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The Role of European Cultural Policy in Advancing a Transnational Culture

The case study of the European Institute of Cultural Routes

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The Role of European Cultural Policy in Advancing a Transnational culture:

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Abstract

This thesis aims at exploring the role of international policies in the field of culture. An in-depth analysis of the academic discourse is provided, delving into the notion of culture in its broader definition: as universal and possessing intrinsic value. The research contributes to the academic discourse by investigating the implementation of these values in cultural policies within the European landscape, with a focus on the European Union and the Council of Europe. Accordingly, the European Union's shift in values is outlined, moving its policy discourse from the singular idea of promoting a "European Cultural Heritage" to advancing "Cultural diversity". In this process, the Council of Europe has played a significant role in defining intercultural dialogue as a tool for managing diversity among European Union communities. This context has facilitated the flourishing of a transnational culture. This research proves the necessity of this shift in discourse in addressing the global challenges posed by globalization and immigration. Within this framework, the case of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, the technical agency of the Council of Europe, is presented, highlighting its influential role in promoting cross-cultural exchange and addressing the global challenge of inclusive diversity.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDCC	Council for Cultural Cooperation
COE	Council of Europe
ECC	European Citizens Campus
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECOC	European Capital of Culture
EHL	European Heritage Label
EICR	European Institute of Cultural Routes
EPA	Enlarged Partial Agreement
EU	European Union
UNWTO	United Nations World Tourism Organization

Introduction

This thesis explores the principal European policy tools implemented at the European and international levels in the field of culture. The goal of this research is to raise awareness regarding the development of a new European cultural policy approach that reflects the genuine and progressive changes occurring in our societies. Indeed, in a world of global flows and enhanced interconnections, the principle of transnationality acquires an ever more important role. As this text will subsequently explore, the Council of Europe and the European Union have contributed to this phenomenon by advancing a Transnational idea of culture that transcends human borders and encompasses universal and intrinsic values, rooted in the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

The thesis is divided into four sections. The first Chapter provides an in-depth analysis of the academic discourse, delving into the notion of culture in its broader definition: as a universal principle possessing intrinsic value. Two different interpretations of the notion of "Culture" coexist: culture as a way of life, embedded in human experience, and culture as a tool to convey principles of democracy, characteristic of the political discourse.

The second and third chapters investigate the implementation of these values in cultural policies within the European landscape. Specifically, the Second Chapter outlines the achievements of the European Union that shifted its policy discourse from the singular idea of promoting a "European Cultural Heritage" to advancing "Cultural diversity". In this context, Culture is analyzed as a "display" and "soft power" tool in matters of identity-building and community cohesion. Indeed, as discussed throughout the Chapter, the absence of fixed definitions in the European Union policy suggests its success in promoting cultural diversity, rather than merely a specific European culture.

Chapter Three outlines the influential role of the Council of Europe in fostering unity, democracy and cultural diversity, among European and international communities. This section explores the Council of Europe's achievements in reframing the perception of cultural diversity in today's evolving societies. Additionally, it examines how its latest emphasis on "intercultural dialogue", as a new policy tool for managing cultural diversity, reflects a deeper understanding of societal needs, currently influenced by the principle of transnationality. This approach enabled the flourishing of a Transnational culture,

politically supported by the Council of Europe, based on cultural diversification and a modern conception of space that transcends boundaries and fosters global cohesion.

The final Chapter serves as a practical counterpart to the theoretical discourse by presenting the programme of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, run by the European Institute of Cultural Routes, its technical agency. The programme is rooted in the evolving European cultural policy landscape and is grounded on numerous conventions and charters that lay the bedrock for the creation of the "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe", practical evidence of the transnational ideal. Here, the idea of a Transnational culture advances, promoting the shared heritage of each Cultural Route across the boundaries of the European continent and fostering interconnections and unity, under the guidance of the universal and intrinsic values of culture.

1. Interpreting Culture: in the human experience and in the political discourse

1.1 Culture as a way of life

Along the rich path of human existence, the idea of "culture" has emerged as a central and intricate phenomenon, influencing several aspects of our lives. Many scholars have tackled the issue of defining and understanding what culture encompasses, through the lenses of different disciplines, attempting to frame this concept in their contemporary context. Within this framework, two esteemed personalities of the 19th century, Matthew Arnold and Edward Burnett Tylor attempted to interpret this notion accordingly. This chapter will provide a deep analysis of their theories, discovering two very different perspectives. However, both authors will finally interpret culture as the result of the intricate relationship between human beings and their interaction with societies. This analysis will be useful to comprehend the most sophisticated contemporary expression of these two concepts through the development of cultural policies: the promotion of personal growth and the protection of societal values.

Matthew Arnold was an English poet and critic of the 19th century, recognized as the originator of one of the earliest theories regarding the concept of culture, attributed to his work "Culture and Anarchy", which was published in 1870 in "The Cornhill Magazine"[1]. His revolutionary ideas helped to shape 19th-century thought about the value of the humanities in higher education and the meaningful role culture played in human daily lives. His theory was based on an idealist definition of culture, as "something humans should strive for"[2], imagining culture as a set of ideas, values and principles able to influence the behaviour and social norms of a community.

This definition was partly the result of a deep terminological analysis, in which he traced the term's origin and its metaphorical evolution over time. Indeed, according to Arnold, the etymology of the term "culture", has its roots in the farming world. Originally

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[1] *The Cornhill Magazine* was a monthly Victorian magazine and literary journal published between 1860 and 1975 in the London Victorian Society. Further information can be found here: http://www.conradfirst.net/view/periodical-id=33.html

[2] Arnold, M. (2011). *Culture and anarchy: An essay in political and social criticism*. Cambridge University Press.

referring solely to the agricultural sector, where "culture" meant the human care of crops or animals. Afterwards, its connotation widened until the early 18th century. During this time, it was gradually reinterpreted in a metaphorical sense, shifting from the cultivation of crops to the cultivation of the human mind. In this latter sense, it became associated with the knowledge of Greek, Latin and fine arts, standard components of a gentleman's education in the early Victorian society. Soon, this idea of education, in terms of "acquiring culture", became a sign of one's elite status and a term of distinction and power.

However, what differentiates Arnold's theories from the others of his time, was assuming the existence of a "shared humanity". He proposed a definition that was not intended to create separation among people, *"from others who have not got it"*[3], as traditionally intended, but rather presupposing a common human experience among both the élite class and the lower social class. Indeed, his definition of culture "as something to strive for" is to be seen as the combination of broad intellectual interests with the final common goal of social improvement. In his words:

"There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it,—motives eminently such as are called social,—come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part"[4].

This groundbreaking conception of culture provides a new interpretation of the term that applies also to the general aspects of human life in society. In this way, Arnold broadened the traditional definition of culture by attributing to it new social values and practical applications. On the one hand, he emphasized that culture could encompass not only intellectual refinement but also a strong dedication to social improvement and empathy towards others. On the other hand, he saw in this new understanding a practical function in developing new possibilities on the harsh realities of industrialization and class conflicts, characterizing the Victorian society of the 19th century. Indeed, he envisioned in its new definition a way to overcome the rigid class structures of the past, giving way

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[3] Arnold, M. (2011). *Culture and anarchy,* Culture 90.

[4] Arnold, M. (2011). *Culture and anarchy,* Culture 91.

to the emerging impersonal forces of industrialization, by fostering, through culture, a sense of shared humanity, which could promote the common good above personal or class interests. In this sense, culture, in its broader definition, can be seen as a unifying force against societal disorder.

Arnold concludes his theory, by identifying two class-bound perspectives that inhabit societies: the "ordinary self" and the "best self". The "ordinary self" refers to that part of the human personality which is subjected to the influences and conventions of the social class to which one belongs and may be constrained by a lack of critical vision or conformity to prevailing social norms. Instead, the "best self" is the state individuals obtain once they acquire culture, as a means of human personal growth. It is a transcendent perspective that recognizes the needs of others and puts the greater good ahead of class interest or personal gain[5]. According to Arnold, those who are dominated by their best self, do not belong to any class, since the best self "always tends to take them out of their class, regardless of their actual social position[6]".

During the same period, the esteemed English anthropologist and professor, Edward Burnett Tylor undertook another comparable exploration into the field of understanding "culture". Known for establishing the theoretical principles of Victorian anthropology through his seminal work "Primitive Culture", published around 1870, he articulated one of the two significant theories of culture that emerged alongside Matthew Arnold's work "Culture and Anarchy".

"Primitive Culture" soon became a masterpiece of 19th-century anthropological literature, delving into the tight relationship between "primitive" and "civilized" societies. Specifically, it analyses the differences in the development of cultural practices, beliefs, and social structures between these two human states. He ultimately, finds that human societies, regardless of their stage of development, share fundamental similarities in their cultural evolution[7]. However, differently from Arnold's conception, Tylor's theory offered a distinct perspective on culture, defining it not merely as an individual concept but rather as a societal phenomenon. While Arnold viewed culture as something the

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[5] Melville Logan, P. (2012). *Peter Melville Logan "on culture: Matthew Arnold's culture and anarchy, 1869"*.

[6] Arnold, M. (2011). *Culture and anarchy,* Culture 146.

[7] Further information concerning Edward Burnett Tylor's theory can be found here: Street, Brian Vincent. "Sir Edward Burnett Tylor". Encyclopedia Britannica, 1 Jan. 2024.

individual should "strive for" – in terms of learned qualities that humans should aspire to attain for the improvement of society – Tylor saw these qualities as already inherent in our existence, representing culture as a "whole way of life"[8].

Therefore, according to Tylor's anthropological view, culture encompasses the entirety of a way of life, by embodying "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society"[9].

Thus, through this definition, he recognises culture as a natural component of the human being, which is inevitably attained by living in a community characterised by specific values which are absorbed by humans staying in that specific society.

Despite these two different approaches, the simultaneous emergence of the theories of Tylor and Arnold indicates a fundamental connection between the two intellectuals. Indeed, both versions of "culture" wanted to address a common problem: redefining culture as a term that encompasses society as a whole, thereby overcoming the limit of the single individual, through the recognition of this intricate relationship between humans and societies from which culture cannot be divided. The efforts of the two authors represent an initial attempt to define culture as a cohesive entity, opening the debate to a deeper understanding of the complexity of this word and its several interconnections.

Nowadays, this "collective way of life", that the word culture is able to express, is channelled into our society through the discipline of cultural policies. The main characters of this process are policymakers, who are entrusted to implement cultural policies. In this role, they bear the dual responsibility of promoting culture, according to Arnold's definition as a tool for enhancing human well-being and fostering social development, and at the same time, protecting culture, following Tylor's definition, as an integral component of our origins and values.

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[8] Tylor, E. B. (2016). *Primitive culture: Research into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art and custom.* Dover Publications.

[9] Tylor, E. B. (2016). *Primitive culture: Research into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, language, art and custom.* Dover Publications.

