

European Union

The diversity of cultural expressions lies at the heart of the European project. The European Union has developed a vision for the role of culture in its policies which is premised on the principle 'unity in diversity'. This vision is driven by the will to create a vibrant space of cooperation and exchange, stimulating the creation and circulation of more and diverse cultural expressions, allowing for broader and better access to cultural expressions and putting in place the appropriate conditions in which creativity and diversity may thrive.

The implementation of the Convention by the EU is not a specific legislative activity but rather the pursuit of policy developments both as regards internal and external policies. This report presents measures running the gamut of EU policies impacting on the diversity of cultural expressions in the context of the Convention. It covers measures specifically designed for the cultural and audiovisual sectors, as well as measures influencing the environment in which these sectors operate such as information society, internal market including intellectual property rights, industrial and innovation policy, competition including state aid, taxation as relating to cultural expressions, cohesion policy, common commercial policy, development cooperation and economic, financial and technical cooperation with third countries. Diverse as they may be, the presented measures reflect a shared policy objective: to ensure an enabling regulatory and support environment for artists, cultural enterprises and cultural institutions in the EU. In this environment, artists may create and disseminate their work while enjoying high protection for their works and a simplified legal environment to operate across borders; cultural enterprises find support to address the challenges posed by globalization and the digital shift and, more recently, the financial crisis; and cultural institutions can reaffirm their role as harbingers of creativity and custodians of our cultural heritage. Moreover, culture is a standard feature of EU international cooperation instruments and in its bilateral agreements with third countries. Cultural cooperation with third countries is formulated through different means and objectives. Cooperation and policy dialogue may be based on reciprocity, mutual learning and sharing of best practice, as may be the case of industrialized or emerging partners. Cooperation with developing partners seeks, on one hand, to enhance the diversity of cultural expressions and facilitate access and, on the other, to support the development of local cultural policies and structural capacities conducive to socio-economic development. In addition, a new instrument the "Protocol on Cultural Cooperation" has been developed to promote the principles of the Convention and its implementation in the context of bilateral trade negotiations. Cooperation and policy dialogue with partners across the board is anchored on the Convention, with the objective of promoting its ratification and implementation in different parts of the world.

The EU has been actively supporting the implementation and ratification of the Convention. It has also helped to lay conditions for providing technical assistance to developing countries, for instance, by mobilizing EU funds to set up an expert facility on cultural governance run by UNESCO.

The principles of the Convention lie in the background of the EU dialogue with civil society. Moreover, the civil society has actively contributed to the preparation of this report.

The implementation of the Convention is in its early stages. Sustained focus and political support are required to address the challenges lying ahead and ensure that the positive momentum following the adoption of the Convention will be sustained and further translated into concrete results on the ground.