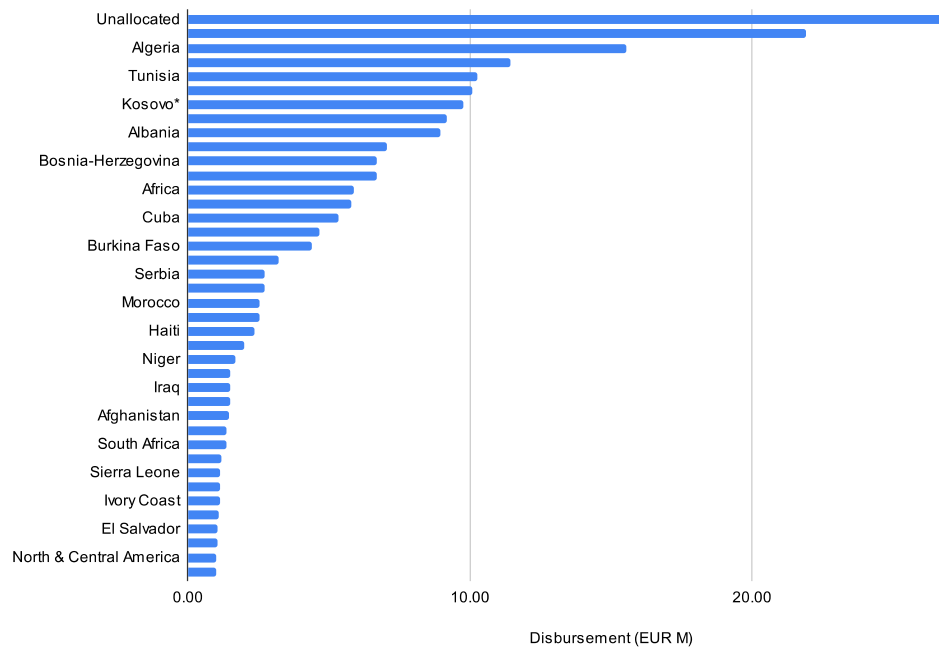


Figure 21: Countries receiving funding for the sector Culture and recreation from the EC (2014 to 2020)

The following chart presents the previous information geographically:

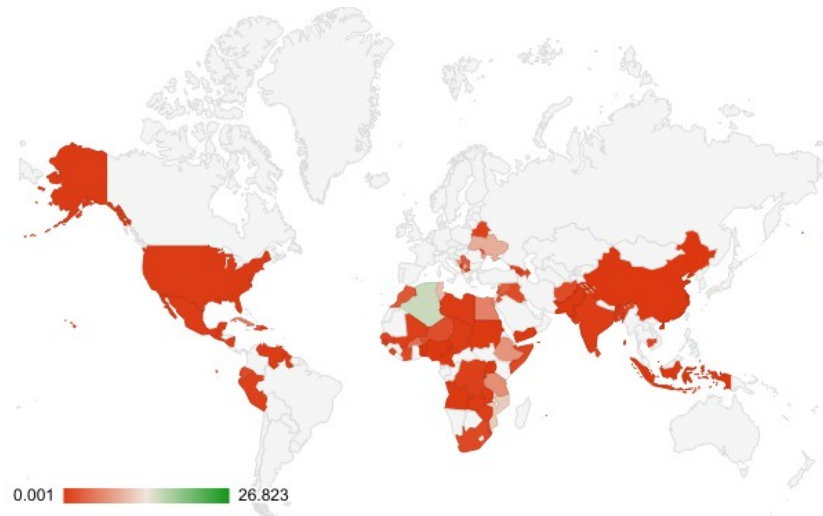


Figure 22: Countries receiving funding for the sector Culture and recreation from the EC (2014 to 2020) (Geo)

Even if it is very difficult to measure the foreign policy of the EU in a quantitative way, for cultural diplomacy or for more general matters, we can conclude that the amount of funding invested in cultural diplomacy is a small one. On the one hand, we have an important amount of funds to develop the internal cultural sector of the EU (Creative Europe); on the other hand, the funding is focused on (cultural) cooperation for development. The independence of this funding from any stated interest-based consideration and the long-term commitment from the EU, make EU's actions constructivist ones and again reinforcing the international cultural relations position of the EU.

5.4. Stakeholders consultation

For professional and privacy and data protection reasons, I cannot provide details on the person interviewed. As said in the Methodology section, I have only been able to do one interview out of the several planned.

During the interview I performed, several of the main themes on this work were discussed: understanding of culture, the cultural dimension of EU's international relations or the relation between culture, cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy.

The interviewee stressed the link between culture, cultural diversity and subsidiarity in the EU. These are foundational elements of any understanding of the EU's cultural diplomacy. It is also important to reckon the actual diversity of cultures in the EU and the relationships between them. Most of the issues and discussions already treated can be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the relations between member states and also between the cultures in Europe regardless of their political and administrative embodiment.