The Council of Europe's definition of cultural policy resonates with this dual responsibility, emphasizing the rights of individuals to express themselves culturally through active participation in shaping society, while also stressing the significance of safeguarding diverse cultural identities, as essential components of societal cohesion and progress.

"Cultural policy encompasses the right of every citizen to express himself, develop and take part in local or regional cultural life, and in decisions affecting society, as well as the right of everyone to maintain, develop and disseminate his own culture and language. The aims of cultural policy encompass the enhancement of quality of life, freedom, equality of opportunity, democratization, and preservation of identity"[10].

Thomas Dye[11] briefly summarises public policy as "*What governments choose to do or not do to*"[12], therefore a complex set of government activities in a related sector. The idea of incorporating culture at the State level is to be traced back to the afterwar period and seen as the result of a gradual process that emerged at different times and in various countries, influenced by specific socio-historical processes. For instance, during the period of the Cold War different sectors, classes, and groups were asked to take clearer political stances and act differently toward their audiences. Within this goal, certain policies were implemented through the cultural sector to serve as a conduit for disseminating these changes beyond their private spheres and engaging with a broader, new and diverse audience.

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[10] During the Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, held in Strasbourg in 1981, the Council of Europe drafted an initial definition regarding the concept and objectives of cultural policy, while also formulating a report outlining a plan for the decentralization of cultural policies. The Conference aimed to provide local and regional authorities in the European context with a more significant and autonomous institutional platform to participate in continental-level decisions. The Conference marked the origins of what would later evolve into in the "Congress of Local and Regional Authorities" in 1994. Further information concerning the report can be found here: https://rm.coe.int/09000016808bba86.

[11] Thomas Dye was a notable figure in political science and a professor at Florida State University from 1968 to 2000. He conducted groundbreaking research on the influence of economic development on state policies, which influenced considerably the sector during that time. Further information can be found here: https://coss.fsu.edu/polisci/emeritus/thomas-r-dye/

[12] Dye, T. (2005). *Understanding Public Policy.* New York: Pearson

Against this backdrop, UNESCO played a pivotal role in institutionalizing at the international level the implementation of cultural policies. The international organization was established at the end of the Second World War, with the primary goal of promoting peace and fostering dialogue among nations, through international cooperation in education, science and culture. The organization facilitated the rapid adoption of the mechanism of cultural policies internationally, also in those countries where it had not previously been a priority. A turning point in this matter was the outcome of the 1967 Monaco Round Table meeting, which led to the publishing of a series of first documents and studies on cultural policies[13]. This was a groundbreaking meeting attended by thirty-two participants from twenty-four countries, which led to the first definition of cultural policy in 1967 as: "*a body of operational principles, administrative and budgetary practices and procedures which provide a basis for cultural action by the State[14]*". The objective of the meeting, besides being one of the first conferences dealing with the subject of culture at the international level, was not to prescribe a fixed general model of cultural policy that all countries had to adopt. On the contrary, it aimed to provide useful information and data to Member States regarding the cultural sector, offering guidelines on how to determine national models based on specific cultural values, goals and choices, allowing each state to define them more effectively for itself.

While the Monaco Round Table meeting of 1967 marked a significant milestone in shaping early frameworks of cultural policy at an international level, it also reignited the everlasting challenge of defining "culture" within the context of policymaking. As noted by Raymond Williams, "*Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language*"[15]. Its complexity does not come from the word being hard to define conventionally, but rather from its status, which is widely contested and subjected to

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[13] UNESCO Round Table meeting took place in Monaco from December 18 until 22, 1967. The objectives of the meeting were to confront the main issues perceived by governments in the elaboration of cultural policies. The outcome of the meeting was used as a first basis for the elaboration of the UNESCO World Cultural Programme and budget for the 1969 - 1970 biennial. Further information can be found: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000001173

[14] UNESCO. (1969). *Cultural policy: A preliminary study*. Paris.

[15] Williams, R. (1976). *Keywords* (p. 76). London: Fontana

different interpretations. This leads to a lack of a precise definition and opens up the debate concerning its use.

This is the case, for instance, of nowadays wide employment of the term "culture", currently attached to different areas of concern, such as cultural diversity, cultural development, cultural sustainability, cultural heritage, cultural industries... This extensive usage has blurred the clarity of its definition, making it necessary to distinguish the specific meaning intended when "culture" is mentioned by governments, academics, or critics. Another consequence of this overuse throughout policies has been the possibility of giving policymakers more freedom in developing diverse actions and solutions that they can label as "cultural". This again is possible due to the flexibility of the term and has been often used as an indirect strategy to support the real final objective of a policy, which in some cases could not be considered as solely cultural. Consequently, this practice puts into question the coherence of the cultural policy within the sector.

An additional interesting opinion on the matter is the one of Angela McRobbie[16], who defines today's society as a "Culture Society", stating that we live in a century where there exist cultures of everything: "body culture", "consumer culture", "western culture" and so on. According to her, this abuse of the term "culture" has made the word almost meaningless, effectively depriving the term of its genuine cultural value.

Going back to Tylor's thought in "Primitive Culture", however, it is hardly difficult, if not impossible, to define culture as a static concept. Rather, it should be intended as a dynamic and synergic force that shapes and is shaped by the social environment that it inhabits. This would somehow defend cultural policies' tendency, throughout the 20th century, to pursue a broader idea of culture, intending it as a "way of life", evolving its field of activities from primarily prioritizing high arts to embracing a broader spectrum of cultural activities as a way of achieving wider goals, not necessarily cultural.

The development of a "Culture Society" based on a "way of life cultural model" allows policymakers to break down the model into different components and reassemble it in

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[16] Angela McRobbie is a Fellow of the British Academy, specialising in research on the creative economy and the fashion industry. Additionally, she is a feminist social and cultural theorist exploring the gendered dynamics of contemporary neoliberal society. Furter information can be found here: McRobbie, A. (1999). *In the culture society: Art, fashion, and popular music*. Routledge.

different ways according to the user and field of employment. In this way culture can be easily manipulated, through policy means, influencing people's behaviour and life. Yet, this tendency is the result of a "mechanistic" definition of culture, which goes against culture's idea as a vital and continuously evolving process.

To conclude, understanding which "culture" should be included in public policy and for what reasons still remains an ongoing issue for policymakers. This again is not merely a matter of defining the term "culture", whether adopting a broader overview that considers culture as encompassing an entire way of life, or a narrower perspective that focuses solely on artistic activities. Rather, it depends on how the concept of "culture" is delineated within cultural policy, and thus how a State decides to engage with it, by determining its own cultural policy model based on its values, goals and choices; namely, in terms of implemented measures and policy to facilitate, repress or regulate culture. Therefore, delving into this debate requires a nuanced understanding of the term culture and a recognition of its dynamic and multifaceted nature within the field of cultural policies.

1.2 Culture and the language of politics

The researcher Eleonora Belfiore[17] has highlighted how the beginning of the 1980s was marked by a new worldwide trend in promoting public policies in the field of culture. More specifically, she defined this trend by using the term "cultural instrumentalism", which is a common practice that involves the instrumentalization of the rationales behind public support of the arts and culture. In particular, she observed the frequent adoption of this system in the specific case of the United Kingdom at the beginning of the Thatcherian era[18]. During this period, she noticed a radical change in the meaning of "instrumental" from the one of the past. She demonstrated how, before the advent of neoliberalism, "cultural instrumentalism" was a recurring strategy aimed more at

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[17] Belfiore, E. (2012). "Defensive instrumentalism" and the legacy of New Labour's cultural policies. *Cultural Trends*, 21(2), 103–111.

[18] The term *Thatcherism* refers to the political and economic ideology of free market and neo-liberalism associated with Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative prime minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990.

"defending" the arts by questioning their societal utility, rather than obscuring art's cultural value, attaching it to the promotion of other sectors.

According to McGuigan, today the form of instrumentalism that we are experiencing within the cultural sector takes a different direction from the one taken in the past, and for this reason, it should be interpreted in the contemporary context prevailed by neoliberal past ideals and globalized societies[19].

Within this framework, Clive Gray defined this process of instrumentalization in culture, through the notion of "policy attachment"[20], as a solution to "attach" a public sector with scarce visibility, limited budget and little political influence, such as the cultural one, to a better-resourced area of the welfare state. This mechanism leads to a gradual alignment of the two sectors giving the possibility, to the weakest, to access additional budget and benefits from the greater political relevance of another sector. This strategy relies on a specific structure, primarily based on a *top-down* model, in which the government seeks to impose an instrumental agenda for arts and culture by establishing specific targets and expectations, emphasizing their role in achieving broader social and economic goals. At the same time, a *bottom-up* model emerges, wherein the cultural sector itself attempted to demonstrate its "utility" in socio-economic terms, leveraging claims of impact to secure better funding levels.

One of the main consequences of using a "policy attachment" mechanism has been an increased focus on trying to assess the impact of culture, more specifically on social impact evaluation, which has become nowadays the most popular field of study behind the process of implementing a cultural policy. According to Clay, the prominence of this area of interest and immediate policy needs, have left aside a deeper understanding of the meaning of "social impact of the arts" and the cultural value per se. He suggests that adopting a more philosophical approach to concepts, such as "impact" and "instrumentalism" could enrich the understanding of these terms and benefit, leading to both new research and cultural policy results. This of course would also involve

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[19] McGuigan, J. (2005). Neo-liberalism, culture and policy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 11(3), 229–341.

[20] Gray, C. (2008). Instrumental policies: Causes, consequences, museums and galleries. *Cultural Trends*, 17(4), 209–222.

questioning the forgone assumption that art is effectively producing positive effects, being "useful" and "instrumental" for the betterment of society and the world.

Nevertheless, the utilization of culture as a tool for broader interests is a longstanding narrative, whose origins can be traced back to 2.500 years ago. Indeed, since Ancient Greece, it was believed that the arts could influence various aspects of the human being such as psychological well-being, health, moral education, and social empowerment, making arts valuable enough to be upheld even at the time. Therefore, contemporary instrumentalism may appear to be just the latest manifestation of historically based concepts, that have gradually been acquired and institutionalized over time, starting from the late eighteenth century onwards. During this period, the broader definition of culture was integrated within influential cultural and educational institutions, into national curricula, and into the public perception. Consequently, the idea that acquiring culture serves a societal function, alongside its aesthetic considerations, has been a longstanding belief and remains the principal reason for attributing value to culture.

According to several research studies conducted by Belfiore and Bennet[21], the reasons behind these convictions could be found in Western aesthetic thought, which has long been divided between "negative" and "positive" definitions regarding the value of art and its impact on society. What is interesting to note is that the "positive" tradition, which views the beneficial influence of arts and culture on society, originated in response to the "negative" definition.

