

European Commission DG Education and Culture

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Study of external cooperation of the
European Union and its Member States in
the culture and audiovisual sectors



Final report

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Summary

European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture disclaimer

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The study of external cooperation of the European Union and its Member States in the culture and audiovisual sectors was awarded, following a call for tenders by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, to the Barbier Frinault et Associés - Ernst & Young France consultancy. The gathering and analysis of data took place from January 2003 to February 2004. The summary of the main results of the study is presented below, preceded by a reminder of the study objectives.

1. Subject and objectives of the study

The Directorate General for Education and Culture commissioned a **study and analysis of the external cooperation of the European Union, the fifteen Member States and the three countries of the European Economic Area (EEA)¹ in the culture and audiovisual sectors (ECCAS²) with the aim of developing a Community strategy in this area.** To be more precise, the study presents and analyses the external cooperation in the culture and audiovisual sectors of these States and the European institutions with third countries. New Member States and candidate countries for European Union membership³ are excluded from the category of “third” countries.

The study has several objectives:

- to establish an **inventory**, as complete as possible, of the existing frameworks and programmes/initiatives of the players in external cultural cooperation, via an inventory of public, semi-public and private players⁴ with regard to ECCAS at national and Community level, and of their initiatives, means, strategies and objectives;
- to carry out a **comparative analysis** of the data gathered and to analyse trends concerning organisations, objectives and activity sectors;
- to use this comparative analysis to evaluate the **trends** in a prospective manner: to identify the possibilities for the best possible synergy between the initiatives of Member States and those of the EU, as well as between the differing Community policies, so as to identify the **trends to be retained in the development of a European strategy for external cooperation in the culture and audiovisual areas.**

However, the study encountered a number of difficulties, essentially due to the fact that ECCAS does not constitute a reality as such but rather a component of a broader framework and therefore does not correspond to an easily identifiable involvement approach⁵.

¹ Iceland, Lichtenstein, Norway.

² External cooperation in the Culture and Audiovisual sectors with third countries as defined by the focus of the study, that is to say with non-Member States and non-EU candidate countries, will be shortened to “**ECCAS**” throughout this report. This acronym therefore takes into consideration the geographical perimeters defined by the focus of the study.

³ Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey.

⁴ Players with a purely commercial approach in their involvement in external cultural cooperation are excluded from the scope of the study.

⁵ Member States rarely distinguish their cultural cooperation with other EU Member States from that with non-EU member countries.

Other difficulties followed:

- difficulty in identifying the appropriate individuals to be approached within the national authorities, a result of the fact that **ECCAS activities are rarely entrusted to just one particular service or individual**. Within the national authorities and cultural institutions, ECCAS is performed in the same way as cooperation with other European Union Member States;
- difficulty in gathering factual data: there is **no precise data for ECCAS activities**, and the only possible way to collect “ECCAS only” data was to use **information provided by the players** themselves and most significantly their estimation of the human and financial resources;
- difficulty in **identifying the ECCAS operational frameworks** through those responsible within the national authorities. It transpired that those responsible for international cooperation did not have an exhaustive knowledge of “operational” ECCAS players in their country. It was therefore only possible to consult those players that could be identified;
- lastly, in addition to cooperation with third countries in the culture and audiovisual sectors, the study had to cover, albeit in a non-exhaustive and non-systematic fashion, other aspects of external cultural cooperation, such as education and young people, for example.

2. Main results of comparative analysis

2.1. Comparison of the place and objectives of ECCAS at national and Community level

The national level analysis of ECCAS shows a considerable diversity of situations regarding formalisation, objectives and geographical priorities. Diplomatic and economic necessity, the geopolitical context and the historical connections of each of these countries partly account for these differences. The table below summarises the principal characteristics of the ECCAS strategies identified in the States to which the study applied:

		Formalisation		Competent ministry(ies) (1)		Main objectives	Geographical priorities(2)
				MFA	MC		
Austria		Document outlining strategic approach	YES (25)	X		- To spread national prestige - To play an influential role on the international stage - To promote cultural interaction and diversity	- ME and Mediterranean - Balkans - USA and Canada - Russia and CIS
Belgium (3)	Flemish Community	Document outlining strategic approach	YES (27)		X	- To make the public more open to foreign cultures - To encourage dialogue, exchanges and cooperation between peoples - To promote and increase awareness of national culture in third party countries	- USA and Canada - South Africa - Morocco - Russia
	French Community	Document outlining strategic approach	YES (23)	X		- To promote and increase awareness of national culture in third party countries - To promote the French language - To encourage dialogue, exchanges and cooperation between peoples - To promote cultural diversity	- Maghreb - ACP (French-speaking Africa) - Haiti - Asia (Vietnam) - Latin America (Bolivia, Chile) - USA and Canada
	German Community		YES		X	- To promote and increase awareness of national culture in third countries - To make the public more open to foreign cultures	
Denmark			NO	X	X		- Asia - USA and Canada
Finland			YES (43)	X	X	- To spread national prestige - To promote cultural interaction and diversity - To aid development	- Russia and CIS - Asia (Korea and Japan excepted) - etc.

	Formalisation	Bilateral agreements	Competent ministry(ies) (1)		Main objectives	Geographical priorities(2)
			MFA	MC		
France	Document outlining strategic approach	YES	X	X	- To spread national prestige - To promote cultural interaction and diversity - To aid development	- ACP - ME and Mediterranean - USA and Canada
Germany	Document outlining strategic approach	YES	X		- To spread national prestige, above all in the framework of diplomatic operations - To promote cultural interaction and diversity	- Gulf region - ME and Mediterranean - Balkans - JP, KR, AU, NZ - Russia and CIS
Greece	Work programmes via delegated framework	YES (120)	X	X	- To spread national prestige - Exchanges with regard to conservation of heritage	- ME and Mediterranean - Balkans - USA and Canada - Russia and CIS
Iceland		YES	X	X	- To spread national prestige: increase awareness of national culture - Increase national awareness of the cultures of third countries	- Asia - EU and Canada - JP, KR, AU, NZ
Italy		YES	X	X	- To spread national prestige: promotion of culture and language - Exchanges with regard to conservation of heritage	- South America - USA and Canada
Liechtenstein	Document outlining strategic approach	YES (2)		X	- Increase awareness of national culture, above all in the framework of diplomatic operations	- Switzerland - USA and Canada
Luxembourg	Document outlining strategic approach	YES (26)	X	X	- To inspire artistic creation - to promote cultural identity and heritage - to contribute to the brand image of Luxembourg.	- Asia (China) - Russia - USA
The Netherlands	Document outlining strategic approach	YES	X	X	- To spread national prestige - To promote cultural interaction and diversity	- USA and Canada - Russia and CIS - Asia - South America (Cuba and Caribbean excepted)
Norway		IENO	X	X	- To spread national prestige: increase awareness of national culture - To promote cultural interaction and diversity - To aid development	- USA and Canada - Balkans - Russia and CIS
Portugal		YES (75)		X	- To spread national prestige: promotion of culture and language - Exchanges with regard to conservation of heritage - To promote cultural interaction and diversity	- USA - Portuguese-speaking countries - Asia - Africa
Republic of Ireland	Document outlining strategic approach	YES	X	X	- To spread national prestige	- USA and Canada
Spain	Document outlining strategic approach	YES	X	X	- To spread national prestige: promotion of language and culture - To promote cultural interaction and diversity - To aid development and develop exchanges with regard to conservation of heritage	- South America/ Spanish-speaking countries - ME and Mediterranean - USA and Canada
Sweden		NO	X	X	- To promote cultural interaction and diversity - To aid development	- ACP - Russia and CIS
United Kingdom	Work programmes via delegated framework	YES	X		- To promote cultural interaction and diversity - To play an influential role on the international stage	- ACP - USA and Canada - JP, KR, AU, NZ

Notes:

- (1) in red: Dominant ECCAS ministry
(2) - ACP: Countries of Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific
- USA: United States of America
- CIS: Countries of the Community of Independent States
- JP, KR, AU, NZ: Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand
- ME: Middle Eastern countries
(3) External cultural cooperation in Belgium is a policy domain for each of the Communities

■ Formalisation of external cultural cooperation

ECCAS formalisation cannot be considered to have been carried out in the same way at national and Community institution level.