We also discussed the preponderance of the social dimension standpoint with respect to culture in the EU cultural policies when comparing to market or trade considerations in line with the presented tension and choice between EU's values and interests. A certain *sacralisation* of the idea of culture (in line with ideas of *high culture vs low/popular culture*), EU's strong social dimension regarding culture and the values approach mentioned, limit our capacity to relate to culture in all its dimensions and possibilities.

One important aspect mentioned during the interview is the relationship between the cultural market (intra and extra EU), the health of the EU ecosystem for the creative and cultural sector or industries and cultural diplomacy/strategic autonomy. It is very difficult to be really autonomous in cultural diplomacy when there is no cultural industry and market behind it. One example of an extremely successful synergy between cultural diplomacy and cultural industry is US cinema. Although I have not been able to explore this matter for limitations in terms of scope and time; it deserves a proper treatment in any future work.

It was concluded that there is no possible strategic autonomy without *cultural autonomy*. And that cultural autonomy depends greatly on economic autonomy so that EU creators can really produce independently. This is a matter the EU still must develop.

5.5. Strategic autonomy and cultural diplomacy

All documents in our research predate the current discussion on EU's strategic autonomy. Besides, the current EU policy oriented towards international cultural relations probably precludes a strong relationship with strategic autonomy. Even so, there is still the possibility to study our texts reflecting on the implications for strategic autonomy of their proposals and messages. In this, I use the previous table from Helwig on *EU's self-conception and strategic autonomy* (see table 3 on page 12).

| | Normative Power |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Source of identity | EU's distinct values |
| Strategic autonomy from | Authoritarianism, human rights abuse |
| Strategic autonomy for | Protecting <i>European way of life</i> Diffuse norms in external relations |
| Related concepts | European civilization |
| Key debates | European vs. universal norms |

Box 8: The EU's self-conception and strategic autonomy (Normative power)

Helwig synthesises prevalent EU's self-identities into three ones: *Market*, *Normative* and *Realist Power*. Of these three, the most significant one for us is that on normative power. (See it copied here for ease of use.)

Clearly, the EU position is one of values, the interests of the EU are missing in any document but for a brief mention. However, European values are mentioned in all documents but for the first Council conclusions, more operative and the shortest one. In figure 23 we can see the relationship between the term *values* and its main collocations in the text: *european* is an obvious occurrence but the appearance of interest is

more interesting. Further investigation confirms that there is no intentional and significant link between the two.

The EP defines the EU as a '*culturally diverse community of values*' and has a section on *Culture and European values (2011:136 and 137)*. Both the Council and the EC mentioned European values also giving an indication of what they may be and/or serve for:

'cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue are an integral part of the values of the European Union and play an important role in the promotion of human rights, [...] and contribute to democratisation, good governance and more peaceful societies' (Council of the European Union 2019:7)

'Cultural diversity is an integral part of the values of the European Union. The EU is strongly committed to promoting a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental rights.'

'This reflects and promotes the EU's fundamental values, such as human rights, gender equality, democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity.' (European Commission 2016:2)

EU position expressed in these texts checks all elements of Helwig table but for *Strategic autonomy from* which is not enunciated directly or indirectly at any moment.

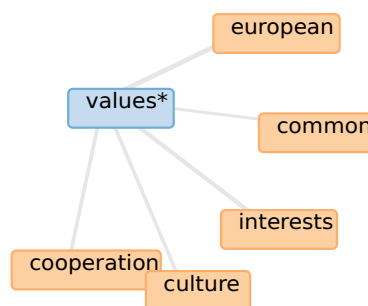


Figure 23: Main collocations of the term 'values'

The discussion on the instrumentalisation of culture for foreign policy use (*section 5.2.1*) shows that the EU is adamant about promoting human/universal/EU values. Many times these texts mention the promotion of EU values directly, and, even when not, these are the ones considered when talking of democracy, human rights, conflict prevention, etc.

As a whole, this approach brings its own issues, mainly on *European civilization (identity politics)* and *neo-colonialism* due to assimilating European values to universal ones (if these were to exist.)

So, even if the new debate on strategic autonomy was not in the mind of creators of these documents, the ideas, positions and messages expressed feed into the debate on strategic autonomy.

The last embodiment of EU's foreign policy *A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence* has the very meaningful subtitle: '*For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security*'. Promoting, and protecting, EU values is everywhere in the text. However, cultural diplomacy, or international cultural relations, are missing.

In the discussion on strategic autonomy there is an obvious paradox. If we take into account the EU motto *United in diversity*, we must consider said diversity as a given. Then, at what level to apply this strategic autonomy? Of course, the theses supported by the EU (EEAS HR/VP) scope the strategic autonomy to the EU; the tensions described between EU and member states hint at another level (a national one) at play here. And still, we cannot forget the EU of the regions and their desire for (strategic) autonomy.

If we add to this the UNESCO anthropological understanding of culture as linked to social groups which may not be represented by an administrative entity (country or region) the situation gets even more complicated.

