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European cultural diplomacy and its influence on sustainable development.
A case study on Libya

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INTRODUCTION

"Culture is who we are, and what shapes our identity. Placing culture at the heart of development policies is the only way to ensure a human-centred, inclusive and equitable development**."**

Jyoti Hosagrahar, Deputy Director for the World Heritage Centre at UNESCO.

This research will investigate European cultural diplomacy, its actors, tools, weaknesses, and future perspectives. It will pay particular attention to how cultural diplomacy affects developing nations' ability to develop sustainably, with a specific case study on Libya.

The European Union has displayed a range of domestic successes ensuring more than 70 years of peace within its borders and economic prosperity for a region that today counts about 500 million people and 27 member states. The EU has also invested for the protection and enhancement of its culture which is one the most appreciated assets domestically, ranging from history, art, music, education. However, what about its role in the EU external action? The EU has grown as a global actor and has implemented a series of measures to increase its role as a diplomatic force. Recently, the promotion of European culture has become one of the protagonists of the growth of the EU internationally. The EU has also invested resources to champion sustainable development both at the domestic and international level. Given the relevance of both fields in the EU agenda, it does not come as a surprise that culture and sustainable development have intertwined, and the former has become vehicle of the second.

Recently, culture was recognised as an important asset for the promotion of sustainable development. However, despite its recognition, the potential of culture as a vehicle for sustainable development has long been underestimated. Therefore, to boost its relevance and monitor the progress made in the field of culture, as part of the 2030 United Nations Agenda and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, culture was included in SDG 11 Target 4 'Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage'[1]. In fact, the use of cultural as a diplomatic force can provide a range of tools necessary to promote and support sustainable development, particularly in developing countries. Despite the recent history of cultural diplomacy, it has already showcased its positive influence on sustainable development, which will be analysed in this thesis.

Indeed, cultural diplomacy aims at strengthening the geopolitical position of the EU but also aims at supporting economic and social development in the partner countries. This thesis will therefore be

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[1] Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 11 https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11#targets_and_indicators

divided in four chapters. The first chapter will analyse the history, relevant actors and initiatives of European cultural diplomacy, and its influence on sustainable development. Since it targets wider regions such as the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region and Latin America, the second chapter will focus on will continue by analysing the initiatives and policies enacted at the EU in the different regions. However, for a more detailed perspective, the third chapter will analyse the case of Libya. It has a long-standing social and economic partnership with the EU, and it represents an interesting case given its young population and its effort in investing in sustainable development. Moreover, it will focus on the fruitful partnerships the EU has created in Libya with the UN and its member states such as Italy. Finally, the fourth and final chapter will proceed by analysing the weaknesses identified in the development of cultural diplomacy and will outline future perspectives of its evolution.

Eventually, the research question is 'How can European Union Cultural diplomacy influence the sustainable development of developing countries?'. In order to investigate it, a qualitative deductive methodology drawing from both primary and secondary sources will be used. The research will make use of a wide range of secondary resources such as EU publications, scholarly publications, and articles. The European Commission, in collaboration with the European Parliament and the EU Council, has released a number of Joint Communications and papers to establish and arrange the structure and policies of cultural diplomacy. These have been made possible by the contributions provided by the UNESCO Conventions and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. These projects have been the subject of literature that has examined the institutional frameworks and procedures that the EU uses to carry out its cultural diplomacy. Furthermore, the research will also draw from the literature on the role that EUNIC's cultural institutions play in advancing soft power and cross-cultural exchange. A great deal of research has also been done on certain cultural exchange programs and initiatives that the EU has launched to foster communication and understanding, with a particular focus on Libya. Finally, primary research was also conducted, mostly carrying out interviews with individuals who have gained experience in the field of cultural diplomacy at the EU and national level. These include projects managers from UNIMED and the cultural attaché of the Italian Embassy in Tripoli.

CHAPTER 1
HISTORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK
OF THE EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

1. The role of diplomacy in the EU

Diplomacy is defined as 'the established method of influencing the decisions and behaviour of foreign governments and peoples through dialogue, negotiation, and other measures short of war or violence'[2]. The European state structure that emerged after the Renaissance gave rise to modern diplomatic practices. Diplomacy in the past referred to the management of formal, mostly bilateral, ties between sovereign states. Nonetheless, by the 20th century, the world had adopted the diplomatic practices that Europe had pioneered, and the scope of diplomacy had grown to include parliamentary diplomacy, summit meetings and other international conferences, the international operations of supranational and subnational entities, unofficial diplomacy by nongovernmental organizations, and the work of international civil servants[3]. The role of diplomacy is related to the strengthening of the standing of the state, country, or organization it represents in the eyes of other countries[4].

The EU has developed its diplomatic structure within the Foreign and Security Policy. The objectives are fostering international cooperation, strengthening international security, preserving peace and consolidating democracy, rule of law and respect of human rights. The principles and interests of the EU are promoted and safeguarded via a global network of more than 140 European Commission delegations and offices. In situations when individual state actors might not be able to mediate, the EU's post-national exterior governance, as opposed to the presumably political nature of its individual member states, appears to be disinterested[5].

The European Union can act in any part of the world because of its extensive global reach and its 50 year long history of ground presence through Commission delegations[6]. Its willingness to provide substantial short-term crisis action as well as broad, long-term technical support is obviously alluring to its less fortunate allies. Additionally, the growing congruence of its managerial proficiency with the military might of its constituent nations in support of humanitarian emergencies and conflict resolution. Interventions entail governance packages that include direct contributions to the

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[2] Britannica, Definition of diplomacy, Diplomacy | Definition, Meaning, Types, & Examples | Britannica
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Spence, D. (2008), Taking Stock: 50 Years of European Diplomacy, The Hague Journal of Diplomacy 4 235-259
[6] Ibid.

governance of the security sector through lobbying and operational support for military or law enforcement activities, in addition to help targeted at efficient governance in general[7].

2. Cultural diplomacy

Within the framework of European diplomacy, European cultural diplomacy emerged. Its definition is rather uncertain. A frequently referenced definition reveals some of this ambiguity. "The concept of cultural diplomacy refers to the exchange of ideas, information, art, and other aspects of culture among nations and their peoples in order to foster mutual understanding. But "cultural diplomacy" can also be more of a one-way street than a two-way exchange, as when one nation concentrates its efforts on promoting the national language, explaining its policies and point of view, or "telling its story" to the rest of the world"[8]. Moreover, cultural diplomacy is first and foremost about bridging differences and facilitating mutual understanding. It is able to tell another story about a particular country that may be a story that differs from what official policy would imply[9].

Several studies agree that cultural diplomacy is a sector of the broader public diplomacy[10]. The other components are listening, advocacy, exchange, international broadcasting. Cultural diplomacy is an actor's attempt to control the global environment by promoting its cultural assets and accomplishments abroad and/or assisting in the transfer of cultures across borders. This objective is supported by the activities of institutions such as the Italian Cultural Institute and the British Council[11]. Indeed, the definition of cultural diplomacy is almost as varied as the number of countries that claim to use it[12]. Indeed, these definitions leave the door open to an interpretation of the concept of cultural diplomacy based on the goals of the polity. The difficulty of the definition is also given by the different meanings given to the cultural elements of the policies. Indeed, it can range from language to art to exchange programmes[13].

It seems that there are two aspects that complicate the process of coming up with a universal definition of cultural diplomacy. First of all, although it was only used in relation to exchange and educational

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Cummings, M., (2009) Cultural diplomacy and the United States government: a survey, Cultural Diplomacy Research Series

[9] Goff, Patricia M., 'Cultural Diplomacy', in Andrew Cooper, Jorge Heine, and Ramesh Thakur (eds), The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy (2013; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Aug. 2013), https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.013.0024

[10] Cull, N. J. (2008a). Public diplomacy: Taxonomies and histories <https://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0002716207311952> Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 616(1), 31–54.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Zamorano, M. M. (2016). Reframing cultural diplomacy: The instrumentalization of culture under the soft power theory <https://dx.doi.org/10.3384/cu.2000.1525.1608165> Culture Unbound, 8(2), 165–186.

[13] Ibid.

programs, the term "cultural diplomacy" was first used in Western policy by the late 1950s. By the 1970s, the term "cultural diplomacy" had been widely accepted in international organizations to the point where the Council for Culture Cooperation within the Council of Europe produced a comprehensive study on the topic[14].

The definition's second challenge stems from the nature of the word "cultural diplomacy"[15]. The concept of culture has grown to be extremely complex and has come to include a wide range of phenomena, from the fine arts to the customs and values of certain groups within human civilization. Even if cultural diplomacy can be understood as a direct contribution to the diplomatic enterprise and the term "diplomacy" is not being used in a more metaphorical sense, there is still disagreement about the nature, purpose, and legitimate actors of diplomacy[16].

Cultural attachés, state-funded cultural institutions, nongovernmental cultural organizations receiving state funding, and recognizable configurations of departments within foreign ministries oversee educational exchanges, the dissemination and promotion of cultural products abroad, exhibitions, language education, book translation, and a host of other mechanisms deemed by their originators to be broadly cultural[17]. States designate their endeavours as "cultural diplomacy". Rather than targeting domestic viewers, the primary target audience for this engagement is foreign audiences[18].

Within the EU, cultural diplomacy has been developed as an instrument of soft power that embraces most of the aspects outlined in the abovementioned definitions. Cultural diplomacy entails using attractiveness and appeal to influence other people's preferences by using foreign policy, political ideals, and culture to affect change, in a non-coercive way.

Therefore, cultural diplomacy is a sector of diplomacy which is strictly connected to the role and meaning given to culture within a polity. Culture, which is widely defined as a collection of "distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features" of a society or social group[19], is closely linked to identity and has traditionally been thought of primarily within the boundaries of the

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[14] Haigh, A. (1974). Cultural diplomacy in Europe. New York: Manhattan Publishing.
[15] Eagleton, T. (2000). The idea of culture. Malden, MA: Blackwell
[16] Murray, S. (2008). Consolidating the gains made in diplomacy studies: A taxonomy <https://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j. 1528-3585.2007.00314.x> International Studies Perspectives, 9(1), 22–39.
[17] Wyszomirski, M. J., Burgess, C., & Peila, C. (2003). International cultural relations: A multi-country comparison. Public Diplomacy Research Series, 1(1), 1–29.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), UNESCO

nation-state. Although EU members have internal cultural policies, they participate in a variety of external cultural activities, including those carried out by the EU.

3. The dual nature of culture in the EU

In the European Union, culture takes a particular form compared to other policies area. Indeed, it has a dual nature, that is both economic and non-economic[20]. This dual nature leads to two different sets of policies which have been implemented. The first explicitly seeks to create an EU political identity, the second is the set of economic policies ranging from the creation of a market in the field of art and cultural heritage and the strengthening of its linkage with development.

In the first case, culture and cultural heritage have been central in the debates about a European cultural identity and the process of integration. From the 1970s to the 1990s, EU policies were centred on the creation of a European consciousness. However, the Treaty of Rome did not provide specific powers related to culture to the European Community. Later, given the difficulties in the integration project, the need to leverage on the culture potential was more and more felt. The "Tindemans Report on European Union" proposed that culture as well as education be used to foster the "rapprochement of peoples" and develop a sense of community[21]. The same goal was reaffirmed in the second "Adonnino Report" on "A People's Europe" which put up a number of similar suggestions for using culture to increase citizens' awareness of Europe[22]. Most of the suggestions were not implemented at the time. Only with the Maastricht Treaty, general aims and values about culture were set out and subsequent Treaties, particularly the Lisbon Treaty, continued on this line by providing instruments to favour EU action.

Regarding the second set of policies, the economic aspects are considered as well. The goal is the indirect development of EU identity through the explicit aims of governing markets and favouring economic growth. Even though culture was historically considered outside competitive markets, after 2000, thanks to the impact of the creative industries and of tourism, the economic benefits of culture were greatly considered during the development of related policies[23]. Indeed, over 12 million full-time employment, or 7.5% of the EU workforce, are produced by the cultural and creative sectors, which account for 5.3% of the EU GDP[24]. After the construction and food and beverage industries,

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[20] Thatcher, M. (2019), Direct and market governance paths for the creation of an EU political identity: cultural heritage policy, Comparative European Politics (2019) 17:585–602
[21] Tindemans Report, 1976
[22] Adonnino Report, 1985
[23] Thatcher, M. (2019), Direct and market governance paths for the creation of an EU political identity: cultural heritage policy, Comparative European Politics (2019) 17:585–602
[24] Ibid.

they employ the third most people in the European Union[25]. Moreover, the global art market reached 67.8$ billion in 2022 and is an ever-growing sector in Europe and abroad[26].

4. The influence of UNESCO

In 2005, the EU became one of the signatories of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expression. The Convention underlines the central role of culture in the development of international relations and international development cooperation[27]. The goal of this Convention is to strengthen the connection between the processes of creation, production, and distribution of cultural activities, properties, and services. It does this by adding to the legal tools that UNESCO already uses and encouraging individual and peoples' creativity in their rich diversity, which in turn promotes their economic and cultural diversity. The Convention aspires to promote cultural heritage in all its manifestations, social cohesiveness, mutual understanding among peoples, and collaboration by strengthening culture as a bridge to sustainable social, economic, and human industries.

In 2007, in order to transfer the Convention goals into the EU agenda, the Commission proposed the 'European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World'[28]. The latter recognizes the critical role that culture plays in social, economic, and political processes as well as its essential function in the process of European integration and calls for stepping up cultural collaboration within the EU. According to the Agenda, the EU should pursue a two-way strategy in its external cultural relations. Firstly, focusing on the development of the systematic integration of the cultural dimension and different components of culture in all external and development policies, projects and programmes[29]. Secondly, on the support for specific cultural actions and events. Cross-cultural communication and openness should be encouraged. As a result, the new Agenda for Culture aims to promote the movement of all artistic expressions and the mobility of artists and cultural workers; the development of intercultural competences and intercultural dialogue through the development of skills like communication in foreign languages and cultural awareness and expression, which are among the essential competencies for lifelong learning.

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[25]   Westlake, M. (2020) The European Union's New Foreign Policy. Springer International Publishing. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/3481136/the-european-unions-new-foreign-policy-pdf

[26] The art market 2023, A report by Art Basel & UBS

[27] Mărășescu, C., The emergence of an European union cultural diplomacy, STUDIA UBB NEGOTIA, LXV, 3, 2020, pp. 77-91

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

5. The Lisbon Treaty

Further steps in the development of the role of culture within the EU international relations were taken by the Lisbon Treaty. According to article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, culture is a shared competence[30]. Therefore, the EU has the 'competence to carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States'[31]. Indeed, member states have never been especially eager to share authority when it comes to cultural policy. Different institutional frameworks and understandings of culture can be found in national cultural policies across the European Union. Furthermore, it might be challenging to separate the goals of individual actors from policy ideas in the context of culture[32].

In the same Treaty, however, an institutional framework (the European External Action Service, EEAS), legal competence, legal personality that could sign treaties, and a role (High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) that could serve as a focal point and possibly offer visible leadership for a strategic approach to culture in external relations were also established. A further significant turning point was the appointment of Federica Mogherini as High Representative in November 2014[33]. Mogherini has always emphasized that cultural cooperation is the cornerstone of EU diplomacy and is strictly connected with the Commission's top aim of strengthening the EU's position as a major player in the world. This objective can be found in article 167 of the TFEU, which 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'[34].