At Community level, despite the reflection, coordination and formalisation efforts in process within the European Commission, there is still no formalised strategy specifically intended for cultural cooperation with third countries. ECCAS is viewed in terms of geographical zones and forms part of the more global relations of the European Union with a given region. It is formalised in a series of framework documents not focused on ECCAS and which vary in

nature from one geographical zone to the next. This heterogeneous formalisation does not allow for easy identification of ECCAS strategy and activities at Community level. Furthermore, some instances of inconsistencies between framework documents and actual cooperation were identified for one and the same zone.

At national level, ECCAS objectives, on the other hand, almost always form part of an external cultural cooperation framework for all countries. The majority of the national authorities formalise their strategy in a policy orientation document. A number of authorities, however, do not produce a strategic cooperation document specifically intended for cultural issues. Nevertheless, at national level, a high degree of formalisation appears to be a necessary prerequisite for greater clarity of strategy.

■ Relative significance of ECCAS

External cultural cooperation seems to be a limited component as much of foreign policy as of cultural policy in each of the States studied. Furthermore, cooperation with third countries constitutes a considerably less important priority than cooperation between Member States (old and new).

At Community level, ECCAS is the focus of policy initiatives within the framework of the external relations of the European Union and of a small number of concrete initiatives, both as part of the internal cultural programmes partially open to the participation of operators in third countries, and as part of external cultural cooperation programmes (with the ACP countries and those of the southern Mediterranean). Such initiatives are, however, still rare in the light of the possibilities offered by the Treaty: external cultural cooperation is not one of the priorities of the European Union.

■ Complementarity and convergence of objectives

The objectives pursued by the Member States and the Community regarding external cultural cooperation are concentrated on a certain number of common themes, the most common of which are: promotion of national culture, the import and promotion of the cultures of third countries, promotion of cultural exchanges and diversity, and development aid.

The importance given to each of these objectives varies according to whether they are pursued by the Community or the EU and EEA Member States. Some of these objectives are complementary whilst others are strongly convergent:

- The positions of the States and the Community are opposed as regards the aid to development objective: it is of the very highest importance at Community level insofar as it is the reasoning behind a considerable number of ECCAS activities carried out on the initiative of the Commission, within the framework of Community development aid policy. At national level, however, this objective is cited less than other objectives.
- The most important objective for the main national decision makers is the promotion of national culture abroad. This objective, on the contrary, rarely features in the framework ECCAS documents of the Community.
- With regard to other objectives, the degree of importance allocated at national and Community level is convergent: the promotion of exchanges and cultural diversity through interaction between cultures is an objective that has received an increasing amount of attention over the last decade, as much from the Community as from the Member States of the EU and EEA.

2.2. Comparison of instruments, players and means on a national and Community level

■ Geographical orientation

At national level, the definition of geographical priorities is developed in accordance with objectives that are often set for all countries regarding external cultural relations whereas, on a Community level, geographical priorities govern the chosen strategy concerning the development of cultural relations.

Analysis of the attention given to each geographical zone by the main decision makers within the States studied, and at Community level has permitted the identification of the main points of convergence:

- The ACP countries and the southern Mediterranean and Middle East countries seem to constitute a strategic and political priority for ECCAS at national and Community level. Strong, effective simultaneous execution through numerous initiatives at national and Community level reinforce the priority character of the countries of the southern Mediterranean. Regarding the ACP countries, effective execution is less important for national players.
- On the other hand, ECCAS seems to be well developed, for most of the States studied, with the countries of North America, whilst few initiatives are launched at Community level.
- Lastly, ECCAS with Latin America, the countries of the former USSR, Russia and the Balkans is only developed by a small number of EU and EEA Member States. At Community level, it does indeed figure in some policy initiatives but remains relatively low-key.

■ Types of ECCAS activity

A review of the most common types of involvement at Community level on the one hand, and at national level on the other, leads to the conclusion that there is a relatively high degree of complementarity.

The most common type of activity at national level, consisting in the organisation of cultural events in order to promote national cultures is in fact relatively uncommon at Community level, insofar as it is not one of the ECCAS objectives. However, the organisation of events to promote the cultures of third countries in Europe is supported by Community programmes, whilst this type of involvement is less frequent at national level for the States studied.