Box 9: The fractality of strategic autonomy

5.6. Summary table

| | <i>(EP) The cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions</i> | <i>(EC) Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations</i> | <i>(Council) An EU strategic approach to international cultural relations</i> | <i>(EC) A New European Agenda for Culture</i> | <i>(Council) An EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action</i> |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Culture | Utilitarian view of culture although recognising culture's intrinsic value | Utilitarian view of culture | Utilitarian view of culture although recognising culture's intrinsic value and independence | Utilitarian view of culture | Utilitarian view of culture although recognising culture's intrinsic value and independence |
| Culture exception | Recognised and assumed | <i>Not mentioned</i> | <i>Not mentioned</i> | <i>Not mentioned</i> | <i>Not mentioned</i> |
| (Public/Cultural) Diplomacy | Diplomacy only as in <i>cultural diplomacy</i> . The closest to define cultural diplomacy | <i>Not mentioned</i> | <i>Not mentioned</i> | <i>Not mentioned</i> | <i>Not mentioned</i> |
| Cultural diplo vs international cultural relations (Realism vs constructivism) | Constructivist international cultural relations. Barely considering the promotion of European culture | Constructivist international cultural relations. <i>No consideration to the promotion of European culture</i> | Constructivist international cultural relations. <i>No consideration to the promotion of European culture</i> | Constructivist international cultural relations. <i>No consideration to the promotion of European culture</i> | Constructivist international cultural relations. <i>No consideration to the promotion of European culture</i> |
| Actors | Network diplomacy. All EU institutions plus other possible actors, including member states' regions | Network diplomacy. Mainly the EC and the EEAS | Network diplomacy. Mainly the Council, the EC and the EEAS | Network diplomacy. Mainly the EC and the EEAS | Network diplomacy. Mainly the Council, the EC and the EEAS with a very important role for EUNIC |

| | <i>(EP) The cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions</i> | <i>(EC) Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations</i> | <i>(Council) An EU strategic approach to international cultural relations</i> | <i>(EC) A New European Agenda for Culture</i> | <i>(Council) An EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action</i> |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|--|--|
| Fragmentation | Recognised the problem. Urges the EC to improve it | Presents the current (2016 and now) architecture as the <i>most effective</i> | Requests improvement in general | <i>Not mentioned</i> | Requests improvement in general |
| Exchanges | Very important and supported. All kind of actors and focused on cultural ones and youth | Important and supported. Focus on academia and youth | Supported | <i>Not mentioned related to cultural diplomacy</i> | Supported |
| Strategic autonomy | Promotion of EU values | Promotion of EU values | <i>Not mentioned</i> | <i>Not mentioned</i> | Promotion of EU values |

Table 4: Summary table

6. Conclusions

After this analysis, let us come back to the original research question: What is the relationship between EU's cultural diplomacy and its strategic autonomy; and the secondary ones: What is EU's approach to cultural diplomacy? And what is the EU understanding and strategy on strategic autonomy?

The EU understanding and position on strategic autonomy is still very fluid and flexible. The geopolitical situation has a great impact on the political discussion and there is no will at the highest level to concretise any particular proposal. We can consider the definition reminded by HR/VP Josep Borrell, '*the capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible*', as the most advanced position on this and endorsed by the latest communications from EEAS. Of course, the theses of strategic autonomy bring their own issues like identity politics, neocolonialism, or the fractality of the concept where other cultures and regions of the EU may, and do, claim autonomy from other entities inside the EU or the EU itself.

On the other secondary question, the answer is straightforward, the EU institutions are clearly pro international cultural relations with all that these implies. Most cultural diplomacy is performed by member states and/or the private sector with EUNIC being the greatest exponent of this. EU's approach based on values more than on interest fosters long-term relationships with like-minded partners. All in all, it is a very constructivist approach. If this is a proactive political decision or the result of the power dynamics of the EU institutions combined with a certain disregard of culture in foreign policy is open for discussion. In the documents analysed we have seen clearly reflected the tensions between the EP and Council and the operational-non-political role of the EC while the EEAS does not seem to have played any major role in defining this particular policy.

Finally, and validating the starting hypothesis, for the time being, there is no intentional relationship between cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy. As already mentioned, the documents analysed are previous to the current debate on strategic autonomy although no to the constant self-reflection in the EU on EU's role in the world. In any case, EU's position is one on values without any reference to EU's interests but for minor ones (and surprisingly coming from the EP instead of the Council or the EC.) Even if defending EU's own interest is not part of the definition I have just mentioned above, it is a theme that permeates the whole discussion.

This disconnection between cultural diplomacy and the EU's strategic autonomy is a missed opportunity. If we go back to the very beginning of our theoretical framework and remember the concepts coming from Bourdieu, we must acknowledge the importance of symbols in human interactions, including between cultures and societies. It is fair abstraction or metaphor to consider international relations as a field in the Bourdian sense where the international entities like countries or the EU are the players with certain symbolic capital. Symbolic capital that self-reinforces itself by modifying the rules of the game while the game is ongoing. From a more pedestrian perspective, international relations are a global competition of narratives¹³.