6. The European response to the XXI century crises

From 2008 to 2015, a series of crises shook Europe[35]. Firstly, the 'Eurozone crisis' which posed challenges to EU solidarity. Due to the worrying economic situations in France, Ireland, Spain and Greece, the economic growth in the Eurozone reached a standstill. Secondly, starting in Tunisia in December 2010, the Arab Spring was a revolutionary wave of violent and nonviolent protests, riots, coups, foreign interventions, and civil wars in North Africa and the Middle East[36]. The evolution of

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[30] Art 6 TFEU EUR-Lex - 12016E006 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[31] Art 2 TFEU EUR-Lex - 12016E002 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[32] Carta C., Higgott, R., Cultural Diplomacy in Europe Between the Domestic and the International, The European union in international affairs, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020
[33] Ibid.
[34] Art 167 (3) TFEU EUR-Lex - 12008E167 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu)
[35] Carta C., Higgott, R., Cultural Diplomacy in Europe Between the Domestic and the International, The European union in international affairs, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020
[36] Ibid.

the political situation posed a threat to the EU relations with the Southern Mediterranean. Thirdly, the decline of the EU-Russian relations which started in 2013. The deterioration mostly relates to the Ukraine issue, in which the EU played (and still plays) a significant role. Not least for the EU's relations with Russia[37], the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine has had extremely important political and strategic ramifications. Lastly, the EU is currently perceived as potentially under an existential threat due to the migration crisis, which began in 2015.

Considering all the abovementioned crises, at that time, the narrative platform provided by culture, with its potentially inclusive and purportedly non-political nature, allowed for the celebration of shared European ideals and the telling of a resilient tale of "unity in diversity" and, in the end, peace. Within this framework, at least three publications released in 2014, from the "New Narrative for Europe," the "Preparatory Action for Culture in External Relations," to the "2015–2018 Work Plan for Culture" articulated the cultural narrative in some depth[38].

The New Narrative for Europe is a project launched by the President of the European Commission Barroso. The aim was to involve the artistic, cultural, scientific, and intellectual communities to give their view about the future of Europe. A cultural committee for the "New Narrative for Europe' project was established with representatives from the abovementioned communities. The result of their work was a declaration which set some objectives to achieve. One of them was to leverage on the EU soft power in order to become a valued worldwide partner and advance a new global social model founded on moral, artistic, and sustainable values[39].

The 'Preparatory Action for Culture in External Relations' instead is a report supported by the European Parliament in 2011. According to the report, many people across the world have a strong interest in engaging culturally with Europe and that culture has a considerable potential in Europe's international relations[40]. The language of the Report reflected a cultural relations approach based on cultural rather than foreign policy[41]. The difficulty that Europe encounters in this multipolar world is to be true to itself while also finding innovative ways to position itself in a globalized world of numerous, fluid identities and ongoing cultural and social transformation. According to the report, even though Europeans have been successful in portraying their shared region to the rest of the world as one of cultural creativity and diversity, it is now necessary to engage with the rest of the world, moving beyond representation alone. Such positions would include embracing a sense of global

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[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid.
[39] New Narrative for Europe, 2014
[40] Preparatory action 'culture in EU external relations', 2014
[41] Ibid.

cultural citizenship that acknowledges shared cultural rights and obligations, contingent upon universal access and participation within a framework solidarity[42]. Cultural ties have the potential to greatly increase European influence and appeal in the rest of the globe as well as raise understanding of other cultures and the ability to learn from them within Europe.

The final initiative as an answer to the abovementioned crises was the 2015–2018 Work Plan for Culture. A plan to create an EU strategy for cross-cultural cooperation was presented in June 2016, by Commissioner Navrasics and EU High Representative Frederica Mogherini[43]. The goal was to have culture at the centre of the EU's diplomatic relations with the rest of the world[44]. Making the EU a more powerful global actor was the Commission's top aim, and this is one aspect of it. The Joint Communiqué can be interpreted as a declaration of strategic intent to focus on three areas: advancing social and economic, encouraging intercultural communication to prevent radicalization and promote peace, and bolstering collaboration on cultural heritage. The Joint Communication Press Release acknowledged the Commission's initiative and made a clear connection between it and the overarching foreign policy objective of advancing a world order founded on respect for fundamental values, freedom of expression, the rule of law, and mutual understanding. This allusion to principles and values was a blatant repetition of the New Narrative's normative components, which had been questioned by other cultural contributors. This could be a reflection of how disjointed Brussels' policymaking is[45]. It may also be interpreted as contradicting findings from a significant study that was commissioned by the European Economic and Social Assembly. The survey revealed that although the EU was not widely regarded as a norm-setter or a visible actor in the globe, its culture and way of life were viewed as highly appealing by all.

6.1   Further evolution of the European cultural diplomacy

In order to continue to build on the work done until then, in 2014, the Commission's Preparatory Action 'Culture in EU External Relations' was published. It was the outcome of the study of 54 countries, the EU member states, 16 countries under the European Neighbourhood Policy and the 10 Strategic Partnership countries[46]. The report highlighted the potential of culture within the EU external relations but also the inability to capitalise on it. It also underlined the strong interest of third

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Carta C., Higgott, R., Cultural Diplomacy in Europe Between the Domestic and the International, The European union in international affairs, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Preparatory action 'Culture in external relations' – Engaging the world – Towards global cultural citizenship, Publications Office, 2014, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/74506

countries in the cultural engagement with the EU. The main reason is Europe's narrative, which focused on cultural diversity, core principles like freedom of speech, and creative and cultural sectors. The report looks at how to balance the rich diversity of European cultures while advancing larger European goals. It makes the case for transnational strategic coordination and communication as well as coherence across the instruments, tools, and people in charge of these things. Moreover, there is the need to establish a robust coordination framework within the European External Action Service to facilitate the cooperation of pertinent DGs, governmental and nongovernmental organizations, and civil society. This would be accompanied by the establishment of a global network of experts in cultural relations within EU Delegations[47].

An interesting follow-up of the 2014 Commission Preparatory Action is the "Analysis of the perception of the EU and of EU's policies abroad" of December 2015[48]. The study involved 10 EU strategic partner countries: Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, South Korea, and the US[49]. It assessed the EU's visibility, perceived actorness, effectiveness, local resonance, and status as a norm setter. The economy, trade, politics, security, foreign aid and social development, education, culture, migration, and multiculturalism, environment and energy, research, science, and technology were among the main issues.

The results were that economy is the most visible topic, followed by political, social (including migration) and cultural issues. The least visible areas were in the field of research, science, technology, environment and education. Moreover, the report's findings indicate that, despite being the largest donor in the world, the EU plays a largely unseen role in international development. On the matter of actorness, about climate change, global economic issues, and technological advancement, the EU is considered influential. It is also thought to be lagging the US, the UN, and the respondent's own larger player countries in terms of importance and influence[50].

All the respondents concurred that the EU does well in international trade and is a significant trading partner. It excels in the economic sector of tourism. Media freedom, justice, and the rule of law were evaluated rather favourably in the areas of politics and security. Negative evaluations were found for the assistance provided to developing nations and the handling of refugees. A particularly well-regarded area for the EU is its culture together with its monuments and museums, history, the arts, luxury products, and clothing. The historical aspects of the EU are valued more highly than their

[47] Ibid.

[48] Analysis of the perception of the EU and of EU's policies abroad (2015), https://fpi.ec.europa.eu/stories/analysis-perception-eu-and-eus-policies-abroad_en

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

modern counterparts. Finally, despite Europe's lengthy academic history and its current strong academic discourse, the EU is rarely acknowledged as a norm-setter[51].

Finally, the study's findings confirm the indisputable need for a centralized cultural relations strategy and the decentralized execution of the EU's public diplomacy strategy to accommodate regional variations. The EU should create location-specific media outreach programs based on messages with a local appeal, engage in a stratified dialogue with various audiences, promote the growth of personal ties within the EU, and work toward improving the synergies efforts with the Member States.

6.2   'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations'

The recommendations of the previous studies were considered when developing the 2016 Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council called the 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations'[52]. In this document, the perspectives, and goals of the EU strategy for the development of cultural diplomacy were laid down. The EU commits to promote a world order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression and respect for fundamental rights. The promotion of cultural diversity through international relations is an important element of the EU's role as a global player. This includes a commitment to help third countries and to promote the different cultures of the Member States. The fundamental values of the EU, such as human rights, gender equality democracy, freedom of expression and the rule of law, as well as cultural and linguistic diversity are the core of the EU commitment. Culture and intercultural dialogue can contribute to addressing major global challenges, such as conflict prevention and resolution. In collaboration with UNESCO, the EU also participates in the efforts to protect cultural heritage with a particular attention to war zones[53].

Cultural exchanges can also bring economic benefits. World trade in creative products more than doubled between 2004 and 2013 and culture is a key element, stimulated by creativity, innovation and access to knowledge[54]. The cultural and creative industry accounts for around 3% of global GDP and 30 million jobs[55]. In developing countries, the cultural and creative sectors contribute to the enhancement of sustainable development and inclusive growth. Culture can therefore help job creation and increase competitiveness both within the EU and beyond[56]. This is recognised by the

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[51] Ibid.
[52] Joint communication to the European parliament and the Council 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations' (2016) European Commission
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations which emphasises that culture (including the world's cultural heritage and creative industries) can play an important role in achieving inclusive and sustainable development. Culture therefore represents one of the key sectors promoted in the framework of EU development assistance[57].

This Joint Communication proposes three pillars to advance efforts to launching an EU strategy for international cultural relations[58]. Firstly, EU action should ensure the promotion of human rights, diversity, intercultural dialogue within the existing partnerships while respecting the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity. The second pillar proposes three main points to focus on. Firstly, supporting culture as a promoter of sustainable social and economic development; secondly, using culture and intercultural dialogue as a vehicle to ensure peaceful relations. The third pillar relates to the strengthening of cooperation in the field of cultural heritage[59].

The objectives of the document ''Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations'' were reaffirmed in the 2018 "A New European Agenda for Culture", the 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[60]. The Communication focuses in particular on the area of the Western Balkans and enlargement countries. However, further EU actions in third countries are envisaged. Implementing dialogue with Japan and China, the culture programme for African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), developing strategies for cultural cooperation at regional level in the Middle East and North Africa and in Latin America, supporting Silk Road Heritage corridors in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran are some of the initiatives which are part of the plan[61].

To build on the expectations of 2016 and 2018, between 2019 and 2022, the Work Plan for Culture was implemented[62]. One of the objectives is the development of international cultural relation. Indeed, the EU's foreign cultural relations should raise awareness of the importance of culture and its beneficial socioeconomic impacts, which tackle significant global concerns and difficulties. Its implementation, however, requires a series of long-term steps. A strategy like this ought to foster intercultural communication, people-to-people interactions, and a bottom-up viewpoint. Ensuring

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid.

[60] 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), European Commission

[61] Ibid.

[62] Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (2018), Official Journal of the European Union

complete complementarity between the efforts of the Council of Europe and UNESCO and those of the Member States is vital[63].

6.3 The promotion and valorisation of European Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage plays an important role in building the future of individual communities and in intercultural dialogue. With reference to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, all institutions of the European Union have been strongly committed to promoting and enhancing this heritage. The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, as well as the European Committee of the Regions and the European Economic and Social Committee, have promoted numerous events focusing on the knowledge and valorisation of the common heritage[64].

However, the European contribution, first as a result of colonisations and then as a result of strong migratory phenomena, has characterised many territories beyond the borders of the Old Continent. This vast and interesting heritage has enabled many countries beyond Europe to initiate important processes of development and growth. It has shaped the identities of so many nations through tangible and intangible assets: from literature, music, art, architecture, science, culture, engineering, technology, gastronomy, handicrafts. All of this has certainly contributed to writing new and interesting pages of history[65].

Therefore, the importance of European culture, including its history, heritage etc, extends beyond Europe and has value for many territories around the world.

7. Taxonomy of the EU instruments

The instruments developed to carry out the activities of cultural diplomacy varied. The first is the Partnership Instrument which aims at improving the understanding and visibility of the Union through public diplomacy, people-to-people contacts, education and academic cooperation and outreach activities for the promotion of the Union's values and interests[66]. The second instrument is the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). It supports the growth of democracy, the rule of law, and the respect to fundamental freedoms and human rights. One of the

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[63] Ibid.
[64] Niglio, O. and Lee, E. Y. J. (2019) Cultural Diplomacy and Heritage, Tab edizioni
[65] Ibid.
[66] Joint communication to the European parliament and the Council 'Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations' (2016) European Commission

objectives of this instrument is to promote freedom of opinion and expression, including political, artistic and cultural expression[67].

Thirdly, the Programme on Public Goods and Global Challenges under the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), through its Human Development component, aims to promote cultural diversity and respect for the equal dignity of all cultures. It also encourages the contribution of the cultural industry to economic growth in developing countries as well as its role in civil society organisations and at local authority level. Fourth, the Instrument for Stability and Peace (IcSP) which promotes conflict prevention, crisis response and peace-building to address global and trans-regional threats. Cultural organisations indeed are covered by the definition of civil society for the purposes of IcSP funding. Finally, Creative Europe Programme which aims, among other things, to 'promote the cultural heritage and strengthen the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors' and is 'open to bilateral or multilateral cooperation actions with third countries'[68].

Moreover, there is the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) which aims to reduce poverty and promote economic, social and environmental development as well as to consolidate democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It consists of three specific components: geographic programmes to support cooperation with 47 developing countries in Latin America, North and South-East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Southern Africa; the new Pan-African programme to support the strategic partnership between the EU and Africa[69]. Several sections of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) recognise the role of culture.

8. EU Commission competences and funding

The EU has three foreign cultural approaches in operation, one for culture, one for development, and one for relations with the EU's neighbours to the East and South. These approaches represent the geographical and financial logic of the relevant Commission Directorates General. External cultural relations are the joint responsibility of the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and four Directorates-General (EAC, NEAR, INTPA, and TRADE) within the European Commission[70]. Public diplomacy and other aspects of foreign policy are also under the wings of the European External Action Service (EEAS)[71]. Every actor involved deals with different aspects of cultural diplomacy.

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[67] Ibid.
[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Triandafyllidou, A., Szűcs, T. (2017), EU Cultural Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities, Global Governance Programme
[71] Ibid.

DG INTPA oversees the European Commission's interactions with developing nations. Its primary funding sources are the European Development Fund (EDF), which is financed by EU Member States independently of the EU budget, and the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), which is a component of the EU budget. Projects like the Silk Road Heritage Corridors are funded by the DCI. Some of the nations targeted by China's Belt and Road (BRI) initiative include Iran, Afghanistan, and the Central Asian nations of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. European cultural collaboration with the abovementioned ACP nations is funded by the European Development Fund[72]. The European Union Trust Fund for Africa and the European Fund for Sustainable Development, established in 2016 in response to the refugee crisis, are also sources of funding for cultural projects in Africa. Funding for artistic expression projects is available through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). According to DG INTPA, it gives cultural cooperation an annual contribution of about €180 million[73].

Secondly, DG NEAR. The Commission's interactions with neighbouring nations are under the direction of DG NEAR. These comprise the sixteen countries of the European Neighbourhood (East: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine; South: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia[74]) and the seven pre-accession countries (candidate countries: Albania, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey; potential candidate countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo)[75]. Between 2007 and 2011, the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)-covered nations' cultural cooperation totalled to about €33 million. Under the EU Partnership Instrument, cultural collaboration is also funded by the Commission's FPI. This funds programs that advance the European Union's strategic objectives globally, particularly ties with China and the United States. The EU's Cultural Diplomacy Platform and the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) are two examples of the cultural cooperation that is funded by the FPI[76].

Thirdly, one of the DG EAC's (education, youth, sport, and culture) responsibilities is international cultural cooperation. The Creative Europe Programme for media and culture is the primary tool used by DG EAC. The budget for the culture subprogram is €453 million (2014–2020). The €181 million Cultural and Creative Sector Guarantee Facility, which is anticipated to provide €1 billion in loans for cultural and creative businesses, is also under the purview of DG EAC[77].

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[72] Westlake, M. (2020) The European Union's New Foreign Policy. Ch 8, Springer International Publishing. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/3481136/the-european-unions-new-foreign-policy-pdf
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid.

