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DATE OF PUBLICATION: 26 March 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY¹

The decentralised nature of government in the USA and the relatively small role, historically, that central government has played in supporting culture, has resulted in an environment where the public sector at national, states and local level, together with federal agencies, cultural organisations, foundations, academia and commerce are all engaged in international cultural activities.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the 'Cold War' the view that prevailed in Washington DC was that there was less need to pursue cultural diplomacy initiatives. Programme budgets suffered considerable reductions as a result. Although there were modest increases in the years since the World Trade Centre attacks, they have not recovered their peak of 1994.

Cultural diplomacy is insufficiently regarded in the USA. Relatively few politicians seem prepared to argue the case for enhancing US soft power actions in general and cultural diplomacy in particular. There is a perception in political circles that American culture is already prominent globally through the export of its cultural products, especially Hollywood. In the absence of a strong lead from Federal Government, the US approach to cultural diplomacy appears fragmented. There is no overall strategy. In the armoury of US diplomatic tools, only broadcasting initiatives are comparatively well resourced. Numerous reports have been published in recent years that suggest US public and cultural diplomacy is in crisis and needs more strategic approaches, but to little obvious effect.

The chief player in cultural diplomacy at Federal Government level is the Department of State's Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, and its Office of Citizen Exchanges operates a number of outward and some inward 'exchange' programmes in culture, sport and professional and academic fellowships (reciprocity is not necessarily built in). Cultural diplomacy programmes specific to US diplomats also operate, notably the Art in Embassies and Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation. Other players include the National Endowment for the Arts – whose international budget has diminished significantly in recent years –, the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as dedicated cultural exchange organisations and high profile cultural institutions.

Integral to the Federal Government's use of culture as a diplomatic tool is not only a desire to (re)build trust through people-to-people encounters, but also to combat violent extremism. To some extent its geographical priorities reflect this and there has also been a shift of focus to East and South Asia and Africa.

The US position on culture in external relations cannot easily be divorced from the aggressive stance it takes on free trade in cultural goods, especially in relation to its powerful audio-visual sector. However, the audio-visual sector is off the agenda of current US-EU free trade

¹ NB American spellings throughout the text have been Anglicised, eg 'centre' for 'center'.

negotiations.

Principal concerns registered by the US cultural sector are raising funds for international engagement and the difficulties with the visa application process for cultural practitioners visiting the US.

The EU Delegation supports a number of cultural initiatives in the Washington DC area to promote greater understanding of the EU and enhance relations with the US. EUNIC has hubs in New York and Washington DC that are quite active.

INTRODUCTION

US policy on cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange has to be understood in the context of Federal Government attitudes to the arts/culture generally and the many private sector players (e.g. Hollywood) who disseminate US culture globally through the export of their products. For the US Government 'culture' is often perceived as commerce and its cultural diplomacy seems more akin to commercial diplomacy. Historically, therefore, government intervention in cultural diplomacy has been modest. It reached its height during the Cold War. The 1950s were a time when US foreign policy was supporting a range of initiatives that promoted Western values and democracy in Europe to counter Soviet Cold War propaganda. This included both overt and covert cultural diplomacy.² The creation of the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1953 provided an instrument for the promotion of US cultural diplomacy and music (especially jazz, rock and contemporary classical) was to be a particular focus of its operations – more than 100 performers were sent to 89 countries in a four year period in the 1950s.

However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the 'Cold War' the view that prevailed in Washington DC was that there was less need to pursue cultural diplomacy initiatives. Programme budgets suffered considerable reductions as a result and the opinions of critics, such as political historian Walter Laqueur that 'cultural diplomacy, in the widest sense, has increased in importance'³ were largely ignored. The United States Information Agency and its programmes were absorbed and subsequently dismantled by the Department of State. Implicit in the creation of the USIA as a separate entity was the understanding that it should have a degree of independence from government foreign interests. However, as Cynthia Schneider has noted: 'The consolidation of USIA into the State Department responded to the opposite impetus... namely that it should be linked to increasing understanding and support for US policies.'⁴

Arguably, diplomacy in general, and cultural diplomacy in particular, is insufficiently regarded in US politics. Few politicians seem prepared to stand up in government and 'run with the issue'. There is a sense that the government is still trying to establish to its satisfaction why cultural diplomacy and exchange is important and in what ways it furthers the government's policy objectives. The situation is not helped by the fact that US interests are defined rather narrowly. Nor is cultural diplomacy necessarily valued as a diplomatic tool at ambassadorial level (some ambassadors are political appointees who receive the accolade for their support in the election campaigns of winning Presidents). Moreover, the US population as a whole, including some politicians, can be very provincial in outlook (e.g. only 20 per cent have passports).

² Rod Fisher, *In Pursuit of Cultural Dialogue: A short and incomplete history of the European Cultural Foundation UK*. London: European Cultural Foundation, c/o ICCE, Goldsmiths, University of London, New Academic Building, New Cross, London, 2011.

³ Walter Laqueur, 'Save Public Diplomacy', in *Foreign Affairs* 73 (5), 1994, p.20.

⁴ Cynthia P. Schneider referring in her chapter on 'Culture Communicates: US Diplomacy that Works' to observations by Joe Merant, in a presentation on 29 March 2004, in Jan Melissen (ed.), *The New Public Diplomacy. Soft Power in International Relations*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

In the past decade there has been a plethora of reports and conferences on the role and importance of US public diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. In one month alone, April of 2003, there were three important conferences – ‘Sustaining Exchanges While Securing Borders’, ‘Communicating with the World: Diplomacy that Works’, and ‘Arts and Minds: A Conference on Cultural Diplomacy Amidst Global Tensions’⁵ – as well as a report on *How to Reinvigorate Public Diplomacy*, published by the Heritage Foundation.⁶ Not long afterwards, another report on reinvigorating US public diplomacy was published by the Council on Foreign Relations.⁷ Publications continued to appear in the years that followed as the positive image of the US globally continued to decline, including for example one on international cultural exchange from the Doris Duke Foundation, Richard Arndt’s history of US public and cultural diplomacy, and Cynthia Schneider’s report on arts/culture in US-Muslim relations.⁸ Meanwhile, in 2005, the Department of State issued a report on cultural diplomacy as a key element of public diplomacy.⁹

In 2007 the Robert Sterling Clark Foundation began to commission research on US based cultural diplomacy and cultural exchange designed to make the case for public and private reinvestment in the area, which led to a number of reports.¹⁰ Then in 2009, the Brademas Centre for the Study of Congress and the Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University, brought together a number of experts to explore the public policy implications for US arts/culture of a renewed focus on public diplomacy following the election of Barack Obama as President. The resulting report, addressed to the President, recommended that international arts/cultural exchanges be integrated into the planning strategies of US policy makers as a principal dimension of public diplomacy.¹¹ The report makes a number of recommendations for fostering greater inter-agency co-operation in the integration of cultural exchanges in their respective strategies. It calls for

⁵ ‘Sustaining Exchanges While Securing Borders’ co-sponsored by the Public Diplomacy Council, the Alliance for Educational and Cultural Exchanges and George Washington University’s Public Diplomacy Institute; ‘Communicating with the World: Diplomacy that Works’, co-sponsored by the Centre for Arts and Culture and Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of Diplomacy; ‘Arts and Minds: A Conference on Cultural Diplomacy Amidst Global Tensions’, co-sponsored by the Centre for Arts and Culture, Arts International and the National Arts Journalism Program of Columbia University.

⁶ Stephen Johnson and Helle C. Dale, *How to Reinvigorate Public Diplomacy*, The Heritage Foundation, 23 April 2003. Online. Available at: <http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2003/04/old-how-to-reinvigorate-us-public-diplomacy>.

