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The European network on cultural
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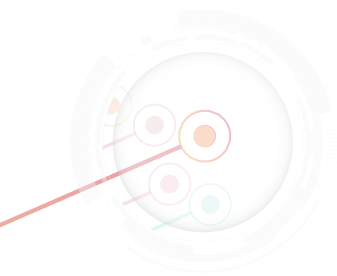
Cultural Policy
TRACKER

Culture 2024: A Year of Policy Transformation



content

<i>GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens</i>	3
<i>Pravali Vangeti</i>	5
<i>Isabel Verdet</i>	9
<i>Erminia Sciacchitano</i>	14
<i>Malaya del Rosario</i>	19



editorial

As 2024 draws to a close, it is with great pride that I introduce the final issue of the **ENCATC Cultural Policy Tracker** for this year. This edition not only reviews the significant strides made in cultural policy at international and European level but also reflects on the challenges that continue to shape our shared mission.

This year, the European scene has drastically changed with a new College of Commissioners, a new Commissioner for culture overseeing the newly combined portfolio of Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture, and Sport, and a new European Parliament with a highly renovated CULT Committee.

At the international level, we have witnessed a remarkable confluence of global efforts to elevate culture's role in addressing critical issues such as climate change, conflict, and digital transformation. The G7 in Italy, the G20 in Brazil, the COP21 in Baku, and the Summit of the Future in NY has they have marked a historic moment for our sector. These major gatherings have demonstrated a growing acknowledgment of culture as a transformative force for sustainable development. More specifically, from the corridors of UNESCO to the deliberations at the G7 and G20, culture has been at the forefront of multilateral discussions. Italy's leadership at the G7 emphasized the ethical dimensions of artificial intelligence in cultural industries and the resilience of cultural heritage in the face of climate challenges. Meanwhile, UNESCO's initiatives, such as the operational framework for culture-based climate action at COP29, exemplify the alignment of cultural policy with urgent global priorities.



editorial

Amidst these advancements, the year has also highlighted the complexities of cultural diplomacy and resources in terms of finances and people. As Malaya del Rosario eloquently explores, instrumentalizing culture can either empower or constrain artistic expression, depending on how funders' agendas intersect with creative intentions. Striking this balance remains a key challenge for cultural managers worldwide.

ENCATC remains committed to supporting our members and our cultural management and policy community in navigating this unpredictable future. By fostering knowledge exchange, advocating for fair practices and policies, and connecting stakeholders across disciplines and sectors, we aim to equip cultural policymakers and practitioners with the critical thinking and knowledge to drive meaningful change.

As we prepare for 2025, **ENCATC is proud to align its flagship Congress in Barcelona with the MONDIACULT Conference 2025.** Let us continue to champion culture as both a public good and a human right, both a cornerstone of sustainable societies. Together, we can turn the challenges of today into the opportunities of tomorrow.

Wishing you a joyous end to the year and a fruitful start to 2025.

Yours sincerely,

GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens
ENCATC Secretary General



Culture on the Global Stage: Trajectories for Multilateralism

Pravali Vangeti

Project Coordinator, Culture Sector, UNESCO

As 2024 concludes, the year has emerged as a pivotal moment in the global cultural policy landscape. A confluence of initiatives, agreements, and milestones spearheaded by the UN and other international organizations have underscored the interplay between culture, sustainability, and resilience. These developments, albeit diverse in nature, collectively give us an insight into the role of culture in the post 2030 development agenda.

UNESCO's Leading Role in Cultural Policy Advancement

As the UN specialized agency with a dedicated mandate on culture, UNESCO has played a pivotal role in advancing cultural policies. The year commenced with the **Global framework to strengthen Culture and Arts education**, adopted unanimously by the Member States at the World Conference on Culture and Arts Education, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. This framework emphasizes the interdisciplinary nature of culture and arts education, urging closer collaboration between ministries of education and culture. By aligning these efforts with broader education reforms, UNESCO aims to strengthen informal learning pathways and foster community-driven initiatives. Furthermore, the pandemic has highlighted the potential of arts education to enhance well-being, promote active citizenship, and encourage creative problem-solving. These measures, if implemented effectively, can recalibrate education systems globally to address societal challenges while safeguarding cultural heritage.

