



European Parliament

Brussels, 11.5.2024
2024/0001 (EP)

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
on the European Union's cultural relations and diplomacy

2024/0001 (EP)

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
on the European Union's cultural relations and diplomacy

Article 1
Subject matter

This Regulation establishes the rules on the European Union cultural relations and diplomacy

The European Parliament,

Having regard to the proposal 2024/0001 (COD) of the European Commission on the European Union's cultural relations and diplomacy,

Having regard to Rule 111(6) of its Rules of Procedure,

Having regard to the letter of the Committee of Foreign Affairs (AFET)

Having regard to the letter of the Committee on Culture (CULT)

Taking into consideration the Articles 2 and 3 of the TEU, the fundamental role and influence of the Union within the international sphere,

Alarmed by the recent socio-economic challenges arising in the international political context

Recognizing the importance for an enhanced coordinated approach on EU's Diplomatic Relations,

Understanding European Culture as a cornerstone of European policy, initiatives and innovation,

Reminding the "European Agenda for Culture in a globalizing world" and the Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council "Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations"

Article 2
Measures

Calls for a comprehensive review of the existing EU strategy on cultural diplomacy to assess its efficiency in addressing contemporary challenges and opportunities;

Encourages Cultural diplomacy in promoting peace and reconciliation both within and outside Europe, and encourages the Union to mobilize culture as a tool for conflict resolution and social cohesion;

Urges the Union to streamline and facilitate the Cultural Visa application process for artists, cultural workers, and organizations from third countries, while addressing obstacles such as bureaucratic barriers and visa restrictions. This can be done through various procedures;

3.1: reduction of processing time: by establishing a clear and transparent timelines for the processing of cultural visa applications, providing applicants with estimated processing times and ensuring adherence to these timelines by consular authorities

3.2 : specialized visa categories: by developing specialized visa categories specifically designed to meet the unique needs of cultural professionals, encompassing diverse fields such as visual arts, performing arts, literature, film, and heritage preservation

3.3: by establishing a comprehensive evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of visa facilitation measures implemented for cultural professionals, encompassing criteria such as processing times, applicant satisfaction, and impact on cultural exchange;

Encourages the integration of cultural considerations into the Union's sustainable development agenda, promoting cultural exchanges, heritage preservation, and creative industries as drivers of economic growth and social progress;

Calls upon the Commission and the High Representative to adopt a coordinated responsible approach in order to advance the Union's international cultural relations with partner countries based but not limited to three major pillars:

- i. supporting culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development
- ii. promoting culture and intercultural dialogue for peaceful inter-community relations
- iii. reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage;

Encourages the continuation of the EDF Intra-ACP programme in order to support the contribution of cultural industries to the socio-economic development of ACP countries and enhance EU's presence in the region;

Underlines the importance for better innovative partnerships by reconsidering the mandate and funds allocated to the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), focused primarily on least developed countries including fragile democratic contexts or countries where cultural rights are threatened;

Calls for the coherent application of monitoring mechanisms in the framework of the European Media Freedom Act, in order to protect the freedom and diversity of cultural production in the digital era;

Recommends the fostering of careers in the CCIS sector by promoting cultural scholarships for both university programmes and apprenticeships to support creative industries;

Highly suggests a reinforced cooperation with international organisations such as the UN, the OECD, Amnesty International and emerging countries on European policies by expanding the external cultural relations of the EU in human rights matters, sustainable development and economic development by:

- i. Supporting the cultural diverse NGOs in order to implement projects which promote the cultural diversity;
- ii. Proposing to the commission furthering dialogue with third countries within the mentioned organisations to promote labour relations;

Suggests a coordinated approach by the Commission aiming to enhance the European Neighbourhood policy to the extent of which endorses stabilization of partner regions, in

political, economic, and security related terms based on democracy rule of law and respect of human rights;

Recommends the commission to reduce the arbitration in approval, while increasing the accessibility for cultural visas through unified, clear requirements:

- i. The work contract of the host employer as only requirement for the approval of the visa with exception to freelancer/self-employed artists
- ii. In the case of freelancer/self-employed artists, a written statement on why the individual desires to pursue their work in the EU is sufficient. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the host countries can decide on ways to assess these requests.
- iii. the recipients are provided with health insurance, as well as the worker's rights of the host country;

Calls upon the creation of a European Tech Clusters between Research University and Tech companies to enhance the emergence of EU tech champions which would guarantee our online security in an effort to enhance EU research and innovation;

Highly encourages the potential creation of educational programs for children and youth in primary, secondary and high schools within EU countries reminding the importance of the recognition of equal respect and dignity for all cultures tackling religion, ethnicities, and cultural practices;

Urges the European External Action Service, under the funding of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, to develop a digital platform, similar to CultureXchange developed in the framework of ACP-EU Culture Program, connecting artists from EU Member States with artists coming from conflict zones, in order to foster international cultural dialogue and peace in the global sphere;