⁷ Council on Foreign Relations, *Finding America’s Voice: A Strategy for Reinvigorating US Public Diplomacy*, USA, 2003. Online. Available at: www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/public_diplomacy.pdf.

⁸ Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, *International Cultural Exchange*, 2005; Richard Arndt, *First Resort of Kings: American Cultural Diplomacy in the Twentieth Century*, Washington DC: Potomac Books, 2005; Cynthia P. Schneider, *Mightier than the Sword: Arts and Culture in the US-Muslim Relationship*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 2008.

⁹ US Department of State Advisory Committee on Cultural Diplomacy, *Cultural Diplomacy – The Linchpin of Public Diplomacy*, 2005. Online. Available at: <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/54374.pdf>.

¹⁰ See, for example, Margaret C. Ayers, *Promoting Public and Private Reinvestment in Culture Exchange-Based Diplomacy*, New York, NY: Robert Sterling Clark Foundation, 16 April 2010. Online. Available at: <http://www.rsclark.org/uploads/cultural-exchange-dipl.pdf>.

¹¹ John Brademas Centre for the Study of Congress and the Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University, *Moving Forward: A Renewed Role for American Arts and Artists in the Global Age. A report to the President and the Congress of the United States of America*, New York: New York University, December 2009. Online. Available at <http://www.nyu.edu/brademas/publications-moving-forward.html>.

research to provide demonstrable evidence of the merits of expanding cultural exchange programmes. Among other things it calls for leadership at Federal Government level, with the creation of dedicated cultural positions in the White House, in the National Security Council and in the Department of State.

However, it has to be said that the extensive debates and reports analysing US public and cultural diplomacy and making the case for enhancing US soft power by achieving greater policy coherence and investing more resources in programmes seem to have had little obvious effect. There remains no over-arching strategy for cultural diplomacy and exchange, inter-agency co-ordination appears minimal and funding, year on year, is problematic.

The most commonly used terms to describe international activity in culture are 'cultural diplomacy' and 'cultural exchange'. The broader term 'public diplomacy' is also in common use. Unsurprisingly, given that Harvard academic Joseph Nye first coined the term, 'soft power' is also utilised frequently in government and academia. The term 'international cultural engagement' tends to be used by the National Endowment for the Arts, while the programme description and guidelines of the National Endowment for the Humanities refer more to 'cross-cultural connections'. The term 'citizen diplomacy' is also in usage. It has been defined by the US Centre for Citizen Diplomacy as the 'concept that the individual has the right, even the responsibility, to help shape U.S. foreign relations "one hand shake at a time"'.¹² Within this rubric, citizen 'diplomats' can be artists, students, teachers, sports people, tourists, etc.

¹² Aimee R. Fullman, *Backyard Diplomacy: Prospects for International Cultural Engagement by Local Arts Agencies. Special Report*, Washington DC: Americans for the Arts, 2011, p.5. Online. Available at: http://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/pdf/information_services/research/policy_roundtable/BackyardDiplomacy.pdf.

EXTERNAL CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE POLICY CONTEXT

Federal government and related agencies

The USA has a decentralised structure in regard to cultural action. There is a strong federation system of states' rights and municipal government can act independently at local level, including in areas such as international cultural exchange. At Federal Government level, US public diplomacy outreach is led by the Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs within the Department of State. The Under Secretary has oversight of the Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs (ECA), whose mission is to increase understanding between citizens of the US and other countries to assist in the development of peaceful relations and, in effect, to counteract ideological support for terrorism. It seeks to achieve this through academic, cultural, sporting and professional 'exchanges', e.g. Fulbright Awards, and through public-private partnerships. The Office of Citizen Exchanges within the ECA operates a number of outbound and some inbound exchange programmes in these fields.

As one would expect, the Office attaches considerable importance to increasing cultural exchange and co-operation and fostering people-to-people contacts, and promoting dialogue and building trust with foreign publics. Equal importance is attached to supporting foreign policy objectives, improving diplomatic relations with other countries, promoting a favourable image of the US abroad, strengthening civil society and contributing to conflict prevention and security. A little lower in the hierarchy of objectives, but still important, are: supporting cultural diversity; promoting intellectual exchange of ideas; promoting higher education; and aid to developing countries. Considered less important are branding; improving exports in the creative industries and attracting tourism. The Office's budget is discretionary (unlike the Fulbright Awards which are enshrined in legislation) and is considered too small to have any influence on supporting the cultural sector to expand its international activities. Promoting language and translations and supporting diaspora communities are deemed to be irrelevant to its work.

When it comes to types of intervention, the Office classifies the following areas as important: intellectual exchange in the humanities; museums/touring exhibitions; heritage; performing arts; visual arts; music; film and audio-visual services; and sport. Considered to be less important are libraries/archives; literature & translations (the Office only has one programme); design; fashion; advertising; and architecture; while video games, press and book publishing, TV and radio are completely outside its focus.

Current cultural exchange programmes are administered by the Cultural Programme Division and there are seven outbound programmes involving American cultural practitioners. The **Arts Envoy Programme** operates 'on demand' and enables overseas diplomatic posts to request visits by US artists and arts professionals for up to six weeks to engage in local arts-based community projects. **American Music Abroad** is designed to showcase US musical diversity (jazz, blues, gospel, country and western, etc.) and foster cross-cultural exchange and involves about 10 musical ensembles visiting countries to perform, teach and share their skills. This strand has evolved from one of the most successful US cultural diplomacy programmes in the past, 'Jazz Ambassadors'. In October 2011,

the Department of State chose **American Voices** to administer the American Music Abroad programme. This non-profit organisation has been active in citizen-led cultural diplomacy for 20 years, initially focussing on the newly independent countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but in recent years bringing American culture to young people in countries emerging from conflict, such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan. **American Street Beat** is a new programme introduced in 2013 to bring multi-discipline hip hop arts to engage with young people and underserved communities in strategically selected countries to advance US foreign policy. It builds on previous initiatives that have featured hip hop. Another programme is **Communities in Collaboration: Visual Arts**, through which US artists engage with foreign communities on mural or digital media arts. **Dance Motion USA** is a programme in which three or four contemporary dance companies are sent overseas to perform, run workshops and engage in youth outreach. **American Film Showcase** is a filmmaker exchange programme that takes award-winning contemporary US documentaries and independent film and film specialists to 20-25 countries annually. **Museums Connect** is a two way exchange programme, run in conjunction with the American Alliance of Museums, that facilitates museum related engagement linked to foreign policy themes such as human rights, climate change, conflict resolution, etc. (e.g. an aquarium in the US and a museum in Taiwan engaged in discussions about the protection of coral reefs).

There are four inbound programmes. The **International Writing Programme** is an initiative that brings established writers from around the world to the US to engage in creative writing workshops, residencies and seminars on issues such as freedom of expression, human rights, empowerment of women, etc. It is run in partnership with the University of Iowa. **One Beat** brings musicians from overseas to the US for a one-month residency, performance and outreach tour. **Cultural Visitors** is the inbound equivalent to the Arts Envoy programme. This 'on-demand' programme enables diplomatic posts to request short visits to the US for individuals or small groups of foreign artists/cultural professionals for them to network, attend training workshops, etc. **Centre Stage** brings international performing arts ensembles to the USA for a one-month performance/outreach tour, e.g. artists from Pakistan and Indonesia in 2012.