This negative view considered the impact of art on society not necessarily positive, as it was seen as a sector easily influenced by changing times and the interests of those who control it. This dichotomy finds its oldest origins in Plato and Aristotle's differing conceptions of art, the latter defended poetry and theatre against Plato's criticism by arguing that, arts have a *cathartic* effect on people producing emotional release and purification rather than irrationality[22]. In this way, Aristotle found a way of justifying arts,

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[21] Belfiore, E., & Bennett, O. (2007). *Rethinking the social impacts of the arts.* International Journal of Cultural Policy, 13(2), 135–151.

[22] In *The Republic* (380-370 B.C) Plato criticises poetry and theatre, contending that these art forms are responsible for inducing irrationality in human beings. Conversely, Aristotle in *Poetics* (334 e il 330 B.C) perceives the arts, especially tragedy, as possessing the ability to evoke *catharsis* in individuals by eliciting

recognizing their societal utility, and laying the foundation for the development of a positive tradition regarding their values.

Like their contemporary counterparts, these older forms of instrumentalism have also had a "defensive character", intending not just to "use" arts purely for broader goals, but also to affirm art value and its legitimacy during perceived times of threats. Indeed, there have been several historical moments when the role of the arts was questioned, because of the emerging industrialised societies, which perceived them as not useful to the changing societal needs and thus questioned the utility of artists within the community. Today, instrumentalism has a self-justifying aim too, but differently from the past. According to Belfiore, this is mainly due to the political and ideological neoliberal influence, which has changed the interaction between the state and the support of culture from the past. Today, terms such as "impact" and "utility" seem to be catalysers for public attention and are therefore attached to cultural policies that embody these ideals. In this way, the cultural sector enhances its visibility and becomes instrumental in the growth of the country. This approach appears to offer a convincing interpretation of culture and provides legitimacy to the public cultural sector. Moreover, it also conveniently avoids answering challenging questions about cultural values. These complexities range from blurring distinctions between different cultural forms, like the traditional division between "high" and "low" culture, to the delineation of clear boundaries between professional and amateur cultural endeavours, as well as between subsidized and commercial arts.

Thus, it is necessary to recognise that, despite the historical instrumentalist foundation of the cultural sector, nowadays this strategy does not merely represent a linear continuation of past practices. Rather, it requires examination within the broader political and ideological context of each nation. In line with this perspective, the instrumental cultural policies of today are the result of a renewed relationship between culture and government.

It is generally believed that this phenomenon started to increase during the 1980s, when the economic impact discourse grew in prominence influencing the cultural sector too.

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emotions and purifying humans through experience. Further information can be found here: *Platone e Aristotele – Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica.* Treccani.

Concrete evidence of this convergence was for instance the UK government's reassessment of its funding mechanisms, through an increase in the funding level in the cultural sector. The idea that culture could have economic potential and benefit, due to its interdependency with other sectors, was evidently gaining attraction. Soon, different trends developed, with the proposal of supporting culture and its "economization". An example of a worldwide paradigm, within these years, in cultural policies, was the promotion of a "creative economy".

Developing a "creative economy" was the ideal pursued by the Thatcherian government through big investments in the 1980s, to promote cultural activities and creative industries. This policy round marked also the beginning of a new field of study concerning the economic arts' impact. A notable example was, for instance, the work published in 1988 by John Myerscough, "The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain", which represents the first attempt to provide evidence to the British government of the interdependence between the cultural field and other sectors, demonstrating the economic value it generates. Myerscough calculated that the "cultural goods and services", at that time, accounted for 5% of consumer spending, over 2% of employment and generated £10 billion of turnover in the UK's domestic economy[23]. His work was groundbreaking for his time because it legitimised public subsidies in the arts sector recognizing their contribution to job creation, revenue generation, and enhancement of quality of life. Consequently, new cultural policies and initiatives were undertaken in the United Kingdom to support arts and culture at both local and national levels, accompanied by an increased involvement of the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Apart from Myerscough's influential work, the first attempt to introduce the idea of a creative economy may be traced back to the American economist Simon Nelson Patten[24],

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[23] McGuigan, J. (2005). *Neo-liberalism, culture and policy. International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 11(3), 229–341.

[24] Simon Nelson Patten (May 1, 1852 – July 24, 1922) was an American economist who served as the chair of the Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania. Patten was a pioneering figure in economics, advocating for a transition from an 'economics of scarcity' to an 'economics of abundance'. One of his most important works was "*The New Basis of Civilization*" published in 1907, where he initiated the debate concerning the development of a creative economy. Further information concerning his theory can be found: Patten, S. N. (1907). *The New Basis of Civilization*. New York: The Macmillan Company

a pioneering figure in the field, an American economist in the early 1900s. Indeed, the term made its first appearance in one of his works, titled "The New Basis of Civilization", where he laid down the groundwork for the idea of a "creative economy". The economist envisioned this as the final stage of a progressive economic evolution in societies. According to him, through the years, there has been an economic evolution in societies from a "pain economy" (or Deficit economy) – characterizing all pre-industrial societies - to a "pleasure economy" (or Surplus Economy) – as the stage reached by the USA at the beginning of the 20th century - eventually to a "creative economy" – the final stage societies will reach. In his words,

> To love pleasure is a higher manifestation of life than to fear pain; but the pleasure of action is in advance of the pleasure of consumption. Action creates what pleasure uses up. This would divide progress into three stages: a pain economy, a pleasure economy, and a creative economy. Each stage has its own mode of thought, and its own social institutions.[25]

In the latter phase of the creative economy, Patten foresaw a shift in societies where, the pleasure derived from the production of goods, would become more important than their consumption. This is because of the "creativeness" the work embodies, which marks a significant shift in economic production, wherein the creative process has a central role. This realisation will be followed by further discourses concerning the creation of creative societies, creative classes, and creative industries, where concepts such as "business" and "impact" will be at the core of their cultural process[26].

Despite Patten's relative obscurity compared to other economic theories of the time, his vision offers valuable insights into the transition towards a society where creativity and individuality play central roles in economic and social development. Patten's work is an example of the beginning of a new ratio behind policy decisions, moving from using political values to economic values as the main reason for actions. In this context, the

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[25] Patten, S. N. (1912). *The Reconstruction of Economic Theory*. Philadelphia: American Academy of Political and Social Science.

[26] Richard Florida was an American urban studies theorist and professor, known for being one of the first ones delving into the concept of the creative class. In particular, he highlighted the importance of the creative class in driving economic growth and urban development. His influential books, including "*The Rise of the Creative Class*," have shaped urban policy and economic strategies globally, sparking discussions on fostering creativity and building vibrant communities.

positive understanding of cultural value is compromised, as it no longer solely relies on monetary worth. This marked the advent of a new instrumental approach to cultural policies, departing from the "defensive" intentions of instrumental practices adopted in the past.

A Groundbreaking contribution to this matter was given by the Secretary of State for Culture in the United Kingdom, Tessa Jowell[27]. Indeed, during her political mandate, she attempted to break both the traditional defensive instrumentalism and contemporary instrumentalism, embraced by the cultural field in recent years. By exhorting policymakers to adopt a new political language to convey the importance of promoting and subsidizing culture, she intended to demonstrate cultural value, without attachment to other external factors or influences, thus communicating "what culture does in and of itself"[28]. In 2004 she laid down her convictions in a personal essay, exploring the reasons behind politicians' instrumental use of culture. Here, she noticed that too often politicians have found themselves constrained to discuss culture solely in relation to its practical instrumental value in the realisation of other objectives such as education, crime reduction, or enhancing well-being. Consequently, they often felt obliged to justify or even apologize for investing in culture only in terms of its secondary benefits. Nonetheless, this hesitancy to explore the deeper meaning of culture represses the general understanding of its true worth. This attitude leads to the tendency to avoid a more difficult approach of investigating and celebrating what culture contributes in and of itself. According to Jowell, culture should be perceived as an autonomous and intrinsic entity, and these values should be presented at the forefront of the government's agenda. Rather than viewing culture as a mere component of a *top-down* social strategy, it should be recognized as a catalyst for *bottom-up* cultural enrichment, unlocking creativity and potential.

According to Jowell, until this change of perspective will not occur, governments will not be able to support the cultural sector properly. The biggest fault in this regard stands in the inappropriate way of politics of conveying cultural values, because of the lack of the

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[27] Tessa Jowell was a prominent figure in the English Labour Party. She served as a Member of Parliament from 1992 to 2015. During her tenure, she held the position of Secretary of State for Culture, Media, and Sport from 2001 to 2007.

[28] Jowell, T. (2004). *Government and the value of culture.* London: DCMS.

usage of convincing language in political arguments. Politicians, being the primary leaders of a nation, should instead bear this responsibility, and find an appropriate language, suitable to define culture. Only once the role of culture in investment in personal and social capital is effectively conveyed, justifying its importance on its own terms will become easier. This change in perspective will provide politicians with sufficient reasons to support culture for its intrinsic merits, rather than simply framing it within the context of other agendas and expressing regret for it.

In conclusion, it should be recognized that instrumental practices in the cultural field belong to a historically rooted past and that a change in the perception of cultural value occurred over time. Indeed, before the advent of neoliberal ideas, the instrumental ways of promoting the arts had a "defensive" intention, against the emergence of "negative" perceptions related to them. The development of negative convictions could be seen as a reaction to unstable historical moments, where arts and artists' contributions to societal progress were questioned and considered less significant. The influence of this legacy has promoted a specific way of conceiving the arts, attaching their promotion to the pursuit of unrelated goals such as psychological well-being, health, moral education, social empowerment and so on, thus making them, rather than culture in its broader definition, the only one valuable to be upheld. This instrumental conception of culture has increased with the progressive development of a globalized and neoliberal environment in nowadays societies, as McGuigan maintains.

However, instrumental practices in the cultural field should not be rejected but rather understood and conveyed as supplementary factors in cultural support. At the forefront should be the recognition of the intrinsic value of culture. Politicians should express this concept by acknowledging its "universal value" and its capability to convey fundamental principles for humankind, such as cultural diversity and freedom. Indeed, these values are the bedrock upon which our democracies build a safe space for human flourishing, and for this reason only should be defended.

In addition, recognizing the cultural economic impact and the existence of a possible "economic society" gives the possibility for the cultural sector to flourish and benefit from additional state funding resources. Finally, this approach reinvents the relationship between the government and the "business" of supporting culture, moving policy decisions from economic values to political ones linked also to principles of democracy

and the protection of human rights. In sum, policymakers should concomitantly aim to find a way to develop a new political and cultural language that helps people recognize the intrinsic importance of cultural values themselves.

2. Shifting Values in Cultural Policies: from "European Cultural Heritage" to "Cultural Diversity"

2.1 From "European Cultural Heritage"

According to Raymond Williams, each state has its own ways of "dealing" with culture. However, he recognises three main distinct approaches in the way the State handles culture; namely, as a regulator, protector, and promoter[29]. In this latter role, Williams envisions culture as a "display" of a "particular social order"[30]. Indeed, according to him, the nation-state uses culture and the arts to promote, embellish and make particular social order in place more effective. Thus, the state "is not only the central organ of power but of display"[31] as well. This shows its strategic position for the nation-state to exhibit publicly its authority, organise massive events, and demonstrations as much as exercise its power.