Conversely, the most common types of involvement at Community level, and which are less common at national level, concern the stimulation of artistic creation in third countries and the developing of talent in this area, as well as the exportation of know-how, with the main objective being cooperation in development.

Some types of activity are put into practice both at national and Community level. Those that are involved here are generally those that follow a policy approach of promotion of exchanges, mutual understanding and cultural diversity, objectives common to both levels, in particular the organisation of exchanges of artists and exchanges in the field of education. The organisation of seminars and conferences, frequently found at national level, are, however, less common at Community level.

■ Operational methods

The Community generally intervenes via programmes leading to external cultural cooperation activities following the publication of a call for tenders. At national level for the states studied, however, interventions in the form of projects and one-off activities seem to be preferred.

Procedures for follow-up and evaluation of external cultural cooperation activities are more elaborate at European level. All EU programmes must be subject to internal or external evaluation. At national level, procedures of this type were only identified for a small percentage of the players concerned.

■ Cultural areas covered

The analysis of the priority areas firstly shows a common priority, identified both at Community and national level, for the cinema and audiovisual sectors.

In addition, analysis leads to the conclusion that there is a relatively high degree of complementarity in terms of priority areas of culture at Community and national level.

The areas less frequently considered as important at national level are precisely those that are the focus of a large number of initiatives at Community level. The most significant areas concerned are conservation of heritage and cultural areas such as education, research and support to civil society as a whole. Conversely, the areas that constitute a priority at national level for the States studied (performing arts, visual arts, music) are those that are less commonly the focus of ECCAS activities at European Union level.

This complementarity can be explained mainly by the nature of objectives pursued through ECCAS activities at national and Community level. As stated previously, States look to promote their national cultures and therefore place the emphasis on the sectors for which their heritage, artistic wealth and know-how are of the highest quality. At Community level, on the other hand, the emphasis is placed on the objectives of cooperation and development. This is most significantly reflected by activities involving the transfer of know-how in the area of heritage conservation and other cultural areas (mainly education, science and civil society).

■ Decision makers and operational players

The decision makers are the national authorities responsible for Foreign and/or Cultural Affairs in each of the States. When united in the Council, they also play the role of decision maker in the external cultural cooperation of the European Union. The European Parliament co-legislates for the adoption of programmes and the means allocated to external cultural cooperation (European Development Fund excluded). The Commission services responsible for external relations and development play a specific strategic role, as they assure the drafting –along with the third countries– of strategic documents that set out in concrete terms the regional and bilateral relations with the European Union.