Emergency Preparedness for Cultural Protection

Global crises and conflicts in 2024 placed a renewed emphasis on cultural emergency preparedness. Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the 1954 Hague Convention, UNESCO reinforced and/or expanded its protection of cultural heritage in conflict zones such as Iraq, Palestine, Ukraine, and Lebanon through the Heritage Emergency Fund.

The other normative instruments of culture, i.e., the cultural *Conventions* of the organization were ratified increasingly, reinforcing their role as platforms for global cooperation. In 2024, Nauru ratified the *1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*, as the 196th States Party to the Convention; the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ratified the *2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, joining as its 183rd States Party; and Sao Tome and Principe ratified the *2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions* along with San Marino which completed its accession, bringing the Convention's strength to 158 States Parties.

Integrating Culture into Climate Action

This year also witnessed active global advocacy on the role of culture for climate action at the multilateral level. At COP29, UNESCO's role as the Lead Knowledge Partner facilitated a High-Level Ministerial Dialogue on Culture-Based Climate Action, which culminated in the operational framework for the Group of Friends of Culture-Based Climate Action (GFCBCA). This initiative, building on its 2023 inception, now encompasses 40 state parties and 25 knowledge partners, creating a robust platform to align cultural advocacy with environmental strategies.

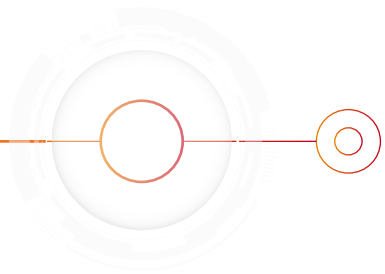
Culture in the Sustainable Development Discourse: Bridging Gaps

Despite these significant advances and the tangible contribution of culture to various domains, it has been widely missing from the sustainable development discourse. At the outset of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, there were concerted efforts from the sector to have culture recognized as both a stand-

alone goal and a transversal tool for achieving the goals. However, this milestone was not achieved and indeed, the culture sector is currently referenced in only 1 of the 169 targets explicitly. This omission translates to tangible consequences, such as limited funding for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs), and lack of qualitative and quantitative data on culture's impact. As we near the end of the current framework, there is tremendous potential to address this gap and chart a new course for the sector. Complimenting UNESCO's campaigning in this regard, countries have overtly expressed their support to positioning culture as a standalone goal in the post-2030 development agenda at previous multilateral discussions including at the [G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration](#) as well as in the [Ministerial Declaration of the UNESCO MONDIACULT Conference](#) in September 2022. This year, building on that momentum, the most advanced economies of the world came together to advocate for integrating culture into social and economic policies at the [G7 Naples Ministerial Declaration](#), "Culture, common good of humanity, common responsibility". The Declaration closely aligned itself to UNESCO's normative instruments in the field of culture, referencing each of the cultural Conventions, and paid special attention to the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural property.

Following suit, UNESCO further supported the Culture working group as an institutional Knowledge Partner under Brazil's presidency at the G20 this year, addressing key priorities of the sector. Diversity, equitable access to cultural goods and services, and cultural participation were identified as a catalyst for social inclusion. Concurrently, culture's evolution in the digital environment and the need for defined legal frameworks to protect artists' rights were discussed prominently, also linking to the need for enhancing creative economy and livelihoods. Preservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage and memory, one of the three pillars of UNESCO's mandate on culture, was the last of the priorities discussed, resulting in the [Salvador da Bahia Declaration of the G20 Ministers of Culture](#).

This growing support for culture from high-level reflections alongside UNESCO's ongoing multilateral efforts led to the historic recognition of culture as an integral component of sustainable development in the "[Pact for the Future](#)" adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the United Nations General Assembly in September, 2024. While falling short of designating culture as a standalone

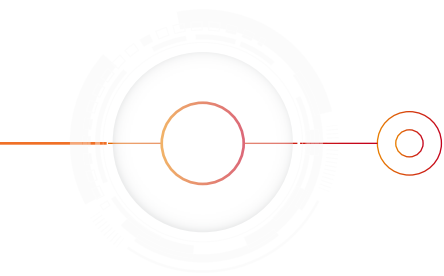


goal, the Pact marks the first explicit mention of culture as an action point in any development agenda. Action 11 of the document calls for the integration of culture into economic, social and environmental development policies and strategies, and necessitates proportional public investment for its implementation. It calls for enhanced international cooperation particularly in the framework of restitution of cultural properties and reiterates the need for intercultural dialogue to strengthen social cohesion.

