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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Azerbaijani external cultural relations are very much determined by the country's geographical location, which has allowed it to link Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Russia, and by its recent history of being an oil-rich and rent-benefitting regime.¹ Over the last 20 years the government has striven to turn the country into a cultural relations hub in line with these historical links and to use them as a foreign policy tool in the form of cultural diplomacy. A presidential regime has ensured continuity and stability which, in turn, has encouraged a cultural policy that focuses on large-scale investments in vigorous nation branding. Reasserting the image of Azerbaijan has been at the core of cultural relations with the European Union, in parallel with oil and gas diplomacy. Impressive growth rates and sovereign funds allow Azerbaijan to pick and choose its cultural partners. The state-led policy of rebranding through cultural hospitality, on the basis of a history of cultural and religious tolerance, has borne fruit and the country increasingly hosts prestigious international cultural events. The reverse of the medal is a mixed record in terms of human rights as reflected in the recent ENP-progress report,² Internet control and a lack of a genuine opening of cultural spaces.

¹ For a discussion of the concepts of rent and rent-seeking, see Jacqueline Coolidge, Susan Rose-Ackerman, *High-Level Rent Seeking and Corruption in African Regimes: Theory and Cases*, World Bank Group, 1996, pp.2-3: 'Rent is equivalent to what most non-economists think of as monopoly profits. Rent seeking is then the effort to acquire access to or control over opportunities for earning rents.'

Online. Available at: <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWBIGOVANTCOR/Resources/wps1780.pdf>.

² European Commission, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Azerbaijan, Progress in 2013 and recommendations for action*, SWD(2014) 70 final, Brussels, 27 March 2014. Online. Available at: http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/2014/country-reports/azerbaijan_en.pdf.

OVERVIEW

Culture in the external relations of Azerbaijan is closely linked to the nature of the political system, which is based on clans and a pyramidal mode of operation as a neo-patrimonial governance regime.³ Corruption is rife. In their discourse, the authorities use nationalism ('Azerbaijanism') as the backbone of their ideology, supplemented by a personality cult surrounding the late president HeydarAliyevand, to a lesser extent, his son and the current leader IlhamAliyev. The approach consists of defining national identity by merging three dimensions of social life: the figure of the political leader (father and son), the nation (or the people) and its culture.⁴ This doctrine encourages people to think and work as if the behaviour of the president (and his family) had contributed to the unity of the Azerbaijani people. This makes it easier to interpret statements made during the consultation such as 'culture is the nation's face'.⁵

In Azerbaijan, the practice and the concept of culture in external relations follow traditional cultural diplomacy approaches based on various models of nation branding. Yet, since the country is still in a phase of nation building, its cultural branding is a challenging task for several reasons. First, the territory of Azerbaijan is still fragmented (despite its internationally recognised integrity): the country is not only divided between the mainland and the exclave of Nakhichevan, but is also cut off from NagornoKarabakh. Azerbaijan and Armenia still have to resolve theNagornoKarabakh conflict. Their respective diasporas are also involved. The second challenge regards the distinctiveness of the Azerbaijani language as a cultural feature. It is not immediately obvious to uninformed foreigners that the language exists in its own right, as it is based upon the Turkish language with some words from Persian, Arabic and, more recently, Russian. It has known several reforms in the way it is written, depriving the Azerbaijani people of easy access to archives in alphabets (Arabic and Cyrillic) or fonts they do not all master. Thirdly, the Azerbaijani people or nation (as another component of state identity) faces another challenge in the sense that the country is mostly composed of Azeri Turks (in addition to a variety of small ethnic and linguistic and religious minorities), a larger number of whom most actually live in contemporary Iran. All the above (the population split between two countries, the language shared with other groups, the fragmented territory) contribute to an international blur or image deficit, which the government tries to counterbalance. Yet, cultural stakeholders still seem to define their country's cultural approach exclusively in comparison with its neighbours.⁶

Part of the external cultural relations strategy to counterbalance the image deficit is to 'bring Europe to Azerbaijan'. In other words, it consists of hosting events in Azerbaijan with numerous European participants in order to raise their awareness of what Azerbaijani culture is and to establish

³ 'Like almost all of the post-Soviet states, the regime is characterized by harsh authoritarianism, widespread corruption, clan rivalry, and nepotism': BayramBalci, 'Presidential elections in Azerbaijan: What for?', *Eurasia Outlook*, Carnegie Moscow Center, 11 October 2013.

⁴ 'Azerbaijanism: single national ideology uniting world Azerbaijanis', interview with HeydarAliyev available on the Yeni Azerbaijan Party's website, 9 July 2011. Online. Available at: <http://www.yap.org.az/view.php?lang=en&menu=19&id=16389>.

⁵ This approach is frequently used in public media campaigns through audiovisual media and historically with more traditional posters or paintings in the countryside.

⁶ Consultation report, November 2013.

long-term and sustainable relations with them. The main stakeholders of this strategy are public structures, as well as cultural professionals eager to interact with the outside world.

Among state structures, the presidential apparatus is the leading body for almost all public policies, including culture, as long as the policy has implications for national interests and security. The president has a dedicated team working on communications and in particular on the internet and social media.⁷

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has had a new legal basis since 2006. It is the main implementing agency for Azerbaijan cultural diplomacy, together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under the umbrella of the Ministry of Culture, numerous public cultural institutions operate with international connections or outward looking agendas: the National Museum of Arts, the National Opera, the Carpet Museum, and a myriad of tangible and intangible cultural heritage sites all over the country.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs deals with the international, the legal, and the political dimensions of Azerbaijan's external cultural relations: protocol and procedures of cooperation with international and multilateral organisations. It also manages cultural centres linked to embassies abroad and is in charge of the management of relations with other states or foreign organisations.

Although some reforms were made in order to allow for the decentralisation of cultural budgets (up to over 60% of the state budget expenditure), the lion's share of internationalised cultural activities still takes place in the capital, Baku.⁸

Another quasi-public organisation (although with a non-for-profit status) is the HeydarAliyev Foundation acting in the field of culture, education, youth and sports according to the philosophy of HeydarAliyev, former president and father of the current leader, IlhamAliyev. The foundation is run by the First Lady (President) and her daughter (Vice-President) who heads the Russian branch of the foundation. The foundation thus resembles Middle Eastern royal family culture-related foundations. The director of the Foundation is also the director of the HeydarAliyev Cultural Centre, created by presidential decree.⁹

Most of the famous and internationally connected cultural institutions in Azerbaijan (theatres, traditional musical forms such as *Mugham*, classical music ensembles, philharmonic orchestra, rug and carpet museums) are related to the state.