6.1. Recommendations

As part of the analysis, I have identified certain elements or issues that could be improved according to the academic literature and my own understanding and creativity. As part of the purpose of this work, I would like to contribute to the ongoing reflection by proposing some actions that the EU institutions could take to improve our understanding and situation of this very important matter.

(R1) Adopt a definition for culture. An adopted and consensual definition for culture would guide and support any possible initiative regarding culture: from foreign policy to public funding. The EU institutions could adopt the UNESCO one (anthropological) or devise their own one maybe more in line with the understanding behind the *creative and cultural sector/industry*.

(R2) Adopt a definition for international cultural relations (or cultural diplomacy). As for the previous point, once having a clear posture (as on international cultural relations vs cultural diplomacy), there are many advantages in claiming so and sharing our own understanding. Again, this has an impact on all actions and would guide better the more practical work of the EU institutions.

(R3) Adopt a clear policy/position on cultural diplomacy (or international cultural relations). Providing a clear policy or position on EU's cultural diplomacy would make clear where the EU stands on this matter for all stakeholders involved: third countries and regions, member states and member states own stakeholders like citizens or creative businesses, and also the people in charge of its implementation. None of the documents analysed are complete enough including all elements that a foreign policy needs.

¹³ Which is not new, in Europe we can easily remember historical conflicts like the Reformation, and Counter-Reformation, the Enlightenment or the Cold War. All of these have many different aspects, including war, and also a crucial battle of narratives for the mind of the people.

(R4) Trust building between the Council and EEAS. Fostering the collaboration between EEAS and member states own cultural diplomacy efforts would enlarge the reach of EU's cultural diplomacy to the benefit of both the EU as an entity and member states. The diplomatic expertise and capacity of EEAS should be put to better use when doing cultural diplomacy. Tensions between EU institutions and the abuse of the principle of subsidiarity are hindering the full reach of EU's cultural diplomacy.

(R5) Develop a funding instrument for cultural diplomacy. Even a small one would provide clarity and a clear link between policy and financial commitment. It would also provide transparency and communication opportunities for the EU on its support to international culture.

(R6) Consider cultural diplomacy a policy of the EU in itself. *(Even if a minor one.)* It is fundamental to have a quantitative view on the cultural diplomacy activities done in the EU. The means should be developed to extract information from public statistics both on the action of the EU institutions and of the other actors involved. Without solving the problem of international cultural statistics, at least *tagging* could be used to extract this particular component from the information available. The previous recommendation and this one would also allay the claims of fragmentation providing a consolidated global picture of EU actions in this field.

(R7) Continue the exchanges. The current exchange programmes run by the EU are probably its best ambassadors in the world. They must continue and probably grow with regards to third countries. They could be improved by having a clear cultural diplomacy aspect even if a secondary one. Also, it is important to develop long-lasting relationships with their beneficiaries allowing some, many, of them to benefit from a whole series of exchanges to accompany specific important persons their whole life and use their multiplying effect on their own societies.

(R8) Assume EU's own interest in cultural diplomacy. Developing a cultural diplomacy policy for the EU which contemplates EU's own interest is fair and accepted by our counterparts. It also shows real commitment by the EU and a wish for transparency of EU's intentions. International relations are a zero-sum game in certain aspects (consider democracy vs autocratic regimes) and it is both realist and realistic to deal with those. Also, an interest-based discussion will be considered less sensible by some parties unwilling or unable to engage with the EU on a purely value-based relation. Prejudices on an EU's interest based foreign policy or concepts like public or cultural diplomacy limit our capacity for action.

(R9) Develop a narrative on/against identity politics and neocolonialism. Assuming international relations as a bourdieuan field; a more assertive EU should develop a narrative on its cultural diplomacy that counters accusations of identity politics and neocolonialism. An open and transparent policy based on EU own legitimate interests is a perfect antidote to this. The current fixation on values in EU's cultural diplomacy may suggest a superiority view from the EU on other cultures. Any reaffirmation of EU's culture with regards to (or even against) other cultures is easily countered by claims of neocolonialism.

(R10) Recognise and incorporate the link between cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy. Cultural diplomacy is a strategic asset for strategic autonomy. One of the basic tenets of strategic autonomy is to work alone only if needed and in collaboration as often as possible. Cultural diplomacy is a great enabler for this last option fostering understanding, dialogue and personal relations that transcend conjuntural situations and conflicts.

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Annex I. Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Article 167)

TITLE XIII CULTURE - Article 167 (ex Article 151 TEC)

1. The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.

2. Action by the Union shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:

- improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples,
- conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance,
- non-commercial cultural exchanges,
- artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.

3. The Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.

4. The Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of the Treaties, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.

5. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article:

- the European Parliament and the Council acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and after consulting the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States,
- the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

(1958 Article 167)

Annex II. European Council and Council of the European Union

The European Council¹⁴ is composed of the heads of state or government of the 27 EU member states, the European Council President and the President of the EC. Defines the general political direction and priorities of the EU by adopting conclusions. However, it does not negotiate or adopt EU laws. The Council was born as an informal discussion forum and took a more formal status under the Treaty of Maastricht. The Lisbon Treaty made the European Council one of the seven EU institutions.

The Council (of the European Union) is one of the two EU decision-makers with the EP. As such, it negotiates and adopts legislative acts. Besides this legislative role, it is responsible for coordinating member states' policies in specific matters, such as culture. Also, the Council defines EU foreign policy on the basis of guidelines set by the European Council. It is responsible for ensuring the unity and consistency of EU's external action with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The Council is a single entity although it meets in 10 different *configurations* per subject. The two more relevant for this work are:

- The Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council: composed of the appropriate ministers from member states. Its meetings are also attended by a representative from the EC, usually the EC Commissioner in charge of similar matters.
- The Foreign Affairs Council: composed of the foreign ministers. Depending on the agenda it may involve defence, development or trade ministers. It is responsible for EU's external action. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy usually chairs it although when discussing trade matters this is done by the rotating presidency.

14 This is the more mediatic institution of the two, the one with more presence in the press and the better known of the two by the general public.

Annex III. Policy briefing

This policy briefing is produced for the dissemination of this work and for my own instruction on this particular tool.

Cultural Diplomacy in the European Union. State and relationship with the EU strategic autonomy¹⁵

Cultural diplomacy is especially relevant for the EU, even more in the current geopolitical state of affairs. Europe has a very influential and important cultural and symbolic capital. Unfortunately, a certain misunderstood humility and competition between and with MSs does not allow the EU to develop its full cultural potential, neither from a political-diplomatic point of view, nor from the industrial one of the creative and cultural industries. For the EU to benefit from this potential certain actions must be pursued.

Recommendations

- (R1) Adopt a definition for culture.
- (R2) Adopt a definition for international cultural relations (or cultural diplomacy).
- (R3) Adopt a clear policy/position on cultural diplomacy (or international cultural relations).
- (R4) Trust building between the Council and EEAS.
- (R5) Develop a funding instrument for cultural diplomacy.
- (R6) Consider cultural diplomacy a policy of the EU in itself.
- (R7) Continue the exchanges.
- (R8) Assume EU's own interest in cultural diplomacy.
- (R9) Develop a narrative on/against identity politics and neocolonialism.
- (R10) Recognise and incorporate the link between cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy.

Introduction

This document presents a critical analysis of the cultural diplomacy of the European Union (EU) and its relationship with the theses of *strategic autonomy*. Its main aim is to provide new ideas to the ongoing conversation about Europe's position in the world.

The scope of this research is EU Institutions and their policies from 2011 until the present. I have chosen 2011 as the starting date as it corresponds to the adoption by the EP of a very important *resolution on the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions*. The research has been performed using both a qualitative and quantitative methodology. The main technique used has been document analysis.

¹⁵ The information and views set out in this work are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.

Context

Cultural diplomacy can be defined as *'the deployment of a state's culture in support of its foreign policy goals or diplomacy.'* (Mark 2009:7) As for everything cultural, there are other definitions that bring light to other also important aspects of cultural diplomacy. E.g.,

'cultural diplomacy involves the systematic intervention of governments in the arts, sciences, and other cultural expressions as the basis of an official categorization of national identity' (Zamorano 2016:169)

or

'Cultural diplomacy designates an "essentially interest-driven governmental practice" (Ang et al. 2015:365) and it is characterised by the agency of state actors, which try to foster their strategic interests by projecting well-defined representations by means of rhetoric and strategic communications.' (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021:9)

When reflecting on cultural diplomacy, we must consider two tension lines: realism vs constructivism and the importance of non-governmental actors in international relations.

Summarily the debate on realism and constructivism can be understood as the dichotomy between a conflictual understanding of international relations where the relations between states are a zero-sum game of power (for various and different understanding of power). Constructivism, on the other hand, presents international relations as social, cultural, interactions between people(s) and mostly performed through collaboration and common objectives and ideals. (Barkin 2003).

Regarding the actors of cultural diplomacy, this line of tension is related to the change from *club diplomacy* to *network diplomacy* where diplomatic activities are not the sole sphere of states and/or professional diplomats (Heine 2013). Indeed, the pre-eminence of different actors in international relations, diplomacy and public/cultural diplomacy is going to generate another concept in international relations: *international cultural relations* (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021) as the public/cultural diplomacy performed by non-diplomats. International cultural relations

'take place when governmental actors attempt to foster international cooperation in support of the common good. [...] They use an argumentative approach to dialogue and cooperation, empowering international institutions to work at arm's length from government, building long-term transnational people-to-people relationships based on trust and non-transactional mutuality' (Murray and LaMoniCa 2021:1).

Academia claims that cultural diplomacy is associated with a realist professional approach to cultural matters in foreign policy while international cultural relations are clearly constructivist and performed by non-governmental actors.