In addition, the Division has open competition programmes that make funding available to US non-profit arts and educational organisations for project proposals for arts-based international people-to-people exchange. In 2013 the themes were: **Arts in Collaboration**, through which one co-operative agreement (worth about US \$ 800,000, 623,991 euros) was to be offered to develop and administer an international exchange programme in hip hop and urban arts, incorporating artistic collaboration, professional development and outreach to youth, to explore and address conflict resolution strategies;¹³ **Community Engagement through the Arts**, under which one or two co-operative agreements (totalling US \$ 500,000, 389,990 euros) were to be offered to design, implement and administer an exchange programme sending four to eight US artists abroad to collaborate with local youth and under-served communities on mural arts or new media arts projects (these seek to address issues such as women's empowerment, HIV-Aids prevention, social inclusion, conflict resolution and the environment); and **Professional Development in the Arts**, in which one

¹³ 'Open Grant Solicitations' on the US Department of State website. Online. Available at: <http://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding/open-grant-solicitations>.

co-operative agreement (worth about US \$ 155,000, 120,898 euros) was to be offered to assist the Cultural Programmes Division implement short-term, in depth professional development exchange projects.¹⁴

Separately from these initiatives are two cultural programmes for embassies that are the responsibility of the Under Secretary for Political Affairs. **Art in Embassies** is a public-private programme that enables US art works and exhibitions to be displayed in embassies and ambassadorial residencies. Ambassadors can select artworks from a database of art available for loan from US artists, galleries, museums, universities, private collections, business, etc. US artists are also commissioned to produce artworks on site. More than 200 venues in 189 countries have been involved over the 50 year duration of the programme. The core mission of Art in Embassies is cross-cultural dialogue, though the focus on increasingly secure diplomatic offices and residencies does invite the observation that this seems to be an initiative with a traditional cultural diplomacy approach and an audience primarily of elites. The **Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation**, established in 2001, enables US Ambassadors in developing countries to nominate heritage projects to receive US technical and other assistance to support the restoration and conservation of buildings and preservation of archives.

Although the nature of both of these programmes differs from the cultural exchange initiatives administered by the Office of Citizen Exchanges, the fact that there is no obvious reporting structure between the latter and the embassies suggests there is a disconnect within the Department of State. According to one informed source, the Department of State is still experiencing ‘growing pains’. Another suggested that there are structural problems in the Department, because public diplomacy policy is divorced from action. However, there is some recognition in the Department that it needs to shape the narrative and that public diplomacy (including cultural exchange) needs to be brought into the forefront of overall policy. It is also generally agreed that the Department has suffered from frequent changes of political appointees at the top. There has been no real continuity and this has weakened the Department in the opinion of several interviewees. Judith McHale, a previous Assistant Secretary of State in the Obama Administration, recommended government officials spend more time on public diplomacy that sought to make US policy more strategic, more integrated and more results oriented, but apparently this was not pursued after she left.

Despite such problems, there are ad hoc examples of successful public and private cultural diplomacy initiatives such as US involvement in ‘Sing Egyptian Women – Let the World Hear You’, a project to empower women run in partnership with a commercial organisation, Share the Mic, the US Embassy in Cairo and Professor Cynthia Schneider. Similarly, the US Government sponsored ‘School of Rock’ in Kosovo, following its independence, was seen as a practical endeavour to bring young people together. The production in the US of ‘The Island’ by the Palestine Theatre Company from the Jenin Refugee Camp was also regarded as an illustration of cultural diplomacy at its best.

Other government departments are also engaged periodically in culture – related external action. The **Department of Commerce** supports the creative industries through overseas trade visits

¹⁴ A further theme on Economic Statecraft and the Arts was cancelled subsequently.

and its 'Brand USA' initiative uses culture as part of the national marketing strategy. Although it may seem unlikely, the **Department of Defence** is also involved in public diplomacy initiatives overseas, e.g. engaging the private sector to 'produce news and entertainment programmes for the Iraqi public "to engage and inspire" Iraqis to support the objectives of the US and the Iraqi governments'.¹⁵ Moreover, support for military bands is the longest running US cultural diplomacy initiative.

Broadcasting is a major dimension of US public diplomacy and, compared to cultural exchange, well resourced. The long established Voice of America, along with Middle East broadcasting channels, Radio Free Asia, broadcasting to Cuba and Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe have been channels for non-military broadcasts to promote freedom and democracy and enhance understanding about US values to audiences overseas.¹⁶ After 9/11 the US set up Arabic and Persian language radio stations and established 75 media channels in Afghanistan to promote democracy and diversity as instruments to combat extremism. The **Broadcasting Board of Governors** is the Federal agency charged with responsibility for overseeing they fulfil their mission. The budget for this in 2009 was US \$ 717.3 million (559.4 million euros), though the arts component of this was small.

The **President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities** is an advisory body to the White House established to address policy issues in conjunction with federal partners and the private sector. This can include policy guidance to advance cultural diplomacy. In 2007 it led a cultural delegation to China.

The **National Endowment for the Arts** (NEA) is a quasi-autonomous institution responsible for awarding grants in the US arts sector to non-profit organisations. It has an International Activities Office that works in partnership with government agencies and the private sector in support of greater recognition of the quality and diversity of US arts and to broaden the scope and experience of American artists and audiences. Four years ago the budget of the NEA for its international partnerships was some US \$ 4 million (3.1 million euros). By 2012 that had been reduced to US \$ 735,000 (573,292 euros) and in 2013 it was US \$ 600,000 (467,993 euros). As with other public sector assistance, NEA funds are used as leverage to raise other finance for projects.

A key recipient of NEA funds for international partnerships is **USArtists International** (USAI), which in 2013 received about US \$ 225,000 (175,497 euros) from the NEA, which is channelled through the **Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation** (i.e. the money is 're-granted'). At one stage independent, USAI is now a programme of the Foundation, which itself was established in 1979 to promote and support multi-state arts programming in a region that includes New York, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia and about one-half of the major museums in the US. USAI derives the largest proportion of its income from the Andrew Mellon Foundation, US \$ 700,000 (545,992 euros) in 2013. Grants from USAI are available to American music, dance and theatre ensembles and solo performers that have been invited to perform at major international festivals. Almost 100 grants are awarded each year and currently the highest number of applicants are from the New York area and most festival destinations are located in Western Europe. USAI is endeavouring to cast the net wider.

¹⁵ Kristin M. Lord, article in *Christian Science Monitor*, 29 October 2008, referred to in Margaret Ayers, 2010, op. cit., p.18.

¹⁶ Broadcasting Board of Governors, 'Performance Overview', *FY 2009 Budget Request*, 2009, p.1.

NEA assistance is also provided for a dedicated programme called 'Southern Exposure Latin America', which funds US presenters that want to bring artists from South America for their first visit to the USA. The programme budget in 2013 was about US \$ 315,000 (245,696 euros). Some support is also given to **CEC Artslink**, which was established more than 50 years ago to promote cultural exchange and 'non-partisan public diplomacy'. Cultural exchanges and artist residencies with former Soviet countries and Central Asia were extended in 2010 to Turkey and Afghanistan and then two years later to Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria. However, NEA support for CEC Artslink may be phased out due to budgetary pressures. On behalf of the **US-Japan Friendship Commission**, the NEA also administers (but does not fund) five residencies for US artists in Japan.

In its international programmes the NEA can only support the US partners and all grants require matching funding. A considerable disadvantage is that a US cultural organisation can only apply to the NEA for one grant a year. Consequently, such organisations are more likely to apply for assistance towards their domestic rather than international work. The NEA advises the Department of State when US artists are going overseas in case US embassies can suggest further engagement opportunities.