⁷ Katy Pearce presented an organisation chart of the President's communication strategy in some publically accessible slides. Katy E. Pearce, *Networked Authoritarianism in Azerbaijan: How the Azerbaijani government uses the Internet to deter dissent*, Herbert J. Ellison Memorial Lecture Series, Seattle: University of Washington, May 2013.

⁸ Council of Europe, 'Azerbaijan', *Compendium of Cultural Policies and Trends in Europe*, November 2012, p. 45.

⁹ http://heydaraliyevcenter.az/#14_Structure and 'The HeydarAliyevCenter', *Heydar Aliyev Foundation* website. Online. Available at: http://heydar-aliyev-foundation.org/en/content/index/142/Heydar_Aliyev_Centre.

As for the non-governmental sector involved in culture and external relations, it operates in a competitive environment where the state already occupies a lot of space. Developing independent work is possible, but remains a challenge and is subject to a number of indirect controls. One example of new non-state cultural organisations dealing with external action is the Arts Council Azerbaijan. It is a non-governmental organisation led by Dadash Mammedov, the young painter son of cartoonist Nazim Mammedov, who was authorised to set up a gallery, Art Villa. The Arts Council of Azerbaijan worked, for instance, on a project with the Heydar Aliyev Foundation on waste recycling together with European partners from Germany and Romania. The few non-governmental stakeholders consulted in Azerbaijan acknowledged that, even when supported by private or public sponsors, achieving independence in their work is a challenge.¹⁰

Diaspora organisations have also played an increasingly important role in the government's approach to culture in external relations with a view to making them contribute to the country's international image. Dozens of diaspora organisations exist in the world, and dedicated state structures (created in 2002) work on developing connections with them.¹¹ The government has led a very active diaspora policy – although with mixed results – since the 1990s, inspired by the experience and efficiency of the Armenian diaspora, with which it competes internationally on a number of contentious issues such as the Nagorno Karabakh conflict.¹²

¹⁰ 'We are non-governmental company and sometimes we can't find sponsors and when we find sponsors they are telling us what to do'.

¹¹ Council of Europe, 'Azerbaijan', *Compendium*, op. cit., p.13.

¹² Bayram Balci, 'Politique identitaire et construction diasporique en Azerbaïdjan postsoviétique', *Cahiers d'Asie centrale*, 2011, pp.19-20. Online. Available at: <http://asiecentrale.revues.org/1451>.

THE CULTURAL POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RELATIONS WITH THE EU

The cultural policy system in Azerbaijan is state-led in all respects, with small circles within and around the ruling elite taking the main decisions, providing financial support, and coordinating the activities of the various partners involved in culture, in particular the regional and local authorities and professional organisations.

Cultural strategies, initiatives and policies which are viewed as subversive are closely monitored and controlled and critics (including bloggers) of the government's policies (beyond cultural policies) are often seriously threatened or put in jail.¹³ This is only partly reflected in the report of the Council of Europe's *Compendium of Cultural Policies in Europe* (which was drafted by government officials) as well as in the Culture East 2013 country report (which was commented on by the government authorities).

Because of the country's geopolitical location, the culture of Azerbaijan is a melting pot of cultures and influences from its neighbourhood (Persia/Iran, Turkey, Armenia, Kurdish people, Georgia, Caucasian traditions, Caspian sea and Central Asia, etc.). As a consequence, its cultural relations, which have been developed in a variety of directions, are also the product of geopolitics. This sometimes puts the country in delicate diplomatic situations with other countries claiming a common heritage, as in the case of tensions with Iran in the context of UNESCO regarding the intangible heritage of ancient polo game *chogan* or *chovqan*.¹⁴

Azerbaijan also has a strong record in international scientific cooperation, dating back even before Soviet times. This tradition has also allowed Azerbaijani scientists to maintain bonds with international research and engineering networks. This tradition of scientific and cultural relations remains a strong asset for the country in the promotion of its image worldwide.

Strategies on culture in external relations are primarily expressed in terms of national cultural diplomacy, the 'promotion of Azerbaijan', intercultural dialogue and more recently, cultural tourism.¹⁵

¹³ 'Azerbaijani TV broadcaster wins first European Endowment for Democracy grant in time for presidential elections', *EU Neighbourhood Info Centre*, 3 October 2013. Online. Available at: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/eastportal/news/latest/34646/Azerbaijani-TV-broadcaster-wins-first-European-Endowment-for-Democracy-grant-in-time-for-presidential-elections>;

'Azerbaijani Opposition Blogger Says "Democratic Revolution" Is Approaching', *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 6 March 2013. Online. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/donkey-blogger-emin-mili/24921148.html>.

The Human Rights Watch page on Azerbaijan mentions: 'It is clear that the Azerbaijani leadership cares about its international image, but much needs to be done internally before the government can be said to be meeting human rights obligations'.

'Azerbaijan: Election Amid a Rights Crackdown', *Human Rights Watch*, Berlin, 21 January 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/01/21/azerbaijan-election-amid-rights-crackdown>.

¹⁴ 'Iran Claims To Thwart Azerbaijani Cultural Imperialism At UNESCO', *Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 5 December 2013. Online. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/unesco-azerbaijan-iran-dispute-polo/25191067.html>.

Observers also quote the example of Hussein Javid. Email correspondence with European officials, April 2014.

¹⁵ Council of Europe, 'Azerbaijan', *Compendium*, op. cit., p.5, quotes the Law on culture.

Terry Sandell (et al.), 'Analytical Base-line report on the culture sector and cultural policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan', *EuroEast culture*, January 2013, p.14, p.28.

Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on celebrating the 90th birthday anniversary of national leader of the

The way culture is conceived in the country's external relations is clearly related to the concept of cultural diplomacy: state-led and operating mainly along foreign policy objectives. Intercultural dialogue is a cultural policy domain in which the government has invested, using the advantages of Azerbaijan as a geographical and cultural hub. Cultural tourism is a new priority and is presented as a vector of mutual understanding as well as an engine for growth.¹⁶

As an extension of Azerbaijan's cultural diplomacy efforts at home, cultural centres under the embassies of the Republic of Azerbaijan in Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Paris, France were established according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on 2 September 2010.