The Road Ahead: MONDIACULT 2025 and Beyond

The advocacy for culture as a 'global public good' continues from UNESCO's MONDIACULT 2022 to its next edition in 2025, gains pace for its role as a powerful indicator in global governance. The thematic priorities set for MONDIACULT 2025—spanning cultural rights, digital transformation, cultural economy, climate action, and heritage preservation—reflect the ongoing evolution of multilateral cultural policies, and demonstrate the concerted efforts of UN agencies, regional bodies, and national governments in ensuring that culture remains a cornerstone of sustainable development in the years to come.

2024 has demonstrated the potential of culture as a cornerstone of resilience and a transformative force in addressing global challenges. Continued advocacy, investment, and data-driven approaches will be essential in shaping a more inclusive, resilient and sustainable future.



Tracking international cultural policy reports in 2024

Isabel Verdet

Research Manager, ENCACT

The year 2024 has been marked by a proliferation of insightful publications addressing various facets of cultural policy and international cultural affairs. This annotated bibliography presents a curated selection of significant works, organized thematically to highlight prevailing trends and discussions within the field. Emphasis is placed on documents produced by European Union bodies, intergovernmental organizations, and prominent cultural networks, offering professionals a comprehensive overview of the year's key contributions.

Cultural Associations are Ready for Digitalisation

David Ocón and Lluís Bonet's *Enhancing ASEAN-EU Relations through Cultural Cooperation: Realities and Unexplored Potential* provides an in-depth analysis of the cultural ties between ASEAN and the EU. The report highlights historical collaborations, explores existing challenges, and proposes strategies for harnessing cultural diplomacy to foster mutual understanding. These insights are particularly valuable for policymakers working to strengthen intercultural dialogue between these regions.

This theme is reinforced by the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in its report *How Do We Navigate Cultural Diplomacy?*, which offers a comprehensive exploration of evolving strategies in cultural diplomacy. The report highlights the interplay between traditional practices and innovative digital tools, showcasing

how they can be used to bridge cultural divides. It emphasizes the importance of collaborative networks and grassroots initiatives in fostering mutual understanding and resolving cultural conflicts.

In a complementary discussion, *Rethinking Cultural Diplomacy: Insights from ASEF LinkUp Webinar* – in collaboration with ENCATC – reflects on the themes and conclusions from a series of dialogues with cultural practitioners and diplomats. This publication focuses on the challenges and opportunities of cultural diplomacy in a rapidly changing global context, addressing the role of technology, virtual exchanges, and sustainable development goals in fostering international collaboration.

The publication *Measuring Culture's Impact in Development Cooperation - A Practical Guide* by the Practitioners Network for Development Cooperation offers a groundbreaking framework for assessing the impact of culture within development cooperation programmes and projects. This guide is the result of a two-year effort to develop a common methodology for monitoring, evaluation, and advocacy across the Members of the Thematic Working Group on Culture and Development within the Practitioners' Network (PN). The guide synthesizes insights from a wide-ranging qualitative study and incorporates feedback from PN Members, including AECID, AICS, the British Council, GIZ, and the Goethe-Institut. Key elements of the research include a critical review of existing debates on culture's role in sustainable development, an evaluation of PN Members' cultural programmes, and an exploration of measurement frameworks used by leading organizations such as UNESCO, OECD, and UCLG.

— Culture as a Public Good and Global Challenges

The concept of culture as a public good is addressed in IFACCA's report, *Culture as a Public Good: Navigating its Role in Policy Debates*. The document seeks to start an inclusive conversation that reminds us of culture's power and strength in difference, as we approach milestones that will help frame and reinforce its position. It is not intended to resolve or offer a universal definition of culture as a public good. It is also complemented with an overview on definitions of public good in economic and social terms; as well as a series of considerations and recommendations.