Fourthly, the European External Action Service, which oversees public and cultural diplomacy, depends on the European Commission's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, which serves as the agency's parallel vice president and reports directly to the High Representative, for funding for cultural relations. Additionally, DG Trade is not involved in funding. Its main contribution is that it represents the EU in trade discussions abroad that touch on cultural matters[78].

8.1   The spending challenges

The EEAS is in charge of foreign policy but does not control the purse strings. Funding for European cultural cooperation and diplomacy is distributed across seven partially overlapping financial instruments and various funds, which are managed by three Commission Directorates-General and a Service. An interservice group has been established, although the primary financier, DG INTPA, rather than the EEAS, oversees it. There is little synchronization overall[79].

The different players manage their finances in a somewhat autonomous manner, making it challenging for the European Commission to compile the figures. As a matter of fact, the Commission has not been able to determine how much it has spent overall on foreign cultural cooperation. The fragmented approach of the Commission hinders the achievement of policy synergies and reduces the EU's global visibility. It also makes working with the EU Member States to coordinate spending and policy challenging. Furthermore, national governments have shown little interest in working with the EEAS and the Commission to coordinate their spending on cultural development and public diplomacy. In third-world countries, the limited amount of coordination that occurs is mostly limited to the local level. Even so, much of the coordination occurs informally and is reliant on the initiative of individual EU and national diplomats[80].

9.   The role of EUNIC

Within member States, cultural institutes occupy a central role in the development of cultural diplomacy. Few examples include the Goethe Institut from Germany, Fondation des Alliances Françaises from France, Hellenic Foundation for Culture from Greece and the Istituti Italiani di Cultura Dante Alighieri from Italy. In the case of Italy, The Italian Cultural Institutes are 84 around the world. The Institutes are places of encounter and dialogue for intellectuals and artists, for Italians

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[78] Ibid.
[79] EU investments in cultural sites: a topic that deserves more focus and coordination (2020) European Court of Auditors
[80] Ibid.

abroad and for anyone who wants to cultivate a relationship with our country. The institution provides language courses for students and teachers following the Dante.global method, offers examinations to certify language competence in Italian, carries out training and continuing professional development activities for teachers, and promotes thousands of cultural initiatives. Dante promotes Italian books and makes thousands of Italian-language titles available to readers on five continents[81]. It is also a member of EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture).

EUNIC is the European network of cultural relations organizations. Its aim is to bring European cultural cooperation to over 100 countries worldwide through a network of 139 clusters[82], utilizing the vast experience of its members who come from all UE member states as well as affiliated countries. Maintaining the primacy of culture in international relations, EUNIC is a strategic partner of the European Union, actively participating in the further definition of European cultural policy. It is a platform for knowledge sharing and capacity development among its members and partners[83].

The foundation of EUNIC's work is cultural relations theory. It is based on conversation, co-creation, and cooperative capacity building, as well as reciprocal listening and learning. The arts, creative industries, development cooperation, digitalization, education, gender, heritage, human rights, language and multilingualism, social inclusion, sports, sustainability, tourism, youth, and other areas are all included in EUNIC's definition of culture[84].

As part of the EUNIC Strategy 2020-2024, the first main objective is encouraging collaboration between its members and local stakeholders around the world, therefore improving cross-cultural ties. Using a bottom-up methodology, EUNIC co-creates local strategies with local public sector and civil society players, as well as European and global organizations and EU delegations. Strategies are grounded in the concepts of cultural relations and adapt to local contexts. EUNIC also promotes cultural variety and assists in carrying out pertinent international accords, like the Sustainable Development Goals. The second objective is creating a partnership with the EU in cultural relations and promoting the importance of culture in international relations. EUNIC cultivates its strategic partnerships with both national and European stakeholders, such as the European Parliament, the European External Action Service, and the European Commission. It takes part in national and international policy discussions concerning cultural relations, contributes to the development and improvement of European cultural policy, and formulates policy suggestions for the further

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[81] Istituti Italiani di Cultura https://www.esteri.it/it/diplomazia-culturale-e-diplomazia-scientifica/cultura/reteiic/
[82] EUNIC https://www.eunicglobal.eu/
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.

development of EU-Caribbean relations. EUNIC helps implement the EU's international cultural relations strategy, as well[85].

Thirdly, EUNIC strengthens its network's ability to be a dependable collaborator in cross-cultural interactions. By providing more funding and exchanging best practices, it encourages and supports the efforts of its clusters. Members of EUNIC improve their resource pooling, identifying and implementing common activities. It expands its offer in professional mobility schemes, workshops, and other capacity building activities[86].

EUNIC has 11 ongoing projects in collaboration with the EU. The projects are in South America (Peru, Bolivia and Cuba), Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Tunisia, Egypt, Senegal and Sudan) and two projects in Ukraine. The projects aim at supporting creativity and art in the communities where EUNIC clusters are. The goal is to promote EU values such as gender equality, linguistic diversity, protection of the environment while creating new opportunities, especially for young people[87].

10. Culture as part of the sustainable development goals

As the EU moves forward with its implementation of cultural diplomacy, it has to take into account the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. When the 2030 Agenda was developed, culture was included in SDG 11 Target 4 'Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage'[88]. The aim was to monitor the progress of culture as a driver of sustainable development. Indeed, in addition to its positive effects on peace and security, culture plays a critical role in promoting and facilitating social and economic advancement. Culture has a global impact on human welfare, employment, social cohesion, and sustainable economic growth. The cultural and creative industries help raise awareness of the Goals to achieve a fairer world[89].

Moreover, the core principles of the 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions are echoed in the Agenda 2030. They are inclusivity, which aims at treating all nations equally and as equals; the responsibility of nation states to safeguard and advance cultural diversity both domestically and internationally. This responsibility entails both a

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[85] EUNIC Strategy 2020-2024
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 11 https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal11#targets_and_indicators
[89] Ibid.

legal and a moral requirement. Indeed, human rights include the right to culture, which governments have promised to protect[90].

The EU is one of the main supporters of the Agenda 2030 and the global order. It has promised to uphold and improve international institutions and policies. The EU and its member states collectively have the largest global position as Official Development Assistance (ODA)[91] providers. The European Commission oversaw €13.2 billion of the €74.4 billion the EU funded on ODA in 2018. Thus, the EU is in a strong position to advance the SDGs, which include the importance of culture as a component of both sustainable development and peace[92].

The implementation of Agenda 2030 is a core commitment of the European Union and its member states. The Council emphasized that the EU and its member states will act as frontrunners and confirmed that they will do so in a comprehensive, integrated, and effective manner.

11.   Where the EU stands regarding cultural diplomacy

If it was ever solely the domain of sovereign states, diplomacy is no longer so. It is evident that non-state actors and civil society, including those in the cultural sphere, are participants in the era of "new diplomacy"[93]. The fundamentals of diplomacy which is an assembly of roles, norms, and behavioural practices aimed at the good ordering of global society appears to have changed little over time. The fundamental activities of diplomacy are communication, its representative role, and the capacity to mediate and replicate knowledge across boundaries through formal and informal policy fusion and transfer processes[94]. Within this framework, it is also possible to find the evolution of EU cultural diplomacy, so far.

The EU has been encouraged to participate in external cultural policies by the international political, legal, and institutional frameworks surrounding culture. These incentives are closely associated with international cultural organizations and the creation of an international cultural legislation, particularly through the 2005 UNESCO Convention. Cultural exchanges are attractive to many third-world nations, especially those with the EU, which offers opportunities for bilateral or multilateral

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[90] Vries, G. d. (2020). Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: The Role of the European Union. (2nd revised edition) (ifa-Edition Kultur und Außenpolitik)

[91] The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) uses official development assistance (ODA) as a metric for measuring foreign aid.

[92] Vries, G. d. (2020). Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals: The Role of the European Union. (2nd revised edition) (ifa-Edition Kultur und Außenpolitik)

[93] Carta C., Higgott, R., Cultural Diplomacy in Europe Between the Domestic and the International, The European union in international affairs, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020

[94] Ibid.

relations. Evidence, indeed, shows that what people around the world value most about the EU is indeed the lifestyle and culture[95]. Contrary to these opportunities for collaboration, the heightened competition in the global creative and cultural industries for attention and market shares has also conditioned the emergence of an EU external cultural activity[96].

CHAPTER 2
EU CULTURAL DIPLOMACY
TOWARDS DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The initiatives of the EU within the field of cultural diplomacy are tailored based on the Region to be targeted. The most relevant areas are those of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) framework which includes Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine[97] with a particular attention to the Mediterranean area; the partnerships with ACP countries; EU-Latin America and EU-Asia. The general goal of these partnerships is to foster EU values within the involved countries and to create stronger ties with them. Thanks to the cultural initiatives and partnerships with UNESCO, the EU aims at promoting sustainable development.

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Damro, C., Gstöhl, S. and Schunz, S. (2017) The European Union's Evolving External Engagement. 1st edn. Taylor & Francis. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/1478828/the-european-unions-evolving-external-engagement-towards-new-sectoral-diplomacies-pdf
[97] European Neighbourhood Policy https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy_en
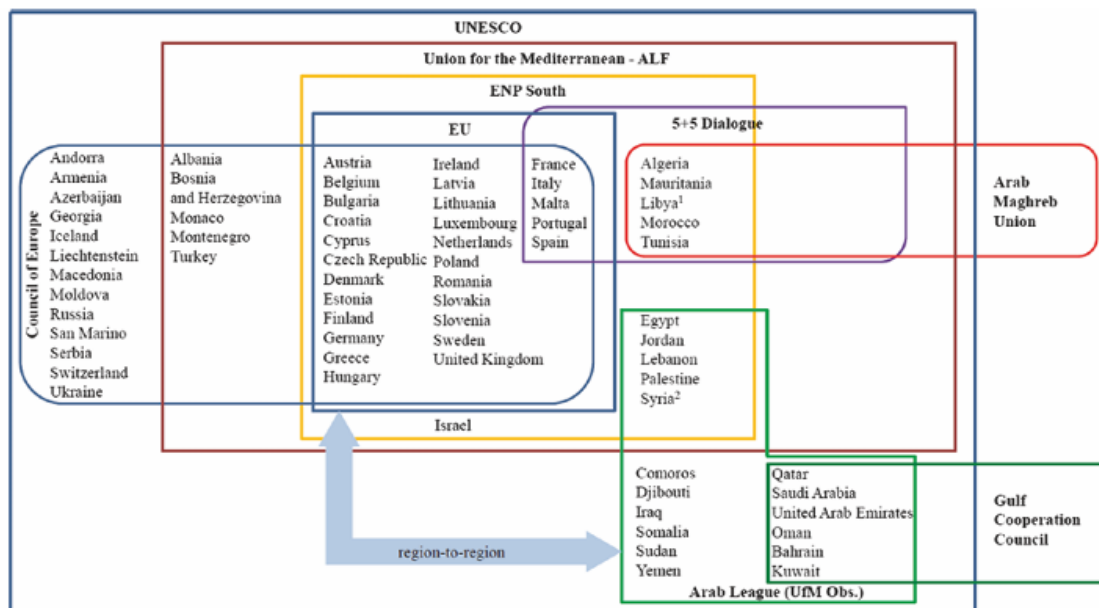
1. European Neighbourhood Policy

Fig. 1 Policy dialogues and frameworks for Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation. [1]Libya never signed an EMAA. [2]All cooperation between the EU and the Syrian government was suspended in 2011. Syria never signed an EMAA

Figure 1

Source: Carta C., Higgott, R., Cultural Diplomacy in Europe Between the Domestic and the International, The European union in international affairs, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020

The European Neighbourhood Policy was launched in 2003 and developed through 2004. It is intended to strengthen the prosperity, stability and security of all the 16 countries Eastern and Southern neighbouring countries concerned. The ENP is based on the principles of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights. It is based on a bilateral policy between the EU and each partner country. It also includes regional cooperation initiatives: the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)[98]. Through the ENP, the EU offers neighbouring countries a privileged relationship based on mutual commitment to common values. The Policy includes enhanced policy coordination and economic integration and greater mobility. It remains distinct from the enlargement process, but this does not prejudge how relations between the neighbouring countries and the EU may develop in the future, in case of enlargement[99].

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[98] Ibid.
[99] European Neighbourhood Policy https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy_en

In 2011, the EU reviewed the ENP and, in response to developments in the Arab countries, focused it more on the promotion of a consolidated and sustainable democracy and inclusive economic development. Consolidated and sustainable democracy includes free and fair elections, a commitment to fight corruption, independence of the judiciary, democratic control over the armed forces and freedom of expression, assembly and association. The EU also emphasised the role played by civil society in the democratic process and introduced the principle of 'more progress, more aid' (more for more), whereby the Union strengthens its partnership with those neighbouring countries that make more progress on the path to democratic reforms[100].

The ENP builds on existing legal agreements between the EU and its partners, such as the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements and, more recently, the Association Agreements. It has as its core elements the bilateral action plans and partnership priorities established between the EU and most partner countries. These plans and priorities set out a series of political and economic reform programmes with short and medium-term (three to five years) priorities. The ENP action plans and partnership priorities reflect the needs, interests and capacities of the EU and each partner. They aim to develop democratic, socially just and inclusive societies, promote economic integration and improve cross-border movement of people[101].

2. The partnership between the EU and the Mediterranean Region

As part of the ENP, broadly speaking, throughout the past few decades, European support for regional integration in the Mediterranean region has relied on the creation of multiple instruments. Because of the numerous political conflicts, low economic complementarity, and lack of economic diversification in the area, it has primarily been focused on economic means and aims. Through overcoming political difficulties and barriers at the governmental level, culture has had a special ability to foster collaboration and enduring bonds in the Region.

In order to increase the effectiveness of EU action, alliances are essential. The primary structures and forums for Euro-Mediterranean cultural cooperation are shown in figure 1, which also includes those that have just declaredly targeted cultural concerns and those that have been provided with personnel and financial resources. With the help of international organizations like the Council of Europe and

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid.

UNESCO, structured collaboration has been formed. Nevertheless, neither of them can match the EU's financial resources, and they frequently carry out or collaborate on EU-funded projects[102].

The actions of the EU in this area have been characterized by two conditions. Firstly, there has been a "proliferation of fora" in Euro-Mediterranean interactions across policy domains since the 1990s but there is still a lack of strong institutionalization at the regional level[103]. Structured cooperation is rare, and relationships are primarily program- and project-based, even though culture is present in many forms in meetings at the political, policy, and civil society levels. Secondly, the institutional system has a strong Eurocentricity. The EU's external policy aims are directly reflected in the ENP and its cultural cooperation programs. For example, an international organization such as the Union for the Mediterranean has not been utilized for collaborative investment in significant cultural programs in the Mediterranean region, but its issues partially intersect with those of projects centered around gender equality and higher education[104].

3.   The Barcelona Declaration

The foundation for the EU-Mediterranean relations is the Barcelona Declaration signed in 1995 and adopted by the EU Member States and the following twelve Mediterranean countries: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority. The League of Arab States and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) were invited together with Mauritania as members of the AMU[105]. The partnership goals range from politics and security to economics and finance to culture. The activities related to culture include the importance of intercultural and interreligious dialogue; the importance of the role of the media for mutual knowledge and understanding between cultures; implementation of educational and cultural programmes respecting cultural identities; the importance of the health sector and social development and respect for fundamental social rights; the involvement of civil society in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and the strengthening of cooperation between regional and local authorities[106].

The objectives envisaged by the Barcelona Declaration led to a multiple international and local initiatives. Among these, the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation, created on the political initiative

[102] Carta C., Higgott, R., Cultural Diplomacy in Europe Between the Domestic and the International, The European union in international affairs, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] Barcelona Declaration https://eur-lex.europa.eu/IT/legal-content/summary/barcelona-declaration-and-euro-mediterranean-partnership.html
[106] Ibid.

of the former President of the European Commission Romano Prodi[107]. Named after the Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, who was assassinated in 2003 in an act of hate crime, the Foundation aims at creating more inclusive and tolerant societies by creating bridges among cultures. Exchange, inclusivity, and narratives are the key words guiding the work of the Foundation.