In the last decade, the authorities have successively opened and closed the space for dialogue and consultation with civil society and independent cultural actors.¹⁷ Phases of opening make inexperienced observers believe that the country's cultural external relations are moving in the direction of democratisation. This approach has been partly successful, but has been questioned by human rights defenders (see '[special situation](#)') and specialised academics.¹⁸

In this context, all stakeholders working within or with the government share the same objective in their external cultural relations: '[s]omehow the idea behind bringing famous foreigners to Baku may be related to the fact that we indeed want them to go back and when asked by press to inform the public about the Azerbaijani culture'.¹⁹

This strategy has been implemented at various levels. First, Baku has become an active member of multilateral cultural frameworks. Azerbaijan participates in a series of multilateral cultural projects. Co-operation with the Council of Europe (CoE) is also a key element of multilateral engagement. This included the participation in the CoE's compendium, STAGE, Kiyv initiative, the Faro strategy on intercultural dialogue and other projects.²⁰ The country has also been active in promoting its image abroad in the framework of UNESCO (usually focusing on national material and immaterial heritage), but also in the Islamic Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO), TURKSOY – the

Azerbaijani people Heydar Aliyev, 21 January 2013. Online. Available at: http://president.az/files/serencam_en.pdf.
On the promotion of Azerbaijani culture, see consultation report for this study.

¹⁶ Speech of Minister of Culture of Azerbaijan Republic at the Tbilisi Ministerial Conference on culture of the Eastern Partnership, 27-28 June 2013.

¹⁷ Some consulted EU Member States' representatives gave two examples of promising and positive developments for the independent cultural scene: the Yarat group and the exhibition space for Independent Artists. Correspondence with a Member State's representative, March 2014.
Other European officials mentioned Art for Democracy as an independent form of art promotion.

¹⁸ On the use of censorship on the Internet: Arzu Geybullayeva, *Deceiving Internet Freedom in Azerbaijan*, 20 December 2013. See also the work of Katy Pearce, in particular: *Equivocation and Internet Freedom in Azerbaijan*, the video transcript of which is available online at: <http://fsi.stanford.edu/events/AB40F208055991C2FEnuU2454124-7636>. She writes: 'While Azerbaijan does little first generation control (although it has sporadically filtered opposition news sources, especially before elections), it instead discourages technology use in three ways: media framing (third generation), monitoring (third generation) and arrests (second and third generation). Together these have created psychological barriers that impacts Azerbaijani technology use'. Human Rights Watch, *Azerbaijan: Shrinking Space for Media Freedom*, 2 November 2012.

¹⁹ Consultation report for this study, p.7.

²⁰ A full description is available in Council of Europe, 'Azerbaijan', *Compendium*, op. cit., pp. 11-13.

International Organisation on Joint Development of Turkic Culture and Arts and the CIS Intergovernmental Foundation for Educational, Scientific and Cultural Cooperation of the CIS (IFESCO).²¹ Under Mrs. Aliyeva's leadership, the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions was widely covered in national media both at the moment of its discussion worldwide prior to its adoption in 2005 and its ratification by the *MilliMejlis* (national parliament) of Azerbaijan in 2010.

Second, the culture-orientated foundation named after HeydarAliyev was created and headed by the First Lady. The foundation is a partner of numerous European embassies, as mentioned on its website. Mrs. Aliyeva holds the honorary title of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and is also chair of the 'Friends of Azerbaijani Culture Association'. The foundation seems to operate as a parallel structure to the Ministry of Culture allowing the president and his wife to support initiatives independently as private donors using their personal and family fortune. However, time did not allow for more research on the way the foundation is financed or for a comparison between the amount of the foundation's budget spent by local and national authorities.

As far as Europe is concerned, the establishment of a public diplomacy structure called The Europe Azerbaijan Society (TEAS) aims to promote Azerbaijan in Europe.²² The company, headed by the son of the influential Minister for Emergency Situations, has several offices in Europe and has dedicated activities and programmes on cultural relations.²³ The funding of some apparently private structures like TEAS seems to rely almost exclusively on private and corporate sponsorship. More research on the linkages between this public diplomacy initiative and the government would provide more information on the role of respective stakeholders and thereby opportunities for the EU to develop partnerships. The EU has mostly engaged Azerbaijan in the framework of its Eastern Partnership regional programmes on culture. In this framework, it funded programmes involving Azerbaijani public and non-governmental cultural operators on the topics of regional dialogue, heritage and cinema (see Annex).

The third strategic direction taken by the government has consisted in merging culture and tourism in the same ministry. This signals the choice for a single territorial marketing approach aiming at attracting foreigners (reaching around 2 million euros a year according to public statements by the ministry), raising their awareness about the cultural wealth of the country, contributing to local development and, thus, improving the country's overall image.

Decentralisation is part of a new strategy aimed at giving local authorities more autonomy in the cultural field. Yet, since local executive authorities are usually appointed via a highly centralised process – although some of the local representatives obtain seats through elections – the autonomy of local authorities is likely to remain politically constrained.

²¹ Ibid.

²² The European Azerbaijan Society website: www.teas.eu.

²³ Rebecca Vincent, 'UK Politicians Enjoy Azerbaijani Culture While Turning A Blind Eye To Human Right Abuses', *Azadliq Radiosu*, 12 March 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.azadliq.org/content/article/25294167.html>.

With regard to territorial marketing, the authorities follow multi-year plans for cultural policy modernisation, with the renovation and construction of large-scale cultural infrastructures. One of the most striking examples of this policy is the new HeydarAliyev Cultural Centre in Baku built by the architect ZahaHadid and inaugurated in 2012. Other cultural structures include the Carpet Museum (opened in December 2013) and the International Mugham Centre. These infrastructures will increasingly be used for holding large international cultural events. Several festivals have also been created (the QaraQarayev Festival of Contemporary Music, the Qabala festival).²⁴ Baku hosted or plans to host a number of international events such as the 2012 Eurovision song contest, the first 2015 European games or the Baku International Humanitarian forum (under the patronage of Russia and Azerbaijan's presidents).²⁵

Fourthly, state authorities have invested in digital cultural diplomacy through the creation of websites and web-based showcase platforms. This is becoming a must for the majority of cultural institutions in Azerbaijan. The website of the Ministry of Culture has several versions in Russian, English, Arabic and French. General information on the country can be found on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' website, as well as on other country promotion websites.²⁶ Some of them are reportedly financed and managed by circles close to the leadership.