Culture Action Europe's *State of Culture 2024* complements this perspective by providing a broad overview of the cultural sector across Europe, focusing on sustainability, digital transformation, and policy coherence. These findings offer a roadmap for cultural institutions seeking to adapt to modern challenges.

The CHARTER project's contributions, particularly the report *Dynamics and Future Scenarios for the Cultural Heritage Sector*, further expand the discussion. It highlights how climate change, the shift toward a circular economy, and digital transformation are shaping the cultural heritage sector. The accompanying CHARTER Booklets (1, 2, and 3) summarize four years of research and provide actionable insights into profiling heritage practices, improving education and training, and understanding sectoral dynamics.

Cultural Policy and Technological Advancement

The report *Considerations regarding the implementation of the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act* by Culture Action Europe and the Marcel Hicter Association critically examines how artificial intelligence impacts the cultural sector. It addresses ethical considerations, opportunities, and challenges, offering practical guidance for aligning AI policies with cultural sector needs.

On its turn, the report *Digital Culture: A Review of Evidence and Experience, with Recommendations for UK Policy, Practice, and Research* – authored by Susan Oman and published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of the UK – provides a broader analysis following recommendations from the 2021 'Boundless Creativity' report, published by DCMS and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), to commission further research to improve understanding of digital opportunities for the UK cultural sectors, particularly in relation to international audiences and the role of innovation in shaping cultural experiences during the pandemic.

Cultural Employment and Labor Practices

The European Labour Association's report *Employment Characteristics and Undeclared Work in the Cultural and Creative Sectors* identifies systemic barriers to fair labor practices in Europe's cultural industries. It offers concrete policy recommendations for improving working conditions and addressing informal labor.

The UK's Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre's report *Audiences and workforces in arts, culture and heritage* adds to this discussion by examining workforce demographics and progress toward inclusion in the sector. It highlights gaps in policy and practice that need attention to foster equity.

Expanding this section, the International Labour Organization (ILO)'s 2024 working paper "*Balancing Act: The Role of Digital Platforms in Shaping the Conditions of Creative Work*" examines how digital platforms influence creative workers, focusing on the balance between platform control and worker autonomy. It covers traditional artistic roles like musicians and photographers, as well as emerging professions such as bloggers and podcasters.

Conclusion

The publications from 2024 collectively underscore the critical role of culture in addressing contemporary challenges such as international diplomacy, technological innovation, labor rights, and sustainable development within the cultural heritage sector. By grouping these contributions under thematic clusters, this bibliography provides an accessible guide to the most significant discussions in cultural policy, offering a foundation for further exploration and application in the field.

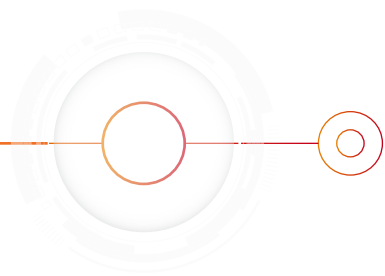
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Outcomes of the G7 Culture Working Group and the G7 Declaration on Culture

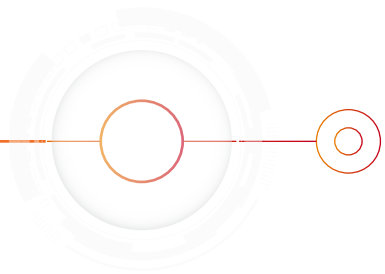
Erminia Sciacchitano

Senior Advisor on Multilateral Affairs, Minister's Cabinet,
Italian Ministry of Culture

Italy has always been at the forefront of international collaboration to protect cultural heritage, ready to act and help other countries in need with its longstanding expertise, strongly believing in cultural diplomacy as a bridge between peoples and nations and as a ground for dialogue, even in challenging times.

Italy is equally committed to mobilising the global partnership for the protection and promotion of cultural heritage and cultural diversity. In July 2021, under Italy's presidency of the G20 group of the world's largest economies, Italy convened the first Culture Ministerial in this context. The Ministers of Culture of the G20, in the Rome Declaration, called for the full recognition and integration of culture and the creative economy into development processes and policies, as a driver and an enabler for the achievement of the Goals set out in the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Rome Declaration has echoed in many international fora, from the UN Assembly General to the United Nations Climate Change Conference. And the following Presidencies of the G20 (Indonesia, India and Brazil) have amplified and strengthened its message, accelerating global commitments towards the full recognition of the role of culture as a driver and enabler for sustainable development and even calling for Culture to be made a stand-alone goal in the post-2030 Agenda.