The largest civil society meeting and the most significant process of its type promoting intercultural conversation throughout the Mediterranean area is the Foundation's flagship event, the MED FORUM. To jointly bring about significant and long-lasting change in the face of the most urgent issues facing the region, the Forum brings together a special regional network of practitioners, policymakers, media, and foreign donors[108].

3.1   EUROMED Initiatives

Other initiatives born from the Barcelona Declaration include another series of forums. The annual Euromed Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Similar Institutions, the EuroMed Trade Union Forum, the EuroMed Social Dialogue Forum, and the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly are among the other forums and meetings established within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership that also support intercultural dialogue and partially address cultural issues[109]. Among these forums, the most relevant is the Euro-Mediterranean Summit of Economic and Social Councils and Related Institutions. Its goal is to examine the shared difficulties faced by organized civil society in the Euromed region and to foster a better understanding of the key issues impacting it. About 120 people attend this summit, representing a variety of economic and social councils and related organizations, employers' associations, labor unions, other economic and social interest groups, and non-governmental organizations from Union for the Mediterranean member nations[110].

Another program which was developed is the EUROMED Heritage Programme. Since its creation in 1998, a total of €57 million has been provided to support collaborations between Mediterranean heritage institutions and specialists in heritage protection. In its earliest stages, this program has helped over 400 partners in member states of the EU and MENA nations (Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey). The

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[107] The Anna Lindh Foundation https://www.annalindhfoundation.org/
[108] Ibid.
[109] Trobbiani, R., (2017) EU Cultural Diplomacy in the MENA region: a qualitative mapping of initiatives promoting regional cooperation, Working paper, Institute for European Studies
[110] European Economic and Social Committee https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/agenda/our-events/events/euromed-summit-2016-economic-and-social-councils-and-similar-institutions

programme ran from 1998 to 2013 in 4 different phases, acknowledging culture as a driving force behind intercultural understanding amongst Mediterranean peoples[111].

The fourth phase (2008–2012) became part of the ENP and aimed at assisting communities in appropriating their own national and regional cultural heritage by facilitating access to education and knowledge about it. Over a three-year period, funding was provided to twelve initiatives with this goal in mind. Every project is predicated on a significant organization collaborating with many European Union partners and Mediterranean partner countries. The program enables cross-disciplinary collaboration, training, networking, sharing of best practices, and initiatives to support and strengthen the cultural heritage's social and economic impact. Ultimately, it also helps partner countries' institutional and legal frameworks for cultural heritage to be improved. For the projects, a Regional Management and Support Unit (RMSU) offers technical assistance for project management and ownership[112].

3.2   EUROMED Audiovisual program

Moreover, with the goal of assisting the audio-visual industry in Southern Mediterranean countries, EUROMED Audiovisual program was founded in 2000 and ran until 2014. Establishing new cooperative ventures between European and Mediterranean businesses in the audiovisual sector is the primary goal of the program[113]. The program supported radio, television, and cinema projects. This initiative was the outcome of the agreement achieved at the conference between the twenty-seven countries of the Euro-Mediterranean partners held in Thessalonika in 1997 and it was a direct consequence of the Barcelona Conference in 1995. The program aimed at encouraging the growth of the audiovisual industry, especially through collaboration between European and Mediterranean operators; promoting the sharing of technology and expertise; encouraging radio and television broadcasters to work together on the distribution of their shows; supporting the marketing and distribution of films produced by Mediterranean partners and the EU; fostering a renewed appreciation for the region's rich cinematic and audiovisual legacy; facilitating investment and the creation of jobs and wealth within the audiovisual industry.

For instance, through Europa Cinemas project, it funded several initiatives, such as the one to coordinate operations and distribution across the Maghreb countries. As a result, it is possible to

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[111] EUROMED Heritage Programme http://www.medmem.eu/en/projet/2/the-euromed-heritage-programme
[112] Ibid.
[113] EUROMED Audiovisual Programme https://www.iemed.org/publication/euro-mediterranean-partnership-film-and-audiovisual-have-a-space-to-conquer/

observe a discernible improvement in the variety and contemporaneity of programming between the Maghreb and Europe[114].

4. Union For the Mediterranean

The Union for the Mediterranean is an intergovernmental organization which unites 43 nations to promote regional cooperation and communication through targeted programs and projects that deal with stability, integration, and inclusive and sustainable development in the Euro-Mediterranean region. It comprises the 27 EU Member States, the European Union itself and 15 Mediterranean countries, namely Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Montenegro, Monaco, Morocco, Palestine, Syria (whose membership has been suspended due to civil war), Tunisia and Turkey. The Arab League has attended all meetings since 2008 and Libya has observer status[115].

The establishment of the UfM in 2008 was a clear continuation of the Barcelona Process and reflected the political commitment of its member nations to strengthen the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Since its founding, the UfM has worked to advance inclusive regional sustainable development and integration through a wide range of projects and activities. The group supports efforts to create jobs, protect women's rights, promote international connection, and deal with climate and environmental emergencies[116].

Through the development of creative initiatives and the scaling up effect, the UfM finds and supports tangible regional cooperation projects that strengthen partnerships between promoters, partners, and beneficiaries throughout the region. The UfM facilitates initiatives by promoting regional discourse to foster new synergies and by walking alongside promoters throughout the project lifecycle. Sectoral discourse platforms can identify projects that address the strategic priorities established by pertinent policy frameworks. The areas of action are economic development and employment; higher education and research; social and civil affairs; water, environment and blue economy; transport and urban development; energy and climate action[117].

Regarding the goal of higher education and research, achieving a positive agenda for youth in the Mediterranean requires regional cooperation efforts in higher education, research, and innovation, as well as vocational training and mobility. These efforts have the potential to increase employability,

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[114] Ibid.
[115] Union for the Mediterranean https://ufmsecretariat.org/who-we-are/
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.

foster intercultural dialogue, strengthen social cohesion, and prevent extremism. Key political goals include working with the UfM Member States to appropriately implement and grow the Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe initiatives in the region, particularly the Mediterranean Initiative. The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 is one of the goals of the UfM's Higher Education and Research operations, which also aim to support the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[118].

4.1   The European Union Literary Prizes

As part of its cultural diplomacy efforts, the EU has supported and promoted prestigious literary prizes. The first one is the European Union Prize for Literature (EUPL). It is managed by three trade associations closely involved in the European translation publishing industry on behalf of the European Commission: the European Writers Council (EWC), the Federation of European Publishers (FEP), and the European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF)[119]. Collectively, they constitute the EUPL Consortium, an intersectorial organization that symbolizes the range of market participants engaged in the dissemination of literary works throughout Europe. Through this kind of public-private cooperation, the EUPL's organizational structure incorporates the Consortium's business objectives as well as the political and cultural goals of the European Commission. The Consortium is in charge of the coordinating organization that chooses the national juries as well as the award ceremony and other promotional events[120].

In addition to a member chosen by the Consortium, the national juries usually consist of three or four distinguished writers from each of the participating nations. Remarkably, the EUPL is structured around nation-state-specific juries, which choose one winner from the nominated works from each nation. This system, which mimics the multi-level governance of the EU, is in place despite the EUPL being a supranational entity[121]. Between eleven and fourteen writers from various nations both inside and outside the European Union get the EUPL each year. The EU's twenty-seven member states, the three nations that make up the European Economic Area (Iceland, Norway, and Liechtenstein), the seven acceding nations, candidate and potential candidates (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey)[122], and the five nations that make up the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) are the only nations eligible to participate as they are part

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[118] Ibid.
[119] EU Prize for Literature https://www.euprizeliterature.eu/news/european-union-prize-literature-renewed-2022-2024-cycle
[120] Carbó-Catalan, E., Roig-Sanz, D., (2022) Culture as Soft Power: Bridging Cultural Relations, Intellectual Cooperation, and Cultural Diplomacy, De Gruyter
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.

of Creative Europe program of the European Commission. Azerbaijan, Belarus, Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine are ENP nations who have indicated interest in participating in the Creative Europe initiative and might be added in the upcoming years[123].

Political and diplomatic ramifications arise from the EUPL's geographic reach. The prize itself provides a forum for fostering cross-cultural communication inside the EU, between Eastern and Western Europe and between the EU and its neighboring countries. In this way, the prize's purview includes both EU cultural diplomacy conducted abroad and internal cultural policy. The EUPL strengthens the idea of Europe as a broker of peace by extending the designation of "European" and "European Union" to nations going through protracted geopolitical conflicts, like Cyprus or Ukraine. It does this by utilizing literature as a diplomatic instrument to encourage respect for linguistic diversity in conflict areas[124].

A second prize which is awarded is the European Book Prize. It was first given out in 2007 and almost simultaneously with the EUPL made its literary debut in Europe. Its goals are identical to those of the EUPL, which is to "promote European values and contribute to a better understanding of the European Union by its citizens"[125].

4.2   EUNIC role in the Mediterranean area

At the moment, every ENP Southern nation has an EUNIC cluster. These clusters are working with the relevant EUDs to build three-year engagement strategies for cultural relations. Finding a regional strategy and fostering more transnational cooperation among all parties involved in the region is one of their goals. Nonetheless, it was recognized that prioritizing national interests above local contexts meant focusing first on domestic partnership and delivering capability before examining regional issues[126].

The recent evolution of EU policy on culture in external relations provided additional motivation for cooperation. A new type of partnership between the EEAS, national cultural institutes, European Commission services, and EUNIC was suggested in the 2016 Joint Communication as a means of achieving "enhanced cooperation" with cultural institutes[127]. An Administrative Arrangement was agreed in 2017 by the EC, EEAS, and EUNIC in response to this proposal (EEAS, EUNIC & EC

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[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Carta C., Higgott, R., Cultural Diplomacy in Europe Between the Domestic and the International, The European union in international affairs, Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020
[127] EUNIC activities https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2017-05-16_admin_arrangement_eunic.pdf

2017). The Arrangement sets forth shared ideals, tenets, and goals that are meant to serve as the foundation for this collaboration. In addition, it identifies priority areas and provides workable plans for implementing them through pilot projects created by EUNIC in collaboration with EC services and the EEAS[128].

Whether at the EU, single MS, or EUNIC cluster level, the primary goal of EU bilateral cultural engagement with the Southern Mediterranean is to support and collaborate with governments, non-profits, and private organizations in order to identify needs and promote communication, teamwork, and co-creation. EU national cultural institutes are well-positioned to act as a bridge between local national governments and foreign policy bodies in member states. They also possess the know-how, abilities, and proficiency to engage with local cultural operators and stakeholders, civil society, and larger audiences. Coordination has improved cooperative European activities step by step[129].

5. EU-Asian countries relations

The core of EU-Asia cultural relations is the Asia-Europe Foundation with headquarters in Singapore. It is an intergovernmental non-profit organization, which unites the peoples of Asia and Europe to tackle shared global challenges. It does this by promoting understanding and cooperation between the two regions' peoples through opportunities for idea exchange; serving as ASEM's civil society outreach; as a forum for Asia-Europe dialogue to create long-lasting networks that strengthen Asia-Europe bi-regional relations; and as a liaison between ASEM governments and civil society, which in turn helps the ASEM process by producing original recommendations for officials to take into account[130].

The main focus of ASEF's activities, as the sole permanent institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), is the ASEM mechanism, an informal intergovernmental dialogue mechanism that was started in 1996 and currently unites 51 nations, the European Union, and the ASEAN Secretariat.
 All things considered, ASEF converts the ASEM Agenda into tangible initiatives that facilitate communication between Europeans and Asians as well as between the public sector and the government. The cycle of ASEM Summits and Ministerial Meetings is followed by a number of ASEF projects. By means of research studies or policy suggestions, ASEF projects provide content for ASEM meetings[131].

[128] Ibid.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Asia- Europe Foundation https://asef.org/about-us/who-we-are/
[131] Ibid.

One of ASEF's seven main theme areas is culture. In this arena, the Foundation facilitates connections between Asian and European creative communities via virtual residencies, internet platforms, bi-regional dialogue, and arts festivals. By establishing connections between artists, cultural workers, public institutions, networks, museums, and arts organizations throughout Asia and Europe, we foster cultural exchanges. Our approach to addressing the existing deficiencies in the cultural cooperation between Asia and Europe include granting access to information, helping the development of capability, promoting artistic diversity, dialogue, and knowledge sharing. Because the initiatives are cross-disciplinary, they involve experts from relevant sectors like environmentalists, journalists, and academics, as well as artists, heritage and museum professionals, arts administrators, and policy officials[132].

5.1   EU-Japan partnership

A particular collaboration within Asia was also established with Japan. The EU Delegation in Japan collaborates with local partners to promote awareness of European culture and cultural diversity, and the embassies and cultural institutes of the EU's member states in Japan facilitate access to a vast array of European innovation. EU Film Days, the Delegation's principal cultural event, is a one-of-a-kind occasion that highlights the diversity and excellence of European filmmaking. Over the course of many weeks, Tokyo screens films from EU member states; occasionally, other Japanese cities also host screenings of these films. Since its inception in 2003, the occasion has been hosted yearly with growing popularity. More than 11,000 people saw screenings in Tokyo and Kyoto in 2015[133].

Occasionally, the Delegation also organizes conferences, workshops, concerts, and movie screenings for the general public. Through the "EU Comes to you School" initiative, diplomats from the EU delegation and member states have been visiting high schools across Japan every year since 2007 to offer presentations on the EU and their individual nations. The goals are to increase young Japanese people's curiosity about the EU and the rich and varied histories and cultures of Europe, as well as to bring the EU closer to young people in Japan. The school project has involved more than 1,000 schools[134].

A further cultural initiative is the EU-Japan Friendship Week, a series of events spanning several weeks with a focus on academic, cultural, and public diplomacy. Since then, it has expanded into an extensive calendar of activities that take place in Tokyo and other parts of Japan over the months of

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[132] Asia-Europe Foundation, https://asef.org/themes/culture/
[133] EU-Asia relations https://www.eeas.europa.eu/japan/european-union-and-japan-political-relations-cultural-public-diplomacy_en?s=169 , EEAS
[134] Ibid.

May, June, and part of July. Friendship Week aims to educate the Japanese public about the European Union, its relations with Japan, and the rich history and diversity of Europe. In order to achieve this, the EU Delegation plans a few events and activities while supporting or encouraging a large number of others. Friendship Week typically begins on May 9 with the celebration of Europe Day, and the next few weeks are filled with a plethora of fascinating, educational, and enjoyable events[135].

6. EU-ACP region relations

The 27 EU Member States and the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries together represent around two billion people and more than half of the UN seats[136]. The concept behind the ACP-EU Culture Programme is one of decentralization and strengthening of the cultural sectors within the ACP regions. With a predominantly ACP component, its funding facilitates the establishment of support funds for the cultural and audiovisual sectors, which are mainly controlled by regional or international organizations. Based on yearly requests for proposals, these partner organizations are in charge of sub-granting cash to players in the field. It is imperative that the support mechanisms that have been built incorporate a substantial technical assistance and capacity building element for field operators.

The Lomé Convention of 1975 is the founding document of the ACP-EU partnership. The Convention was signed between the European Economic Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and was re-negotiated three times. Within the Third Convention, the EU integrated culture into development policy[137].

With the ACP group of countries, there is one of the most long- standing and best manifestations of culture and development relations. The "ACPCultures+" program (2012–2017), run by the Secretariat of the ACP group of states, was funded with 30 million euros under the 10th European Development Fund[138]. Among its objectives were the improvement of the regulatory environment of the culture sector in ACP states; capacity-building of culture sector professional; the support for an increased access to local, regional, intra-ACP, European, and international markets for the cultural goods and services of the ACP States, and the reinforcement of the creation and production of cultural goods and services in the ACP States[139].

