



**2022/2047(INI)**

13.10.2022

# **OPINION**

of the Committee on Foreign Affairs

for the Committee on Culture and Education

on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU  
strategy for international cultural relations  
(2022/2047(INI))

Rapporteur for opinion: Nacho Sánchez Amor

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## SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Foreign Affairs calls on the Committee on Culture and Education, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions into its motion for a resolution:

- having regard to the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of 23 May 2018 on the need to bring cultural heritage to the fore across policies in the EU<sup>1</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Conclusions of 21 December 2018 on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022<sup>2</sup>,
- having regard to Article 8(2) of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court,
- having regard to the Nicosia Convention on Criminal Offences relating to Cultural Property,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 8 June 2016 entitled ‘Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations’ (JOIN(2016)0029),
- having regard to Article 167(3) and (4) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU),
- having regard to the document entitled ‘Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy’ presented by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 28 June 2016,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 22 January 2018 on the integrated approach to external conflicts and crises,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 7 June 2019 on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action<sup>3</sup>,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 21 June 2021 on an EU approach to cultural heritage in conflicts and crises,
- having regard to its resolution of 5 July 2017 on Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations<sup>4</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 196, 8.6.2018, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 460, 21.12.2018, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> OJ C 192, 7.6.2019, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup> OJ C 334, 19.9.2018, p. 112.

- having regard to its resolutions of 30 April 2015 on the destruction of cultural sites perpetrated by ISIS/Da’esh<sup>5</sup> and of 10 March 2022 on the destruction of cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>6</sup>,
  - having regard to the joint guidelines of the European External Action Service and EU National Institutes for Culture published in January 2021,
  - having regard to the preparatory action on culture in EU external relations and its recommendations,
  - having regard to the EU action plan against trafficking in cultural goods,
  - having regard to Resolution CM/Res(2010)53 adopted by the Council of Europe establishing an Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) to enable closer co-operation on Cultural Routes,
- A. whereas culture has major potential to promote the EU’s humanist values, solidify its identity and contribute to the fulfilment of its objectives worldwide;
  - B. whereas culture is a key factor in addressing major global challenges and, if conceived as a bottom-up free flow of ideas and creations, is also a fundamental tool for peace and conflict prevention and a resource for stability and regeneration in any fragile context;
  - C. whereas culture is one of the most valuable drivers of social cohesion, intercultural encounters and sustainable social, economic and human development, and can foster mutual understanding between peoples and nations worldwide;
  - D. whereas culture is deeply rooted in local realities and key determinants of societal and personal bonds in many of the EU’s partner countries and regions, including those in Africa, Latin America, Asia and the EU’s Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood; whereas developing a profound understanding of these realities and taking them fully into account could contribute to enhancing the comprehensiveness and fairness of the EU’s partnerships, and to increasing the overall effectiveness of the EU’s external action;
  - E. whereas cultural diversity plays an important role in the promotion of human rights, conflict prevention, reconciliation and counter-extremism; whereas EU efforts towards fostering international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy should strive to promote values such as solidarity and fraternity, involving actors at all levels of public institutions and civil society;
  - F. whereas third countries’ diasporas in the EU and European diasporas in third countries can be important actors in strengthening cultural relations between the EU and other countries;
  - G. whereas the EU created a special system known as the ‘cultural exception’ in 1993 in order to protect cultural goods and services from free trade rules, as culture should not

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<sup>5</sup> OJ C 346, 21.9.2016, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> OJ C 347, 9.9.2022, p. 198.