Strategic autonomy is a fluid and contested term, too. This may be on purpose so that there is a certain flexibility around strategic autonomy to benefit from in national political narratives and in the negotiations taking place in the EU between member states. On the other hand, this undefinition hinders both the political and the academic discussion producing, e.g., apparent conflicts where in reality there may be none (Analysis and research team (ART) 2021).

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) Josep Borrell defined strategic autonomy as *'the capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible'* (Quoted in Borrell Fontelles 2020). Another definition from academia: *'strategic autonomy is about setting objectives, making decisions and mobilising resources in ways that do not primarily depend on the decisions and assets of others'* (Grevi 2019:3). Both definitions are quite similar in spirit although both have specific nuances on the collaboration with partners in the first, while the second one is more detailed on what strategic autonomy entails (*objectives, decisions, resources...*)

The EU Institutions have discussed these matters for quite some time. Adopting 2011 as starting point, we can identify the following main documents by the EU Institutions which also correspond to the main milestones:

- European Parliament resolution of 12 May 2011 on **the cultural dimensions of the EU's external actions** (European Parliament 2011)
- JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL **Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations** (European Commission 2016)
- Council conclusions **on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations** (Council of the European Union 2017)
- COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS **A New European Agenda for Culture** (European Commission 2018)

- Council conclusions on **an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action (Council of the European Union 2019)**

Analysis

All EU Institutions position themselves on the side of international cultural relations. They claim to favour an approach based on values more than on interest and to foster long-term relationships with like-minded partners. There is no mention to the economic, political or diplomatic interests of the EU.

Regarding the actors involved, the EP barely receives any attention while the EC is the entity that appears more in any of the documents analysed and which receives the more requests and tasks as could be expected from its operational role. On the general discussion on *club diplomacy vs. network diplomacy*, the analysis confirms that current EU's views on cultural diplomacy as those of network diplomacy: there is an important variety and number of actors, the responsibilities of EU's professional diplomats (EEAS) is limited, and entities like EUNIC play a very important role.

There is a recurrent complaint on the *fragmentation* of EU cultural diplomacy actions that the EC acknowledges while defending the current architecture on cultural (diplomacy) funding.

Another important point is that of *exchanges* which allow '*the development of lasting relationships with key individuals over many years or even decades*' (Nye 2013). Both the EP and the EC consider this point, support it and promote it.

The number of EU programmes associated with cultural diplomacy is very important although organised along the various geographic programmes of the EU and without specific information about the cultural diplomacy aspect of them. So, even if this number may be high, there is no reasonable manner to know the exact amount dedicated by the EU. *As it is always the problem with cultural statistics, it is very difficult to find the relevant information as culture is not usually, ever, tagged as such and there is no direct and easy way to get the information.*

The discussion on strategic autonomy includes an obvious paradox. If we take into account the EU motto *United in diversity*, we must consider said diversity as a given. Then, at what level to apply this strategic autonomy? Of course, the theses supported by the EU (EEAS HR/VP) scope the strategic autonomy to the EU; the tensions described between EU and member states hint at another level (a national one) at play here. And still, we cannot forget the EU of the regions and their desire for (strategic) autonomy. If we add to this the UNESCO anthropological understanding of culture as linked to social groups which may not be represented by an administrative entity (country or region) the situation gets even more complicated.

Policy implications

EU cultural diplomacy is void of EU interests. There is no meaningful position on cultural trade, market or industry which hinders both the cultural diplomacy capacity of the EU and their cultural and creative sector.

There is not a single mention to *public diplomacy* even if their objectives permeate all documents analysed. Public diplomacy is about *affecting the thinking of foreign people* or cultural diplomacy in *using state's culture in support of its foreign goals* which is completely aligned with the utilitarian treatment of culture by the EP, the Council or the EC. Recognising the value and opportunity of public diplomacy will add a new tool to our diplomatic toolset.

A more assertive EU will be accused of identity politics and neocolonialism. An open and transparent policy based on EU own legitimate interests could allay any fears or at least provide a counter narrative.

Conclusions

There is no intended relationship between the current EU's policy on cultural diplomacy and EU's strategic autonomy or the theses of strategic autonomy. If anything, the current approach to cultural diplomacy would play against the subjacent ideas of strategic autonomy. This disconnection between cultural diplomacy and the EU's strategic autonomy is a missed opportunity. International relations are to a certain extent a competition of narratives and cultural diplomacy is the tool to compete. EU's position on cultural diplomacy is one on values without any reference to EU's interests.

The EU institutions claim to be pro international cultural relations: EU's approach based on values more than on interest fosters long-term relationships with like-minded partners. If this is a proactive political decision or the result of the power dynamics of the EU institutions combined with a certain disregard of culture in foreign policy is open for discussion. In the documents analysed it is clearly reflected the tensions between the EP and Council and the operational-non-political role of the EC while the EEAS does not seem to have played any major role in defining this particular policy.