In its role, the State appears to exercise two primary forms of display, that is (i) "the *actual* display of certain aspects of state power" and (ii) "a *stately* sense of cultural policy". The first form of "cultural display" deals with a series of recurrent big events or rituals, which have become part of the nation's tradition, showcasing the "majesty of the state" to the international and local communities. This strategy of hosting "mega-events" to attract public attention, has been a recurring practice in the field of cultural policy. One of the most exemplary cases is the one of the United Kingdom, which constructed its sense of national belonging and respectability around its traditional monarchy institution, which has continued to be celebrated over time despite its non-governmental role. The persistent image of attaching big magnificent royal events[32] to the English nationality has shaped a sense of national grandeur and prestige that has pervaded throughout English

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[29] Bell, D., & Oakley, K. (2014). *Cultural Policy* (1st ed.). Routledge.

[30] Williams, R. (1984). State culture and beyond. In L. Appignanesi (Ed.), *Culture and the State* (pp. 3-5). London: Institute of Contemporary Art.

[31] Williams, R. (1984). State culture and beyond. In L. Appignanesi (Ed.), *Culture and the State* (pp. 3-5). London: Institute of Contemporary Art

[32] The United Kingdom initiated this trend in 1851 with the opening of the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations in Hyde Park. The exhibition aimed to showcase the country's cultural and technical achievements to a global audience.

history and culture, becoming deeply ingrained in the mindset of people. This is also confirmed by several surveys conducted by the UK's main public broadcaster, the BBC, which identified Queen Elizabeth II's coronation, in 1953, as the first mass media event ever registered in the country. On this occasion, over 20 million British people gathered in public and private spaces to watch the national event on television. It was broadcast from Westminster Abbey by a series of cameras specifically installed for the occasion. This monumental event not only captivated the nation but also served as a celebration of technological progress within the royal national context. Seven decades following Queen's Elizabeth II historic coronation, the crowning ceremony of King Charles III was watched on steaming by an average of 18 million British people and reached 4 billion worldwide viewers[33]. This phenomenon underscores the enduring success of the British cultural national project, as evidenced by the continued reverence and international recognition accorded to the UK monarchy. Nowadays the recurrence of these spectacular "mega-events" still represents an occasion to "display" the rich cultural heritage of a nation at the national and global scale.

It is in these "great ceremonial events", which generally take place in the realm of everyday life, that Williams sees the second form of display exercised by the State, defined as a "*stately* sense of cultural policy". This dimension is hardly perceptible because of the deep connection between culture, arts and state power, and it refers to how these ceremonial events incorporate and communicate the power of the state through cultural and artistic elements, whose presence is fundamental for national recognition. However significant, this sphere of cultural policy is rarely recognized, because these kinds of cultural initiatives are so ingrained in the social context that are perceived as normal activities rather than actual cultural policy initiatives, even though they carry a specific political and cultural message. This framework belongs also to the field of cultural diplomacy, which has been defined as a form of "cultural instrumentalism", managed by nations to promote, through culture, their political alignment and international affiliation. Specifically, this phenomenon derives from a complex process of intricate relationships between cultural heritage, societal values and diplomatic efforts. Indeed, cultural diplomacy is a powerful tool able to influence and foster mutual understanding,

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[33] Further information concerning the crowning celebration can be found here: bbc.com/news/uk-65518360

all while projecting a form of *soft power* on the world stage. According to the theory developed by the scholar Joseph Nye in the 20th century, culture is the first government resource determining its success in world politics. This is thanks to its capacity to attract and influence people's behaviour, working as a *soft power*[34] tool. In particular, there are two main forms of power defining world politics: *hard power* and *soft power*. They both share the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the other's behaviours. However, the former relies on a form of "command power" (usually associated with oppressive regimes) able to *change* what others do. The other Instead builds on a co-optive power (usually associated with freedom values) able to *shape* what the others want. Its exercise arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideas and policies. Indeed, according to the author, the winning strategy for a government to obtain what it aims to achieve is through attraction, rather than coercion or payments. Additionally, the soft power of a country is enhanced when the policies are seen as legitimate in the eyes of others, carrying values shared by the local or international community[35].

William's idea of culture as a "national display" is articulated in all these forms of activities, which by themselves constitute specific instances of cultural policies. Moreover, leveraging culture in this manner is a strategic practice and non-coercive tool often employed by states to influence or enhance a country's image. Indeed, beyond culture's role as an international catalyst and an indirect promoter of values and policies, it also plays a pivotal role in shaping a collective sense of belonging and identity. Even more so, as was previously mentioned, at the core of a national cultural policy project lies a particular form of instrumentalism, which uses culture not just to forge but also to consistently reaffirm national identity. As Kevin Robins maintained:

"The nation-state created an entirely new and unprecedented institution of culture and cultural policy. In the nation-state era, cultural policy has essentially been about

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[34] In his work, *Soft Power: the Means to Success in World Politics*, Joseph Nye, compares *hard power* with its opposite, *soft power*. While *hard power* relies on military and economic force for persuasion, *soft power* derives from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies - what Nye refers to as 'positive' values. Further information can be found here: Nye, J. (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Cambridge MA: Perseus.

[35] Nye, J. (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, Cambridge MA: Perseus.

shaping and managing national cultural orders. The central objective has been to create and continuously foster a sense of belonging and allegiance to the national community"[36].

As the author implicitly underscores through his words, national cultural policies are also constructed and created for a specific type of community, essentially an "imagined community" hidden under the title of "national community". Within this context, commentators[37] often highlighted various forms of culture as a kind of glue that binds a nation and defines its "nation-ness" when exploring the histories of nation-building and national identity. Culture often guides the process of imagination and identification with a nation, the main idea being that a nation is like a community people imagine themselves to be a part of[38]. This theory also suggests the predictability of finding cultural production and consumption deeply entangled with the narrative construction of a nation, often providing the bedrock upon which national identity can consolidate[39].

Given the capacity of culture to provide imaginative frameworks and facilitate identity formation, it becomes clear how cultural manifestations, such as public displays, serve to unite members of a nation, thereby contributing to what Robins defined as "the national imaginary"[40]. The aforementioned large-scale events, could be considered as part of this strategy, used to rediscover or invent the national past of a country as a tool for present and future nation-building. Over time the "inventiveness" of these traditions sticks, and they become part of the ordinary cultural life of the nation.

While cultural policies have historically focused on a national level as the natural starting point for understanding and analysing the role of culture in state affairs, the middle of the 20th century saw a shift in this paradigm. The emergence of several supranational

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[36] Robins, K. (2007). Transnational cultural policy and European cosmopolitanism. *Cultural Politics, 3*(2), 147–174

[37] See Robins, K. (2007) and House, J., & Kaniklidou, T (2017)

[38] House, J., & Kaniklidou, T. (Eds.). (2017). *Europe in Discourse: Identity, Diversity, Borders*. Athens: Hellenic American University Press.

[39] DeVereaux, C., & Griffin, M. (2013). *Narrative, Identity, and the Map of Cultural Policy: Once Upon a Time in a Globalized World* (1st ed.). Routledge.

[40] Robins, K. (2007). Transnational cultural policy and European cosmopolitanism. *Cultural Politics*, 3(2) 150.

organizations by the end of the Second World War progressively challenged the nation's centrality in cultural matters.

According to the scholar Monica Sassatelli, during that period, the nation's path was crossed by two emerging trends at the European level: gradual decentralization and progressive Europeanization[41]. These tendencies have gradually limited the state's monopoly on several activities while influencing the field of cultural policies. The first embryonic idea of a "European Community" pushed the states that agreed to adhere to the new values of this alliance to reevaluate many of the objectives and achievements of their policies. The European initiative encouraged them to live aside that nationalism that had driven the world toward two world wars, in favour of the principles of peace and cooperation. Against this backdrop, the discourse used to promote and reorganize the cultural sector evolved progressively as well. The new principles embedded in the emerging "European" society contributed to a redefinition of the relationship between the Arts and the world, giving the cultural sector an occasion for public reconsideration, besides its economic and "display" roles. Finally, this process will get to its full completion at the beginning of 2000 with the inauguration of the European Union's new cultural funding agenda.

Even though today's European Union is considered a central actor protecting and preserving the diversity of the world's cultural heritage, the initial idea of "union" was far from this "cultural" objective. Indeed, the need and political will of today's EU arose from the economic necessity of creating a "European Market". Accordingly, the primary intention of constructing a "European alliance" was to facilitate the after-war economic reconstruction, due to the considerable economic damages that occurred by the end of the Second World War. In this way, the creation of a common market among the European Member States enabled the free circulation of people, goods and capital in the hope of a fast economic recovery. This process began when in 1951 six countries at the very heart of the European continent - France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands - signed the Treaty of Paris[42]. The Treaty established the formation of the

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[41] Sassatelli, M. (2007). The Arts, the State, and the EU: Cultural Policy in the Making of Europe. *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice, 51*(1), 28–41.

[42] Treaty of Paris 1951. Treaty Constituting the European Coal and Steel Community. Luxembourg: Publishing Services of the European Communities.

European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which contributed to the creation of a common market for the sale of coal and steel. Despite its economic intentions, the treaty laid the groundwork for the foundation of a new community, bounded by the shared vision of creating a unified and peaceful space. The treaty was refined in 1957, with the Treaty of Rome, transforming the initial European Coal and Steel Community into the European Economic Community[43], which represented a second effort to define its unionising intentions more clearly.

Still, the Treaty of Rome did not empower European institutions in cultural matters, recognizing other sectors as a priority for intervention instead. Nonetheless, already at that time, Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Economic Community, recognized culture more than any other activity as a valuable starting point in the European formation. Indeed, he argued that "If we were to do it all over again, we would start with culture"[44]. However, the treaty was moving in a different direction than the one envisioned by Jean Monnet, showing little regard for its impact on the cultural sector.

In this regard, one notable example is the regulations enacted to create a single market and facilitate the free movement of goods, which were extended to include the cultural domain. While these measures aimed to promote European integration and succeed in establishing a unified market across all economic sectors, they also affected cultural affairs adversely.

In this regard, Article 28 of the Treaty of Rome stipulated that

> "The Union shall comprise a customs union which shall cover all trade in goods and which shall involve the prohibition between Member States of customs duties on imports and exports and of all charges having equivalent effect and the adoption of a common customs tariff in their relations with third countries[45]".

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[43] Treaty of Rome. 1957. Traité instituant la Communauté Economique Européenne et documents annexes

[44] Sassatelli, M. (2007). The Arts, the State, and the EU: Cultural Policy in the Making of Europe. *Social Analysis: The International Journal of Social and Cultural Practice*, *51*(1), 28–41.