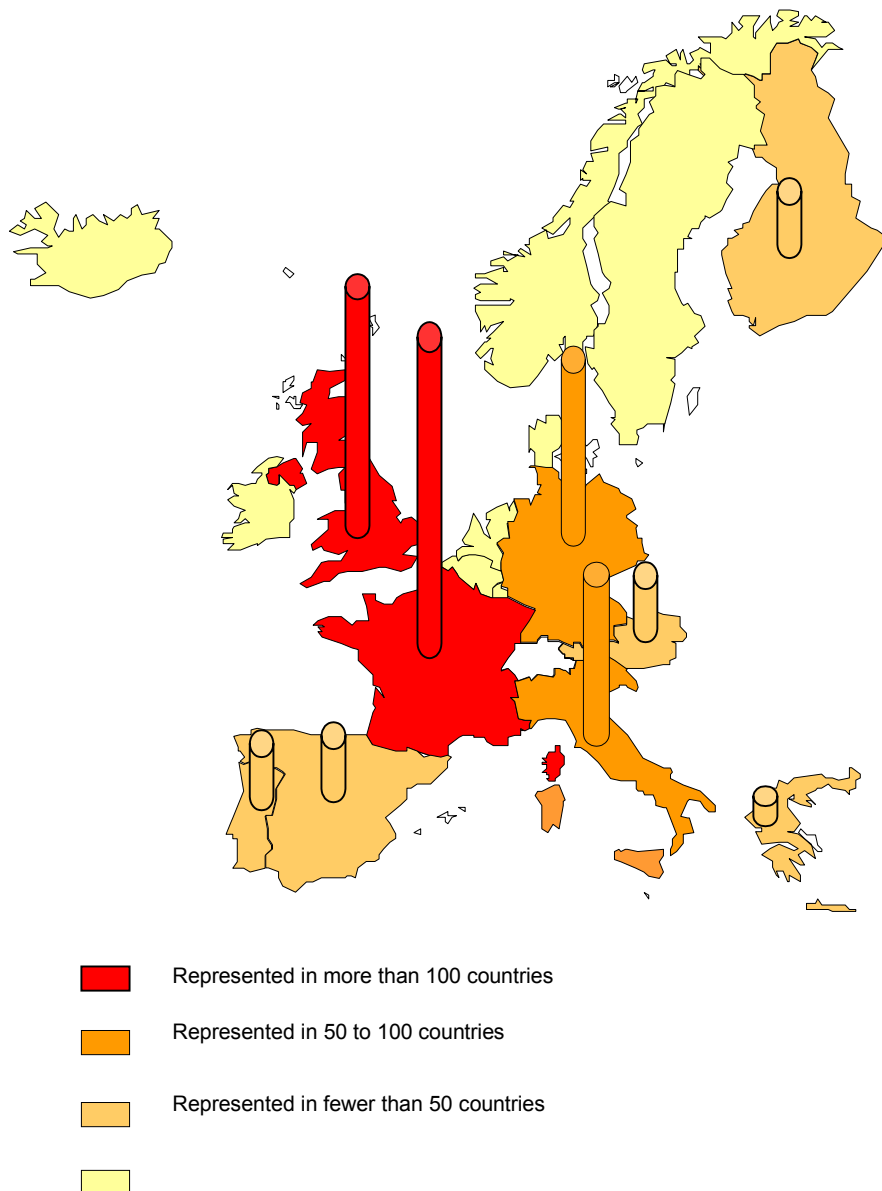
On the operational level, an “atomisation” of players (i.e., players are spread out) is as much apparent at Community level as at national level for the countries studied.

- Several Directorates General of the European Commission are responsible for definition, operation and follow-up of programmes. The Commission delegations in third countries will progressively take over the management of virtually all external aid (intra-ACP funds excluded).

- In the same way, at national level practical ECCAS operations involve numerous players. They greatly vary in status (public organisations, associations, private organisations); stand-alone organisations and those forming part of a network; show considerable variety in activity areas (cultural, audiovisual, international, development aid), and have greatly differing means at their disposal.

Moreover, at Community level there is no network-type player as it is the case at national level. Such cultural activity organisations in third countries⁶ represent a means of relaying cultural activity for nine of the States studied. They complement embassy activities. With regard to Commission delegations in third countries, they do not have the function of representing the European Union from a cultural point of view.

Number of player-networks identified abroad



⁶ Examples: Network of French cultural institutes (France), Goethe Institute (Germany), Cervantes Institutes (Spain), etc.

■ Financial resources

The scarcity of available quantitative and qualitative financial data does not allow any comparative judgement on the sums engaged at national and Community level for ECCAS.

At both levels, the sums vary a great deal from one project to the next, and are relatively insignificant.

Similarities are apparent between the national and Community levels in the discrepancy between the lack of allocated resources and the ECCAS objectives adopted, essentially within the framework of development aid.

Some differences can nonetheless be identified:

- The cinema and heritage sectors are the areas that are allocated most funds at Community level: they are aspects of the main objectives of development aid and promotion of the cultures of third countries. At national level, they do not appear to be allocated the largest public budgets: the “promotion of natural cultures” objective is pursued by cultural players that devote more attention to the organisation of performing-arts related events.
- At Community level, the budgets allocated to cultural activity programmes with third countries and to the delegations remain insignificant compared to the budgets available for some significant national culture players and most of all the “cultural relay” organisations in third countries. By way of illustration, the Cervantes Institute, the principal Spanish organisation for external cultural cooperation, has at its disposal an annual budget of €17 million. By comparison, the available data at Community level seems to indicate that the size of the European Union ECCAS budget is somewhere around €20 million.