Building on this momentum Italy took the opportunity of its Chairmanship of the Group of Seven in 2024 to host the second meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the G7, which took place from 19 to 21 September 2024 at the Royal Palace of Naples.

The G7 Culture Ministerial Meeting was held on 20 September, has been an opportunity to recall the value of culture, cultural heritage and creative industries as an essential public good and a driver of sustainable development.

Besides the Ministers of Culture and Heads of Delegation of the G7 countries and the European Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, permanently invited, the Ministerial meeting saw the participation of the Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine and the Deputy Director General for Culture of UNESCO.

The 4 priorities identified by the Italian Presidency revolved around how to strengthen cooperation among the G7, building on common democratic values and principles, to address the current challenges that threaten cultural identities, such as illicit trafficking of cultural goods, conflicts, climate change and natural disasters as well as and to respond to the ethical questions posed by Artificial Intelligence (AI) which, if not well regulated, can produce devastating economic and social impacts for those who create and produce culture.

The first session of the Ministerial, focusing on the protection and promotion of cultural identities, was opened by the Ukrainian Minister of Culture, on his first visit abroad, who underlined that the defence of Ukrainian cultural identity is a common challenge. The G7 launched a strong message of unity in defending and promoting the resilience and regeneration of Ukrainian culture and cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, and committed to coordinate programmes and initiatives and galvanise the support of other partners in such endeavours in the framework of the Ukraine Recovery Conference.

The G7 Culture Declaration is one of the first documents at the international level that addresses the various profiles of the impact of artificial intelligence in the

cultural sector. The exchange of views on culture in the era of AI highlighted the new opportunities and benefits that AI brings to the cultural and creative sectors and industries and cultural organisations, including museums, libraries, archives and galleries, supporting creative processes, informing decisions, producing knowledge, and supporting business operations and management, benefitting productivity, efficiency, and opening to new revenue streams. These benefits include supporting research and data collection on culture and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, to improve our understanding of the past, manage risks, tackle challenges including climate change and illicit trafficking of cultural property, and help safeguard endangered languages. Moreover, AI can broaden people's opportunities to engage and interact with the arts and culture, overcoming language barriers, and facilitating discoverability of and access to the works of underrepresented creators and artists.

Nevertheless, AI entails risks alongside opportunities. It is increasingly permeating the value chains in the cultural and creative sectors and industries, with impacts on the working conditions and the livelihoods of culture professionals and the sustainability of a vibrant and vital cultural ecosystem.

Recognising the transformative potential of AI for the culture and creative sectors and industries and the creative economy, Ministers called for seizing the opportunities that AI presents to foster creativity and artistic expression and safeguard cultural heritage, including from illicit trafficking, while ensuring the sustainability of human creativity and the cultural ecosystem.

Important points of convergence were found, starting from the Hiroshima process, on the need to respect intellectual property and copyright, adopt appropriate measures to manage data quality, including transparency, and encourage the identification and authentication of cultural content entirely or partially generated, modified or altered by artificial intelligence systems.

Regarding the global fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods, views were unanimous, as reflected in the G7 Culture Declaration, in strengthening cooperation and coordination to better prevent and combat crimes related to cultural

heritage. The Italian experience was fully recognised, including activities where the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage is at the forefront, such as the Stolen Works of Art Identification System (SWADS), which uses AI to monitor and inspect the illegal trade of cultural goods online.

On strengthening the resilience of cultural heritage in the face of climate change and natural disasters, the Declaration relaunched the G7 commitment to promoting strategies and actions to mitigate the impacts and adapt cultural heritage to climate change, promote culture-based climate solutions and ensure that cultural issues are recognised in the international climate agenda, taking advantage of the 29th edition of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Baku, Azerbaijan in 2024 and the subsequent edition in Belem, Brazil (COP 30) in 2025. We are proud to see that the EU Council Conclusions on the Preparations for the 29th Conference of the Parties (COP29) of the UNFCCC (Baku, 11-22 November 2024) echoes the G7 Culture declaration.