Digitalisation projects are ongoing in a variety of cultural sectors (theatre, music) in cooperation with international partners (such as one on musical archives with the British Library).²⁷ Since 2011, a new television channel fully dedicated to culture, and Azerbaijani culture in particular, Medeniyyet TV, has non-stop broadcasts while anyone can listen to Mugham music on the web-based Mugham radio.²⁸

The paradox of contemporary Azerbaijan is that, on the one hand, all of the above are supposed to lead to a better image of the country and increasing contacts with the rest of the world, while on the other, these dynamics remain mostly state-run, without associating, in a truly inclusive and self-critical manner, independent cultural stakeholders. As a matter of fact, the state's external cultural strategy – despite being successful in involving the government's numerous local and

²⁴ The 5th Qara Qarayev international contemporary music Festival website: <http://www.qaraqarayev-festival-az.net/en/festival.html>.

²⁵ European Games website: <http://www.baku2015.com/en/>, and Baku International Humanitarian Forum website: www.bakuforum.org.

²⁶ 'General information on Azeri Culture', *Azerbaijan*: http://www.azerbaijan.az/Culture/GeneralInfo/generalInfo_e.html; Azerbaijan portal: Azerbaijans.com, gives general information; AzeTube provides videos from the Azerbaijan's audiovisual heritage, AzeTV, AzeRadio and Azerbaijanphoto; Garabagh.net is a website dedicated to Nagorno Karabakh; See 'Azerbaijani government steps up its digital game', *Katy Pearce website*. Online. Available at: <http://www.katypearce.net/azerbaijani-government-steps-up-its-digital-game/>.

²⁷ *RMCBU report 2012/2013*, p. 24.

Milli Virtual Kitabxana (National Virtual Library) website: www.kitabxana.net; *World Music International Scientific Online Musical Journal of Azerbaijan* website: www.musigi-dunya.az; AzerbaijanTeatru website: <http://azteatr.musigi-dunya.az/>.

²⁸ 'Azerbaijan', *RMCBU report 2012/2013*, op. cit. pp.18-19; See at: www.mugamradio.az.

international supporters who benefit from state support and resources from the energy sector – has not prevented a wider gap from forming within Azerbaijan itself between the ruling elite and educated professionals whose standards of living have not substantially improved.²⁹

The most active European cultural partners of Azerbaijan have actually followed or benefitted from – knowingly or not – their governments' trade and investment interests. Large private sponsors mostly come from the hydrocarbon industry and multinational firms (including airlines companies) registered in the US, Europe (BP, Shell, Total, ENI, Statoil), but also Asia.³⁰ European sources report that the majority of arts sponsorship nowadays comes from Azerbaijani companies.³¹

European countries have ensured a significant level of cultural relations with Azerbaijan for a variety of reasons. In many – but not all – instances government-led European cultural relations accompanied oil and gas business and trade relations initiated in the 1990s by national champions attracted by promising investment opportunities: this was the case of the UK, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands and Norway.³² Some EU Member States are also politically involved in regional diplomacy. France, a country with a strong Armenian community, plays a mediation role in the NagornoKarabakh conflict negotiations. Germany and Poland are also active at the diplomatic level.³³

The cooperation between the YUG State National Theatre and the Adam Mickiewicz Institute in Poland was mentioned as an example of cooperation with cultural partners in EU Member States. Experts also recognise that cooperation with European museums is quite frequent; for example, around 20 exhibitions from leading European museums were held in Baku in 2012.

One way of contributing to the opening of the country to the outside world and to better understanding of European culture has been to encourage student grants and studies abroad on a large scale. Reports mention a series of examples of cooperation in the field of creative industries with Europe and potential for further development in this field on the basis of public-private partnerships.³⁴ In the area of heritage protection and conservation, many exchanges with and participation of European experts have taken place since the country's independence in order to promote the country's untapped monumental heritage in Baku as well as in other parts of the country (Absheron peninsula, Nakhitchevan, Sheqi, Qish, etc.).³⁵

EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture) does not seem to be particularly active in Baku. There are only two EUNIC institutes at present represented – the British Council and the

²⁹ Interview with an Azerbaijani scholar, January 2014. A teacher earns less than 250 € a month.

³⁰ 'Azerbaijan', *RMCBU report 2012/2013*, op. cit., p.19.

³¹ Correspondance with British Council staff, December 2013.

³² Experience of the author residing and working in and on Azerbaijan between 1996 and 2000.

³³ Sprachlernzentrum Aserbajdschan (Partner des Goethe-Instituts) website: <http://slz.az/az/>;
British Council Azerbaijan website: <http://www.britishcouncil.az/en>;
Institutfrançaisd'Azerbaïdjan website: <http://ifa.az/>.

³⁴ 'Azerbaijan', *RMCBU report 2012/2013*, op. cit., p.20.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 22.

French Institute. The EU delegation organises a European film festival on a regular basis, but there are no reports of specific synergies between European cultural agencies in Azerbaijan.

The most striking trend in cultural relations between Azerbaijan and Europe is probably the fact that the Azerbaijan ruling elite has become a sponsor and a cultural donor for Europeans struggling with their own economic and financial crisis. The opening of the cultural centre in Paris and the outreach to the French cultural and political establishment has been extremely efficient. In Spain, Azerbaijan sponsors the Atlético de Madrid football club with the team's jerseys being branded with the logo 'Azerbaijan Land of Fire'.

Through the Heydar Aliyev Foundation, Azerbaijan has also invested heavily in its presence at the Venice Biennale with its own pavilion, something that other oil-rich countries in the European neighbourhood have not yet achieved.

Special situation: human rights, external cultural relations and politics in Azerbaijan

The ideology of Azerbaijanism, which integrates the country's people with the image of the president and the identity of its people, de facto mixes culture and politics.³⁶ This system seemed to be increasingly questioned in 2012 when famous film director and Oscar winner Rustam Ibrahimbegov became more critical of the Aliyev regime. Ibrahimbegov and the Union of cinematographers were then harassed in various ways by the authorities.³⁷ Ibrahimbegov briefly joined the political opposition and human rights defenders organisations in the 2013 presidential campaign. As a cultural icon in the former Soviet Union and a powerful millionaire, his statements, as a designated presidential candidate in 2013, mattered. This briefly started to present a narrative contradicting the official Azerbaijanism doctrine and its cultural diplomacy aiming at enhancing the country's image. However, Ibrahimbegov could not run for the presidency because he did not manage to obtain the right documents on time in Russia and his application was rejected. Criminal cases against him (he now resides in Russia) and Lala Afendiyeva, a member of the Cinematographers Union, remain open.