- be seen as a commercial commodity and should not be subject to market needs;
- H. whereas clearly targeted resources for international cultural relations would greatly enhance their ability to fully develop;
- I. whereas the EU's intercultural relations are a valuable component of the diplomatic toolbox;
- J. whereas the EU needs to engage in international cultural relations using its own instruments to shape the cultural face of the EU worldwide and complement the work of Member States' cultural institutes abroad, and ensure that sufficient resources and funds are available to achieve this end;
- K. whereas Article 167(3) TFEU states that 'the Union and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe';
- L. whereas illiberal and authoritarian regimes attempt to redefine international rules and values by challenging their universality and claiming them to be a weapon of cultural hegemony deployed by the EU; whereas such regimes attempt to typify the EU as a neo-colonial actor in their global discourse; whereas these regimes' actions have a far-reaching impact worldwide and seek to redefine international rules and multilateralism; whereas such regimes, under the pretence of cultural cooperation, are pursuing influence operations to shape or disorient European public debate, undermine European democratic values and depict themselves in a positive light; whereas travelling to authoritarian countries to develop cultural projects can expose cultural stakeholders to malign influences; whereas in order to combat such regimes' claims it is necessary for the EU to further invest in strategic communication and visibility campaigns to promote shared values and cultural heritage;
- M. whereas, in the context of conflicts and wars worldwide, attacks on cultural heritage have taken place; whereas this destruction of cultural heritage makes communities more vulnerable and restricts the exercise of their right to freedom of belief, thought and expression; whereas deliberate attacks on cultural heritage in the course of armed conflict are considered war crimes under international law;
1. Acknowledges the efforts of the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to implement the joint communication 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations', demonstrating the EU's added value and promoting cultural cooperation and relations with partner countries, as well as its efforts to develop a closer model of cooperation with Member States, the EU national institutes for culture (EUNIC), and private and public operators from the EU and its partner countries;
  2. Encourages the Commission and the EEAS to consider the added value of civil society organisations' involvement in efforts to foster the EU's international cultural relations, and to stimulate an effective engagement of these actors in this regard;
  3. Underlines the need to strengthen synergies and complementarities between the actions undertaken by the EU and its Member States in third countries, including through their diplomatic and consular representations and the EUNIC network;

4. Urges the Member States, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to redouble their efforts to achieve common EU positions in multilateral forums and networks and, where appropriate, to speak with one voice on issues that have an impact on international cultural relations;
5. Calls on the Council, the EEAS and the Commission to mainstream culture as a strategic pillar through all of the EU's external action policy areas; supports the inclusion of culture in all existing and future bilateral and multilateral agreements, with due respect for the commitments made under the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity; encourages Member States to include international cultural relations in their regular foreign policy reporting;
6. Highlights that European culture could be best represented and identified by means of a common and consolidated embodiment of the EU worldwide, which goes beyond the image of different particular EU Member States' cultures or an aggregate of those cultures;
7. Welcomes the creation of focal points in EU delegations, the development of the Cultural Relations Platform and the joint implementation of programmes allowing cultural actors and public stakeholders to develop innovative ideas and concrete projects, finance cultural relations and facilitate networks, as well as to share expertise and best practices;
8. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission to strengthen cooperation between the EU and third countries to protect cultural heritage and fight illicit trafficking, looting and destruction of cultural property; urges the EEAS and the Commission to support Member States' actions to repatriate stolen or looted cultural artefacts around the globe to their countries of origin or former owners in a way that takes an evidenced-based approach based on mutual understanding; calls on third countries to fully respect the historical and cultural character of cultural monuments and symbols, especially those classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites;
9. Urges the Council, the Commission and the EEAS to enhance the protection of cultural heritage in conflict zones, such as by providing emergency support for its preservation and considering the introduction of targeted sanctions against the individuals and entities responsible for destroying or vandalising, trafficking, or counterfeiting cultural heritage as an important step in establishing deterrence and ensuring accountability for such acts; calls for the inclusion of the protection of cultural heritage within the EU's common security and defence policy (CSDP) missions and operations by providing assistance and training to local partners in addressing the security challenges affecting cultural heritage;
10. Stresses the importance of integrating the protection of cultural heritage into the various phases of conflicts; calls for the more systematic involvement of cultural actors in joint conflict analyses for countries that are at risk of, or are facing, conflict or instability; calls for greater focus in protecting and preserving cultural heritage in all multilateral forums, including after conflicts and crises, as it can help to protect identity, develop mutual understanding and lay the foundations for a sustainable recovery, reconciliation and lasting peace in post-conflict environments;