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Damro, C., Gstöhl, S. and Schunz, S. (2017) The European Union's Evolving External Engagement. 1st edn. Taylor & Francis. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/1478828/the-european-unions-evolving-external-engagement-towards-new-sectoral-diplomacies-pdf
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

Furthermore, in the same context, numerous initiatives pertaining to professionalization, training, and the creation and dissemination of cultural products have received funding. According to the European Commission, 40 million euros are set aside in the 11th European Development Fund (2014–2020) to promote the cultural and creative sectors. In addition to integrating cultural objectives into this policy domain using development aid for cultural reasons, the EU also encourages the integration of culture in political discussions to interact with third countries within the context of the ACP relationship.

The Lomè Convention was substituted by the Cotonou agreement signed in 2000, for a period of 20 years. The Cotonou Agreement was aimed at reducing and eventually eradicating poverty and contributing to the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy. It is based on three pillars: development cooperation; economic and trade cooperation; political dimension[140]. The agreement includes cooperation activities to enhance economic development focusing on the industrial, agricultural or tourism sectors in ACP countries; social and human development to improve health, education and nutrition services; and regional cooperation and integration to promote and expand trade between ACP countries. All objectives must go hand in hand with the achievement of 2030 SDGs[141].

Once the Cotonou agreement expired, in November 2023, a new agreement with ACP countries was signed. The Samoa agreement was provisionally applied from January 2024 and will enter into force after approval by the European Parliament and ratification by the parties, i.e. all EU Member States and at least two thirds of the members of the OSACP. The new partnership agreement establishes common principles and covers the following priority areas: human rights, democracy and governance; peace and security; human and social development; inclusive and sustainable economic growth and development; environmental sustainability and climate change; migration and mobility[142].

7. EU-Latin America relations

The relationship between EU and Latin American countries has strengthened particularly after the accession of Spain. Since then, Latin America has been the target of several European projects and programs to support the local society, economy and culture. In the domain of human rights, Latin American countries are covered under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. The EU's promotion of human rights encompasses nearly all of the region's nations in a wide range

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[140] Cotonou Agreement https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/cotonou-agreement/ , Council of the European Union
[141] Ibid.
[142] Samoa Agreement, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/11/15/samoa-agreement-eu-and-its-member-states-sign-new-partnership-agreement-with-the-members-of-the-organisation-of-the-african-caribbean-and-pacific-states/ Council of the European Union

of targeted programs, from financial support to the UN-backed International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala to funding projects for prisoner rehabilitation in Honduras. Moreover, the European Development Fund (EDF) provides funding for cooperative initiatives in the areas of social, human, and economic development to support EU human rights policies[143].

Erasmus Mundus program is another project developed towards Latin American countries in the field of education. It aims at advancing European higher education, assist in enhancing and improving students' career prospects, and foster intercultural understanding through collaboration with non-EU nations in line with EU external policy goals. Directorate General Development and Cooperation oversees the budget, establishes priorities, targets, and criteria, and directs and monitors the program's overall execution, monitoring, and assessment throughout Latin America[144].

Further cultural initiatives were developed between 2021 and 2022. Indeed, the European Union, the Spanish Presidency of EUNIC and the Ibero-American Cultural Network RIDCULT of the Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB) collaborated under the banner of EULAT4Culture to emphasize the importance of cultural dialogue in EU-Latin America relations as a means of addressing global issues and promoting peace. The global effort EULAT4Culture is an extension of a previous project co-sponsored by the EU and funded by the Government of Spain during its EUNIC chairmanship. In 20 global capitals Abuja, Algiers, Ankara, Bogotá, Brasilia, Brussels, Buenos Aires, Hanoi, Madrid, Manila, Maputo, Mexico City, New Delhi, Santiago de Chile, Paris, Beijing, Pretoria, Tel Aviv, Tokyo, and Washington, D.C. hundreds of cultural events took place[145].

These projects involved more than 200 partners, including embassies, cultural centres, and other organizations. In addition to fostering common principles like democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech, the goal is to fortify the artistic linkages that exist between Europe and Latin America through the suggested activities. Considering shifting regional and global circumstances, this aligns with the two regions' common goal of forging a deeper bi-regional collaboration. Numerous academic fields are covered by the suggested activities, including music, theatre, literature, architecture, gastronomy, ICTs, film, art, museums, and archaeology. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and shared priorities have served as inspiration for the major themes: identities as well

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[143] Dominguez, R. (2015) EU Foreign Policy Towards Latin America. Palgrave Macmillan UK. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/3486964/eu-foreign-policy-towards-latin-america-pdf
[144] Ibid.
[145] EULAT4CULTURE https://www.eunicglobal.eu/news/eulat-4-culture-support-to-cultural-relations-between-europe-and-latin-america

as inclusivity; migration: citizenship and democratic ideals; establishing and removing roots; connectivity; environment and sustainability: action for climate; gender and youth[146].

8. EU efforts towards enhancement of cultural diplomacy

In general, the EU has exerted pressure to reach specific agreements to guarantee the application of the UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity and its fundamental tenets, particularly those pertaining to Article 16 which obliges developed nations to promote cultural exchanges with developing nations by giving preference to cultural professionals and cultural products and services from developing nations. For example, these protocols on cultural cooperation were protagonists of the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement of 2009 and the 2008 EU-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement[147]. EU policies demonstrate how the Union works to use its financial presence to advance cultural goals that align with more comprehensive institutional-legal frameworks, like those offered by UNESCO.

The growth of cultural sectors in partner countries depends on strengthening bilateral collaboration by involving both governments and civil society on subjects and with procedures specific to each nation. More robust national cultural sectors affect democratization and human development at the national level and may also have repercussions for regional cooperation and stability. For this to occur, a more defined regional cooperation approach must incorporate both bilateral cultural support and national difference. In addition to highlighting the areas in which regional cooperation is feasible, this should also show how regional and bilateral actions support political stability and advancement on a regional scale.

CHAPTER 3
CASE STUDY: EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY IN LIBYA

1. The Libyan context

Tripoli's urban landscape has come to represent the numerous, little wars that have dogged the capital of Libya ever since longtime leader Moammar Gadhafi was overthrown in 2011. Libya's efforts to achieve lasting peace and prosperity have been hampered by fractured political dynamics and

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[146] Ibid.
[147] Damro, C., Gstöhl, S. and Schunz, S. (2017) The European Union's Evolving External Engagement. 1st edn. Taylor & Francis. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/1478828/the-european-unions-evolving-external-engagement-towards-new-sectoral-diplomacies-pdf

governance frameworks. Indeed, currently Libya is divided in two parts. On the one hand, General Khalifa Haftar controls a large part of Cyrenaica and Fezzan in the East and South of the country. However, his government is not officially recognized by the international community. On the other hand, Abdul Hamid Mohammed Dbeibeh, since 15 March 2021, has been interim Prime Minister of Libya, appointed through the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum. He was expected to serve as leader until the general elections on 24 December 2021, which were instead postponed. Presidential and parliamentary elections represent a problem since the absence of a consensus legislative framework and schedule continued to be the main source of political disagreement[148].

The economic situation has not been stable over the years. After a severe economic downturn in 2020, GDP per person increased by about 30% in 2021 compared to the year before[149]. Moreover 7% of Libyans were expected to be living below the national poverty threshold in 2022, compared to 14.2% estimated to be below the international poverty line. The most vulnerable individuals' purchasing power decreased as the cost of necessities rose. The protracted conflict between Russia and Ukraine has affected Libya's strong reliance on food imports from the Black Sea region, while low domestic consumption has limited the availability and accessibility of essential food items, leading to an increase in food insecurity and the adoption of unhealthy coping mechanisms. The government worked to improve and broaden the country's social protection system, even though there are still many obstacles to overcome[150].

In Libya, the oil and gas sector contribute significantly to the country's economy. Significant oil discoveries in the late 1950s led to the development of a robust oil sector in the nation. Libya's economy has remained highly dependent on the oil business, which is the primary source of wealth in the nation, despite the fluctuations in oil production caused by the conflicts and COVID-19 in recent years. 2020 saw Libya's GDP rise to almost 50% from oil money, the highest percentage in Africa. Libya's economy benefits from the gas industry, albeit to a smaller degree, given that it is the fourth-largest producer of natural gas in Africa. Furthermore, Libya's export commerce is mostly reliant on its oil and gas resources. With almost 95% of all exports in 2021 coming from mineral fuels like oil and natural gas, these items were the top exports[151]. Despite significant attempts to increase efficiency, especially in the oil and gas and energy production sectors, there have been few advancements in the areas of the environment and climate change.

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[148] Libya's Kleptocratic Boom (2023), The Sentry
[149] The World Bank in Libya (2023) https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/libya/overview
[150] Ibid.
[151] Oil and natural gas industry in Libya - statistics & facts, https://www.statista.com/topics/9253/oil-and-natural-gas-industry-in-libya/#topicOverview Statista LUISS

Education access is still high, and performance on secondary school exams have been steadily improving. The Ministry has started rolling out an Education Management Information System, providing basic IT training to all staff members, including teachers, social workers, and counsellors, and creating e-learning materials for digital learning platforms, even though the education sector still lacks a functional management information system.[152]

Libyan society has suffered a series of freedom restrictions over the years. The restrictions tried to silence young people and social, cultural, and nonviolent movements. Examples of these tactics include hate speech, smear campaigns, inciting violence, and attacks against journalists, women and human rights defenders, civil society actors, and members of social movements[153].

Despite the abovementioned issues, Libya represents an interesting case in which the EU fosters its cultural diplomacy. As stated by former High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President (HR/VP) of the European Commission Federica Mogherini 'The EU has unparalleled "soft" power—in economic, diplomatic, and cultural terms—and we are increasingly active as a global security provider, building our "hard" power as never before. In Syria and Libya, we are not a military player—and I am proud of this. Violence has brought more violence, while we have always worked for peaceful and negotiated solutions'[154]. This speech by HR/VP HAS received mixed reactions.

The Italian Istituto Affari Internazionali in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported the speech and praised the efforts done by the HR/VP and the EU in matters of Foreign Policy and support to sustainable development, particularly in Libya and more generally in Africa[155].The German Council of Foreign Relations, instead, had a more negative reaction to the speech. It stated that in Libya, the EU had not been effective and did not manage to stabilise the country. It also added that the EU member states most directly involved in Libya, France and Italy, have not built a partnership and have not worked toward creating a single European approach[156].

However, Libya's dynamism represents one of the country's strengths. It has a young population, which is younger the European average. Therefore, there is a pressing need for educational, cultural growth. To increase the country's performance and stability, EU institutions play a particularly

[152] Common Country Analysis 2023, UN Libya
[153] Ibid.
[154] Mogherini, Federica. 2019. Shaping Europe's Present and Future. European Council on Foreign Relations, January 11. https://ecfr.eu/article/commentary_shaping_europes_present_and_future/
[155] Bonomi, M., (2019) Walking the Strategic Talk. A Progressive EU Foreign Policy Agenda Conference Report, IaI Istituto Affari Internazionali
[156] Puglierin, J., (2019) Mogherini's legacy, German Council on Foreign Relations https://dgap.org/en/research/publications/mogherinis-legacy

relevant role in breaking the isolation of Libyan institutions[157]. Cooperation between the EU and Libya helps providing more opportunities for young people, creating better infrastructure and developing new markets[158]. However, due to its unstable situation, Libya has received support from multiples international actors including the UN and EU member states, particularly Italy.

2. UN and EU in Libya

The UN has had a long-standing presence in Libya and is active through the UNSMIL (United Nations Support Mission in Libya). The primary goal of the UNSMIL is to ensure support for the consolidation of Libyan democratic institutions. Firstly, by helping the organization of free, fair, transparent, and inclusive national and parliamentary elections as soon as feasible, as part of an inclusive political process that is led and owned by Libya and is backed by the international community. To generate and maintain the momentum necessary for an inclusive and legitimate electoral process, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General with UNSMIL increased mediation efforts and engagement with important political actors, Libyans throughout the nation, and regional partners. There have been few achievements and worries that agreements on a new electoral procedure would not ensure women's full involvement and representation. Women's representation in governance structures at all levels has remained extremely low[159].

Secondly, USNMIL has a continuous collaboration with Libyan authorities and institutions to guarantee women's full, equal, meaningful, safe, and effective participation at all levels, including leadership roles, and in all decision-making concerning inclusive political processes, democratic transition, efforts at reconciliation, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding[160].

Thirdly, it provides support by assisting in bringing together the economic, security, and governance frameworks; this includes backing economic transformation in conjunction with global financial institutions. Moreover, in compliance with humanitarian standards, organize and support the delivery of vital services and humanitarian aid, especially for refugees and migrants, under the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-2025[161].

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[157] The Internationalisation of higher education in the Mediterranean (2021), UNIMED Union for the Mediterranean
[158] Ibid.
[159] UNSMIL https://unsmil.unmissions.org/
[160] UN Common Country Analysis 2023
[161] Ibid.

The graph below shows the progress related to the achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. It clearly shows that despite relevant steps ahead in the achievement of a few SDGs, there is still much work to do to put the country on track for sustainable development.
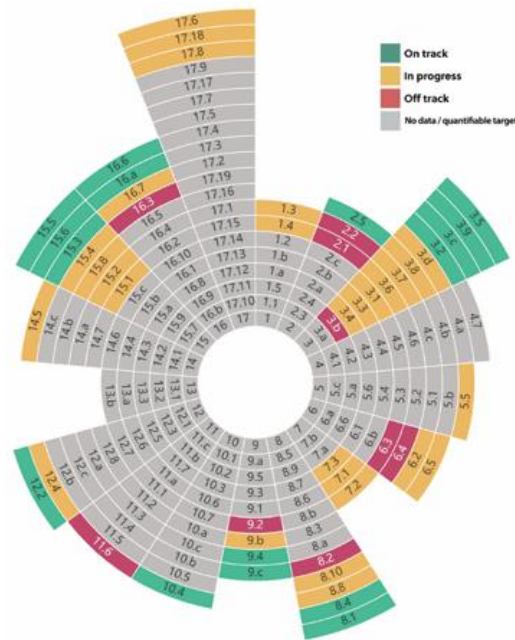
Source: UN Common Country Analysis 2023

Another pivotal international actor in Libya is the EU. Despite its importance, the relationship between the EU and Libya has not been easy. For example, back in 1995, Libya was the only nation in the Mediterranean to opt out of the EU Barcelona procedure or Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. However, things appeared to change in 1999. Libya was granted observer status at some Barcelona Process meetings, including the Foreign Affairs Ministerial meeting, the high-level political dialogue meetings, and the Euro-Med committee and it attended the Barcelona Process III conference as a special guest of the EU presidency. Qadhafi assured EU Commission President Romano Prodi during their meeting at the African Union Summit in Sirte that Libya was prepared to begin working right away to fully join the Barcelona process. Two months later, Qadhafi announced a new chapter in the history of ties between his nation and the EU when visiting the European Commission in Brussels[162].

For many years, the EU has been in Libya to provide assistance. EU projects aim to strengthen civil society and democratic governance, health care, entrepreneurship, gender equality, youth empowerment, and human rights. Additionally, the EU has supported border management programs, the protection and aid of vulnerable groups, refugees, and migrants—which together account for a sizable amount of EU assistance to Libya—as well as Libyan areas that host an excessively high

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[162] The European Union and Libya https://www.eeas.europa.eu/libya/european-union-and-libya_en?s=105

number of migrants. Among them is the provision of technical trainings or equipment to enable Libyan authorities to carry out life-saving operations at sea in accordance with international law. The European Union has additionally partnered with the United Nations Refugee Agency and the International Organization for Migration[163].