The very fact that a prominent cultural figure decided to unite with the democratic opposition is new in a country where historically artists and intellectuals would not confront the ruling clan.³⁸ Be this as it may, the new role played by Ibrahimbegov demonstrated the overlap between cultural issues and politics in Azerbaijan. This has raised concerns in Europe about the EU stance vis-à-vis the Caspian country. Ibrahimbegov visited Berlin and Brussels in July 2013 and met with various political and cultural experts, as well as senior EU figures such as Baroness Ashton. Before and after the presidential

³⁶ Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on celebrating the 90th birthday anniversary of national leader, op. cit.

³⁷ *Art for Democracy Report*, April 2014, in possession of the author. The report was due to be launched on 29 April 2014 but the public event had to be cancelled at last minute. 'Hotel "Grand Hotel" breaks the event of human rights defenders'. Online. Available at: <http://www.contact.az/docs/2014/Social/042800076932en.htm#.U2cxOq2Sw3x>.

³⁸ Musicians Mstislav Rostropovitch and Alim Qassimov are famous examples of artists living in good terms with the regime. Ibrahimbegov himself was considered as close to the leadership in the past. Bayram Balci, 'Presidential elections in Azerbaijan: What for?', op. cit: 'The unprecedented coming together of various political parties, associations, intellectuals, and religious figures proves the [Azerbaijani opposition capable of organizing itself](#) to challenge the incumbent president'.

campaign, the EU and some European politicians were criticised in the European and Azerbaijani press for applying double standards in Azerbaijan as far as fundamental rights and freedom of expression are concerned.³⁹

One may assume when reading recent reports on freedom of expression in Azerbaijan that the image of the country has not improved in human rights indexes partly because of the government's policies limiting free cultural practice.⁴⁰ The public presentation of the latest report of the Art for Democracy campaign due to take place in late April 2014 was actually banned, according to its organisers.⁴¹ The regime has maintained strong control of cultural media and practice despite official rhetoric claiming it is on the path to democracy.⁴² Freedom House (FH) ranks Azerbaijan as 'not free', which is not a strong incentive for a greater focus on external cultural relations. The real stake of external cultural relations is therefore in the audio-visual sector and on the internet, where culture and access to cultural means becomes part of the protection of the regime or opposition to it.^{43,44}

What this also means is that, because it can be dangerous, open and public criticism of the state policy in external cultural relations by cultural professionals is very rare. One way cultural stakeholders often express criticism is to make comparisons with neighbouring countries in the view to attract policy makers' attention and to stimulate their critical thinking in a constructive manner. For instance, some stakeholders noted that there is a lack of engagement of local authorities in internationally orientated cultural events, as well as very little engagement with civil society and hardly any sponsorship from private or public companies.⁴⁵ In this context, the outward-looking strategies of individual cultural stakeholders in Azerbaijan remain very constrained.

³⁹<http://www.dw.de/in-azerbaijan-eu-focuses-on-energy-instead-of-democracy/a-17145518><http://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/aslan-amani/how-europe-failed-azerbaijan>; 'Director vs dictator: Oscar-winning film-maker Rustam Ibragimbekov stands for Azerbaijan presidency', *The Independent*, 15 July 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/director-vs-dictator-oscar-winning-filmmaker-rustam-ibragimbekov-stands-for-azerbaijan-presidency-8709966.html>; 'UK politicians Enjoy Azerbaijani Culture', op. cit. <http://www.azadliq.org/content/article/25294167.html>; and <http://www.azadliq.org/content/article/25043589.html> (in Azeri).

⁴⁰*Art for Democracy report*, op. cit., p. 29: 'As with addressing the many other widespread and systemic human rights violations taking place in Azerbaijan, creating an environment truly conducive to the right to artistic freedom of expression is a question of political will. However, rather than progressing in the fulfillment of Azerbaijan's human rights obligations and stated commitment to democratization, the authorities have been steadily backsliding for a number of years. At present, there is little hope of positive reforms being implemented in the near future'.

⁴¹ Email exchange with Art for Democracy activists, April and May 2014.

⁴²<http://www.rferl.org/content/azerbaijan-rights-aliyev-political-prisoners/25024048.html>; Rebecca Vincent, 'Jamming in Azerbaijan: Foreign news outlets unable to broadcast', *Aljazeera*, 9 July 2013. Online. Available at: <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/07/2013779559301632.html>.

⁴³ Rebecca Vincent, 'Jamming in Azerbaijan', op. cit.

⁴⁴ 'Azerbaijan', *Freedom House*. Online. Available at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/country/azerbaijan#UvnLBkJdVwh>. Some analyses however argue that it is difficult to assert that Azerbaijan is doing worse than some of its neighbours in the realm of Internet control. FuadAliyev, 'Internet freedom in Armenia and Azerbaijan: comparative review', *Caucasus Edition Journal of Conflict Transformation*, 1 November 2013. Online. Available at: <http://caucasusedition.net/analysis/internet-freedom-in-armenia-and-azerbaijan-comparative-review/>.

⁴⁵ Consultation report for this study.

The decision in 2012 by the government to promote army officer Ramil Safarov to the rank of major and to treat him as a hero upon his return to Azerbaijan, after he had beheaded an Armenian counterpart at a NATO language course in Hungary contradicted the establishment of a conducive environment for open external cultural relations, intercultural dialogue and international trust building.⁴⁶ The Safarov affair spurred serious tensions in the region and risks casting a shadow over the image of the country for some time. A year later, the writer Akram Aylisli was publicly harassed for having published a novel deemed politically incorrect because it was portraying war from the perspective of Armenian characters. Following hate speech, he said: 'it is very sad that our nation is humiliating itself in this way. A country that can burn books will not be respected by the rest of the world'.⁴⁷

Whether this is only a tactic to gain more leverage in the negotiations over a settlement (in 2013 Azerbaijan proposed giving a figure of over 210 billion euros for a possible compensation package) is unclear.⁴⁸ What is clear is that nationalistic rhetoric has not helped in the cultural area despite goodwill gestures in multilateral fora, often supported by Europe.