11. Emphasises the potential of EU international cultural relations to counter disinformation in third countries and foreign interference towards the EU, and the hostile narratives against the EU in illiberal and authoritarian regimes; calls on the EEAS to analyse the prevalence and influence of malicious state actors in European international cultural relations in which the EU is involved;
12. Recalls, for example, China's attempts to pressure and censor the museum of Nantes in relation to an exhibition on Genghis Kahn initially planned for 2020 or the role played by Confucius Institutes in enabling China to exercise strict control over all topics related to China in the field of research and teaching, thus constituting a violation of the constitutional protection of academic freedom and autonomy;
13. Condemns the deliberate destruction of cultural sites in Ukraine as a result of the unprovoked and illegal Russian war of aggression; commends the efforts of volunteers, museum curators and cultural workers in Ukraine, as well as in the EU Member States, to rescue and protect artworks and artefacts belonging to Ukraine; calls for the EU and its Member States to support these efforts to preserve and reconstruct destroyed or damaged cultural sites, and to work in cooperation with international institutions to pressure Russia to return artefacts stolen from Ukraine;
14. Condemns Azerbaijan's continued policy of erasing and denying the existence of the Armenian cultural heritage in and around Nagorno-Karabakh, in violation of international law and the decision of the International Court of Justice of 7 December 2021; condemns further the renewed aggression of Azerbaijan against Armenia, which further endangers Armenian cultural heritage; calls for the EU to actively pressure Azerbaijan to end hostilities and to participate in efforts to protect at-risk cultural heritage in Nagorno-Karabakh, notably by deploying mechanisms to facilitate UNESCO's fact-finding mission;
15. Calls on the Turkish authorities to fully respect the historical and cultural character of cultural and religious monuments and symbols, especially those classified as UNESCO World Heritage Sites; calls on Türkiye to fully respect its international obligation to protect monuments of Alevi, Christian, Armenian, Pontian and Jewish origin;
16. Stresses the need for the EU to be fully present in cultural events worldwide, especially those that are global, such as the World Expo; calls for the EU to be allowed the possibility of hosting a World Expo, which could be held in different EU Member States;
17. Underlines the need to strengthen cooperation on international cultural relations between the Commission and the EEAS with EUNIC, as well as with like-minded partners and international organisations such as UNESCO, such as via the allocation of additional financial resources; stresses the need for the EU to focus particularly on international cultural relations with Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the Western Balkans and the EU's Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, without disregarding other partners;
18. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission to further strengthen the role of EU delegations in EU international cultural relations and its focal points with the objective of better coordinating the EU's cultural outreach and cooperation in partner countries, including

by the allocation of the necessary resources, by enhancing the specific skills of the focal points needed to perform their duties at the highest level and by developing a tailor-made list of international cultural relations activities and programmes for EU delegations to implement with the appropriate resources;

19. Calls for the development of strategies based on international cultural relations for EU delegations and other EU actors, including EUNIC, in their relations with third countries and international organisations such as UNESCO, the Council of Europe, Interpol, the World Customs Organization and the International Council of Museums; calls for these strategies to embrace European cultural diversity, including regional languages, and encompass actions to promote respect for minorities and cultural diversity worldwide;
20. Calls for the EU , through the instruments in its educational programmes in partner countries, to invest in, and to cooperate with, youth organisations and educational institutions on raising awareness and developing the necessary skills and knowledge to preserve cultural heritage;
21. Calls for the allocation of the necessary budgetary and personnel resources to the EU's international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy in order to strengthen the EU's action in this regard, calls for an increase in -cultural cooperation with local actors, including public institutions, civil society organisations and academia in third countries;
22. Calls on the EEAS and the Commission to consider the feasibility of introducing a dedicated chapter for international cultural relations in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe as part of the mid-term evaluation of the instrument, including as regards the recovery, protection, restoration and promotion of European cultural heritage and the continuation of cultural exchange programmes between the EU and third countries in conflict situations;
23. Calls on the Commission to further strengthen the international dimension of EU programmes (Erasmus, Horizon, specific delegation programmes, exchange programmes and the global leadership programme), to provide adequate financial resources, and to promote EU artists' residencies; calls for the deepening of cooperation in cultural programmes with like-minded partners, such as the Council of Europe and its Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes, with the aim of consolidating cultural relations with third countries and promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; recalls, in this regard, the crucial role that EU programmes in the fields of culture have as a key part of tackling disinformation and foreign interference in third countries;
24. Calls for an update to the 2016 joint communication entitled 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations' with a view to establishing a coherent permanent structural and institutional EU dimension and developing and implementing an overarching long-term strategy to be integrated permanently and horizontally within the EU's external action toolbox;
25. Calls for the development of the EU's own autonomous toolbox for its international cultural relations and cultural diplomacy, drawing on the experience and partnerships of EUNIC and Member States' cultural institutes abroad, with cultural diplomacy and



international cultural relations activities centring on events organised in a framework of cultural cooperation and co-creation, actively involving civil society and the cultural sectors of third countries' societies;