Moreover, the EU has given Libya's political and reconciliation efforts significant financial support, which since 2018 reached a total of 9.3 million euros[164]. EU funds especially supports UN-led peace mediation efforts and national reconciliation programs implemented by Libyan and international civil society organizations. The entities funded by the EU represent all facets of Libyan society with a focus on women and young people. The objective of the gathering is to settle disputes and establish broad agreement on matters crucial to Libya's future. The EU is prepared to invest an extra 5 million euros to further its involvement in this field. In order to strengthen institutional ability to plan and conduct elections, the EU collaborates with the Central Committee for Municipal Council Elections (CCMCE) and the High National Elections Commission[165].

Especially in developing countries like Libya, culture is an important tool for the growth and sustainable development of society, also in terms of economic prosperity. It contributes to preserving the identity and memory of peoples and fosters dialogue and intercultural exchange between all nations, nurturing tolerance, mutual understanding, recognition and respect for diversity[166]. Moreover, there is a need to fortify the synergies between culture and education, enhancing the recognition of credentials and competencies. Culture is fundamental to close the skills gap, highlighting the necessity of providing cultural and creative workers with new managerial, digital, technological, creative, accessibility-related, mediation, and environmental skills[167]. Strengthening ties between scientific, educational, and professional systems allows to advance inclusivity, knowledge transfer between generations, and multidisciplinarity, as well as to enable cross-functionality and synergies between policies and decision-making related to culture, society, the environment, and the economy. The role of universities as well as libraries, archives, museums, conservation organizations, hubs for culture and creativity, other cultural institutions is essential to foster education, interpretation and conveyance of culture and tying local actions to the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN[168].

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[163] EU in Libya, EEAS https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-libya-relations_en
[164] Ibid.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Florence Declaration, 2017, G7 Ministers of Culture
[167] Rome Declaration, 2021, G20 Ministers of Culture
[168] Ibid.

3. EU cultural diplomacy: UNIMED

In the cultural sector, the EU has provided support to Libya in different occasions. Libyan universities are an important asset for European cultural diplomacy. Indeed, they are part of UNIMED, Mediterranean Universities Union. UNIMED is a network of 158 universities and research centres in 25 countries of the Mediterranean area. Libya counts 23 universities as part of the network and they participate to several educational and cultural initiatives, mostly funded by the European Union.

For years now, Libya has been involved in the Erasmus+ program, in particular the KA2 Capacity Building and the International Credit Mobility. The objective of these initiatives is to create mobility opportunities both for students, for the faculty, and staff. The mobility opportunities aim to be from Libya to Europe and vice versa. The KA2 Capacity building program entails a series of actions financed to achieve the program's priorities, as well as to have a positive and enduring impact on the organizations that participate, the policy frameworks and the organizations and individuals that are either directly or indirectly involved in the activities. Innovative practices are anticipated to be developed, transferred, and/or implemented at the organizational, local, regional, national, or European levels. These actions are overseen by the European Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) or the National Agencies, depending on the field addressed and the kind of applicant. The International Credit Mobility instead supports the mobility of individuals enrolled or employed at a higher education institution (HEI), from a Programme Country to a Partner Country or vice versa.

In Libya in particular, 3 projects have been developed related to capacity building as part of Erasmus+, KA2 Capacity Building program. IBTIKAR is a project which aims at improving the competencies and skills of its academic and administrative staff and seeks to improve the research capabilities of Libyan Higher Education Institutions as well as their capacity to develop and manage high-quality research[169]. Eleven higher education institutions in Libya are involved in the project to expand their capabilities in research and innovation as well as their networks with other researchers worldwide. Long-term goals include developing a new generation of thinkers who can handle both domestic and international issues, resolve neighbourhood conflicts, and contribute to Libya's socioeconomic development[170].

The second project, ARMONIA, is developed in cooperation and support of Libya's Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. It seeks to facilitate the implementation of the Bologna

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[169] UNIMED IBTIKAR https://www.uni-med.net/projects/ibtikar/
[170] Ibid.

process principles in partner with HEIs in Libya. The Bologna process provides three cycles of higher education qualifications as part of the fundamental structure. The qualifications are defined in terms of learning outcomes, which are declarations of what students know and are able to perform upon receiving their degrees, according to the framework that the ministers agreed upon during their 2005 meeting in Bergen. The ARMONIA projects has the overarching goal of modernizing and harmonizing Libya's higher education system to facilitate the adoption of the methods and principles of the Bologna Process[171].

The third project is called HGRA. One of the most important problems that has plagued Libyan society for a long time is migration. In terms of deaths, incarcerations, and ongoing atrocities, the outcome is a humanitarian catastrophe[172]. The long-term ramifications are very concerning: health and security issues, the social and economic fallout from a calamity that also affects a large number of women and children. This project involved universities to fulfil their societal responsibilities by contributing to the resolution of the mishandling of illegal immigration. The goal of HGRA is to improve research and management of migration in Libya[173]. Indeed, academics seldom ever address the matter, and there are hardly any faculties that offer courses, trainings, or research on the topic. HGRA attempts to increase academics' knowledge of the crisis's medium- to long-term consequences and to enable higher education institutions to better structure their educational offerings in this area[174].

3.1   Libya Restart and support to sustainable development

Since 2015, UNIMED has worked with Libyan Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) under the Erasmus Plus program on capacity building projects. At this point, UNIMED presence in the country is fairly stable, and a wide range of initiatives and activities are shared with the Libyan Higher Education system. Universities in Libya have the capability to positively impact the community by fostering empowerment and teamwork[175]. In fact, the local population views universities as essential to maintaining stability. In order to better understand the Libyan higher education system and improve it, UNIMED decided to establish the Libya Restart project in 2018. This institutional effort involved a research project that was carried out in collaboration with university staff in Libya and UNIMED staff[176].

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[171] UNIIMED ARMONIA https://www.uni-med.net/projects/armonia/
[172] UNIMED HGRA https://www.uni-med.net/projects/hgra/
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Libya Restart A Journey Analysis, UNIMED research team
[176] UNIMED Libya Restart https://www.uni-med.net/publications/libya-restart-a-journey-analysis-2/

Higher education institutions in Libya represent an important connection point. They have remained open even during the war and they have never stopped interacting with one another. Despite political divisions in the country, universities from the East and West have kept the constructive dialogue going creating important bridges between Tripoli and Benghazi. Furthermore, fresh cultural ventures have been created because of European Commission funding and projects. As affirmed by UNIMED Project Managers Anne-Laurence Pastorini and Martina Zipoli 'In fact, the EU is viewed as a trustworthy, non-political partner that provides a neutral, productive environment for engagement'[177].

One of the goals of UNIMED is to bring sustainable development within Libyan universities, and therefore Libyan society and institutions. The first SDG to be pursued is SDG4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'[178]. The objective is to solve some issues related to the quality of universities courses and research initiatives. Indeed, research activities suffer from limited amount of funding, lack of research infrastructures, limited amount of time and limited skills of the academic staff, brain drain effect[179]. Research is currently heavily funded by the government, and it lacks access to international funds due to lack of management skills and human resources. Moreover, in general Libyan education suffers of poor infrastructure which has not been renovated. There is only one source of internet, therefore creating several criticalities. Additionally, there is a lack of expertise in the field of digitalisation and technology. Indeed, during the pandemic universities were not able to offer online courses. This forced the Ministry to stop all teaching activities[180].

However, after the floods of Derna of September 2023, there has been an increasing interest and efforts in the development of new critical infrastructure in the digital, communication, water fields. These efforts have led to an increase of scientific research superintended by public actors. Particularly relevant has also been the fight to climate change which has affected Libyan cities, infrastructure and also cultural heritage. The EU has also intervened to help preserve Libyan cultural heritage, by providing funds for the establishment of a school of restoration and supporting the EU member states archaeological expeditions across the country.

Eventually, despite difficulties, EU support has turned out to be vital in the short and medium term for Libyan education, culture, and society. It has allowed more capacity building opportunities and increased the network of Libyan institutions at the regional and international level, thanks to exchange

[177] Pastorini, A-L; Zipoli M., interviewed by the author on 19.03.2024
[178] SDG 4 https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4
[179] The Internationalisation of higher education in the Mediterranean (2021), UNIMED Union for the Mediterranean
[180] Ibid.

programmes as well. Continued mutual cooperation between Libyan and EU institutions will provide help in developing better infrastructure and new markets to benefit society as a whole[181].

4. Italian support to cultural diplomacy

As previously mentioned, the EU is active in Libya both as an actor itself and through its reliance on member states. In the first case, the EU has used its toolkit of financial, training, and development aid as well as development initiatives. It has so far contributed €44.5 million in humanitarian aid to Libya; it is also funding 23 projects totalling €70 million in bilateral help[182]. In addition, €408 million has been made available to Libya to assist in managing the migratory crisis through the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa[183]. EU member states, such as Italy, instead, use a wider range of tools to carry out cultural diplomacy. From providing funds to supporting archaeological activities to promoting the language and the peculiar national economic activities, the objective is to foster the country system as a whole. However, while carrying out their own activities, they also participate and promote European diplomatic initiatives.

In Libya, Italy plays a significant role as a cultural partner. As a member state of the EU, Italy carries out a series of initiatives which aim at fostering Italian and European relations. Given its long-standing relations with Libya and its cultural relevance, Italy is a central player in the Libyan cultural scenario. The main Italian cultural institution is the Italian Institute of Culture, a member of EUNIC. The Institute is located in the capital, Tripoli and it acts under the directives of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ambassador. From 2014 to 2023, the Institute was closed due to security concerns and the unstable situation in the country. However, from 2023, the Ministry and the Embassy have started to reopen it.

The Institute of Culture is responsible of the programming and implementation of a cultural program to promote Italian culture and language in the country. To do so, collaboration with local cultural institutions and representatives from the government, universities is fundamental[184]. The work is coordinated by the Italian Embassy in Libya.

The activities of Italian cultural diplomacy range from archaeology to the promotion of the Italian language to Italian design and cuisine.

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[181] Ibid.

[182] Marcuzzi, S., (2022) The EU, NATO and the Libya crisis: Scaling ambitions down? https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/report/the-eu-nato-and-the-libya-crisis-scaling-ambitions-down/

[183] Ibid.

[184] Istituti Italiani di Cultura https://www.esteri.it/it/diplomazia-culturale-e-diplomazia-scientifica/cultura/reteiic/

4.1   Archaeology and promotion of the Italian language

Research in the field of archaeology is one of the cornerstones of Italian cultural diplomacy. Italy has a primacy in this field, managing the highest number of expeditions. In 2023, the collaboration between Libya and Italy reached the milestone of 110 years[185], making it the most long-standing collaboration of this kind in the country. Italian experts are the most present on the Libyan territory and carry out both excavation and research activities. There are several missions currently ongoing on the Libyan territory. 3 missions are undertaken in and nearby Leptis Magna. The first is carried out in Tripoli and Leptis Magna by the University of Roma Tre[186]. The project, active since 1996 consists of the creation of a telematic portal dedicated to the activities of the Italian archaeological missions in the Arab Maghreb, with a focus on Libya. The portal contains information on current and past activities carried out by the archaeological missions and the Italian action in the Maghreb area, in the archaeological, historical-artistic and monumental fields. A second mission in Leptis Magna is superintended by the University of Catania. The programme intends to address three complementary themes: the continuation of the excavation in Leptis Magna; the completion of the research on the 'Trajan Basilica'; investigations and studies on building techniques, regarding local building materials and Punic and Neo-Punic quarry marks, also through reconnaissance in culturally contiguous provinces of the Mediterranean. A third mission in Leptis Magna is carried out by the Centro *Internazionale Ricerche Archeologiche Antropologiche Storiche*. The Archaeological Mission 'Flavian Temple' takes its name from the temple complex with two twin temples on a porticoed platform dedicated to the Gens Flavia (1st century A.D.) and located on the western quay of the wadi Lebda at the entrance to the port[187].

Further expeditions are undertaken in other ancient sites of Libya. In Sabratha, the University of Macerata has carried out a project involving the survey, restoration, conservation, and study of the funerary monuments (of Sidret el-Balik, and painted tombs) and the Villa a Mare in Sabratha, as well as the completion of the survey and restoration of the Serapion and Magna Mater[188]. Another project is managed by the University of Palermo, which has been operational since 2016. It envisages: the study of the contexts in the eastern part of the settlement, expanding *in situ* detailed documentation (survey of the Domus Piscina, integration of the House of the Tragic Actor; topographical verifications of the Theatre district) for illustrative/editorial apparatuses. Due to the need to ensure

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[185] Missioni archeologiche Libia https://ambtripoli.esteri.it/it/italia-e-libia/diplomazia-culturale/missioni-archeologiche/
[186] Missioni archeologiche-Italia https://italiana.esteri.it/italiana/chi-siamo/mappa/?cat=missioni
[187] Ibid.
[188] Ibid.

wide use of past documentation, the aim is digital enhancement with complete digitisation, cataloguing and networking of the CeRAM (Centro di Ricerca per l'Archeologia del Mediterraneo) archive relating to research carried out in Libya[189].

A final project is carried out by the *Centro Internazionale Studi Architettura e Storia Del Mediterrane*o (CISAM). In 2002, the Mission was established with the aim of creating a database for the preservation of the oasis caravan cities in southern Libya, through the construction of a recovery model. The expedition is carried out in the medinas of Ghat, Murzuq, Sebha and Hun which are autochthonous settlements, made of unbaked bricks, in which the transformations of recent decades have seriously jeopardised the conservation of the traditional building-architectural elements that characterise them[190].

The promotion of the Italian language is also a vital instrument of cultural diplomacy. As affirmed by the cultural attaché of the Italian Embassy in Tripoli Marcello Matera, through the work of the Italian Institute of Culture, the Italian language has dedicated courses in all the major Libyan universities: Tripoli, Benghazi, Misrata, Homs, Zenna and Janzul[191]. The courses are part of Bachelor's degree programs. Once completed, students are encouraged to continue their studies in Italy, thanks to the provision of scholarships. The latter are granted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and intend to help students to reach higher and achieve better education[192].

From 2020, the Italian language is also officially taught in secondary schools in Libya. This was laid down in an agreement signed in Tripoli between the Italian embassy and the Minister of Education of Libya's Government of National Accord (GNA). The agreement also envisaged training courses for teachers so that from 2021 Italian could be taught to pupils aged twelve and over[193].

Moreover, the certification of European languages, in accordance with the principles dictated by the Council of Europe, the European Parliament and the European Council of Ministers, is part of the European Language Portfolio programme and aims to enhance the citizen's competences, favouring communication, mobility and intercultural relations[194]. In particular, the language certification has a documentation function, according to the levels of competence envisaged by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. In the panorama of the certification of knowledge of Italian

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[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Matera, M., interviewed by the author on 5.03.2024
[192] Ibid.
[193] Libia: lingua italiana sarà insegnata nelle scuole (2020) ANSA, https://www.ansa.it/ansamed/it/notizie/rubriche/cultura/2020/12/02/libia-lingua-italiana-sara-insegnata-nelle-scuole_fb64d52f-a644-4f2d-afa7-52b87ee64862.html
[194] CLIQ https://italiana.esteri.it/italiana/lingua/certificazioni/

as a foreign language, the association *Certificazione Lingua Italiana di Qualità* - CLIQ was created, which brings together four certifying bodies: Società Dante Alighieri, Università per Stranieri di Perugia, Università per Stranieri di Siena and Università degli Studi Roma Tre[195]. The aim of the association is to promote the culture of certifying assessment for Italian and to guarantee a quality system for the certification of language skills, in line with the scientific standards set by the Council of Europe in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages[196].