[45] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. (2016). Part Three - Union Policies and Internal Actions, Title II - Free Movement of Goods, Article 28 (ex-Article 23 TEC). Eur-Lex. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu_2016/art_28/oj

The prohibition among the Member States and the establishment of a customs union[46] undoubtedly represented a core achievement of the "European project". However, despite the absence of explicit mention, these new measures were implicitly extended to all goods, including cultural goods, which began to circulate freely among the Member States without adequate control and protection. As a consequence, these measures dramatically increased the illicit traffic of cultural goods as much as the risk of dispersion of the goods among the states of the Union.

Another issue that arose due to the lack of clarity in these regulations pertained to the definition of cultural goods. One of the first legal cases concerning this matter occurred in 1968 between the European Commission and the Italian Republic[47]. The lawsuit highlighted a discrepancy between the European Commission's regulation and the perception of "cultural goods" under Italian national law. In this instance, according to the treaty's provision, "cultural goods" fall under the provisions relating to the customs union. However, the Italian Republic refused to consider those goods as "ordinary goods" requiring their exclusion from the provision and added a tax on their exportation as a form of protection. The European Commission had to intervene by urging Italy to abolish the tax. Instead, according to the national law[48] of the state, the tax was applied only to a specific category of goods, possessing artistic, historical, archaeological, or ethnographic value, namely cultural goods. Thus, Itay refused to change its policy, deeming it necessary for the protection of the "Italian national treasure of outstanding value". This compelled the European Court of Justice to intervene in order to clarify the scope of application of the Treaty of Rome's provision on the customs union, by proposing a clearer definition of "goods." They were consequently defined as "items capable of being valued monetarily and forming the subject of commercial transactions"[49]. Since then, the European Court of

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[46] A customs union is an agreement among two or more countries to eliminate trade barriers and impose a common external tariff on imports from non-member countries.

[47] Judgment of the Court of 10 December 1968, Commission of the European Communities v Italian Republic, Case 7-68. Eur-Lex https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A61968CJ0007

[48] Law No. 1089 of June 1st, 1939, part of the Italian legislation concerning the safeguarding of artistic or historical items, included several regulations concerning their exportation. Depending on the circumstances, it could impose an absolute prohibition on export, require a license, grant the state a right of first refusal, or impose a progressive tax on exports ranging from 8% to 30%.

[49] Further information can be found here:

Justice has recognised items of an artistic, historical, archaeological, or ethnographic nature as goods belonging to this category and, therefore subject to customs union provisions. The case was dismissed with the European Court of Justice remarking that the Italian Republic failed the obligations imposed by Article 16 of the Treaty of Rome because any tax burden, related to the free movement of goods, had already been prohibited under Article 12[50]. Therefore, the Italian actions were deemed against Community law.

Although the Italian Republic lost the lawsuit, the case raised concerns at the international level, regarding the position of the European Economic Community in the realm of "cultural goods", and specifically the distinction of cultural goods from other commodities, in consideration of the Italian representation of these goods as "national treasure". In this regard, Article 36 was added later on in order to provide further clarity in establishing that:

"The provisions of Articles 34 and 35 shall not preclude prohibitions or restrictions on imports, exports or goods in transit justified on grounds of public morality, public policy or public security; the protection of health and life of humans, animals or plants; the protection of national treasures possessing artistic, historic or archaeological value; or the protection of industrial and commercial property. Such prohibitions or restrictions shall not, however, constitute a means of arbitrary discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade between Member States."[51]

Therefore, the Article explicitly states that, although there is freedom of movement of goods among the Member States, there could be some "exceptions" where prohibitions or restrictions on imports, exports, or transit of goods may be imposed by the Member States. This is the case of the "cultural goods", which the provision now differentiates from other commodities in relation to their "artistic, historic or archaeological value".

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https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX%3A61968CJ0007

[50] Indeed, Article 12 expressly established that Member States could not introduce new customs duties on imports or exports.

[51] Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. (2016). Part Three - Union Policies and Internal Actions, Title II - Free Movement of Goods, Chapter 3 - Prohibition of Quantitative Restrictions Between Member States, Article 36 (ex-Article 30 TEC). Eur-Lex.
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016E036

Their protection aims at also safeguarding the state's national treasure, linked to the value of cultural goods. However, the provision specifies that these restrictions or prohibitions should not be used by Member States to gain commercial advantage or discriminate.

The introduction of this "cultural exception", is considered a groundbreaking event in the progressive alignment of cultural issues with European interests. Furthermore, it contributes to the evolution of the Italian perception of cultural goods as integral components of the "national treasure". This consideration soon became influential on the European scale, advancing the idea of the existence of a common European treasure as well.

Along this process, the international community has also been an influential actor in providing an encompassing notion of "cultural heritage", slowly taking shape at the international level. Indeed, the first attempt at a definition trace back to the end of the Second World War, after extensive assessments were conducted to evaluate the damages inflicted on cultural heritage during the conflict. The study showcased how many cultural goods had been badly injured or destroyed, setting in motion the process for the creation of various measures concerning the protection of cultural goods in case of future conflicts. In particular, to prevent any further destruction, in 1954 the newly formed international organization UNESCO adopted the "Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict". The Convention aimed to protect "cultural properties" during armed conflicts as well as during times of peace. Furthermore, it introduced for the first time the notion of "cultural property" into the international legal discourse. Accordingly, in Article 1 of the Hague Convention, a "cultural property" is defined as a:

"movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above (...)"[52]

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[52] UNESCO. (1954). Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention. Chapter I. General provisions regarding protection, Article

However, substantial progress in the terminological refinement occurred only in the 1970s when UNESCO adopted a further Convention, which completely altered the perspective adopted by the Hague Convention. The "World Heritage and Natural Convention"[53] redefined the notion of "cultural heritage", recognizing its intrinsic value beyond mere association with armed conflict. Moreover, the concept of "cultural property" outlined in the prior Convention of 1954 was redefined from two key perspectives. In the first place, the Convention was extended to both cultural and, for the first time, natural sites, thereby binding the Member States to actively promote and protect the world's natural and cultural heritage. In the second place, the Convention replaced the notion of "cultural property" with "World Cultural Heritage". This transformative change reshaped how cultural goods and culture were previously communicated and perceived. In fact, this redefinition eliminates the possibility of referring to cultural heritage solely as a "cultural property" belonging to a single nation, emphasizing instead that cultural heritage belongs to the world. Moreover, it advances the idea that cultural heritage should be protected to ensure its transmission and conservation for future generations.

These linguistic and conceptual changes that occurred at the international scale became influential also at the European level. By the end of the 1970s Europe demonstrated its proactive stance, by inscribing for the first time the cultural sector in its agenda. However, as previously analysed, the European Community's bedrock from the outset was mainly economic. The preamble of the Treaty of Paris clearly established its goal:

"to substitute for age-old rivalries the merging of their essential interests; to create by establishing an economic community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples divided by the bloody conflicts; and to lay the foundations for institutions which will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared".[54]

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1 – Definition of cultural property. The Hague, 14 May 1954. https://en.unesco.org/protecting-heritage/convention-and-protocols/1954-convention

[53] Further information can be found here:

https://whc.unesco.org/en/convention/https://whc.unesco.org/archive/convention-en.pdf

[54] Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community and Annexes I-III. (1951, April 18). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:11951K:EN:PDF

This historical context would explain the delay in action of the European community, compared to the international one, in positioning itself as an influential actor in the cultural sector. Initially, its cultural role remained marginal and subordinate to other spheres of competence due to the absence of specific treaties and provisions defining its role. Additionally, culture was traditionally seen as a delicate sector with its management entrusted primarily to the nations rather than any other international organization or subnational entity. This was partly because of its fundamental role in determining values of national belonging and identity. For this latter reason, the first European cultural actions adopted a specific policy approach, recognising their complementary role to national competencies, even though, according to the Treaty's preamble European cooperation and tolerance would have been possible only once nations would have moved beyond any forms of nationalism.

Accordingly, until the 1970s, the European Commission's activities in the field of culture remained blurred. However, the "World Heritage and Natural Convention" pushed the European Commission to engage in cultural matters. Since then, the commission has been actively defining the application of the Treaty of Rometo the cultural sector by publishing a series of cultural communications[55]. These documents outlined the principal guidelines regulating community action in promoting and protecting cultural activities. Moreover, they identified the four fields of action of the European Economic Community[56], initially limited to preserving the architectural heritage, contributing to the development of cultural exchanges, encouraging cooperation between cultural institutes and Member states, and finally committing to the promotion of socio-cultural activities at the European level.

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[55] Commission of the European Communities. (1977). Community action in the Cultural Sector (Communication from the Commission to the Council), Brussels, 2 December 1977. Further information can be found here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51977DC0560&rid=8

[56] Commission of the European Communities. (1977). Community Action in the Cultural Sector. Brussels, 2 December 1977, Content, II Other action.
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51977DC0560&rid=8

As early as these documents, culture was considered "as a means of arousing a greater feeling of belonging and solidarity amongst Europeans"[57]. These efforts have progressively focused on values, aiming to reach broader audiences for cultural productions across Europe and fostering the creation of a European cultural space. Moreover, the gradual establishment of European cultural, heritage, and of remembrance policies could be seen as an extension and deepening of the EU project, emphasizing the cultural-historical foundation of the Union, which had been primarily viewed from economic and political perspectives[58]. In the years immediately following the Second World War, European institutions were established to regulate the economy and trade with the aim of fostering a collective identity that transcended the nationalistic interests of the past. The emergence of an identity "discourse" of the European Community came in parallel with the economic recession and humanitarian crisis experienced during these years[59]. The community could no longer be legitimised by the economic prosperity discourse but needed a new narrative to continue its process of community building. Additionally, the consensus obtained in the after-war period started to be challenged by the first enlargement of the Community.

These elements are the bedrock of the following cultural policies oriented to increase the "European" interests in their common origins and identities. The European Community began looking for new storytelling that could combine democratic and humanitarian values with the past nationalist idea of identity and belonging. The evolutionary process undergone by the notion of "cultural heritage" could perfectly encompass these characteristics under its new label of "European cultural heritage". Imaging a shared

[57] Lähdesmäki, T., Mäkinen, K., Ceginskas, V. L. A., & Kaasik-Krogerus, S. (2021). *Europe from Below: Notions of Europe and the European among Participants in EU Cultural Initiatives.*

[58] Prutsch, M. J. (2013). *European Historical Memory: Policies, Challenges and Perspectives*. Directorate-General for Internal Policies. Policy Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies. Culture and Education. Brussels: European Parliament.

[59] Since the early 1950s, the primary focus of economic policy in developing countries has been on fostering economic growth and implementing the necessary structural adjustments to facilitate such development. However, in the mid-1970s, this pattern was disrupted by an increase in commodity prices and the onset of the first major oil shock, followed by a second oil shock linked to the revolution in Iran. As a result, many countries deviated from their long-term objectives to address this significant global economic disruption. Further information can be found here: Cooper, R. N. (1994). *Boom, Crisis, and Adjustment: The Macroeconomic Experience of Developing Countries, 1970-90. A Summary*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.