26. Stresses that this toolbox could help to promote Europe's culture and way of life, and to provide EU assistance on technical and material capacity-building, as well as financial support, for the cultural, creative and innovative sectors of third countries' civil societies; underlines that this toolbox should include the protection of cultural heritage in EU external action, including the protection of minorities' cultural heritage, the promotion of intercultural dialogue and the sustainable territorial development of lesser-known cultural tourist destinations by creating a '100 EU Tourist Sites' initiative with 100 places of interest from all Member States, and that the toolbox should foster the mobility of artists and cultural professionals between the EU and third countries.

## INFORMATION ON ADOPTION IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

<b>Date adopted</b>	13.10.2022
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+: 56 -: 3 0: 2
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Maria Arena, Petras Auštrevičius, Traian Băsescu, Fabio Massimo Castaldo, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Katalin Cseh, Anna Fotyga, Michael Gahler, Bernard Guetta, Sandra Kalniete, Dietmar Köster, Andrius Kubilius, Miriam Lexmann, Leopoldo López Gil, Jaak Madison, Claudiu Manda, Lukas Mandl, Thierry Mariani, Pedro Marques, Marisa Matias, Sven Mikser, Matjaž Nemec, Kostas Papadakis, Tonino Picula, Manu Pineda, Giuliano Pisapia, Thijs Reuten, Nacho Sánchez Amor, Isabel Santos, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Mounir Satouri, Dominik Tarczyński, Dragoș Tudorache, Hilde Vautmans, Harald Vilimsky, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel, Witold Jan Waszczykowski, Charlie Weimers, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Željana Zovko
<b>Substitutes present for the final vote</b>	Markéta Gregorová, Christophe Grudler, Evin Incir, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Arba Kokalari, Andrey Kovatchev, Georgios Kyrtos, Sergey Lagodinsky, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Juozas Olekas, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Mick Wallace
<b>Substitutes under Rule 209(7) present for the final vote</b>	Asim Ademov, Bas Eickhout, Andrzej Halicki, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Piernicola Pedicini, Ramona Strugariu, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez

## FINAL VOTE BY ROLL CALL IN COMMITTEE ASKED FOR OPINION

56	+
ECR	Anna Fotyga, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Dominik Tarczyński, Witold Jan Waszczykowski
NI	Fabio Massimo Castaldo
PPE	Asim Ademov, Alexander Alexandrov Yordanov, Traian Băsescu, Michael Gahler, Andrzej Halicki, Sandra Kalniete, Manolis Kefalogiannis, Arba Kokalari, Andrey Kovatchev, Andrius Kubilius, Miriam Lexmann, Leopoldo López Gil, Lukas Mandl, Tom Vandenkendelaere, Isabel Wiseler-Lima, Juan Ignacio Zoido Álvarez, Željana Zovko
RENEW	Petras Auštrevičius, Katalin Cseh, Christophe Grudler, Bernard Guetta, Georgios Kyrtos, Ramona Strugariu, Dragoș Tudorache, Hilde Vautmans
S&D	Maria Arena, Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, Evin Incir, Dietmar Köster, Pierfrancesco Majorino, Claudiu Manda, Pedro Marques, Sven Mikser, Javier Moreno Sánchez, Matjaž Nemec, Juozas Olekas, Tonino Picula, Giuliano Pisapia, Thijs Reuten, Isabel Santos, Nacho Sánchez Amor
THE LEFT	Marisa Matias, Manu Pineda, Miguel Urbán Crespo, Mick Wallace
VERTS/ALE	Bas Eickhout, Markéta Gregorová, Sergey Lagodinsky, Piernicola Pedicini, Mounir Satouri, Viola von Cramon-Taubadel

3	-
NI	Kostas Papadakis
ECR	Charlie Weimers
ID	Thierry Mariani

2	0
ID	Jaak Madison, Harald Vilimsky

Key to symbols:

+ : in favour

- : against

0 : abstention