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also launched the initiative of the 'Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo' to promote Italian language across the world. It is held every year in the third week of October[197]. Organised by the diplomatic-consular network and the Italian Cultural Institutes in collaboration with Italian Ministry of Culture, Ministry of University and Research and Ministry of Education, the Government of the Helvetic Confederation, Accademia della Crusca, CGIE (Consiglio generale degli italiani all'estero), Comunità Radiotelevisiva Italofona, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, RAI Italia and Società Dante Alighieri, the Week has become over time the most important event on a global scale dedicated to our language. Since its institution in 2001, this event has received the High Patronage of the Presidency of the Republic every year[198].

Each Week is dedicated to a different theme, which serves as a common thread for a rich programme of conferences, exhibitions and meetings. The XXIII edition (16-22 October 2023) had as its theme 'Italian and Sustainability', with the aim of promoting in the world, through the Italian language, the culture of sustainability carried out by a country at the forefront of environmental issues[199]. Last year, after years of hiatus, the celebrations for the Italian Language Week were held again in Libya. Promoted by the Italian Embassy in Tripoli and the Consulate General in Benghazi, the objective was to further strengthen cooperation in the cultural and linguistic sphere, which is a priority in Italian-Libyan bilateral relations[200].

4.1   Italian cuisine and design

In both national and municipal development policies and initiatives, culture and cuisine are essential components. Food and the related cultural practices that surround it contribute to social and economic

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[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo, MAECI https://www.esteri.it/it/diplomazia-culturale-e-diplomazia-scientifica/cultura/promozionelinguaitaliana/settimanalinguaitaliana/
[198] Ibid.
[199] Torna in Libia la Settimana della Lingua Italiana nel Mondo (2023) ANSA https://www.ansa.it/ansamed/it/notizie/rubriche/news_dalle_ambasciate_med/2023/10/20/torna-in-libia-la-settimana-della-lingua-italiana-nel-mondo_f7ce4635-a20b-49b8-afdc-5e1581a0b395.html
[200]Ibid.

development, a sense of well-being, and a forum for discussion, creativity, and innovation[201]. Food has a fundamental role in the cultural identities of people and communities on a local and global scale. Moreover, culinary culture is a potent weapon for social inclusion, intercultural communication, and overall sustainable development. Additionally, food systems and practices support biological and cultural variety and are part of humanity's shared history. According to this framework, the Sustainable Development Goals are significantly impacted by the preservation of regional culinary customs and practices[202].

The promotion of Italian cuisine is therefore another asset of Italian and European cultural diplomacy. The 'Settimana della Cucina Italiana nel Mondo' is the initiative created in 2015 to promote quality Italian cuisine and agri-food products abroad. Seminars and conferences, meetings with chefs and cooking courses, tastings and dinners accompany the trade promotion activities. Italian cuisine is also narrated through its projection in art, with films, concerts and photographic exhibitions. The Week also proposes moments of in-depth analysis on highly topical issues: the relationship between food and environmental sustainability, the culture of healthy food, food safety, the right to food, food education, territorial identities and biodiversity[203]. The project, devised and coordinated by the Directorate General for the Promotion of the Country System of the Farnesina, has been developed within a broad working group involving other Italian ministries and the various entities representing Italian cuisine and Italy in the world.

In 2022, Libya joined the celebrations. 'Italy-Libya: cuisine between the two shores of the Mediterranean': this was the title of the evening organised by the Italian Embassy in Tripoli in collaboration with the local ICE Office, dedicated to Italian cuisine and its influences in the Arab culinary tradition[204]. The event wanted to highlight further cultural relations between Italy and Libya. Typical dishes of the Italian gastronomic tradition were prepared, combined with traditional Libyan dishes, enhancing their common specificities. This is a proof of how the strong cultural ties existing between Italy and Libya also extend to the culinary sphere, where several dishes of Italian origin can be found on Libyan tables and have over time become part of the country's culinary tradition[205].

This important event was celebrated for the first time in the Libyan capital after years of instability in the country, in line with the relaunch action pursued by the Italian Embassy to strengthen bilateral

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[201] Culture and food: innovative strategies for sustainable development, Executive Board UNESCO
[202] Ibid.
[203] Italia-Libia. Cucina e Tradizioni del Mediterraneo. Settimana della Cucina Italiana nel Mondo 2023
https://ambtripoli.esteri.it/it/news/dall_ambasciata/2023/11/1139/
[204] Ibid.
[205] Italia – Libia. La Cucina tra le due sponde del Mediterraneo
https://ambtripoli.esteri.it/it/news/dall_ambasciata/2022/12/italia-libia-la-cucina-tra-le-due/

cultural cooperation, which has so far seen the organisation of numerous events in the fields of archaeology and design.

Indeed, a further field of cooperation related to cultural diplomacy is Design with a particular attention to sustainable development. Long-term solutions are produced by sustainable design, which assists societies in securing the welfare of its citizens and environmental balance for future generations. By creating goods that are recyclable, compostable, and, best of all, infinitely reusable, designers help to reduce waste. Additionally, they might develop a manufacturing procedure that eliminates or minimizes carbon dioxide emissions. Climate change and environmentalism are major themes in many of these designs, which address the greatest challenge of our day[206].

The Italian Design Day (IDD) is an annual thematic event organised from 2017 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in collaboration and with the support of the Ministry of Heritage, Cultural Activities and Tourism[207]. The IDD includes a series of promotional events organised by a network of embassies, consulates, Italian cultural institutes and ICE offices abroad. It has established itself as an effective tool promote design and the internationalisation of a strategic industrial sector for Italian exports. Every year, 100 initiatives become the story of Italian design and creativity in the world[208].

In 2023, Italy took part in the Tripoli Urban Expo & Forum. Experts in architecture and engineering, together with other notable figures, convened for a public gathering to deliberate on plans, tactics, and regulations concerning Libya's urban growth. Italy participated in two events: the first devoted to the Mediterranean's Italian architectural legacy, and the second was the seventh iteration of the Italian Design Day. The event had the heading "Illuminating Quality. The Design Energy: Improving People and the Environment." The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is in charge of promoting the yearly theme event, which has a global reach. It involves the entire global network of Italian consulates, Embassies, and Cultural Institutes[209].

In 2023, in Tripoli, a further initiative related to design and architecture was held. "Razionalismo Libico – Italian Rational Architecture in Libya" showcased one of the most significant and distinctive instances of Mediterranean architectural history, a manifestation of a common identity. The goal was to rediscover, preserve, and promote a common historical past since it can only be safeguarded with the help and understanding of local communities. The program also included a discussion of the

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[206] Sustainable Design https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/topics/sustainable-design
[207] Italian Design Day https://italiandesignday.it/about-us/
[208] Ibid.
[209] Italian architectural heritage and Italian Design Day: Italy's dual participation in the Urban Expo from 15 to 16 March, (2023) Libya Herald

restoration of the Islamic madrasa in Dhahra and the mosque in Dorar, which are currently two of the most notable instances of Italian-Libyan collaboration in this field[210].

Eventually, European cultural diplomacy in Libya takes different forms. They range from the support to UN programs to fostering relations with Libyan students and education and cultural institutions to supporting the initiatives of its member states, in particular Italy. Libya is a complex country, with a complicated past and an unstable present. However, the promotion of culture, sustainable development and the strengthening of ties with Europe can be solid foundations for a sustainable future.

CHAPTER 4
ISSUES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS OF EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

European cultural diplomacy is a fairly recent development of European diplomacy. However, although culture is a relatively new addition to the Union's policy portfolio, its actorness in this area has grown significantly in recent years. Furthermore, the EU has developed into a proactive external cultural actor in a number of ways, investing in the creation of a bi- and multilateral diplomacy and using its presence to expand the reach of its emerging cultural space towards neighbouring countries, as well. Cultural diplomacy represents a field rich in opportunities for the EU and its influence on sustainable development. However, its development also presents a series of different issues and has received some criticism. The intricacy of the ongoing evolutionary process and the range of components, people, and sensitivities involved contribute to the challenge's enormity.

1. The issues of competence and funding

Support for the development of EU external cultural action has been widespread thanks to a set of necessary conditions linked to an external environment that offers incentives for engagement, as well. However, the evolution has been restricted by the treaty's limits and member states' worries about the protection of their sovereignty. The first issue of European cultural diplomacy is, therefore, that of competence[211]. Culture continues to be primarily the responsibility of the member states, with the EU playing a supporting role as laid down in articles 6 and 167.3 of the TFEU. Therefore, the willingness of the EU's members to make ongoing investments in this field is likely to determine how far this policy sector may advance. The EU is a multi-governance organization with distinct competences

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[210] Ibid.
[211] C. Carta and R. Higgott (2020), Cultural Diplomacy in Europe, The European Union in International Affairs, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21544-6_10

based on policy areas, decisions are often shared with member states which might have different views. Moreover, given the early stage of development of the field and the shared competence, often the personal views of EU officials can play a major role in determining both change and continuity in the promotion of intercultural communication[212].

Since member states continue to be primarily responsible for culture, with the EU playing a supplemental role, future administrations run the risk of squashing the emerging policy if they reject more integration in such a delicate political area. In fact, opposing perspectives on the place of culture in external interactions do exist and may even come to dominate. EU cultural diplomacy initiatives have worked better towards developing and neighbouring countries, especially the relationship between cultural institutes and cultural attachés, where shared approaches have been tested in the context of intercultural dialogue, capacity building, and development assistance. Cultural diplomacy policies with developed economies such as the US, on the other hand, are frequently characterized by less successful results. In fact, in this instance, more limited interpretations of cultural diplomacy such as self-promotion, cultural display, and competition for the host nation's political, economic, and cultural attention run the risk of underestimating the EU's effect on matters of mutual interest.

Moreover, the complexity of EU spending management represents a further issue. The EEAS oversees foreign policy but does not control the purse strings. Funding for European cultural cooperation and diplomacy is distributed across seven partially overlapping financial instruments and various funds, which are managed by three Commission Directorates-General and a Service. An interservice group has been established, although the primary financier, DG INTPA, rather than the EEAS, is in charge of it[213]. There is little synchronization overall. The different players manage their finances in a somewhat autonomous manner, making it challenging for the European Commission to compile the figures.

As a matter of fact, the Commission encounters difficulties in determining how much it has spent overall on foreign cultural cooperation. The fragmented approach of the Commission hinders the achievement of policy synergies and reduces the EU's global visibility. Additionally, it makes it challenging to coordinate spending and policy with EU Member States. Furthermore, national governments have shown little interest in working with the EEAS and the Commission to coordinate their spending on cultural development and public diplomacy. In developing countries, the limited amount of coordination that occurs is mostly limited to the local level. Even so, most of the

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[212] de Perini, P. (2018). Intercultural Dialogue in EU Foreign Policy. Abingdon: Routledge.
[213] Westlake, M. (2020) The European Union's New Foreign Policy. [edition unavailable]. Springer International Publishing. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/3481136/the-european-unions-new-foreign-policy-pdf

coordination occurs informally and is reliant on the initiative of individual EU and national diplomats[214].

Eventually, the EU and its allies face difficulties as a result of the general lack of coordination. Recipient nations frequently find themselves subject to a variety of EU instruments, each with its own regulations and deadlines. Under the new Multiannual Financial Framework (2021–2027), the Commission has proposed to streamline matters by combining many funding sources into a single Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument[215].

2. Challenges affecting EUNIC and Cultural Institutes

A flaw of the enhanced cooperation in the field of cultural diplomacy can also be detected in the member states' management of cultural institutes. Governments should continue to safeguard cultural institutions' independent status to engage in reciprocal cultural ties and build confidence[216]. However, considering the growing popularity of realpolitik approaches, many governments have recently tried to curtail the autonomy of these institutions and exert control over their operations. This means that rather than advocating the establishment of a new degree of political and administrative control, a strong focus needs to be placed on the coordination and support functions that the EU is proposing to play[217].

Moreover, national cultural institutions such as the British Council, the Goethe-Institut, the Instituto Cervantes, and others are witnessing a gradual loss of influence over their nation's international image due to the rapid advancement of ICT and the ever-expanding flow of digital communications. Of course, their survival in the future is probably dependent on the value of in-person interactions in fields like the promotion and exhibition of the arts and the management of formal credentials in language acquisition. Their involvement in social media or e-learning, however, only makes up a small portion of their role as the primary gatekeepers of a country's image abroad. These platforms have become but a small fraction of unregulated and rapid communications about cultural activities and the EU's discussion on cultural diplomacy has given relatively little attention to digital transformation and ICT[218]. The digital transformation poses a severe danger to the scope, durability, and overall impact of such an approach. European efforts in this fundamental sector which serves as

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[214] Ibid.
[215] Ibid.
[216] Rose, M., & Wadham-Smith, N. (2004). Mutuality, Trust and Cultural Relations. Counterpoint Report.
[217] C. Carta and R. Higgott (2020), Cultural Diplomacy in Europe, The European Union in International Affairs, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21544-6_10
[218] Ibid.

a vital medium for culture in general are undermined by US dominance in ICT through companies like Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple[219].

The stringent restrictions of a digital environment may not always provide an atmosphere of trust and privacy in cross-border online interactions and conversations. While the foundation of diplomatic contacts has historically been enduring interpersonal ties that foster international good-will and understanding, the absence of physical touch in digital contexts inhibits the growth of more meaningful interpersonal ties. A small number of the most recent studies that have tackled this issue (inserire dei riferimenti agli studi cui si fa riferimento) have shown that, indeed, digital interactions can be highly effective in introducing participants to new cultural information. They can reveal cultural preconceptions, encourage curiosity about the customs and cultures of others, and even foster cross-cultural inquiry that results in cross-border human interactions[220].

Although there has been little cooperation with the EU's international cultural strategy and national cultural institutes still focus primarily on promoting their own countries, in recent years, some joint projects between EUNIC and EU delegations have been started (Bolivia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Jordan, Senegal, Sudan, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ukraine). The EU institutions have attempted, though not always successfully, to increase EUNIC's global position and their own involvement in different ways. One such example is the story of the European Culture Houses. The Commission and the EEAS encouraged the cultural institutions to collaborate by establishing European Houses of Culture around the globe in their joint strategy document from 2016. The concept was warmly welcomed by the European Parliament, which also set aside a substantial €2.5 million budget for preparatory measures[221]. However, some other EUNIC members and the powerful Goethe Institute were noticeably less receptive to the idea, objecting to such a high level of European prominence. Instead, they favoured a symbolic understanding of the "Houses". The Commission was compelled to abandon the notion of physical co-location in the face of such resistance. Rather, EUNIC was requested to establish digital European cultural spaces by utilizing the current collaborative approaches. In this case, the cultural boundaries of European institutional entrepreneurship had been reaffirmed[222].

Furthermore, finances are frequently a problem. Since just one in four members are ready to contribute to the EUNIC Cluster Fund, most cooperative projects are tiny. After the European

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[219] Ibid.

[220] Grincheva, N., (2024) The past and future of cultural diplomacy, INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CULTURAL POLICY 2024, VOL. 30, NO. 2, 172–191 https://doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2023.2183949

[221] Westlake, M. (2020) The European Union's New Foreign Policy. [edition unavailable]. Springer International Publishing. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/3481136/the-european-unions-new-foreign-policy-pdf

[222] Ibid.

Commission intervened, the majority of the EUNIC budget is currently covered by an EU subsidy There has also been a lack of national commitment to support the EUNIC secretariat[223].

3. The political situation in the EU member states

An increasing number of national governments are impacted by political unpredictability and the growth of Euroscepticism. The current retreat of liberal ideals in many European nations amid a growing populist-nationalist zeitgeist is a relevant internal weakness.

Hungary and Poland are among the most concerning examples. The new context in which European cultural diplomacy would have to function is the emergence of nationalist and populist rhetoric and politics. The outward-looking attitude of proponents of cultural dialogues, both public and private, in the foreign policies of several EU member states and the EU itself, as well as the EU as an independent foreign policy actor, are directly at odds with these[224].