Finally, in a country where culture and politics have become intimately intertwined, international and European investors and governments in Azerbaijan have so far struggled to make a true and decisive impact in the improvement of fundamental human rights and democracy, including cultural practice via freedom of expression. Online music campaigns like the Birlik Ucu Oxu youth positive change movement, partly supported by foreign agencies, to some extent illustrated the determined wish to achieve change from within a locked system.⁴⁹ Support to the Azerbaijani opposition led by an internationally respected film maker (such as funds from the European Endowment for Democracy allocated to Meydan TV broadcasting from Germany), and to more intense cultural relations with Europe, is intended to support human rights defenders and allow all citizens to enjoy freer external cultural relations and expression.⁵⁰

Because of the ambiguous governance style of the Azerbaijani leadership (officially promoting the country, through public and private cultural diplomacy, as a space for cultural exchange while diverting attention away from human rights abuses), external cultural relations and politics have become two sides of the same coin. This poses serious dilemmas for European partners keen to promote mutual cultural relations with Azerbaijan.

⁴⁶ 'A Hero's Welcome for a Convicted Killer Reignites Tensions', *New York Times*, 4 September 2012.

'Azeri killer Ramil Safarov: Concern over Armenian anger', *BBC News*, 3 September 2012.

⁴⁷ Damien McGuinness, 'Azeri writer Akram Aylisli hounded for "pro-Armenian" book', *BBC News Europe*, Tbilisi, 15 February 2013. Online. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21459091>.

⁴⁸ 'Azerbaijan Puts Armenian Compensation For Nagorno-Karabakh At \$300 Billion', *Rqdon Free Europe Radio Liberty*, 5 June 2014. Online. Available at: <http://www.rferl.org/content/azerbaijan-compensation-armenia-karabakh/25195795.html>.

⁴⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DhINK5nXUP0>.

⁵⁰ 'Azerbaijani TV broadcaster wins first European Endowment for Democracy grant in time for presidential elections', op. cit.

Perceptions and expectations of the EU, its Member States, and their consequences

Most of the participants in our consultation welcome the EU preparatory action on culture in external relations and encouraged more initiatives of this kind to come to Azerbaijan. They hope that these consultations will end up with some large-scale initiative that they will be also be involved in.

In addition to bringing Europe to Azerbaijan, some independent cultural stakeholders hope for more opportunities to bring Azerbaijan to Europe and to make Azerbaijani cultural stakeholders more aware of European practices of external cultural relations.

When asked how they would like to be perceived, the stakeholders consulted for this project replied: 'as a country with a rich cultural heritage', 'as civil, intellectual and educated people, as we are', 'as professionals in our work'.

One recommendation shared by one participant at the workshop was to create an EU-Azerbaijani coordination group to work out a strategy for cultural development. Such a coordinating unit should prioritise the fields that need to be developed.

The non-governmental cultural sector would deserve more space and should be encouraged to develop new international activities abroad, as some participants underlined, emphasising that the Azerbaijan Arts Council could be a source of inspiration.

With regard to the government's expectations, the Minister of Culture insisted in an interview given in the margins of the Eastern Partnership Culture conference in Tbilisi in June 2013 on the importance of the Internet in cultural diplomacy and on the need to invest in digital tools to reach out to a larger public. For him, the question, therefore, is the accessibility of state initiatives to the massive cultural offer on the web. In his view, more cooperation with the EU in this realm would be welcome.

He also noted that 'too often European experts come and repeat the same things, as if there was no learning/stock taking of past visits/exchange'. This statement can be understood in different ways. The first interpretation is that European experts are unable to understand how the Azerbaijani government works in the field of external cultural relations. This would mean that there may be room for the Azerbaijani government to be more open to in-depth analysis by and dialogue with culture experts on the functioning of the external cultural policy-making system of the country, including in its potential political implications. The second interpretation is that so little has changed in the country's governance that the diagnosis from external experts (in the cultural field as well as in other external relations areas) remains more or less the same over the years.

The evolution of cultural relations between Azerbaijan and Europe will mostly depend on the evolution of Azerbaijan's internal governance and the capacity of an enlightened leadership to defeat a very powerful post-Soviet establishment.⁵¹ The more the regime opens itself up to European cultural

⁵¹ For more details on the main figures of the Azerbaijani elite and its authoritarian functioning, see: 'Azerbaijan: Vulnerable Stability', *International Crisis Group*, Europe Report n°207, 3 September 2010. Online. Available at: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/europe/south-caucasus/azerbaijan/207-azerbaijan-vulnerable-stability.aspx>.

practices and to free civil society exchanges and initiatives, the deeper the relations will be, thanks to the country's cultural and financial resources. As things stand, cultural relations are very similar to those with oil-rich Gulf States, in other words based on trade interests and oil-induced sponsorship.

ANNEXES

Annex I: EU-Azerbaijan joint programmes and initiatives

A. EU-Azerbaijani cultural cooperation activities run by the EU Delegation⁵²

Since 2010 the European Union Delegation, jointly with the Embassies of the European Union Member States, has been hosting the **European Film Festivals** in Baku. Thanks to the established partnership relations with the network of 'Park Cinema' cinemas, it is already the third year of cooperation with the cinema that it does not charge the Delegation for the projection of the films. Along with the film demonstrations they also sponsor the visits of European film directors/actors and other film experts to Azerbaijan to enable a dialogue on the screened films with the audience and to meet the cinema professionals and students in Azerbaijan. The Festivals serve to further build and strengthen the cultural links between the European Union countries and Azerbaijan, thus contributing to better mutual understanding. In 2013, 17 EU Member-States even those not having permanent representations in Baku (Estonia, Finland, Sweden) were represented at the Festival. As it is a joint project with the MS, the costs for film rent and delivery are mainly covered by the relevant Embassy. The costs of the PR materials are mainly covered by the festival's partner – the 'Park Cinema' network of cinemas. The Delegation contributes substantially with its human resources, coordination work of the whole Festival, etc. It also became a tradition for the EU Delegation to open the Festival by hosting the reception to celebrate one of the largest cultural event of the country.

As of 2013, the EU Delegation in partnership with the EU Member States has been organising **EuroVillages**. The EuroVillage is an outdoor event that showcases current EU projects in Azerbaijan and presents European culture through the perspective of the EU countries. The event highlights the diversity and wealth of European cultural life by presenting dances, music, food, languages and many other activities to the Azerbaijani public. Over 2 days' event full of entertainment the event could reach over 7,500 people.

Starting in 2012, the Delegation of the European Union also organises **drawing competitions** for children. The competitions are organised with the aim of demonstrating through paintings how children in Azerbaijan perceive Europe and what is their understanding of Azerbaijan's position role in Europe. Over 100 entries are received from children of 6-14 years of age every year. In 2013 as prizes the Delegation offered the winners of 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes free European language courses for 12, 6 and 3 months.