2.3. Player expectations with respect to the European Union

■ Analysis of national player expectations concerning concrete actions at Community level

Information not available

The study was able to identify four types of expectations:

- Firstly, the main expectations of ECCAS players seem to involve the improvement of what is currently available:
 - o better active use of European and national networks in third countries,
 - o better coordination of activities already under way,
 - o simplification of administrative procedures.
- The encouragement and support of common activities carried out by EU and EEA Member States was often cited by the players consulted. This requirement is divided between three different areas. The first is focused on logistic and financial support at Community level for projects and activities carried out jointly by a number of EU and EEA Member States. The second, on the setting up of an efficient information system on ECCAS activities led by EU and EEA States. The last relates to common involvement in cultural events in third countries (E.g., “Europe week”).

- Only a small number of players refer to the establishment of new types of organisation such as “Europe Houses” in third countries or a “European Coordination Office” to contribute to the coordination of the various activities of EU and EEA Member States with regard to ECCAS.
- In addition, a small minority of players would like to see the foundation of a new European programme to encourage the practice of transnational cultural cooperation activities with third countries. Such a programme could include diagnosis and need identification aspects, support for common and interdisciplinary (culture/education/training) projects and for those intending a reciprocal learning process between Member States and third countries.

■ Analysis of national player expectations regarding strategy initiatives at Community level

The national authorities and some key ECCAS players emphasise the secondary character of Community competence in cultural areas. The expectations they express with regard to Community policy initiatives are consequently rather limited. The main priority seems above all to concern intra-Community cultural cooperation.

Three main potential areas for the development of an ECCAS-based Community initiative can be distinguished:

- The preservation and promotion of certain European cultural values on the international stage, and above all the spreading of the founding concepts (Human Rights, rule of law, etc.), the respect of plurality in European cultures, the encouragement of cultural diversity and the promotion of interaction between cultures.
- The support and coordination of wide-ranging activities common to a number of EU and EEA Member States in the area of cultural cooperation with third countries.
- The recognition of culture as a “tool” to be applied to other policies such as development aid policy and foreign policy.

2.4. Guidelines for a European strategy in terms of ECCAS

The juxtaposition of expectations on the part of players and the areas of complementarity and convergence between national and Community level underpins the establishment of guidelines for a more sustained action in terms of external cultural cooperation at Community level.

2.4.1. Formalisation of a community strategy in terms of external cultural cooperation

■ A single strategy document

External cultural cooperation is not governed by any single document covering the Community's objectives at Community level.

Such a document would facilitate an interdisciplinary view of Community culture and the audiovisual initiatives conducted in each of the regions of the world. These political initiatives are currently confirmed in numerous documents that involve regional or bilateral cooperation with the various geographical areas and are expressed by concrete initiatives.

Such a document would therefore allow the formalisation of a **community strategy in terms of ECCAS** and thus ensure better coherence of the status given to culture in existing framework documents.

Such a document would furthermore ensure better overall follow-up of Community action in terms of external cultural cooperation and would therefore contribute to reinforcing its readability.

A single document covering the objectives pursued in terms of cultural Community cooperation within the framework of European Union external relations, with developing countries on the one hand and industrialised countries on the other hand, would improve readability and hence better visibility of Community action in terms of ECCAS.

2.4.2. Presentation of the possible applications of such a strategy

- **First major approach: guidelines for reinforcement of complementarity within the framework of the development cooperation policy between ECCAS at national level and Community action**

The objectives pursued by national strategies in terms of ECCAS and those pursued at Community level seem to complement each other.

The main objective of national authorities is the promotion of national culture, an objective that is not being broached at Community level.

Similarly, initiatives at Community level tend to be aimed at supporting artistic creation in third countries, at the promotion of local cultural industries, of know-how and the promotion and dissemination of third country culture in Europe. These objectives are recognised as important by all Member States, but are rarely the subject of concrete action.

In addition, Community initiatives aimed at these objectives in terms of external cultural cooperation are essentially part of the policy framework of development aid, which is firmly established at Community level.

It thus seems that reinforcement of the cultural part of development aid policy, which has as its objective the safeguarding, development and dissemination of third country culture can be envisaged.

It would allow:

- **to reinforce the complementarity of EU and EEA Member States objectives and those of Community action;**

- to develop cultural cooperation with developing countries by relying on Community expertise without encroaching on national priorities and prerogatives.