The following objectives are considered 'very important' to the NEA: promoting a favourable image of the US abroad; supporting the US cultural sector to expand its activities at international level; increasing cultural exchanges and co-operation; supporting cultural diversity; fostering people-to-people contacts and intercultural dialogue; and promoting translations. Perhaps a little surprisingly it also considers supporting foreign policy objectives, improving diplomatic relations and contributing to conflict prevention and cultural security as 'important'.¹⁷ Also considered to be important are support for diaspora communities and promoting dialogue and building trust with foreign publics. Improving exports in the creative industries and promoting intellectual exchange of ideas are considered 'less important', while the following are considered irrelevant or incidental: attracting tourism; strengthening civil society; promoting use of the national language (the US has a common language, but not an official one); promoting higher education; and branding (despite the importance it attached to promoting a favourable image of the US).

For international purposes, the NEA categorises the performing arts, visual arts, literature/translations, music, film and audio-visual, design, and also the preservation of traditional and minority cultures as 'very important'; museums/touring exhibitions, heritage, and video games are perceived to be 'important'. TV and radio is considered 'less important', while libraries & archives, press & book publishing, fashion, advertising, architecture and sports are seen as irrelevant or incidental.

Despite the perceived absence of 'joined up' thinking on cultural diplomacy at government level, it is interesting to note that the International Activities specialist at the NEA collaborates with

¹⁷ Historically, the NEA has established relationships with the military. For instance, from 2004-2009 its 'Operation Homecoming' initiative conducted more than 60 writing workshops for US troops, military veterans and their families to provide them with opportunities to tell their stories.

the Foreign Service Institute (the State Department that trains diplomatic staff) by giving talks to prospective cultural attachés.

In common with the NEA, the **National Endowment for the Humanities** (NEH) was established by government as a quasi-autonomous agency. Its focus is on research and original scholarship in the humanities, including intellectual exchange. Typically the NEH awards grants to scholars and also to non-profit US museums, archives, libraries, higher education establishments and public broadcasting as long as there is input based on scholarship. Its international support has included 'Bridging Continents through Film', a collaboration with foreign film directors, and 'Digging Into Data' a joint digital information collaboration with Canada, which is expanding as it has generated a lot of interest in other countries.

The **Asian Cultural Council** (ACC) supports exchange in culture and the humanities between the USA and Asian countries. Since it was established in 1963 the ACC has supported some 6,000 artists, scholars, specialists and cultural leaders in more than 20 different culture-related areas in over 25 countries in Asia. Annually, grants are made to about 100 cultural practitioners, experts and 'rising stars' in both traditional and contemporary cultural fields to strengthen ties between the US and Asia.

The US Government has no equivalent to the cultural institutes of some EU Member States or the international network of national cultural centres of some other countries. However, since 2003 the Bureau of International Information Programmes in the Department of State has supported '**American Corners**' – American focussed libraries in universities, libraries and chambers of commerce in several hundred cities globally (in the main they are outside Europe).¹⁸ The space and staff are paid by sources in host countries, while the US Government provides content and linkages. In addition to the specific Art in Embassies and Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation initiatives referred to previously, US embassies are invited to take some responsibility on the ground for the co-ordination of cultural exchange programmes initiated by the Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs of the Department of State.¹⁹ They can provide a consular role in facilitating exchanges and often do so with institutional partners that support such work. The emphasis that is given tends to be shaped by the ambassador on the ground.

The assertion is sometimes made that in external affairs the US Government does policy rather than culture. Therefore, it is rather surprising that its policy sometimes appears rather opaque, or at least is not made very explicit. Implicit in US government public and cultural diplomacy is a concern to neutralise violent extremism. Consequently, the geographical interests of the Department of State will often be countries where US political relations are difficult and for countries that are seen as incubators of terrorism. Countries where the US has good international relations (EU Member States for example) and which broadly share the same values are not usually considered

¹⁸ These replaced the larger and better resourced American Houses. One interviewee recalls seeing an American Corner in an industrial park near an airport in Turkey, with no flag or plaque to signify from the outside what it was, which raises questions not only about the accessibility of the facility, but also its relevance.

¹⁹ The USA has 294 embassies, consulates and diplomatic missions abroad. See at: <http://www.usembassy.gov/>.

priorities for cultural action (although Europe will often be the destination of choice of many practitioners involved in cultural engagement and exchange, due to factors such as artistic interest, professional development, touring opportunities, institutional partnerships or historic and diasporic links).

For the Department of State the geographical tilt is to Asia – especially East and South Asia – and to Africa. One illustration of this was the fourth annual **US-China Consultation on People-to-People Exchange**, co-chaired by Secretary of State John Kerry and Chinese State Councillor Liu Yandong in Washington DC on 21 November 2013. This initiative is designed to strengthen ties in culture, education, sport, women’s issues, science and technology. The meeting reaffirmed its commitment to continuing outreach efforts to young audiences through the performing and visual arts and to continue co-operation between public and private initiatives. Bilateral cultural co-operation agreements were signed the following day between the Smithsonian Institute and the Chinese Ministry of Culture, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and the National Library of China, the Chinese Association of Cultural Relics Exchange with the National Gallery of Arts, Washington DC, and the world’s largest children’s museum in Indianapolis, and between US promoter and presenter IMG Artists and the China Arts & Entertainment Group. Other cultural collaborations exist between, for example, the Kennedy Centre and the National Theatre of China, the Lincoln Centre and the Suzhou Kun Opera Theatre and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and the Palace Museum of China, while professional network links are being stimulated through the American Alliance of Museums and the Terra Foundation for American Arts. For its part the Department of State is committed to pursuing its cultural diplomacy efforts with China through the American Music Abroad, American Film Showcase and the Arts Envoy programmes.

Another illustration of US geographical interest is the **US-North Africa Partnership for Economic Opportunities** (NAPEO), a public-private initiative that seeks to link entrepreneurs in Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. As part of this, the Department of State Economic Bureau, in partnership with the Aspen Institute, Americans for the Arts and Creative Leaps International, is engaged in a Creative Industries and Cultural Economy Incubator initiative. In addition, it is evident that the Middle East also features on the government’s radar.

Geographical priorities for the NEA are primarily determined by identifying opportunities to strengthen the arts ecosystem in the USA and funding likeminded partners with resources. Its programme with a Latin-American focus is responsive to demographic shifts in the USA. The interest in Russia and the former Soviet States hitherto has been a response to a continuing desire to strengthen cultural engagement with an area that was isolated from the West for so long.

The NEH has no priority country focus. It is open to the possibility of co-operation with agencies in any country in pursuit of mutual goals in advancing knowledge of the humanities. Previously, it signed Memoranda of Understanding or Letters of Intent with, among others, the Arts & Humanities Research Council of the UK, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, the Social Science & Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Ministry of Culture, China.

Some other public and private players

Between US \$ 10-15 million (7.8 million-11.8 million euros) is estimated to be spent annually by the **State Arts Agencies** on international related arts projects.²⁰ Several factors drive the international engagement. States that border other countries may have exchange programmes, e.g. Maine in the US has a major programme with New Brunswick in Canada, and Arizona has cultural exchange with Mexico. Another factor is immigrant populations; thus Chicago and Cleveland often focus exchange projects with Poland and Hungary respectively, while North Dakota and Iceland have a co-operation programme that is well staffed and networked. The third factor is where States have trade partners. A decade ago it was evident that State Governors had recognised that culture was a factor in accelerating trade development. Ohio has used cultural exchanges to enhance its trade relations since the late 1980s and its Arts Council signed cultural agreements with counterparts in Mexico, Chile, Argentina and the Czech Republic, etc.²¹ Today it is common for Governors to bring their cultural units or cultural leaders with them on trade visits to other countries. Many States delegate their international work to regional organisations in the belief they can be more effectively managed at that level.