The EU understanding and position on strategic autonomy is still very fluid and flexible. The geopolitical situation has a great impact on the political discussion and there is no will at the highest level to concretise any particular proposal. We can consider the definition reminded by HR/VP Josep Borrell, *'the capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible'*, as the most advanced position on this and endorsed by the latest communications from EEAS.

Recommendations (extended)

| Recommendation | Rationale |
|---|--|
| (R1) Adopt a definition for culture | An adopted and consensual definition for culture would guide and support any possible initiative regarding culture: from foreign policy to public funding. The EU institutions could adopt the UNESCO one (anthropological) or devise their own one maybe more in line with the understanding behind the <i>creative and cultural sector/industry</i> . |
| (R2) Adopt a definition for international cultural relations (or cultural diplomacy) | As for the previous point, once having a clear posture (as on international cultural relations vs cultural diplomacy), there are many advantages in claiming so and sharing our own understanding. Again, this has an impact on all actions and would guide better the more practical work of the EU institutions. |
| (R3) Adopt a clear policy/position on cultural diplomacy (or international cultural relations) | Providing a clear policy or position on EU's cultural diplomacy would make clear where the EU stands on this matter for all stakeholders involved: third countries and regions, member states and member states own stakeholders like citizens or creative businesses, and also the people in charge of its implementation. None of the documents analysed are complete enough including all elements that a foreign policy needs. |
| (R4) Trust building between the Council and EEAS | Fostering the collaboration between EEAS and member states own cultural diplomacy efforts would enlarge the reach of EU's cultural diplomacy to the benefit of both the EU as an entity and member states. The diplomatic expertise and capacity of EEAS should be put to better use when doing cultural diplomacy. Tensions between EU institutions and the abuse of the principle of subsidiarity are hindering the full reach of EU's cultural diplomacy. |
| (R5) Develop a funding instrument for cultural diplomacy | Even a small one would provide clarity and a clear link between policy and financial commitment. It would also provide transparency and communication opportunities for the EU on its support to international culture. |
| (R6) Consider cultural diplomacy a policy of the EU in itself | <i>(Even if a minor one.)</i> It is fundamental to have a quantitative view on the cultural diplomacy activities done in the EU. The means should be developed to extract information from public statistics both on the action of the EU institutions and of the other actors involved. Without solving the problem of |

international cultural statistics, at least *tagging* could be used to extract this particular component from the information available. The previous recommendation and this one would also allay the claims of fragmentation providing a consolidated global picture of EU actions in this field.

(R7) Continue the exchanges

The current exchange programmes run by the EU are probably its best ambassadors in the world. They must continue and probably grow with regards to third countries. They could be improved by having a clear cultural diplomacy aspect even if a secondary one. Also, it is important to develop long-lasting relationships with their beneficiaries allowing some, many, of them to benefit from a whole series of exchanges to accompany specific important persons their whole life and use their multiplying effect on their own societies.

(R8) Assume EU's own interest in cultural diplomacy

Developing a cultural diplomacy policy for the EU which contemplates EU's own interest is fair and accepted by our counterparts. It also shows real commitment by the EU and a wish for transparency of EU's intentions. International relations are a zero-sum game in certain aspects (consider democracy vs autocratic regimes) and it is both realist and realistic to deal with those. Also, an interest-based discussion will be considered less sensible by some parties unwilling or unable to engage with the EU on a purely value-based relation. Prejudices on an EU's interest based foreign policy or concepts like public or cultural diplomacy limit our capacity for action.

(R9) Develop a narrative on/against identity politics and neocolonialism

Assuming international relations as a bourdieuan field; a more assertive EU should develop a narrative on its cultural diplomacy that counters accusations of identity politics and neocolonialism. An open and transparent policy based on EU own legitimate interests is a perfect antidote to this. The current fixation on values in EU's cultural diplomacy may suggest a superiority view from the EU on other cultures. Any reaffirmation of EU's culture with regards to (or even against) other cultures is easily countered by claims of neocolonialism.

(R10) Recognise and incorporate the link between cultural diplomacy and strategic autonomy

Cultural diplomacy is a strategic asset for strategic autonomy. One of the basic tenets of strategic autonomy is to work alone only if needed and in collaboration as often as possible. Cultural diplomacy is a great enabler for this last option fostering understanding, dialogue and personal relations that transcend conjunctural situations and conflicts.

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Annex IV. Cultural statistics

As preparation for this work, I have investigated the use of public statistics to complement my mainly qualitative techniques with a quantitative angle. In this annex I resume the main elements of that investigation.

I started from the hypothesis that information on commercial exchanges of cultural goods and services may be a good proxy to measure the cultural influence of a given country or region. More exactly, measuring EU cultural footprint through official data on cultural trade exchanges between the EU and other large regions/countries such as the US, China or Japan.

UNESCO has the *UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) n.d.)* where there is a specific section for *Culture* with content on *international trade in cultural goods and services*. A brief exploration of the available reports as well as of the databases confronts us with the great problem of public statistics and culture: public statistics are not a direct solution to cultural statistics. Cultural statistics are based on the reuse of indicators and measures from other frameworks, i.e., international trade. In 2009, UNESCO developed its own framework for cultural statistics: the UNESCO Cultural Statistics Framework 2009 (Pessoa and Deloumeaux 2009).