The evolution of the role played by culture in the objectives of the development aid policy **would reinforce the complementarity between the activities of EU/EEA States and those of the Community**: comparative analysis has indeed shown the priorities and frequency in terms of types of contributions for ECCAS and the cultural areas concerned to be complementary.

In this way, such a shift of objectives would be accompanied by the quantitative and qualitative development of support actions for artistic creation and/or audiovisual production in third countries, of support for the local dissemination of cultural goods and services, together with the organisation of third countries' cultural events in Europe. These actions would complement cultural events in the field of performing and plastic arts (which usually involve national artistic creations), more frequently organised by cultural players in EU and EEA Member States. The common priority granted to the audiovisual sector could thus lead to a combination of initiatives in this matter.

In addition, **complementarity in terms of geographical areas would be reinforced**: countries in Asia and North America are the regions that are most frequently the focus of ECCAS activities carried out by local players. ACP countries are a confirmed priority target for national authorities, but operating players are in fact less active there than in Asia and North America. In South America and the Mediterranean, ECCAS activities are relatively well developed in the majority of Member States; Community activities would in that case not really complement what is being done at national level, but rather reinforce it and accompany, through a convergence effect, contributions by Member States.

This reinforcement is one possible axis of development for a formalised interdisciplinary strategy. It could consist of:

- increasing awareness of Commission services responsible for negotiating Country Strategy Papers and national and regional Indicative Programmes in order to encourage third countries to provide greater visibility to cultural projects and thus establish an identical focus for all bilateral and regional relations in this matter, in compliance with a single strategy,
- better promotion and communication involving existing programmes such as the ACP cinema support programme, or Euromed programmes,
- greater visibility of opportunities offered by external cooperation programmes that are not specifically cultural, in order to benefit from support for projects in the culture and audiovisual sectors,
- new initiatives with Asian and South American countries similar to those currently implemented with the ACP and the countries of the southern Mediterranean and by taking into account the priority granted by national authorities of the States studied to the development of cultural relations with Asia, and China in particular.

These guidelines are clearly feasible since the texts defining external cooperation between the Community, its Member States and third countries allow for it, in particular:

- Article 151 of the Treaty
- Article of the Cotonou Agreements entitled "Cultural Cooperation"

- Regional and sub-regional agreements with South America, which include articles dealing with “Cooperation in the audiovisual area” and “Cooperation in the cultural area”
- Bilateral agreements with the countries of the southern Mediterranean, which include an article on “Cultural Cooperation”
- European Commission communication: COM/2003/0399 for Southeast Asia.

■ **Second approach: guidelines that make use of the convergence of the objectives of reinforcement of intercultural interaction and promotion of exchanges between cultures**

International events the past ten years and more particularly those of 11 September 2001 have oriented the objectives displayed by national authorities in terms of cultural cooperation with third countries. Ever since, the objectives of increasing intercultural exchanges, encouragement of interaction between cultures and promotion of cultural diversity have been more regularly affirmed. It is all about increasing mutual understanding.

The expectations of the players presented above confirm this evolution: the need to reinforce the cultural dimension of diplomatic relations has greatly increased over the past few years. Better mutual knowledge encourages dialogue and facilitates relations. Culture would thus no longer merely be considered as a “sector of activity” in foreign relations, and would play a fuller role from a geopolitical viewpoint.

The joint initiative of the EU Member States at Community level of the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for Dialogue among Cultures fits into this framework. It shows a **convergence of objectives involving the development of intercultural dialogue and the promotion of cultural diversity at national and Community level.**

The value of the Community contribution in the area of culture is particularly evident in this context. Respect for cultural diversity and intercultural interaction indeed make up the founding principles of the European framework. The Community level thus benefits from irrefutable experience in conducting intercultural dialogue and building bridges between diverse cultures. Therefore Community action would support the priority granted by all concerning the need to promote cultural diversity and to encourage intercultural dialogue, resulting in better mutual understanding.

External cultural cooperation should thus go further than just cultural and audiovisual areas.

The Community would provide an added value by encouraging intercultural dialogue and initiatives aimed at promoting cultural diversity and the respect of the identity of each culture.

More concretely, the European Community could still further encourage inter-State initiatives and joint projects with third countries concerning problems of intercultural dialogue, promotion and respect of cultural diversity.