Apart from that throughout the year the Delegation organises a number of exhibitions at the EU Residence, for example in December 2012 a **Miniature Exhibition** of 7 Azerbaijani and international artists was organised with the aim of promoting the arts and artists among the international community.

⁵² Information provided by the EU Delegation to Azerbaijan.

The Delegation, looking for opportunities for cooperation with the Embassies of the EU Member-States, also invites them to join in the organisation of the ad hoc events. For example, to celebrate the **European Union winning the Nobel Peace Prize** the Delegation organised a Reception with participation of the representatives of the government, diplomatic community, MPs and young people. During the event a live transmission of the Nobel Peace Prize award ceremony from Oslo and a photo exhibition on the French-German reconciliation (courtesy of the French and German Embassies) were organised. The event was followed by a dinner with participation of Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov. During the day itself, the EU produced video clip on the Nobel Peace Prize award was projected on street monitors in Baku.

All the EU organised events are accompanied with a wide PR campaign and receive broad media coverage on TV, newspapers and on-line portals before, during and after the events.

B. EU-Azerbaijan cultural cooperation activities run by the Commission Headquarters

The 'Kyiv Initiative': brings actors from local authorities and culture in ten small- to middle-sized range historic towns from each EaP country together:
http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/cooperation/Kyiv/default_en.asp

The Kyiv Initiative brings together five countries at the South-Eastern edge of Europe, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Their aim is to work with each other, to create democratic and engaged societies and rebuild trust and confidence across the region.

The programme focuses on five themes that both unite and characterise the participating countries – heritage management, film, the shaping of cultural policy, literature, wine culture and tourism exchange. Through a series of projects designed to encourage cross-border collaboration, the Kyiv Initiative enables the sharing of expertise and the development of competence and skills in both towns and the countryside.

In the context of the Council of Europe's Kyiv Initiative Regional Programme, the European Commission is co-financing over the period 2009/2010 the first phase of Pilot Project 2 on 'Rehabilitation of Cultural Heritage in Historic Cities' (PP2) for institutional capacity-building in relation to rehabilitation projects. A second convention will be concluded between the Commission and the Council of Europe in 2010, valid until 2011, for the second phase of Pilot Project 2.

Eastern Partnership Programme Culture programme Part I

Programmes managed by HQ in Brussels

Strengthens regional cultural links and dialogue within the ENP East region, and between the EU and ENP Eastern countries' cultural networks and actors

Objectives:

It aims at assisting the Partner Countries in their cultural policy reform at government level, as well as capacity building and improving professionalism of cultural operators in the Eastern ENP region. It contributes to exchange of information and experience among cultural operators at a regional level and with the EU. The programme seeks to support regional initiatives which demonstrate positive cultural contributions to economic development, social inclusion, conflict resolution and intercultural dialogue (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus).

What does it do?

The programme helps strengthen policy-making, project and resource generating capacities of both the public sector and cultural operators. It fosters dialogue and contributes to the development of co-operation mechanisms within the sector across the region.

It also promotes intra-regional and inter-regional (EU-ENP) cultural initiatives and partnerships while helping to strengthen management skills and networking capacities of the cultural organisations and operators. The programme furthers linkages between cultural activities and wider regional agendas ranging from employment creation to social inclusion, environmental conservation, conflict prevention/resolution and intercultural dialogue.

Actions in brief: 1) Provides technical assistance to the Ministries of Culture in their policy reforms and helps overhaul legal and regulatory framework to foster cultural sector modernisation; 2) Organises training to address the identified skills shortages in the cultural sector; 3) Facilitates the increase of public access to cultural resources; 4) Supports conservation and valorisation of regional cultural resources and heritage; 5) Encourages multi-disciplinary and cross-sector exchanges between government, civil society and the private sector; 6) Helps cultivate cultural operators in the region through support in developing strategic management, business planning, communications, advocacy, fundraising and other relevant capacities.

Budget: 3 million €

Duration: April 2011-2013

Eastern Partnership Programme Culture programme Part II

Decision 2010/021-920

(Six projects were de-concentrated to the EU Delegation in Georgia)

The second part of the Eastern Partnership Culture Programme has been approved, one of a number of new regional programmes approved on 26 July 2010 by the European Commission, under the ENPI Regional East Action Programme 2010.

This Eastern Partnership Culture Programme will provide both *technical assistance*, to address specific priority needs of public institutions and the region's cultural sector, and *grants* to civil society cultural organisations – profit and non-profit – and national and local institutions for regional cooperation projects. The Programme will encompass the entire cultural sector, including cinema and the audio-visual sector, contemporary arts, tangible and intangible heritage, as well as support to heritage conservation projects.

The programme will help civil society organisations, both profit and non-profit, and government institutions at the national and local level to: 1) Strengthen regional links and dialogue within the region of the Eastern Partnership, and between the EU and countries of the Eastern Partnership in respect to cultural networks and actors; 2) Support policy reform and modernisation of the cultural sectors in the Eastern Partnership region with the aim of promoting the role of culture in national agendas for development; 3) Support

awareness raising and cultural initiatives having a regional impact on sustainable economic and social development, democratisation, and enhanced intercultural dialogue.