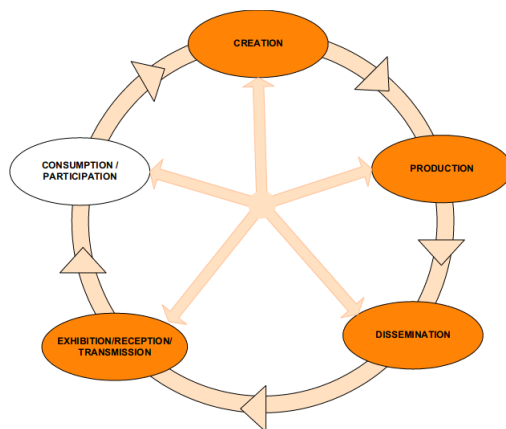


Figure 24: UNESCO's culture cycle

This framework provides a conceptual framework for cultural phenomena, for example: the life cycle of a cultural good/product or service. UNESCO's search, collection and interpretation of statistics is based on this framework.

The analysis of Eurostat¹⁶ gives with similar results. Eurostat also has its own framework for interpreting statistics from other domains in the cultural sphere: Guide to Eurostat culture statistics: 2018 edition (European Commission. Statistical Office of the European Union 2018). This

framework is based on the UNESCO one although structured differently and the areas covered do not include natural heritage, equipment and support material, sport or tourism.

¹⁶ Eurostat is the statistical office of the EU.

The Eurostat framework also includes its own culture life cycle organized around six sequential functions where trade is found within Dissemination (2018:31).



Figure 25: Eurostat's culture lifecycle

UNESCO expresses very well this problem in the diagram below (Deloumeaux and Pessoa 2016:14). The UNESCO model shares certain

elements with that of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) or from The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. For example, WIPO has adopted a fundamentally economic definition based on copyright. UNESCO also includes the natural heritage, coherence obliges, to respect the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972.



Figure 26: Different conceptual frameworks for cultural statistics

Statistics on international cultural trade clearly distinguish between goods and services. In both cases, these statistics offer a picture of the contribution of cultural goods and services to international trade and add one more aspect of the impact of culture on the economy.

The statistics on cultural goods are based on the more general ones on the import and export of goods of all kinds. These goods are classified through various *taxonomies*, the most important in our case is the Combined Nomenclature which is a classification of goods designed to meet the tariff needs of the EU and serve as a basis for the international trade statistics of the EU.

The concept of *artistic creation* is used to be able to choose, within this nomenclature, which are cultural goods. Artistic creation both from the point of view of the production process and from the standpoint of the capacity of these products to transmit '*symbolic, artistic or spiritual expressions and values*'. (European Commission. Statistical Office of the European Union 2018:34) The result is the list of products to monitor. From this basis, some other products have been added: those that allow artistic expression or access to cultural content, e.g., musical instruments or video game consoles. The following figure shows the result (European Commission. Statistical Office of the European Union 2018:35):

| CULTURAL DOMAIN | CULTURAL GOODS |
|----------------------------|--|
| Heritage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antiques, collections and collectors' pieces, postage or revenue stamps |
| Books and press | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Newspapers, journals and periodicals • Maps and hydrographical and similar charts |
| Visual arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works of art (paintings, engravings, sculpture, designs etc.) • Photographic plates and films developed |
| Art craft | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Craft (hand made fabrics and ornamental articles) • Jewellery (of precious metals and stones) |
| Performing arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musical instruments |
| Audiovisual and multimedia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio-visual and interactive media (films, videos, video games and consoles) • Recorded media with music (gramophone records, magnetic tapes and CDs) |
| Architecture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Architecture plans and drawings |

Figure 27: Eurostat cultural goods

International trade in cultural services involves the performance of a cultural service where the supplier and client reside in different countries. The data on international trade in cultural services come from the statistics of the more general international trade in services, which are included in the more general concept of the balance of payments of a given country. The balance of payments systematically summarizes all economic transactions between residents and non-residents of a country or economic area during a given period.

Grosso modo, cultural services include: information services, architectural services, audio-visual and related services, licenses to reproduce or distribute audiovisual and related products, and heritage and recreation services. These cultural services have been identified considering the applicable frameworks both from the point of view of international trade in services, and from the point of view of culture, where we meet again with the Framework for Cultural Statistics of UNESCO 2009.

From the previous, we conclude that public statistics do not directly reflect trade in cultural goods or services. They do it indirectly, relying on other frameworks (balance of payments or customs) whose main objective is not to support cultural policies.

Beyond the methodological problems, the symbolic *value* of some of the elements that appear in these statistics could be challenged: the fact that the most internationally traded category of cultural asset is jewellery casts doubts on the value of these data with regards to the cultural influence of the EU in the world.