Three weaknesses can be identified. Firstly, there is a dormant inclination among Member States to pursue independent foreign policies, so undermining the HR/VP, the EEAS, and even the EU. With their historical baggage and sizable and powerful diplomatic apparatuses that may not have fully adapted to the new post-Lisbon reality, this has probably been especially true of the larger Member States. However, this is both a reasonable reality and a tendency that will most likely diminish over time as Member State domestic policies change and adapt[225]. Secondly, there is the incapacity of Member States to reach an agreement among themselves in an atmosphere of consensus, or unanimity, in the Political and Security Committee, the General Affairs Council, and the European Union which leads to a political and institutional paralysis. Thirdly, there is a more straightforward pushback by the Member States against any perceived infringement on intergovernmental prerogatives through the European Council and the President of the European Council[226].

The emergence of the EU as a player in the field is threatened by a series of interconnected causes. The EU has been the perfect target for discourses against globalization, multiculturalism, and devolution of authority. In competitive perspectives of culture as a means of exhibiting domestic output within the confines of restricted cultural diplomacy, the EU finds it difficult to distinguish itself from its member states and to provide value addition. While EU cultural events abroad are

[223] Ibid.

[224] C. Carta and R. Higgott (2020), Cultural Diplomacy in Europe, The European Union in International Affairs, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21544-6_10

[225] Damro, C., Gstöhl, S. and Schunz, S. (2017) The European Union's Evolving External Engagement. 1st edn. Taylor & Francis. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/1478828/the-european-unions-evolving-external-engagement-towards-new-sectoral-diplomacies-pdf

[226] Ibid.

undoubtedly good examples of European cooperation, they frequently involve bringing together distinct national products in a small physical or temporal space. Then, the promise of soft power and its associated culture as a tool influencing international politics appears to be undermined by the return of hard power capabilities as a determinant element forming interactions between states[227].

Moreover, the EU should ignore competitive sectors in the cultural sphere, particularly those pertaining to emerging cultural and economic powers or regions. Other players with different models and narratives occasionally approach regions that recognize the allure of European culture and standards. For instance, the EU and its member states' endeavours to foster ties in higher education and culture with Central Asia barely compare to Russia's position of influence and leadership based on more substantial financial investments, deeper historical and cultural links, and both. Furthermore, accusations of neo-colonialism could resurface if the EU becomes more forceful culturally in the development arena, which would go against the acceptability of its role and actions in third countries, such as the European Neighbourhood with a majority of Muslims[228].

4. The EU and other national and international entities

Throughout the entire process and among all parties involved, coordination is essential at both the local and national levels. The process should engage non-state actors at local and regional levels, such as cities, cultural associations, artists and curators, as well as the UNESCO and the Council of Europe, in addition to governmental entities like ministries and national cultural institutes[229]. By getting involved, these players should contribute to creating a clear picture and preventing acts taken by the EU, Council of Europe, and UNESCO from repeating or overlapping[230].

Indeed, a sense of co-ownership of projects and initiatives is created when all cultural stakeholders are involved from the start in the creation and curation of goods and services, such as film festivals, art exhibitions, fairs, and laboratories[231]. There is not a single model that works for all countries or all regions; instead, diverse approaches and rates are needed. Certain situations, for instance, require that a number of requirements be satisfied before engaging in any kind of cultural activity, such as those pertaining to the security of one's livelihood, education, and basic infrastructure. In other instances, people who would otherwise continue to be marginalized and jobless turn to the creative

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[227] Ibid.

[228] Ada, S. (2018). Foreword. In S. Ada, et al. (Eds.), Rise of Populism and the Crisis of Political Pragmatism. Cultural Policy and Management Research Centre.

[229] Ibid.

[230] Triandafyllidou, A., Szűcs, T. (2017), EU Cultural Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities, Global Governance Programme

[231] Ibid.

and cultural industries as their primary source of income. While a city-level strategy is effective in certain parts of the world, other places should place more of an emphasis on interacting with regional or national players[232].

Co-creation poses significant value challenges as well. It is unclear, therefore, whether the EU's cultural initiatives for growth, mobility, and exchange should be based on shared values or, alternatively, should have a shared set of objectives for cultural creation and aim to create connections and shared ideals. Furthermore, it is important to remember that nations are inherently diverse because they may consist of several regions and frequently welcome native and immigrant minorities. The involvement of diasporas is especially important in this setting.

Finally, but just as importantly, every activity should be accompanied with attention to promotion, active communication, and attention to sustainability. Projects must be carried out for a set amount of time or repeated frequently in order to assess and quantify their effects on community development and relations. To maximize their impact and establish a positive feedback loop, certain audiences outside of the participants should be informed about tangible projects via targeted messaging, both directly and through social media and audiovisuals.

Unfortunately, only European interlocutors and a few previously EU-funded external actors were included in the cultural diplomacy's original mandate, which was to strengthen the EU ability to engage on an equal footing with its partners across with the globe, from national governments, local authorities, civil society organizations, and individual citizens[233]. The community of practitioners and important stakeholders in Brussels has been heavily involved in debate and consultation generally, which runs the danger of undermining ownership and trust in target nations. Furthermore, cultural actors have historically been reluctant to have the public interfere in their affairs. Therefore, imposing a transnational layer of supervision without first undergoing thorough consultations at all levels may be seen as an invasive measure that makes it more difficult to carry out the policy[234].

5. The path looking forward

Internationally, the European Union is highly esteemed, and its favourable perception among non-European audiences is intimately linked to Europe's rich cultural legacy. Member states are also aware of the underutilization of European cultural diplomacy as a supporting factor to domestic policy.

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[232] Ibid.

[233] C. Carta and R. Higgott (2020), Cultural Diplomacy in Europe, The European Union in International Affairs, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-21544-6_10

[234] Ibid.

Furthermore, cultural diplomacy is becoming more and more popular around the globe. USA, Canada, Australia, China, Russia, India, Iran, and many more countries occasionally make significant investments in national initiatives.
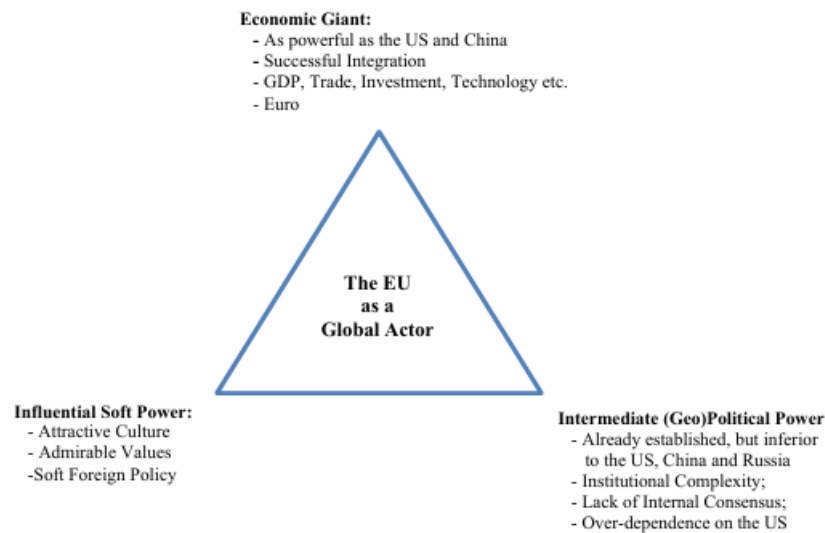
Figure 1 Attributes of the EU's perceived actorness as a global player

Source: EU Global Actorness in a World of Contested Leadership: Policies, Instruments and Perceptions

The 2016 Joint Communication is the best example of the Commission and EEAS's increasingly collaborative approach. The question of what drove these actors' entrepreneurship remains, even though the institutional factor which linked EU supranational bodies, national cultural institutes backed by the foreign and/or cultural ministries of major member states, particularly Italy and civil society actors provided a crucial environment for the development and evolution of EU external cultural engagement. It is possible to argue that ideational causes and material interests are responsible for it.

Cultural actors are motivated, on the one hand, by beliefs about the role that culture may play both inside the EU and outside of it, particularly when it is supported by it. According to these actors, intercultural exchange promoted by the EU can help advance general cooperation within it, but particularly with third countries. This is because the EU can play a different role as a cultural diplomat, valuing exchange and promoting diversity instead of projecting the image of an exclusive

club or homogenous society. Important members of the Commission, the Parliament, and the EEAS all agree on the significance of "co-created" EU external cultural initiatives[235].

Conversely, some proponents of EU external cultural participation are motivated by self-interest. First, some in EU institutions and member states favor this kind of action because it aids in the "branding"[236] of the EU and its member states overseas, hoping to attract audiences in other countries and so facilitate the pursuit of foreign policy goals. In reaction to the growing global soft power competition, they view culture as a tool for advancing national and EU identity-related goals. The member states justify their actions by arguing that they will only benefit from EU assistance if subsidiarity is upheld. Second, there is a compelling case to be made for the development of an external component for EU cultural policies given the commodification of culture within the EU. Those who advocate promoting the EU's cultural and creative industries as a potential growth sector argue that external participation is necessary given the battle for market shares among nations. This viewpoint turns culture into a tool for economic expansion[237].

Ideational and interest-driven rationales coexist and appear to have played a combined role in the recent strong support for the extension of EU foreign cultural activities. Only when a policy is both sufficiently broad to allow for differing justifications and stays inside everyone's comfort zone can such diversity coexist. At this point in their evolution, the EU's foreign cultural policies unambiguously permit this. This also clarifies why the employment of financing programs and dialogues and consequently, incentive-based tactics and persuasion is the central component of the EU's current policies. The unique kind of networked, layered cultural diplomacy previously discussed satisfies member state concerns about subsidiarity while also satisfying the interests of those seeking to present the EU in the traditional sense. The diminishing fuzziness of the boundaries between the various forms of external cultural participation may also be explained by the many constituencies and justifications backing them.

To make the most of this advantage, the Cultural Affairs Committee prepared conclusions which were endorsed by the Foreign Affairs Council in April 2019. By including cultural relations, the conclusions seek to increase the effectiveness of EU foreign policy. Member states are encouraged to become more involved in shared cultural initiatives and projects in third countries, including planning, executing, overseeing, and assessing them. As they had pledged to do in 2016, the

[235] Damro, C., Gstöhl, S. and Schunz, S. (2017) The European Union's Evolving External Engagement. 1st edn. Taylor & Francis. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/1478828/the-european-unions-evolving-external-engagement-towards-new-sectoral-diplomacies-pdf
[236] Ibid.
[237] Ibid.

Commission and the EEAS are requested to assign cultural focal points in EU delegations. Along with strengthening the role of culture, particularly under the CFSP, the Member States, the Commission, and the EEAS are also urged to improve mutual coordination, synergies, and strategic guidance "within their respective spheres of competence and with due regard for the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity"[238]. In November 2019, the Council took up the matter once more. In order to support Member States' efforts in this area, it invited the Commission to create an action plan on the cultural aspect of sustainable development at the EU level. This resolution represents a rare instance of the Council being more ambitious than the Commission in the field of culture[239].

Eventually, with the 2016 Global Strategy and further initiatives, the EU is promoting what could be called "Europeanism"[240]. The world could become harsher and more Westphalian if it fails before its powers and population decline[241]. Concentrating also on the development of the "Culture in External Relations" agenda there is a certain polyvocality in an agenda-setting process that has been heavily influenced by non-state actors, for whom culture has been a crucial stake for a convergence of interests in reshaping a narrative of Europe "in a manner that is somewhat different from the way that national governments elaborate cultural diplomacy"[242]. The policies' multiple voices are just as important as the programs they support. The policy frameworks of the EU can serve as the standard for the adoption of more cosmopolitan principles in cultural diplomacy. The EU continues to advance despite all of the complications and sensitivities previously mentioned because of the shared understanding, which guides its actions.

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[238] Westlake, M. (2020) The European Union's New Foreign Policy. [edition unavailable]. Springer International Publishing. Available at: https://www.perlego.com/book/3481136/the-european-unions-new-foreign-policy-pdf
[239] Ibid.
[240] Ibid.
[241] Ang, I., Isar, Y. R., Mar, P., (2015) Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest?, International Journal of Cultural Policy, 2015Vol. 21, No. 4, 365–381, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10286632.2015.1042474
[242] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

As this thesis draws to a close, it is critical to emphasize the research findings about the impact of European cultural diplomacy on sustainable development. This thesis has examined and highlighted the relationship between EU cultural policies and initiatives and the support for sustainable development in developing nations, beginning with an analysis of the current state of EU cultural diplomacy and the actors involved and through specific examples and a case study.

European cultural diplomacy has been an important vehicle for the implementation of sustainable development policies. By bolstering culture as a link to sustainable social, economic, and human industries, it seeks to advance culture in all of its forms, social cohesion, intercultural understanding, and cooperation. The promotion and funding of cultural activities aims at supporting the economic and social development of the involved communities. In developing countries, the EU has invested relevant resources in the promotion of cultural activities and partnerships with cultural institutions such as EUNIC members and the Anna Lindh Foundation. The establishment of partnerships has been fundamental for the creation of long-standing fruitful relations with foreign countries. It is in line with the goal of sustainable development to strike a balance between the demands of the environment, the economy, and society. It also fosters social cohesion and reciprocal understanding. An example is the EUROMED Audiovisual programme which established new cooperative ventures between European and Mediterranean businesses in the audiovisual sector. The program aimed at encouraging partnerships among radio and television broadcasters on the distribution of their shows and the distribution of films produced by Mediterranean partners and the EU; fostering a renewed appreciation for the region's rich cinematic and audiovisual legacy; facilitating investment and the creation of jobs and wealth within the audiovisual industry.

In this thesis, a particular focus was carried out on Libya. Libya is an interesting country since it has had strong economic ties with the EU for a long time but has experienced high levels of political instability and domestic conflicts. Moreover, Libya has a young population and there is a strong necessity of cultural and educational growth. The actions carried out within the cultural diplomacy of the EU are long-standing and varied. Thanks to the support of UNIMED, the EU conveys support to universities, exchange and capacity-building programmes. Moreover, it provides funding for cultural activities such as archaeological expeditions. The EU has also relied on the initiatives of the UN, particularly UNSMIL and its member states, particularly Italy. Thanks to the investment in cultural activities, the EU has invested in the promotion of sustainable development initiatives which aim at strengthening the country's social and economic framework, by leveraging its rich culture and history.

Although they are many and varied, the framework and actions of cultural diplomacy have received few criticisms. The institutional framework is considered too complex since many different actors are involved in the decision-making process and in the provision of funding, such as the four Directorates-General (EAC, NEAR, INTPA, and TRADE), the EEAS, and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. The role of EUNIC has also been weakened by the decrease of independence of cultural institutes, the ICT revolution and the lack of funding. Moreover, the domestic situation of member states has led to a retreat of liberal ideals and has selected the EU as the perfect target of discourses opposing globalization and multiculturalism. The foreign policies of a number of EU member states, the EU as an independent foreign policy actor, and the outward-looking mindset of proponents of cultural dialogues, both public and private, are directly at contrast with these. However, globally, the EU is seen under a positive light, and the continent's rich cultural heritage plays a crucial role in the positive opinion that non-European audiences hold of it. The underutilization of European cultural diplomacy as a means of promoting home policies is another awareness shared by member states.

Ultimately, it is possible to say that the EU's framework for cultural diplomacy has become stronger and has a greater global influence because of the shared idea that guides its operations. The creation and application of sustainable development initiatives have benefited from the use of cultural diplomacy. Even while there is still a lot of work to be done and the EU needs to address enduring problems like competence, culture is more important than ever as a means of promoting inclusive growth, employment creation, and international trade in creative goods. Furthermore, through intercultural discourse, culture may foster communication both inside and between nations. Thanks to these positive spillovers, the EU could become a stronghold of protection of human rights and cultural diversity, establishing itself as a beacon for other closer or further developing countries.

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