■ **Third approach: guidelines to stimulate national initiatives in the framework of Community programmes**

Internal Community programmes in the culture and audiovisual areas (namely Culture 2000, Youth and Media) open up participation to players in third countries, as “silent” partners in

projects, with no Community funding. This option does not seem to be well exploited: few projects integrating third country participation are submitted and few are accepted.

The European Community could, for example, encourage activities common to several Member States in the area of cooperation in the cultural and audiovisual sectors, launched by national public authorities and/or major cultural players. It could provide special support to them and play a coordinating role in their implementation. These projects could associate third countries and take place in Member States of the European Union/EEA countries but also elsewhere.

More communication concerning the opportunities provided by internal programmes would make it more visible to cultural players in the EU and EEA Member States and could prompt them to set up projects integrating players from third countries.

The European Union could reinforce this role of fostering the emergence of innovative, large-scale inter-Member States projects in the cultural and audiovisual sectors, as it does for other areas.

■ **Fourth approach: guidelines to reinforce coordination and information activities**

Commission delegations very rarely play a cultural relay role for the European Union in third countries, even if currently they are poised to play a greater role in the management of actions in this area.

At national level, players in third countries mainly endeavour to promote their national culture.

The Community could provide an added value via Commission delegations by better disseminating information on European cultural diversity.

On the other hand, the Community added value could also be provided by initiating and coordinating joint projects around values shared by EU and EEA Member States (democracy, Human Rights). Delegations could boost these initiatives.

This reinforced role for delegations is envisaged in all geographical areas.

Commission delegations could:

- accentuate their role of relaying information on the European Union and the cultures it encompasses to third countries;

- be a proposal force in order to multiply joint initiatives by players in Member States active in third countries around shared values within the European Union.

2.4.3. Operational recommendations

The gathering of data on external cooperation of the European Union in the areas of culture and the audiovisual met with some obstacles that motivate the formulation of operational recommendations to be envisaged independently or jointly with previously formulated recommendations. They were often mentioned by those consulted.

■ Reinforcement of communication and flow of information in terms of ECCAS at Community level

Initiatives in terms of ECCAS are the concern of a variety of players within the European Commission, spread over several General Directorates. Beyond the relatively recent creation of two inter-service “culture and development” and “cultural diversity” groups, relations between these officials are not necessarily or systematically formalised and, if they exist, are more of a limited and informal nature. In addition, no consolidated information seems to exist on the subject.

The identification of projects of a cultural nature involving or aimed at third countries in non-specifically culturally oriented Community programmes has proved difficult. Inter-service cooperation must hence contribute to increased transparency on actions conducted to improve their value and coherence.

Similarly, it appeared that cultural initiatives by Commission delegations, often original and visible in third countries, are ill-known by Community officials and that there too, no consolidated information seems to exist on the subject.

The forming of inter-service groups between officials of the various General Directorates concerned would permit the sharing of information on ECCAS initiatives and would facilitate, over time, improved coordination of initiatives.

In addition, a system for uploading information by project managers, in particular in the delegations, and circulating of this information within the Commission would permit better communication on cultural events organised by delegations.

■ Information watch of the ECCAS conducted by national authorities in Member States

The study has allowed us to identify the main decision makers and external cooperation players in the culture and audiovisual sectors for each of the EU and EEA Member States. These players also implement projects in the framework of Community programmes.

Moreover, it has underlined the limitation of existing financial information on external cultural cooperation between EU Member States and third countries.

This is why a more systematic follow-up of the strategy of the main players, their objectives and means could be envisaged.

It would allow:

- in the beginning, to reinforce communication between national players (national authorities and major cultural players) and Community officials;

- then, later, focus the Community strategy defined according to guiding policies envisaged previously on better complementarity, convergence or coordination in accordance with the evolution of political initiatives and players' priorities at national level.

2.4.4. Conclusions

The implementation of the suggested avenues for action and the accompanying guiding as well as more operational recommendations can be envisaged either separately and gradually, or jointly.

In principle, existing legal and operational instruments at Community level permit their materialisation.

Taking them into account, however, depends on the will of the studied States, and the political will to encourage concrete cultural Community action.