Last but not least, the Culture Ministers of the G7, reaffirmed the importance of culture as a transformative driver and enabler for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the 2030 Agenda and relaunched the call for the full recognition and integration of culture and the creative economy into the development processes and policies, promoting the inclusion of culture as a standalone goal in future discussions on how to advance sustainable development beyond 2030.

This strong call contributed to placing high Culture in the parallel discussion on how to accelerate global efforts and renew commitments to meet development objectives agreed upon in 2015 in the 2030 Agenda, held on 22-23 September at the Summit for the Future at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Pact for the Future adopted at the Summit by World leaders, for the first time includes an Action (n.11) to the protection and promotion of culture as an integral component of sustainable development.

The G7 Culture Ministerial was followed by a Special Session, held on 21 September, focusing on culture for the sustainable development of Africa and the world. The debate was opened by the leaders of the African Union (both the Minister of Culture of Mauritania, Presidency in office and the AU Commissioner responsible for culture were present), followed by the Ministers of Culture of Brazil and India (respectively current and former G20 Presidency), the Ministry of Culture of Greece, the Deputy Director General for Culture of UNESCO and the Director General of ICCROM.

The Special Session provided a valuable opportunity to connect with the current and previous Presidencies of the G20 (Brazil and India) who invest heavily in culture on a multilateral level and gathered the support of the G7 and Greece as well as UNESCO and ICCROM to continue in this direction. The G7 together with the invited States and Organizations agreed on the importance of working together to enhance Africa's cultural heritage as a driver of sustainable development.

Building on these achievements, Italy will continue to promote joint action at international level to enhance and safeguard culture as a global public good and catalyst for a sustainable future.

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Culture as an instrument — for better or worse?

Malaya del Rosario

Arts and Creative Economy consultant

As an art and culture manager, I **have come to realise how challenging it is to balance artistic goals with stakeholders' practical demands to achieve project success**. Securing funding through grant proposals can be tough. It is not always easy to understand what funders really want. It is even harder when you are working across varied cultural contexts. And when you do manage to get that grant, there is always the challenge of balancing artistic goals with funder requirements. Add to that the importance of protecting artistic expression amidst unstable political environments.

In May 2024, I had the privilege of joining [ASEF LinkUp | Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab in Prague](#), where, along with other experts and practitioners, we discussed the challenges of working in cross-cultural exchange. A key topic was how culture is increasingly being used as a diplomatic tool.

In this context, instrumentalisation refers to the integration of 'culture' as a concept in government and institutional plans to help achieve social, economic, or political objectives (Makarychev et al., 2020). It often serves predefined goals, such as fostering national identity, strengthening diplomatic relations, or more recently, achieving the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Culture is tricky to instrumentalise due to its many interpretations. When defined as 'the values, practices, and norms of a group', it is often used for peacebuilding or social cohesion. 'The arts', on the other hand, are often attributed to supporting artistic work and creative expression. In the Nordics, for example, programmes on migrant integration involve artists for their ability to inspire and engage communities. Meanwhile, other initiatives can serve populist views on traditionalism and nativism, with art at risk of being used as propaganda (Ibid). When culture is intertwined with other agendas, a project's original intent can be redirected or diluted. Being aware of these nuances will allow us to contribute meaningfully to diplomacy through the unique lens of art and culture.

How can cultural facilitators, whether they are art managers, cultural leaders, curators, or programme heads, navigate these complexities? How can we take advantage of opportunities while upholding artistic outcomes?

1

More than just for diplomats

While some of my co-participants resisted the idea of instrumentalisation, others saw it as a way to connect their work with broader social outcomes. A key insight from the Lab is culture's ability to create dialogue where political frameworks fall short. Our conversations reminded me of a 2015 interview I did with Patrick Flores, who curated the Philippine Pavilion at the [Venice Biennale](#). Featuring works by Jose Tence Ruiz, Manny Montelibano and Manuel Conde, it explored the complexities of neo-imperialism and territorial disputes surrounding the South China Sea. Flores, as curator, helped bridge the gap between national concerns and global issues on geopolitics. Nine years on, the exhibition continues to be a poignant reference for reflection and discussion.