Encourages the EU Member States to evaluate intercultural dialogue and its cultural initiatives on a global scale to develop a comprehensive framework for assessing its cultural initiatives' impact with quantitative and qualitative indicators;

Strongly suggests the revaluation of resources allocated to the European Education and Culture Executive Agency and urges member states to engage in closer cooperation with the institution in order to support cultural exchange programmes, including but not limited to;

- i. Erasmus+;
- ii. Creative Europe;

Underlines the importance for a coordinated approach concerning the interrelation between artificial intelligence (AI) and culture, and the development of a sub-branch in the existing Artificial Intelligence Act framework;

Calls for the European Commission and the European Union National Institutes of Culture to officially implement the European Spaces for Culture initiative, starting from the evaluation of the pilot projects implemented during the period 2019-2023, and extending those initiatives, to empower underrepresented communities and marginalised social groups;

Requests the digitalization and facilitation of the cultural visa, in order to enable efficient mobility for cultural practitioners, through the implementation of the following aspects:

- i. Creation of a streamlined application process through a digital portal dedicated to cultural visa applicants,
- ii. Specification of clear guidelines, requirements, and timeline. Provide resources to connect applicants with information on housing, healthcare, legal rights,
- iii. Provision of experts for visa assistance both in country of origin and destination,
- iv. Establishment of a feedback mechanism through the portal, allowing applicants to provide feedback for the process, to enable the process to continue improving,
- v. Offer possible waivers and reductions for cultural workers from countries affected by conflict, developing countries, as well as individuals with limited financial means, within specific criteria;

Recommends the adoption of a fellowship (merit-based) program for young professionals and students of cultural diplomacy from European neighboring countries affected by international conflict and tensions, in order to build long-lasting stability and peace worldwide by:

- i. Ensuring recognition of education titles,
- ii. Facilitating access to visas to the EU,
- iii. Evaluation of successfulness;

Urges the European Commission to redesign the ‘European Capitals of Culture’. The project will involve the choice of each Member State of its own city of culture, based on the same merit, in order to improve the visibility of Culture in Europe and increase cross-cultural dialogue in order to endorse the creation of a digital forum to accompany the ‘European Capitals of Culture’ project, to further highlight the event to boost cultural tourism and connect EU artists;

Urges the Commission to improve ‘Europeana’, the digital cultural heritage platform, by adding a digital platform for dialogue to promote cultural discourse within MS;

Calls for the further enhancement of the Europeana initiative, under the Horizon Europe fund, by translating data concerning cultural heritage in non-European languages, in order to promote European cultural heritage to a broader audience;

Strongly Suggests the Commission to further enhance and reevaluate the culturEU funding programme taking all necessary actions related to cascade funding and limiting existing bureaucratic hurdles for the application process;

Recommends the facilitation of the application programme for the culturEU funding, being available and applicable in all official languages, rather than English;

Urges the National Erasmus Agencies in close cooperation with the Commission and the European Parliament, to ensure that funding for students from each Member State is proportional to the cost of living in the host countries by enforcing Europe-wide rules instead of national agencies deciding the amount of the Erasmus grants;

Encourages the Commission to improve and redesign the ‘Europeana’ website to be more up-to-date, easily-accessible and user-friendly by:

- ii. introducing a specific sub-section dedicated to the cultural work and creatures of young EU citizens with an accessible and visible application section for young people to submit their work and opinion pieces;
- iii. developing a dedicated body that frequently reviews the applications from young people concerning opinion pieces and cultural work, to ensure the website portrays current work;

Encourages the adoption of “Certifications of Authenticity” for the cultural pieces online on European online websites, platforms, and social media, in order to protect the authenticity and integrity of digital cultural content;

Suggests the usage of national digital ID for authenticity purposes, in order to verify the works and the sources, as well as improving the work of fact-checkers;

Requests the launch of an Educational Digital Literacy Campaign by the Publications Office of the European Union, in order to increase digital literacy among internet users, teaching them how to identify authentic cultural content, as well as raising awareness on misinformation and counterfeit material;

Strongly recommends the adoption of the project “Intangible Cultural Heritage for Resilience” to Ukraine, Moldova, and other EU priority partners, as well as neighboring

countries, that are affected by past or present conflict, in order to promote social cohesion of former combatants and the social vulnerable groups. The project involves the reintegration and social cohesion of said categories through their employment in the following fields:

- i. Management of intangible cultural heritage,
- ii. Inventorying of intangible cultural heritage,
- iii. Reconstructing local historical memory;

Endorses the launch of an European campaign on sustainable tourism aiming to raise awareness on its environmental, economic and cultural benefits, which include, but are not limited to:

- i. Preservation of natural ecosystems and living creatures;
- ii. Preservation of cultural heritage;
- iii. Generation of employment opportunities;

Article 3

Entry into force

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. It shall apply from 1 January 2025.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President