Research indicates that *cities and local arts agencies* are also engaged in international initiatives irrespective of size.²² Local arts agencies are more likely to focus their support on international activities in, or inward visits to, their own communities, with visual arts events in particular favoured. The long established Sister City Network has been an important driver of municipal partnerships and local arts organisations have often found international partners through such programmes. The District of Columbia (DC) Commission on the Arts and Humanities launched its Sister Cities International Arts Grant in 2013 to enable artists and arts organisations from the District and DC's international partner cities to develop cultural exchange activities. Support is given both to projects that showcase international artists in the District of Columbia, as well as initiatives that profile US artists from the city, with a view to promoting Washington DC as a world class cultural capital. Most of the grantees have developed new international relationships as a result of the programme and the intention is to offer grant opportunities again in 2015, but seeking at that time to better align projects with the cultural and economic goals of the city.²³

The private sector is also involved in cultural engagement internationally, whether as a partner, as was the case of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Science exchange with the Iranian House of Cinema in 2009 or, more directly, as with the Coke Studio (an initiative of Coca Cola) popular music programme in Pakistan.

²⁰ Information supplied by the National Assembly of State Arts.

²¹ The National Governors Association published a report in 2003 on *How States Are Using Arts and Culture to Strengthen Their Global Trade Development*. Online. Available at: <http://www.nga.org/files/live/sites/NGA/files/pdf/040103GLOBALTRADEDEV.pdf>.

²² See, for example, Fullman, *Backyard Diplomacy: Prospects for International Cultural Engagement by Local Arts Agencies*, op.cit.

²³ Information provided by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

US soft power as manifested through its modest public and cultural diplomacy policies is compromised, some would argue, by the relatively aggressive policy it has pursued on trade in cultural goods. The US Government has consistently argued over many years that film, together with TV programmes, video and sound recording, should be subject to the same international trade rules as govern other goods and services. As Carol Balassa has noted: 'Disagreement over subsidies to the motion-picture industry has been one of the most divisive issues in both WTO Trade and the UNESCO Cultural Diversity Convention negotiations, reflecting profound political and social differences between the US and Europe in the way the arts, and especially motion-pictures, are funded'.²⁴ The USA is the most prominent of those countries that are not prepared to sign the UNESCO Convention. A key driver of international policy is the US Trade Department's concern to open up international markets for US cultural industries. To this end, the US negotiates bilateral agreements with those countries that have also not signed the Convention, e.g. Japan. The US Government is not averse to employing a special 301 instrument to impose sanctions on countries considered not to be complying with intellectual property rules and which the US perceives as having a negative impact on its cultural industries.²⁵

The cultural sector and its concerns

Many leading US cultural institutions have international connections. The **Metropolitan Museum of Art**, for example, is planning to strengthen the institution's international relations through a new initiative, the 'Global Museum Leaders Colloquium'. The Museum, which has the third largest collection of art objects in the world, will host a two-week encounter in New York in April 2014 intended to engage with museum directors from Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The **Smithsonian Institution** in Washington DC – the world's largest museum and research complex, incorporating 19 museums and galleries – is involved in much international co-operation in relation to exhibitions, exhibits and scholarship.

Americans for the Arts is a major advocacy, professional development, training and service organisation for the US arts/cultural sector. Many of its about 3,000 members are national or regional representative bodies for different cultural disciplines or local arts service organisations. Some 16.5 per cent of its members are involved in international work, but many do not expect to receive funds for this from the Federal Government. Americans for the Arts has partnerships with the US Military, which is interested in how cultural diplomacy can be used as an instrument to deter violence and prevent war.

International Arts & Artists (IA&A) is a non-profit visual arts and museums service that has organised more than 500 exhibition presentations in museums throughout the US and in Brazil, Canada, Ireland, Japan, Spain, the UK and other countries. It brings exhibitions from Europe to the US

²⁴ Carol Balassa referring to the World Trade Organisation, *Audiovisual Services: Information Note by the Secretariat*, 2005, in her essay 'An Economic Approach Toward the Trade and Culture Debate: the US Position', in J.P. Singh (ed.), *International Cultural Policy and Power*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p.96.

²⁵ A 301 instrument refers to Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 (as amended by the Omnibus Trade and Competitiveness Act of 1988) designed to address unfair foreign practices affecting United States' exports of goods and services, and to achieve improved intellectual property protection as well as equitable rules for investment abroad.

on a regular basis and has found it easier to co-operate with museums in Western Europe, but is endeavouring to look beyond. IA&A has a series of cultural exchange programmes and is the only arts focussed organisation with official permission from the Department of State to provide J1 visa cultural exchange programmes for US museums wanting to host international curators, lecturers, art scholars and interns.²⁶

The **Kennedy Centre** is one of the foremost presenting and producing cultural venues in the US. It presents a major country or themed festival annually with public and private support. In 2012 it featured India and in 2013 the 'Nordic Cool Festival' celebrated the arts and culture of Nordic countries with about 750 artists and practitioners at a cost of about US \$ 5 million (3.7 million euros). Spain and Portugal will be featured in 2015. An international theatre festival, 'World Stages', will be held in 2014 with companies from France, the UK, Canada, China, Mexico and South Africa, etc.

Two or three international productions a year are presented by the **Shakespeare Theatre** in Washington DC. The Theatre's international focus is only limited by Union restrictions, though that has become less of an issue in recent years. It collaborates with the National Theatre, London, and has presented challenging or controversial productions from the UK (e.g. 'Black Watch' from the National Theatre of Scotland and 'The Great Game' from Tricycle Theatre).

For some years the **Gala Hispanic Theatre** has enjoyed a good relationship with the Spanish Embassy in Washington DC and that has been crucial for its international projects. In the past it received grants from the Federal Government, but that funding source has dried up as resources have diminished.

With Federal Government only playing a small role, cultural organisations are obliged to look for a range of public and private sources to finance their international activities. International Arts & Artists considers it has received more financial assistance from the British Council than it has from the Federal Government. The US is well known for its culture of philanthropy in education and the arts. Individuals, foundations and private corporations sponsor or fund international cultural and educational engagement. However, budgetary reductions have not been confined to the public sector; grant programmes of a number of the large foundations that have been active in support of international cultural exchange have been considerably reduced or, in the case of the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, cut altogether. Yet even before the financial crisis of 2008 the percentage of foundation giving for cultural exchange was still less than 1 per cent of total arts/cultural giving in the US.²⁷ In the period (2003-2008) the Trust for Mutual Understanding was the principal benefactor with 479 grants (worth US \$ 14.6 million (11 million euros)) for direct cultural exchange with Russia and Eastern Europe. Other active foundations have included the Freeman Foundation Trust, the Annenberg Foundation, Florence Gould Foundation and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (the latter,

²⁶ J1 visas are for individuals approved to participate in work-and-study-based exchange visitor programmes.

²⁷ Ayers, op. cit.

for example, awarded US \$ 500,000 (379,797 euros) in 2008 to USArtists International to expand its work with festivals beyond Europe).²⁸

Funding is not the only concern of the cultural sector. The visa application process has changed the paradigm for international exchange. In the years since 9/11, US visa procedures for foreign artists and performers have been increasingly complex and expensive and decisions have been arbitrary according to arts presenters/promoters. This, some argue, is creating an impediment to international cultural co-operation with the US. Foreign artists seeking authorisation to perform/exhibit in the US (or their US hosts) are required to deal with two government departments: Homeland Security, which evaluates the initial application and, subject to its approval, the Department of State through an interview process in the relevant US Embassy abroad. A Q1 classification visa is required for international cultural exchange designed to provide practical training, employment or 'sharing' of the applicant's culture. Fees are high: there is a filing fee, but an additional and substantial processing fee is necessary to 'ensure' a response within two weeks (a time frame that is often missed). The US host organisation/promoter must also submit written evidence of the artist's qualifications. The government advises presenters/performers and ensembles to submit visa applications at least 90 days in advance of travel, but some presenters have suggested the process can take much longer.