Budget: 9 million €

Duration: 2010-2013

Name	Brief Description/Overall Objectives	EU Funding / Duration	Contact
<p>Strengthening Creative Industries in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia: Heritage Crafts – Common Platform for Development</p> <p>CRIS: 257-712</p> <p>Georgian Arts & Culture Centre (GE)</p>	<p><i>Overall objectives:</i> Fostering the sustainable development of the Creative Industries (CI) field of Heritage Crafts (HC) (traditional handicrafts, museum sources and applied art) in Armenia (AM), Azerbaijan (AZ) and Georgia (GE), and contributing to the CI sectors' transnational cooperation among participant countries and the EU.</p> <p><i>Specific objectives:</i> 1) Stimulation of Conducive Environment through Assessment of Needs and Strengthening of Institutional & Legislative framework for the CI field of HC in AM, AZ and Georgia GE; 2) Capacity building and professionalization of cultural operators, encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting innovative design; 3) Awareness raising and introducing of European experience on the CI sector as a source for economic growth, job creation and sustainable developments 4) Development of partnerships and network of artists, craftspeople and cultural workers within AM, AZ and GE and connecting to the European networks in order to promote the exchange and cultural diversity and to align with international trends and standards.</p> <p><i>Target Groups:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Actors: Ministries of Culture, Economics, Education, Related Parliament Committees, Chambers of Commerce, Departments of Tourism and Statistics, Local Authorities, National Agencies, Museums, copyright agencies; • Non-State Actors: cultural NGO's, entrepreneurs, craft SMEs, individual artists, household women, youth, disabled people and IDPs. 	<p>Budget 613,000 €</p> <p>EU Grant 480,000 €</p> <p>24 months Dec. 2011 – Nov. 2013</p>	<p>Georgian Arts and Culture Center Foundation</p> <p>Ms Mariam (Maka) Dvalishvili 7, Niko Nikoladze str. 0108, Tbilisi, Georgia Tel.: (995 32) 931335; (995 32) 935685 Fax: (995 32) 921335 Mob.: (995 99) 506 448 Email: maka@gaccgeorgia.org/ gacc@gaccgeorgia.org</p> <p>Website: www.gaccgeorgia.org</p> <p>Azerbaijan: EcoSphere Social – Ecology Centre</p> <p>Firuza V. Sultan-zadeh, Chairperson Tel: + 994 50 3751300 Email: ecosfera@azeurotel.com; firuzasultan@mail.ru</p>
<p>CAUCULT – Caucasus Cultural Initiatives Network</p> <p>CRIS: 257-644</p> <p>Interkulturelles Zentrum (AU)</p>	<p><i>Overall objectives:</i> Contribute to the creation of a vivid political and social environment conducive to the strengthening of inclusive and culturally diverse societies in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia through the empowerment of their cultural actors, as a cornerstone for sustainable economic, social and human development.</p> <p><i>Specific objectives:</i> 1) Support active participation of citizens, especially groups with least recognized ethnic and cultural backgrounds in cultural activities; 2) Establish strong, inclusive and sustainable networks of cultural actors from different areas active in the field of cultural diversity; 3) Enhance structured and skilful inter-cultural dialogue between all</p>	<p>Budget 838,764 €</p> <p>EU Grant 670,300 €</p> <p>36 months Dec. 2011 – Nov. 2014</p>	<p>Interkulturelles Zentrum</p> <p>Daniela Mussing, Integration & Interkulturelle Bildung, Lindengasse 41/10, 1070 Wien, Austria Tel.: +43 1 586 75 44 – 14 Mob.: +43 (0) 664 150 30 90 Fax: +43 1 586 75 44 -9</p>

	<p>relevant stakeholders aiming at greater respect of cultural diversity.</p> <p><i>Target Groups:</i> 60 Key Dialogue Workers; cultural actors representing different ethnic and cultural groups, institutions and different cultural sectors; media representatives and journalists.</p>		<p>Email: daniela.mussnig@iz.or.at</p> <p>Website: www.iz.or.at</p> <p>Azerbaijan: YUVA Humanitarian Centre</p> <p>Pervana Mammadova Email: pervana77@yahoo.com</p>
<p>Let's Talk about Films in South Caucasus</p> <p>CRIS: 258-528</p> <p>People in Need (CZ)</p>	<p><i>Overall objectives:</i> To strengthen regional linkages and communication in the South Caucasus region. To make practical use of documentary film as a tool for fostering democratic dialogue in the region.</p> <p><i>Specific objectives:</i> To support documentary film making and active use of documentary films as a tool for education, public awareness raising and communication in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.</p> <p><i>Target Groups:</i> 50 documentary film makers, 15 civil society organisations, 30 representatives of public authorities, 200 members of informal community groups, small festival organisers, active members of the public, teachers and students, 15,000 members of the public.</p> <p><i>Final Beneficiaries:</i> Viewers of new documentary films, new users of the project knowhow and tools, new film makers, schools newly using documentary films for education, cultural centres organising documentary film events, etc. The final beneficiary group may amount to 500,000 people in the three countries.</p> <p><i>Estimated Results:</i> 1. Documentary film makers have improved skills; 2. Documentary films are used as a tool for education, communication and discussion throughout Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia; 3. Regional communication and linkages are established between the participating countries through the exchange of documentary films and through their wide use for various audiences.</p>	<p>Budget 653,470 €</p> <p>24 months March 2012 –Feb. 2014</p>	<p>Ms PavlaPijanová, Desk officer for Caucasus Safarikova 24, 12000 Praha 2, Czech Republic Tel.: +420 777 203569 Fax: +420 226 200 452 Email: pavla.pijanova@clovekvtsni.cz</p> <p>Website: www.peopleinneed.cz/aid@peopleinneed.cz</p> <p>People in Need, Mission to Georgia & Armenia</p> <p>ŠárkaZahradníková 8 Sh. Dadiani str., Tbilisi, GE Tel.: +995599562063 Email: sarka.zahradnikova@peopleinneed.cz</p>
<p>Sharing History, Culture Dialogues</p>	<p>The 3 year action plan of the project covers different work packages which will mainly target: the implementation of wide project objectives with the specific focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthening the capacities of semi-public actors involved in the activities and sustainability of independent history and heritage educators associations; awareness raising and cultural education that enhance democracy and intercultural dialogue; creating adequate conditions for the development of educational activities in an 	<p>Budget 928,527 €</p> <p>EU Grant 699,399 €</p> <p>36 months Dec. 2011– Nov.</p>	<p>EUROCLIO - European Association of History Educators Steven Stegers</p> <p>Laan van Meerdervoort 70 2517 AN The Hague Email: steven@euroclio.eu Web: www.euroclio.eu</p>

	<p>international environment promoting cultural tolerance;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> strengthening regional links and dialogue within the region of the Eastern partnership, and between the EU and countries of the Eastern partnership in respect to cultural network and actors. <p>The project target group is both formal and informal educators in the field of culture from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, including history and heritage educators and their associations.</p> <p><i>Overall objective:</i>To promote mutual understanding, tolerance and intercultural dialogue through capacity-building and methodological training of informal and formal educators and their associations in the field of culture in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine.</p> <p><i>Milestones:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of Special Reports on education in the field of culture in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Moldova; Development, testing and publication of educational modules on history and culture of the Black Sea Region <p>Active workshops and seminars on innovative methods in education of history and culture.</p>	2014	<p>Azerbaijan Partner:</p> <p>Public Union of Azerbaijan Historians (PUAH) (Azerbaijan)</p>
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