European past and heritage would consolidate the new narrative and the newly begun process of identity building. Furthermore, this would enhance the creation of a particular image of "Europe" and its "citizens", providing an appealing history to educate the "future Europeans".

The following trend has been defined by several scholars, along with Monica Sassatelli, as "Cultural Europeanization". This process refers to all those policies and practices dealing with being and becoming European through culture[60] and has been interpreted as the third wave of the integration process, in which European inclusion broadens from the economic and political sphere to encompass culture[61]. According to this view, cultural Europeanization would be interpreted mainly as a top-down process initiated by the EU to achieve its European cultural identity project.

2.2 ...To Cultural Diversity

Against this backdrop, the starting point of the official discourse of developing a European identity and sense of belonging was the "Declaration on European Identity". The agreement was signed in Copenhagen in 1973 by the then nine-Member States of the community, reaffirming their collective intentions to transform "the whole complex of their relations into a European Union before the end of the present decade"[62]. Here, Member States recognized the need for further clarity in their relations with other nations and the need to define their responsibilities on the global stage. Furthermore, the Treaty outlines Member States' understanding of the dynamic nature of European integration. This process involved reviewing the common heritage, interests and obligations, as well as the progress achieved until that moment by the Community in establishing a common market, common institutions and a European Political Cooperation (EPC). In short, the Declaration reestablished the current commitment of the

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[60] Sassatelli, M. (2006). The Logic of Europeanizing Cultural Policy. In U. H. Meinhof & A. Triandafyllidou (Eds.), *Transcultural Europe. Cultural Policy in a Changing Europe* (pp. 24–42). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

[61] Lähdesmäki, T., Mäkinen, K., Ceginskas, V. L. A., & Kaasik-Krogerus, S. (2021). *Europe from Below: Notions of Europe and the European among Participants in EU Cultural Initiatives.*

[62] Further information can be found here: https://penguincompaniontoeu.com/additional_entries/declaration-on-european-identity/

Community to clarify the "European identity in relation to the world". This recognition extends to the rich variety of cultures within European society, which share common values, principles and the determination to contribute to the construction of a United Europe. Within this framework, the Convention identifies a common identity shared by the Europeans, derived from the convergence of diverse national cultures in the definition of a European cultural heritage.

Despite the potential complications arising from this Declaration of Identity, the major target of cultural policy remained the forging of a European identity, showcasing the primacy of culture in questions of identity. The establishment of the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992 further reinforced this idea. Here, culture was finally explicitly recognised as an official sector of EU action. Indeed, according to the paragraph one of Article 128:

"The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore[63]*".*

The Treaty of Maastricht formalized the "cultural" role of the European Union and its commitment to contribute to the promotion of each member state's culture. Additionally, it implicitly referred to the Community's intention of promoting a shared identity by aiming at "bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore", while respecting the national and regional diversity. To achieve those goals, the treaty incentivised exchanges among the European Community and the Member States and fostered international cooperation with third countries and international organizations active in the cultural sector[64], such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO. Since then, the interest in culture and the development of its cultural policy has increased in parallel with international cultural cooperation.

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[63] Treaty establishing the European Community (Amsterdam consolidated version) - Part Three: Community policies - Title XII: Culture - Article 151 - Article 128 - EC Treaty (Maastricht consolidated version) - Article 128 - EEC Treaty. (n.d.). Retrieved from:

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:11997E151

[64] Article 128, third paragraph: *The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.* Further information can be found here:

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:11997E151

The Treaty helped the cultural sector to emerge from intergovernmentalism by obtaining a legal status. Nonetheless, critiques persist regarding the perceived constraints on cultural disposition, with some arguing that it still reflects a framework where the primary actor remains the nation-state. In particular, the Treaty formally acknowledged the role of the EU in the cultural sector, but it did not proceed effectively to give substance to what was ratified by the Treaty through concrete political actions. In fact, the actual policy implementation that gave substance to this new legal framework began only in 2000, with the launch of the first EU funding programme, "Culture 200", which brought together the European cultural actions initiated in the second half of the 1990s[65]. The initiative substituted the traditional nation-state actor with a European one, unifying the numerous EU cultural projects under a single heading. From that moment on, the EU implemented various programmes and actions offering economic support for inter-European collaboration in the field of culture.

Nevertheless, the potential effectiveness of the EU in the cultural sphere is still an ongoing debate among scholars. As a matter of fact, the treaties categorize culture within the areas where the European Commission holds only complementary competencies – coordination, integration and support initiatives – and thus can only collaborate with the Member States, rather than taking independent decisions, restricting the EU's efficiency in cultural decisions. Additionally, because of the subsidiarity principle, the EU cannot exert direct influence on cultural policy at the national level, being Member States directly responsible for their own cultural policies. This grants each state the authority to veto proposals that do not align with their interests, even when all other Member States are in agreement. This can significantly slow down the decision-making process and make it difficult for the EU to adopt initiatives on certain issues, including those related to cultural policies, where differences of opinion among Member States may arise. Furthermore, this situation contributes to slowing down the process of implementing cultural initiatives, resulting in the return of authority of Member States. This indicates that some individuals

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[65] For the period 1996-1999, the European Parliament and the Council established a European Programme to support artistic and cultural activities with a European dimension, such as the Kaleidoscope Programme (1966), Raphael Programme (1997) and Ariane Programme (1997). Further information concerning the initiative can be found here: https://cordis.europa.eu/programme/id/ET-KALEIDOSCOPE/fr

still perceive European cultural action as limited, with European efforts often centred on specific projects rather than comprehensive cultural actions.

Not only that, the EU's idea of developing a European cultural project raises some contradictions in its statement. Indeed, both the European Declaration of Diversity and the Maastricht Treaty admit that the EU's space is delineated by diverse cultures and ensures its commitment to preserving them, while at the same time recognising a common heritage in which the European community should identify itself. Thus, even though the Maastricht Treaty secured limited legal "competence" to act in culture it clearly stated its two objectives in this area: fostering diversity and fostering common cultural heritage at the same time.

This contradictory aspect has generated support in several anti-European movements, which refused to be labelled as part of European heritage. Indeed, they perceive EU's actions in this field as a means of enforcing "policies of belonging", rather than fostering diversity and inclusion.

Scholar Tuuli Lähdesmäki identified this process of "Europeanization" in two main cultural agendas: identity-building and participation[66]. The first agenda focuses on implementing policies that foster various "cultural aspects" such as cultural heritage, traditions, languages, religions and everyday practices, arts, values, symbols and cultural institutions and activities[67]. The second agenda, on the other hand, aims to create participatory "display" events involving different actors at the European level, fostering their sense of belonging as "European citizens". According to him, this process began with the fund "Culture 2000"[68]. Since then, numerous similar actions have been implemented, as an attempt to give substance to the abstract principles underlying the idea of a

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[66] Lähdesmäki, T., Mäkinen, K., Ceginskas, V. L. A., & Kaasik-Krogerus, S. (2021). Chapter 3: Focus on Two Agendas. *Europe from Below: Notions of Europe and the European among Participants in EU Cultural Initiatives*.

[67] Lähdesmäki, T., Mäkinen, K., Ceginskas, V. L. A., & Kaasik-Krogerus, S. (2021). Chapter 3: Focus on Two Agendas. *Europe from Below: Notions of Europe and the European among Participants in EU Cultural Initiatives*.

[68] Today this fund has evolved into "Creative Europe". The programme has been established by the EU to support the cultural and creative industries. During its initial phase spanning from 2014 to 2020, it was allocated a budget of €1.47 billion, which was increased to €2.44 billion for its second phase from 2021 to 2027.

European identity. For instance, the scholar recognizes European initiatives such as the European Capital of Culture (ECOC), the European Citizens Campus (ECC) and the European Heritage Label (EHL), as examples of oriented cultural policy in matters of identity-building.

In addition, a third more conservative critique sees Member States' participation in these activities as an attempt to undermine national sovereignty. Indeed, these programmes could impose a specific "European model", while promoting a homogenized European identity among the nation's diversity. The sociologist Ulrich Beck[69] has also contributed to this debate defining some of these initiatives as a more superficial and consumer-oriented form of cultural exchange, rather than a means of valuing individual cultural diversity.

This perspective would additionally be reinforced by the results of the Culture 2000 funding programme[70], which, according to Article 1 of the initiative, aimed to "contribute to the promotion of a cultural area common to the European peoples" [71] and foster cooperation among creative artists, cultural operators, and various cultural institutions across Member States and other participant states. These forms of cooperation were intended to highlight the common heritage of European significance and increase its interest among citizens while disseminating know-how and promoting good practices for its conservation and safeguarding. Additionally, the programme aims to promote cultural dialogue, cooperation between European and non-European cultures, and the transnational dissemination of culture.

However, the evaluating Commission report seems to support the aforementioned critique, highlighting the partial effectiveness of the programme in advancing cross-border cooperation. In this regard, it recognised the several ambitious objectives set by Culture 2000, as one of the reasons for its inefficiency, specifically attributed to the lack

[69] Ulrich Beck (Stolp 1944 – Munich 2015) was an influential sociologist who focused his studies on the consequences of globalisation in terms of cultural disparities and environmental sustainability. Further information can be found here: https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ulrich-beck/

[70] The programme was initially established for five years (2000-2004) with a budget of €167 million, later extended to 2006 with a budget of up to €. 236.5 million.

[71] Commission of the European Communities. (2003). Culture 2000: Call for proposals for 2004 (2003/C 195/14). *Official Journal of the European Union*, III (Notices). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2003:195:0020:0039:EN:PDF

of clarity and ambiguity in their definition: the unclear and contradictory dichotomy of fostering cultural diversity while promoting a European Heritage. Furthermore, the Commission recognised additional complications arising from the complexity of procedural selections in the process of allocating funds and the difficulty in managing cultural projects[72]. Yet, despite the partial achievements of the funding programme, Culture 2000 represented a starting point for the European Commission's efforts to raise awareness of intercultural dialogue rather than solely promoting the abstract European ideal.

The failure of these "policies of belonging" may have enhanced scepticism toward the EU's role in inclusion and diversity promotion, inadvertently fostering divisions. Consequently, this approach could be responsible for creating explicit and implicit boundaries, reminiscent of nationalist sentiments. The narrative propagated of the EU as a distinct cultural entity, with its unique cultural heritage and history, therefore, could be inappropriately associated with nationalist intentions. Moreover, this narrative could be exploited by nationalist parties and extreme right-wing movements to justify political ideologies and actions, rooted for instance in anti-immigration positions. In sum, under these lenses, cultural instrumentalism might become a tool that simultaneously includes some while excluding many others, reinforcing the construction of Europe and the idea of defence from "non-European others"[73].