According to Homeland Security Department records, requests for the standard foreign performers visa declined almost 25 per cent between 2006-2010, and the number of petition rejections rose during the same period by more than two-thirds.²⁹ In 2006 the long established Halle Orchestra in the UK apparently decided it was not financially and administratively worth their while to tour the US, as it was going to cost more than US \$ 70,000 (52,753 euros) to comply with visa regulations for some 100 musicians and staff.³⁰ The Obama administration has pushed to ease the process and time for visa applications for artists following concerns by the US Travel and Tourism Board among others.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Larry Rohter, 'US Visa Rules Deprive Stages of Performers', *New York Times*, 11 April 2012. Online. Available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/11/arts/us-visa-rules-frustrate-foreign-performers.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>.

³⁰ Ibid.

CULTURAL RELATIONS WITH THE EU AND ITS MEMBER STATES: REALITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

The first round of negotiations of the Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership between the EU and the US were held in Washington DC in July 2013. It was evident long before the negotiations commenced that there were considerable differences between the two sides, not least on issues such as intellectual property enforcement and on the protection of Europe's cultural sector in general and audio-visual sector in particular. Approval of the EU's free trade negotiations mandate, in Luxembourg on the 14 June 2013, was subject to the French Government's demand to exclude its film and TV industry from the negotiations (though this divisive issue may resurface later). Of course, it is not only France that seeks to protect its audio-visual and cultural sector, other EU Member States share similar concerns to varying degrees. Nevertheless, the majority of the EU Member States' Trade Ministers favoured the inclusion of the audio-visual sector as part of the talks with the US. However, as far as the French Government is concerned the issue is off-limits and, in any case, it will be able to veto any attempt to bring the audio-visual sector back into the negotiations. Some observers consider the timeframe set for the end of 2014 to complete the trade negotiations to be unrealistic.

According to UNCTAD data, the US ranked 2nd in the top 20 exporters worldwide of cultural goods in 2008 and 1st in the list of cultural exports by developed economies.³¹ In 2008 this amounted to US \$ 35 billion (22.1 billion euros). However, the US also had a huge trade deficit in cultural goods of US \$ 54.9 billion (34.7 billion euros) the same year. In relation to statistics on the flow of trade in cultural goods, the **National Endowment for the Arts**, in partnership with the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the Department of Commerce, has created an Arts & Cultural Production satellite account, and data from the first reports, covering 1998 to 2012, was released in December 2013. According to estimates, 3.2 per cent – or US \$ 504 billion (347.8 billion euros) – of current-dollar GDP in 2011 was attributable to arts and culture.³² The Bureau of Economic Analysis already maintains a national satellite account for travel and tourism, inclusive of some cultural activities.

The EU Delegation in Washington DC has been actively promoting a number of cultural events in the city and environs, with the assistance of the US public sector and foundation support, as well as EU Member States' embassies and cultural institutes. Chief among these is the 'Kids Euro Festival' now in its seventh year, which presents more than 200 free performances, films, workshops, etc. in cultural and public venues, schools and embassies in autumn each year. Originally a French-US collaboration, the Festival is the largest event of its kind in the US and involves contributions from all the EU Member States. Running even longer is the 'American Film Institute European Union Film Showcase', now in its 26th year. The event, in December 2013, involved more than 50 films from EU Member States, including official submissions of many countries for the Oscar awards for Best

³¹ UNCTAD, *Creative Economy Report 2010. Creative Economy: A feasible Development Option*. Online. Available at http://unctad.org/en/Docs/ditctab20103_en.pdf.

³² See more at: <http://arts.gov/news/2013/us-bureau-economic-analysis-and-national-endowment-arts-release-preliminary-report-impact#sthash.VxqYT8Ln.dpuf>.

Foreign Language Film. The 'European Union (Embassies) Open House' is another popular event in which the embassies of EU Member States and the EU Delegation open their doors one day a year to members of the public for them to sample national cuisines, culture and other characteristic activities of their countries. Some 96,000 visits were made during the six-hour event in May 2013.

A new event in 2013 was the 'European Month of Culture', which presented music, art exhibitions, film screening, lectures and other activities at the Kennedy Centre, the National Gallery of Art, the Phillips Collection, the American University and the embassies and cultural institutes of Member States. More details of EU Delegation cultural and educational programmes and events can be found in Annex II.

A new organisation, the **European-American Cultural Foundation** has been established as a charitable US body to take over responsibility for financing existing EU Delegation cultural activities and developing new educational, cultural and scientific programmes. It is designed to provide a more permanent framework for funding current and future projects and to increase awareness and the profile of Europe's linguistic and cultural diversity. Major donors have already committed to funding for programmes and conversations with other potential companies and individuals are in train. 'Transatlantic: Celebrating European-American Partnerships', a major event planned for New York, is anticipated to attract further resources and profile for the Foundation. The event, on Europe Day 5 May 2014, will bring together high level policy makers, corporate executives, artists and international thinkers from both sides of the Atlantic to discuss a range of global topics, including culture and sustaining the arts.

EUNIC currently has three clusters in the USA. The two largest are in New York and Washington DC and there is a smaller cluster in Chicago. Many of the cultural institutes have bases in New York given the importance of the city and its cultural sector and the EUNIC cluster has been quite active. The EUNIC cluster in Washington DC is smaller, but benefits from the location of most, if not all, of the embassies and consulates of EU Member States in the US capital and so may be able to call on the assistance of cultural attachés or counsellors (some cultural counsellors have dual roles as directors of their respective cultural institutes). The DC cluster has been energetically led by Wilfried Eckstein from the Goethe-Institut, and other regular members are the Austrian Cultural Forum, British Council and the embassies of Ireland, Finland and Spain. The Hellenic Foundation, Instituto Camões, Italian Cultural Institute and the Danish, Romanian, Slovenian and Swedish embassies, etc. have also participated. Paul Smith, Director of the British Council, Washington DC, is the EUNIC cluster President in 2014. The Alliance Française has participated, but its board has requested that it refrain from doing so on the grounds that the AF is registered as a US section 501 (c) (3) organisation to promote Francophone culture and language, but not EU culture.³³

There are regular meetings of the Washington DC cluster, usually with the EU Delegation in attendance, and one project a year is undertaken collectively. The current project, 'Transit: Creative

³³ Non-profit organisations are registered for charitable purposes under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Such organisations are commonly referred to as 501 (c) (3) bodies. More at: <http://www.irs.gov/Charities-&-Non-Profits/Charitable-Organizations/Exempt-Purposes-Internal-Revenue-Code-Section-501%28c%29%283%29>.

Placemaking with Europe' is bringing street/mural artists from Austria, Spain and the UK to work with communities in districts of Baltimore to create a better environment. The initiative builds on visits by US artists and arts administrators to Helsinki, Berlin and Marseilles. The 'Transit' project involves European artists participating in mural painting and a street art festival in Autumn 2013, exhibitions on urban development from Vienna and Hamburg in December 2013 and European artist residencies in three urban arts and entertainment districts in the first half of 2014. A major part of the funding (61,000 euros) is coming from the EU's 'Getting to Know Europe' programme, supplemented by 4,500 euros from each of the participating EUNIC members. In addition, the project was granted US \$ 200,000 (155,000 euros) from ArtPlace America for its implementation. Unfortunately, no direct reciprocity is built into the project, which seems to be a missed opportunity for closer mutual dialogue and raises questions about whether the relationship of the European artists with their local counterparts will be sustainable. The Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts has found the experience interesting, but challenging, not least the fact that it would have preferred a larger number of European countries from which to select artists to engage with the city.