2 Understanding layered agendas

How can cultural facilitators navigate the layered agendas of funders and partners? Many grant programmes in the arts are funded by organisations with higher-level political or economic objectives. This is not necessarily a bad thing. On the contrary, understanding funder goals can help us align proposals with high-level agenda or broaden a project's intended impact beyond the arts.

For example, the [action plan](#) to implement the ASEAN-United Kingdom Dialogue Partnership (2022-2026) aims to build regional cooperation, particularly, by addressing key issues such as the South China Sea dispute. While its primary focus is on trade and security, it also supports initiatives that contribute to wider diplomatic aims, and the arts sector stands to benefit from it. Organisations, like the [British Council](#), utilise this framework to amplify their art programmes.

Another case in point is [Japan Foundation's](#) government-funded, [Asia Center](#), which was established in the lead up to the 2020/21 Tokyo Olympics. The programme facilitated exchanges in Southeast Asia and engaged over five million people through art collaborations. While it was designed to support state objectives, it also provided a platform for artistic production and sector development.

Cultural facilitators need to look into funding and governance structures to ensure that higher-level goals do not overshadow artistic outcomes. As Justin O'Connor argues in *Culture is Not an Industry*, reducing culture to a mere tool for economic or political gain can diminish its primary role as a common good.

3

Protect the artists

Funding bodies have the power to decide which initiatives are worth supporting, and, consequently, have a hand in defining which artistic practices are relevant and 'of quality'. Some are flexible and allow artists space and freedom, while others require beneficiaries to shape their work according to predefined goals. **Cultural facilitators, therefore, have an important role to protect the artists they work with from being censored, politicised, or misrepresented.** Based on our discussions at the Lab, we can take proactive steps through:

Transparency

Ensuring that artists understand the funders' objectives and political context of the programmes they are part of. This allows them to make informed decisions about how to position their work.

Advocacy for artistic integrity

Standing firm in ensuring that artists' visions are not compromised. If a project leans too heavily toward a political agenda, facilitators can push for a more balanced approach that respects creative freedom.

Contextual clarity

When presenting artists' work, especially in international settings, it is essential to clearly communicate its context. This helps avoid any misrepresentation or exploitation.

Throughout these examples, there is a view that culture, when instrumentalised, becomes bigger than the arts. **As cultural facilitators, we need to be aware of its fluidity and innovativeness to avoid stifling its vibrancy.** However as we have seen, this is not a straightforward process. By recognising culture's diplomatic potential, understanding funders' layered agendas, and protecting artistic freedom, we can better navigate the complexities of cross-cultural work and its role in diplomacy. Ultimately, critical engagement will allow us to create more meaningful exchanges while keeping the unique value of art and culture at the heart of the conversation.

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for their
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ENCATC The Cultural Policy Tracker is a quarterly publication gathering contributions from the members of the Think Tank and widely disseminated to policy makers.

Our contributors are leading academics, researchers, experts, practitioners, and policy makers. They are recognised by the industry we belong to as influencers. For our publication, they are generously providing us with high-quality content, commentary, the best industry practices, and personal stories. Their contributions aim to help ENCATC to achieve its mission of helping the cultural sector become stronger and more sustainable. **This publication is made possible thanks to the financial support of the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.**

ENCATC CULTURAL POLICY TRACKER ISSUE N°8

PUBLICATION DATE: December 2024

PUBLISHER: ENCATC, The European network on cultural management and policy, Avenue Maurice 1, 1050 Brussels, Belgium

Editor: GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens

AUTHORS: Malaya del Rosario, Erminia Sciacchitano, Pravali Vangeti, Isabel Verdet

Coordinator and Creative Director: Nerina Finetto

Layout Design & Production: Davide Faggiano

CONTACT: T +32 (0)2 201 29 12 WEBSITE: www.encatc.org

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ENCATC holds the status of an NGO in official partnership with UNESCO, of observer to the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe, and is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

CONTACT

T +32 (0)2 201 29 12

info@encatc.org

www.encatc.org

ADDRESS

Avenue Maurice 1

1050 Brussels,

Belgium



**Co-funded by
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