This attempt to "Cultural Europeanization", has often been confused or associated with nation-building. However, this process cannot be understood by using a "national template", which reduces this "European policy of belonging" to that implemented for the creation of the nation-state. In fact, "Europeanization" is a much more complex endeavour that navigates between unity and diversity, influenced by the interests of its Member States. Thus, the European institutions cannot simply follow the steps of cultural homogenization and consensus that the nation-state successfully envisions for itself, first

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[72] European Commission, Directorate-General Education & Culture. (2008, January). *Final External Evaluation of the Culture 2000 programme (2000-2006) – Framework Contract on Evaluation, Impact Assessment and Related Services by ECOTEC.*

[73] This discourse has been referred to migrants coming in particular from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Further information can be found here: Lähdesmäki, T., Mäkinen, K., Ceginskas, V. L. A., & Kaasik-Krogerus, S. (2021). Chapter 3.2: Development of the EU's Cultural Policy and Initiatives. *Europe from Below: Notions of Europe and the European among Participants in EU Cultural Initiatives.*

and foremost because its existence is based on that of its Member States. Indeed, European objectives, as well as strategies, are constructed over the delicate equilibrium between the drive for unity and the concern for diversity. Moreover, the European Union, certainly the principal institutional driver of Europeanization today, also diverges significantly from the political structure of the nation-state. Indeed, it has to rely on its Member States to conduct its elections and enforce its mandates. Furthermore, unlike European states that had centuries to consolidate their nations, the European Union lacks such a long history. Unlike national identity, which is culturally specific, identifying with the EU is still a nebulous idea. If individuals identify as Europeans, their identities no longer revolve around religious, ethnic, or national defence categories but rather around exchange, diversity, and shared values[74]. Simultaneously, the geographical boundaries of Europe, including those of the EU, are not fixed and keep evolving over time. With fifty-one countries listed in the European continent, defining a shared identity among Member States and citizens becomes challenging. Finally, the EU, established in 1945 and consisting of twenty-seven Member States, operates alongside the Council of Europe, which counts forty-seven Member States. This latter institution is an international organisation set up to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law and cooperates with the EU in the development of projects and initiatives aimed at strengthening those values in Europe. Generally, countries become members of the Council of Europe before joining the EU. Consequently, there are European nations associated with the Council of Europe that have not yet attained membership in the EU. This complicated landscape of membership and alliances further complicates the formation of a collective European identity, fostering the debate concerning the topics of the European community and European heritage. Following Brubaker and Cooper's argument, the concept of European Identity "tends to mean too much (when understood in a strong sense), too little (when understood in a weak sense), or nothing at all (because of its clear ambiguity)".

This ambiguity has now been recognised by the European Union, which has accordingly shifted its discourse from a focus on "European cultural heritage" to "Cultural diversity". This transformation has fundamentally changed the core values of the EU and thereby its self-identification. Indeed, according to the "fundamental elements of European Identity",

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[74]Borneman, J., & Fowler, N. (1997). Europeanization. *Annual Review of Anthropology, 26*, 487–514.

recognized in its Declaration in 1973, these are "democracy, the rule of law and social justice"[75]. However, alongside these founding European values, "cultural diversity" is now also recognised as a universal value. Indeed, according to the Treaty of Lisbon established in 2007 "The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity" as fundamental principles of humankind, on par with democracy, the rule of law and humanitarian rights[76]. Thus, the Treaty officially recognises these values even on a universal application, rather than in their sole application to the Europeans. As Gabriel Toggenburg noted, "While diversity can hence be used to describe the nature of the debate on European values, it is also included itself among these values"[77]. The European Union's challenge to broaden the European Heritage idea to cultural diversity also represents an attempt to incorporate new values into the community's self-representation. This new approach differs from the previous abstract ideals of defining the European heritage and identity. Instead, it places greater emphasis on practical interactions among different cultures and identities present in Europe. "Culture 2000", despite its initially unclear objectives, remains one of the earliest concrete examples of this ideological shift towards cultural promotion and diversity inclusion. Indeed, it has had a lasting impact, influencing later programmes and enhancing decentralised cultural policies.

Among these, the European Capital of Culture programme is designed to valorise regional cultural diversity within national contexts. The selection process for cities contending the ECOC title involves submitting applications and competing initially at the national level, and then if selected, the final candidates are recommended by national panels to an international expert panel at the European level. Moreover, the implementation of the ECOC initiative at the local level has evolved over the years, with cities employing its "label" to advance their cultural and urban policies. Consequently, the ECOC designation has transformed itself from a short-term cultural festival into a year-long urban event. This type of commitment not only promotes cultural and artistic diversity but also

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[75] Council of the European Communities. (1973, December 9). Meeting of the Heads of State of Government, Copenhagen, 9 December 1973. Declaration on European Identity. *Bulletin of the EC*, 12, 118.

[76] Calligaro, O. (2014). From 'European cultural heritage' to 'cultural diversity'? The changing core values of European cultural policy. *Politique Européenne, 2014(3)*, 60-85.

[77] Toggenburg, G. N. (2004). The Debate on European Values and the Case of Cultural Diversity. *European Diversity and Autonomy Papers - EDAP, 10*. Retrieved from www.eurac.edu/edap

contributes to the economic and social development of cities while encouraging citizens' participation in local cultural and political life. Accordingly, in this case, the emerging European motto "Unite in diversity" has expanded to also encompass a subnational perspective, rather than being limited to the national level. This expansion has provided participating cities with the opportunity to celebrate and showcase their culture internationally, thereby extending the traditional national European discourse to integrate subnational entities into European cultural policies.

A further attempt towards greater inclusion of "cultural diversity" into the European landscape, is the EU's recognition of cultural minorities' integration into the "European Cultural Heritage". In this regard, several initiatives in favour of minority languages and cultures were established following a resolution voted by the European Parliament in 1996[78], which acknowledged that "these minorities represent millions and millions of people who are an integral part of our Europe and its civilization" and that "every language has within it the secrets of our own heritage"[79]. The Commissioner for Education and Research in the same years defined minority languages and cultures as a "living heritage". The adoption of this resolution anticipated and influenced the further development of the idea of cultural heritage as a set of tangible and intangible goods. Indeed, the inclusion of the European Parliament of languages and traditions into the realm of "cultural heritage" is going to be internationally recognised within the "Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage", adopted by UNESCO in 2003. The Convention codified intangible cultural heritage as:

"*Traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed on to our descendants, such as oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts*[80]"

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[78] Further information concerning the resolution can be found here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:51996AP0148

[79] Calligaro, O. (2014). From 'European cultural heritage' to 'cultural diversity'? The changing core values of European cultural policy. *Politique Européenne, 2014(3)*, 60-85.

[80] Further information concerning the Declaration can be found here: https://ich.unesco.org/en/what-is-intangible-heritage-00003

Undoubtedly, the actions of the EU in the cultural heritage context have often been influenced by international stimuli from organizations like UNESCO and through close cooperation with further international institutions, such as the Council of Europe. For instance, the EU initiatives in support of cultural minorities have been fostered by the "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities"[81], already signed by the Council of Europe Member States in 1995. The Convention aimed to acknowledge cultural diversity in Europe and European societies, emphasising the importance of fostering intercultural dialogue to maintain peace among both European countries and within them. The concept was broadly outlined as measures aimed at:

"*Promoting mutual respect, understanding, and cooperation among all individuals residing within their territories, regardless of their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious identities, particularly in the realms of education, culture, and media*"[82].

Later in 2003, the Council of Europe expanded on the idea of developing global forms of mutual understanding and respect. Here, a relatively precise definition of intercultural dialogue is offered for the first time, through the establishment of the "Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention". This declaration defined intercultural dialogue as follows:

"*This term defines tools used to promote and protect the concept of cultural democracy and encompasses the tangible and intangible elements likely to foster all forms of cultural diversity, manifesting themselves in multiple identities whether individual or collective. Intercultural dialogue must extend to every possible component of culture, without exception, whether these be cultural in the strict sense or political, economic, social, philosophical, or religious*[83]".

The emerging concept of intercultural dialogue became pivotal in shaping the Council of Europe's approach to cultural diversity promotion. This was seen as a means capable of

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[81] Further information concerning the Declaration can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/at-a-glance

[82] Council of Europe. (1995). Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and Explanatory Report (H (1995)010). Strasbourg

[83] Council of Europe. (2004). Conference of European Ministers responsible for Cultural Affairs *Declaration on Intercultural dialogue and conflict prevention* (Opatija/Croatia, 20-22 October 2003), Report by the Secretary-General, CM (2004)18.

protecting cultural democracy, by fostering social cohesion across the European continent. Moreover, intercultural dialogue acknowledges that cultural diversity manifests through multiple identities, all of which should be safeguarded in any form of cultural expression.

Following the path of the Council of Europe, the EU tried to "internalise" this idea of intercultural dialogue within its cultural policies, by supporting several new cultural initiatives and academic debates. For instance, in 2004 the EU established the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue"[84], explaining that the goal of the initiative would be "to develop social and personal habits that will equip us for a more open and complex cultural environment"[85]. Indeed, it was aimed to increase the visibility, efficiency and coherence of all European programmes and actions that contribute to raising awareness over cross-cultural dialogue. The initiative planned to integrate intercultural principles into European policies, and programmes through three main actions developed at the European, national and symbolic levels. Specific financial resources were allocated to support those activities aimed at achieving the goals set for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. For instance, at the European and national levels, several campaigns of information and promotion were put in place, to raise awareness of citizens' understanding of cultural diversity's importance in the development of societies. Moreover, these actions were accompanied by symbolic activities targeting young people's involvement in cultural events, competitions and artistic projects, by organizing cross-cultural events.

In the same year, the Jean Monnet project[86], funded by the EU, emphasised the importance of engaging the academic community as an influential mediator in cultural diversity discussions. The project aimed to enhance interactions by encouraging teaching, research and reflection in the field of European integration studies within higher education institutions. Within this context, the EU's Erasmus programmes, have also played a crucial role, providing financial support to facilitate intercultural dialogue

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[84] Further information concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue can be found here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/european-year-of-intercultural-dialogue-2008.html

[85] Figél, J. (2006). Speech at the "Soul for Europe" Conference, Berlin, 17 November 2006.

[86] Further information concerning the Jean Monnet Actions can be found here: https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/programme-guide/part-b/jean-monnet-actions

through cultural exchanges. In response to these efforts, the European Commission has consequently created the European Jean Monnet Centres of Excellence, an academic network of excellence in European studies. Today, these centre serves as one of the EU's primary partners within the academic community, addressing the European Commission's policy priorities aimed at fostering connections between Europe and its citizens, enhancing the EU's global presence, and - more importantly - promoting transnational research networks.

On this specific matter, the scholar Oriane Calligaro[87] has highlighted the frequent involvement of non-institutional actors, such as scholars, in EU discourse and policymaking when introducing value-based concepts. Indeed, their participation has been boosted by the EU since the year 2000, when this shift of discourse began, and the academic world proved to be an influential actor in shaping principles of freedom and cultural diversity. In this sense, scholars' participation represented also a way to lend legitimacy to the eventual definitions provided.