Some EUNIC members were critical of the EU Delegation cultural initiatives in Washington DC, arguing that they were primarily about branding, lacked strategy and did not bring added value. It was suggested that the EU was primarily concerned with marketing, whereas EUNIC members were more focused on co-operation with artists and civil society. The criticisms were not confined to EUNIC members; a few other interviewees commented that productions at the 'Kids Euro Festival' were not always professional and did not represent the best of European theatre product (though each EU state is responsible for selecting its own participant(s)). That said, there is no question that the 'Kids Euro Festival' event is much appreciated in schools and public venues in Washington and attracts large audiences.

Initiatives by the cultural institutes of note include the British Council's arrangement, in conjunction with the Shakespeare Theatre, Washington, for two performances to be given by the Tricycle Theatre, London, of its play 'The Great Game' before an invited audience of military personnel at the Pentagon, in 2011. 'The Great Game' provides a political and cultural history of Afghanistan. The intention was to provide the military personnel with a greater understanding of how the current conflict is rooted in history. Interestingly, the British Council has a strong relationship with the Department of Cultural Affairs in the City of Los Angeles. 2013 was the 'Year of Italian Culture in the US' and the Italian Embassy and Cultural Institute presented a range of events in Washington, New York and other cities. The same year the Austrian Cultural Forum and Austrian Embassy began hosting a series of concert recitals of rarely performed Russian vocal music by the Russian Chamber Art Society.

Practical support and possible obstacles to the development of a strategic cultural role for the EU in the USA

Opportunities for EU-US Cultural Cooperation

There were a number of suggestions as to how the EU could facilitate cultural co-operation with the US, principally in the area of more information and funding, though there was not so much common ground between interviewees on where the focus should be placed. However, there was some agreement about what the EU policy should NOT do: it should not be a branding exercise.

- Suggestions for information needs were:
 - advice and information for and about promising young artists, as well as cultural organisations (perhaps via a dedicated online portal);
 - guidance to enable cultural practitioners from EU States and from the US to better understand each other and how they operate in their different cultural environments;
 - a clearing house gathering online information with details of visas, finance, taxation and other practical information that could facilitate cultural co-operation between the US and EU Member States.

There was also a suggestion that the EU could identify where expats of EU States and their families (e.g. the EU diaspora) were located in the US so as to focus initiatives more effectively (although this is something the cultural institutes/embassies of Member States already know and, in some cases, already focus some resources on).

- Suggestions for EU financial assistance included:
 - EU match funding/seed money for engagement between the cultural sector in Europe and the US, but directed to cultural organisations, not government;
 - support for residencies for cultural managers, not only artists;
 - funds to cover the international cultural project planning process and impact measurement and not just programming.

The creation of the European-American Cultural Foundation to take over responsibility from the EU Delegation of its cultural activities and provide a more permanent framework for financing current and future projects, could be a model other countries could adopt to strengthen cultural ties with Europe. Such a body should not be dependent solely on well-placed, well-meaning individuals, but should systematically seek advice from cultural specialists to ensure a more strategic and culturally relevant approach.

Potential Obstacles

- The most frequently cited obstacle to closer co-operation was visas, both inward to the US and outwards to EU States (France and the UK were identified in particular). The cost of expediting the US visa process costs US presenters almost US \$ 2,000 (1,537 euros) per applicant, but it is sometimes seen as the only way to ensure the process is completed on time: one major venue said they began the visa application process for foreign

artists/performers six to nine months in advance of the event, especially if they had recognisably Arabic or Moslem names as they were generally subjected to greater scrutiny. Nevertheless, the same source conceded it would be unlikely to seek a visa for an artist from Palestine, for example, because the process was too convoluted and there was no guarantee of success.

- The other major obstacle from a US perspective is raising sufficient funds for an international project. Fund-raising is very time-consuming and fewer US foundations give priority to international cultural initiatives than before. In a survey of US cultural exchange-based programming almost 70 per cent of respondents indicated that international engagement was not financially viable.³⁴
- Another disadvantage that was revealed was that a US cultural organisation can only apply to the National Endowment for the Arts for one grant per year. Consequently, US organisations are more likely to apply for assistance towards their domestic work rather than an international initiative.
- A note of caution was offered in relation to the way the EU presence is projected in international circles through its culture. Countries such as the US and China are sometimes resented because of their size and perceptions that partnerships they enter into are unequal.

³⁴ Fullman, op cit.

CONCLUSIONS

In the USA cultural diplomacy/cultural exchange are not regarded as the sole prerogative of the Federal Government; states, local authorities, cultural organisations, academia, foundations and commerce are all engaged. Indeed, the US approach to cultural diplomacy is fragmented, because of the multiple agencies and organisations involved and the fact that, in the main, they act independently. No single body has adopted a co-ordinating or consultative role in the pursuit of US cultural relations, nor is there any evidence of an overall strategic approach.

Government policy for culture in US external relations is primarily reactive. Programmes are deployed to promote people-to-people exchange as a means of winning friends and counteracting negative perceptions of US economic and military power and the threat of extremism. However, the term 'exchange' is often a misnomer, as the emphasis at Federal Government level is on promoting favourable impressions of the US through sending its artists and cultural organisations abroad, rather than genuine reciprocity. Moreover, the resources made available for such initiatives are very small for a country that has the world's largest economy. One reason for this is a political perception that there is already a lot of US culture 'out there' in the wider world, because of the power and dominance of the audio-visual sector in general and Hollywood in particular. Numerous conferences and reports in recent years have argued for an enhanced Federal Government role and greater resources to support culture in US external relations, but seemingly to little effect.

Although the geographical focus of the Department of State is increasingly on East and South Asia, Africa and the Middle East, many US cultural practitioners continue to favour European connections, e.g. festivals, museums, galleries and cultural centres. Contributory factors include artistic relevance, cultural diversity, professional opportunities, as well as cultural and historical linkages.

There is a general consensus that the arts/cultural sector is an under-utilised resource in US Government cultural diplomacy. There is no lack of interest on the part of most cultural practitioners and organisations in the US, but international engagement is complicated by the need to raise funds from many different public and private sources.

The visa application process is also a hindrance to international engagement, both in relation to outward visits, for example to EU Member States, and, especially in relation to the approval of visa applications for foreign guest artists coming to the USA, where the length of time, cost and uncertainty of the outcome causes frustration to US presenters, festivals and venues.

The EU Delegation promotes a range of cultural activities, some well-established in the Washington DC calendar. In the main, the events are designed to enhance greater awareness of, and interest in, the EU and its Member States, rather than being chosen for their relevance to the US cultural sector. However, the creation of a specific foundation to provide a more secure framework for financing European projects has the potential to be a model that could be replicated in other countries, especially if experts from the cultural sector are able to have a meaningful input.

EUNIC clusters in Washington DC and New York meet regularly and are quite active. As with other countries that have EUNIC hubs, the nature and extent of the collaboration between members is dependent on the enthusiasm and commitment of specific individuals.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Methodology and list of people consulted

To complete this report, an initial mapping process was undertaken between March and June 2013. This involved desk research via official websites and academic papers and a mapping questionnaire sent via the British Council in Washington DC. This process was facilitated on the ground by Sarah Frankland, a former staff member of the Council and by Alexandra Dimsdale, the Council's Manager of Press and Communications. Even so, it only yielded responses from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities; nothing was obtained from the Department of State.

A consultation visit was arranged for Rod Fisher to enable him to consolidate the facts that had been gathered, fill information gaps and elicit opinions about the situation from stakeholders in the US. This took place from Saturday 16 November 2013 (arrival) to Friday 22 November 2013 (departure). A programme of meetings was arranged in Washington DC and Baltimore by Melissa Wear of the British Council in Washington DC and Paul Smith, the Council's Director, kindly made available some space at the Council's offices for one of the meetings and for the researcher to conduct long distance telephone interviews.

Meetings took place over five days (Monday 18 to Friday 22). Altogether 15 meetings, including two focus groups, took place and there were three phone interviews with individuals in other parts of the US. A broad range of individuals from Federal Government and its agencies, state arts agencies, local government, the cultural sector, academia, national cultural institutes/embassies, EEAS/EU staff and consultancy were interviewed, including all those specifically identified by the researcher as important to talk with. The additional length of this consultation visit enabled 33 individuals to be interviewed.

Names of those interviewed individually (in alphabetical order)

- **Alicia B. Adams**, Vice President, International Programming and Dance, Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts, Washington DC
- **Spencer P. Boyer**, Visiting Senior Fellow, Centre for Transatlantic Relations, EU Centre of Excellence Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, John Hopkins University, Washington DC
- **Gina Caruso**, Managing Director, Creative Alliance at the Patterson, Baltimore
- **May Deane Conners**, Director, Office of Citizen Exchanges, Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, US Department of State
- **Nicholas Cull**, Professor of Public Diplomacy, University of Southern California*
- **Aimee Fullman**, Principal, Meaningful Engagement International; consultant on cultural diplomacy
- **Krista Green**, Cultural Affairs Assistant Director, Baltimore Office of Promotion & the Arts
- **Chris Jennings**, Managing Director, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Washington DC

- **Christine M. Kalke**, Senior Analyst & International Co-ordinator, Office of Planning & Budget, National Endowment for the Humanities
- **Guiomar Ochoa**, International Activities Specialist, National Endowment for the Arts
- **Sarah Pickup-Diligenti**, Executive Director, Alliance Française, Washington DC
- **Cynthia P. Schneider**, former US Ambassador to the Netherlands; Co-Director MOST (Management of Social Transformation) Resource Centre, Los Angeles; Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy, Georgetown University; Senior Fellow, Brookings Institute, Washington DC
- **Russell Willis Taylor**, President & Chief Executive Officer, National Arts Strategy*
- **Margaret Wyszomirski**, Professor & Director, Arts Policy & Administration Programme, Ohio State University, Columbus*

(* interviewed by telephone)

The following individuals attended a focus group on culture, organised by Americans for the Arts (in alphabetical order)

- **David Furchgott**, President, International Arts & Artists
- **Brandon Gryde**, Director of Government Affairs, National Opera Centre America
- **Jonathan Katz**, Chief Executive Officer, National Assembly of State Arts Agencies
- **Welmoed Laanstra**, Curator of Cultural Programmes, Art in Embassies Programme, US Department of State
- **Najeon Lee**, Director of Government Affairs & Education Advocacy, League of American Orchestras
- **Abel López**, Associate Producing Director, Gala Hispanic Theatre, Washington DC
- **Robert L. Lynch**, President & Chief Executive Officer, Americans for the Arts
- **Dean Phelus**, Senior Director, International Programmes & Events, American Alliance of Museums
- **Regan Spurlock**, Grant Manager, DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities, Government of the District of Columbia
- **Scott D. Stoner**, Director, Programmes & Resources, Association of Performing Arts Presenters
- **Ximena Varela**, Associate Professor of Arts Management, American University, Washington DC

(This focus group was also attended by Melissa Wear of the British Council, who took notes)

The following individuals attended a focus group meeting of the EUNIC hub, Washington DC (in alphabetical order)

- **Guillermo Corral**, Cultural Counsellor, Embassy of Spain, Washington DC
- **Wilfried Eckstein**, Director, Goethe-Institut, Washington DC
- **Andreas Pawlitschek**, Director, Austrian Cultural Forum; Counsellor (Cultural Affairs), Austrian Embassy, Washington DC
- **Kristina Rennerstedt**, Cultural Counsellor, Embassy of Sweden, Washington DC

- **Angelika Schweiger**, Cultural Officer, Austrian Cultural Forum, Washington DC

(Melissa Wear, British Council, attended for part of the meeting)

The following individuals participated in the meeting at the EU Delegation in Washington DC (in alphabetical order)

- **Sandra E. Auman**, Cultural Affairs Officer, Press & Public Diplomacy
- **Silvia Kofler**, Minister-Counsellor, Spokesperson, Head of Press & Public Diplomacy
- **Constance Whiteside**, Senior Outreach Officer

In addition to the above, conversations were held at The Creative Alliance at the Patterson arts centre, Baltimore, with artist **Laura Arnilsson**, who was exhibiting there, and resident artist **Francisco Loza**.

Annex II: EU-US joint programmes and initiatives, run by the EU Delegation

The EU Delegation is involved with a number of cultural initiatives, primarily in the Washington DC area, through specific programmes or budget lines. The following information indicates most of the initiatives.

The **Getting to Know Europe** programme makes competitive grants to US based NGOs/non-profit bodies for a broad range of activities, including cultural projects, that help advance knowledge of the EU and its role and the value of the transatlantic partnership (the project – ‘Transit: Creative Placemaking with Europe in Baltimore’, administered by EUNIC and referred to in the text, is an illustration).

EU Centres of Excellence are installed at major US universities to advance the study of the EU and its institutions. More than 3.3 million € were allocated by the EU to support 10 such centres between 2008-2011.

Through its **Policy Research and Debate** programme, the EU provided some 2 million € in 2011-2012 to US think tanks and public policy research centres for conferences and scholarly research designed to encourage reflection and discussion on EU-US relations.

EU Rendez-Vous is a new series featuring senior European and US leaders discussing a range of major issues from foreign policy and the global economy to culture and human rights. Opportunity for debate of a different kind is provided by the informal discussion series **Communication in Culture**, in which leading and emerging practitioners in the performing and visual arts, literature and cuisine share insights about their practice with performances and demonstrations, e.g. Spanish Tapas, Byzantine art, Estonian poetry and prose and multimedia from Croatia.

About 25-30% of the Press & Public Diplomacy budget line of 500,000 € is used for cultural projects. New in 2013 was the **European Month of Culture** held in May. This provided an opportunity for EU Member States to showcase their culture and practitioners through classical music recitals, traditional and contemporary music performances, visual arts exhibitions, film and lectures. The idea for the initiative came from the US and was supported by a number of prominent Washington based institutions – the Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts, The National Gallery of Art, the Katzen Arts Centre at the American University and the Phillips Collection. Not all of the activities were specifically created for the Month of Culture; some were already taking place in Washington DC (e.g. the ‘Pre-Raphaelites: Victorian Art & Design 1840-1900’ exhibition curated by Tate Britain and showing at the National Gallery of Art).

All EU Member States contribute to the **Kids Euro Festival**, a month long series of free performances, entertainment, film and workshops in libraries, schools, hospitals, cultural institutes and cultural venues, etc. in Washington DC and neighbouring counties. As with most events, the initiative is made possible through local partnerships, as well as support and sponsorship from foundations, individuals and business.

The **EU Embassies Open House** is a large undertaking, which provides opportunities for the American public to gain insights into the different cultures, customs, heritage and cuisine of EU Member States, when embassies and the EU Delegation office are opened for a day. Public transport is arranged to enable visits to be made to the different embassies.

EU Delegation and Member States support has ensured the longevity of the American Film Institute **European Union Film Showcase**. Now in its 26th year, this annual event is designed to bring the best of European cinema to the city.

The EU Delegation also supports cultural projects beyond Washington DC under the banner '**Beyond the Bellway**'.

There is also co-operation with Cultural Tourism DC on a project called **Passport DC**, though there has been difficulty in raising sponsorship from the private sector for the initiative.

Many of these activities are expected to transfer to the newly established European-American Cultural Foundation in due course.

Annex III: Bibliography and references

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