This is the case, for instance, of the European Research Project, promoted by the Jean Monnet programme, and its study on "The role of intercultural dialogue for the development of a new (plural, democratic) citizenship". The project provided a wide range of surveys and academic contributions on various aspects of both the internal and external political and institutional dimensions of the intercultural dialogue, finally conceived as a fundamental component of social cohesion and human security. The project analysed the European redefinition of citizenship as a plural concept and an essential achievement in today's intercultural discourse.

The research has been of great value in the definition of the context in which the EU has undergone a significant change of discourse. Indeed, as it was previously mentioned, the 2000s brought about a series of challenges and opportunities for the EU, including the enlargement of European territories and, at the same time, the emergence of various forms of cultural, social and linguistic diversity. These events effectively explain how the EU has been induced to change its traditional paradigm, to embrace cultural diversity. Indeed, the very title of the volume "Intercultural Dialogue and Citizenship. Translating

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[87] Calligaro, O. (2014). From 'European cultural heritage' to 'cultural diversity'? The changing core values of European cultural policy. *Politique Européenne, 2014(3)*, 60-85.

Values into Action. A Common Project for Europeans and their Partners"[88], corroborates the discourse and policy link established between intercultural dialogue and citizenship, where intercultural dialogue has contributed to the formation of a sense of belonging extended to a larger community. Moreover, it highlighted the value-based approach in which intercultural dialogue is presented as a tool for the enactment of democratic values. In sum, belonging to the European community cannot solely be based on cultural membership, but rather on active participation in the universal value dialogue. Within this context, the literature highlights the significant achievement of 2005, when the Commission's definition of intercultural dialogue included references to both residents in the EU and European citizens more in general.

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[88] The volume was realized by a network of Jean Monnet Chaìrs and Centres of Excellence and European Community Studies Associations (ECSA) and co-financed by the European Commission and the Region of Veneto.

2.3 Final remarks

To conclude, this analysis attempts to examine the role of cultural policies within the European Union, focusing in particular on their historical impact on issues related to identity-building and community cohesion. Through this examination, culture, in its broader definition, has been presented as a tool of "display" and soft power, capable of embellishing and attracting both internally and externally. The rise of supranational organizations has redefined the significance of cultural policies in global affairs, extending their influence beyond traditional nation-state boundaries. In this context, the mid-20th century marked the beginning of a progressive decentralization of cultural matters within nations. Indeed, the new principles embedded in the emerging "European society" contributed to reshaping the concept of cultural heritage, allowing for the flourishing of a European identity.

However, the evolution of norms revealed some contradictions in the ideal of promoting and protecting a shared European Heritage, inadvertently fostering anti-European movements and more conservative tendencies. These movements perceived EU policies as attempts at Europeanization, rather than preservation of diversity. However, as previously outlined, attempting to frame this Europeanization process within a "nation template" appears inappropriate, given the EU's structural complexity which relies on a delicate equilibrium between inclusivity and unity.

The turn of the new millennium witnessed a shift in the EU identity discourse, transitioning from the abstract ideal of a common European Heritage to concrete actions promoting cultural diversity that found their application within the first EU funding programme. During this period, intercultural dialogue emerged as a key factor in redefining the core values of the EU's cultural policies. The Treaty of Lisbon, despite bringing forward the principles of democracy, the rule of law and social justice as universal values, rather than solely Europeans, additionally recognized cultural diversity as well as a principle of humankind.

Nevertheless, the ongoing academic debate concerning the absence of fixed definitions in the EU policy continues to exist. In this regard, I would like to propose that such ambiguity could be interpreted as well as a sign of the success of the EU in promoting cultural diversity, rather than merely a single European culture. Evidence of this can be found in the EU's attempts to promote a concept of flexible identity, in contrast with a rigidly

constructed top-down model. Instead, the current EU cultural policy acts as a dynamic process, allowing new identities to enter and support the single European one. Individual states support each other while simultaneously receiving support, thereby giving voice to their diversities.

Embracing Cultural diversity legitimizes the EU's association with multiple identities, which coexist in a common space defined by a transnational culture. According to David B. Willis a transnational culture can be described as:

"*a shared set of learned and transmitted social behaviours (symbols, values and experiences) that emerge from a context characterized by multiple participants, languages and ethnic backgrounds. Members of this transnational culture typically view themselves as belonging to a blend of cultures, considering themselves bicultural or multicultural rather than monocultural*"[89]

Thus, according to this perspective, the achievements in the formation of today's EU would be the outcome of a bottom-up building process driven by interconnections and cooperation among various actors participating in the "European project" at different levels. Within this landscape, under the influence of the Council of Europe, intercultural dialogue has served as a tool for promoting tolerance and understanding among EU communities. Furthermore, this shift in approach has proven necessary, if not essential, in addressing the challenges posed by the contemporary phenomena of globalization and migration, which have enhanced synergies and exchanges. Rather than developing a culturally specific European identity, this landscape has facilitated the flourishing of a transnational culture, supported by the EU's policies as a foundation for societal advancement.

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[89] Willis, D. B. (1992). Transnational culture and the role of language: An international school and its community. *The Journal of General Education, 41*, 73-95

3. Advancing a Transnational Culture: The Council of Europe

3.1 The Council of Europe: Pioneering Unity, Democracy, and Cultural Diversity

At the time when the process of constructing a political Europe was launched with the foundation of the Council of Europe in 1949, a new era, defined by the aftermath of war, was thought to have begun, with the conviction that the "*pursuit of peace based upon justice and international co-operation would be vital for the preservation of human society and civilisation*"[90]. Our European founding fathers[91], who experienced a world marked by two world wars, foresaw the possibility of a better future for the world. By founding the Council of Europe, they laid the groundwork for the development of a "better human society", able to promote the newly achieved "civilisation values" through generations and safeguard the common heritage.

The initial negotiations regarding the shape of this new international organisation began in 1948 in the Netherlands, at The Hague, during the Congress of Europe[92], where over seven hundred delegates from across Europe gathered to discuss the project. It was here that the organisation's primary goal was defined:

"to *achieve a greater unity between its members to safeguard and realise the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitate their economic and social progress*"[93].

In accordance, the organisation aimed to prevent potential threats, such as the outbreak of another war, with the hope of fostering unity and international cooperation among the Member States. While the Treaty of London, its original statute, was initially signed only

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[90] Council of Europe. (1949). *Statute of the Council of Europe.* London, 5.V.1949. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680306052

[91] Winston Churchill, Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schuman, Paul-Heri Spaak, Alcide de Gasperi, and Ernest Bevin

[92] Further information concerning the Congress of Europe can be found here: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168 06952c2

[93] Council of Europe. (1949). *Statute of the Council of Europe.* London, 5.V.1949. Chapter I, Article 1(a), Aim of the Council of Europe

by the ten founding countries, its membership currently extends to forty-six European states.

On the European stage, the Council of Europe stands as the oldest intergovernmental organisation bringing together the largest number of European countries. Along its history, the Council has devised more than 160 international agreements, treaties and conventions, which have favoured international diplomacy among various European states in common concerns[94]. Although it operates independently from the European Union, the two entities collaborate in specific areas with the common goal of protecting human rights and parliamentary democracy.

Indeed, in the "Purposes and Principles of co-operation" of the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union[95]" signed in 2007, both organisations outlined their commitment to developing their relationship across various areas of common interest. The document explicitly states:

"The Council of Europe and European Union will develop their relationship in all areas of common interest, in particular the promotion and protection of pluralistic democracy, the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, political and legal co-operation, social cohesion and cultural interchange (…)"[96].

These fundamental principles are central to the Council of Europe's mission. Bringing together governments from across Europe and beyond and setting minimum legal standards in various sectors, are the policy tools employed to achieve such goals. For instance, one of its key roles is to assess the implementation of these standards by the Member States and offer technical assistance to facilitate compliance, often in collaboration with the European Union.

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[94] Further information concerning the history of the Council of Europe can be found here: https://www.britannica.com/topic/Council-of-Europe

[95] Further information can be found here: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices

[96] Council of Europe. (2007). *Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union on Cooperation: Purposes and Principles of Cooperation*, 9. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680597b32

Similarly, the EU embraces these shared values, recognising them as fundamental elements of its political and economic integration process. Since the EU's foundation, the Council has played a pivotal role in providing guidance and assistance within the EU framework. Additionally, the EU recognises it as a leading force in maintaining equilibrium and exerting influence on the global stage, championing principles of democracy and human rights. Therefore, the EU frequently incorporates the Council's standards when formulating legal instruments and agreements applicable to its twenty-seven Member States. It also regularly relies on the Council of Europe's criteria and monitoring mechanism in its relations with neighbouring countries, many of which are also Council of Europe's members.
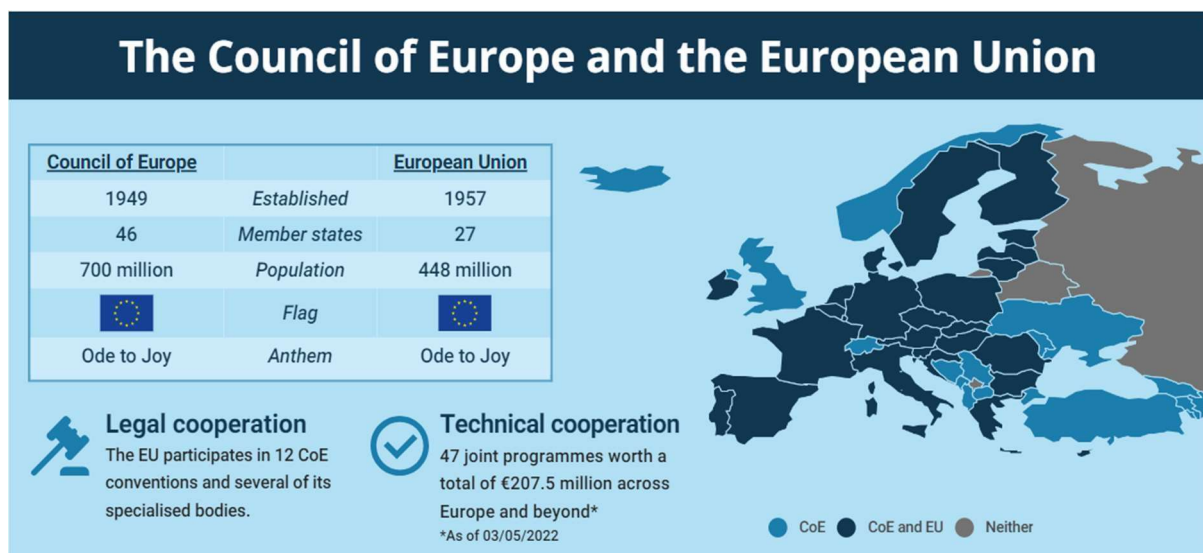
Figure 1: The Council of Europe and the European Union: different roles, shared values[97]

Figure 1 presents a comparative analysis of the COE's official website between the two organisations. The map illustrates the geographical territories covered by both the COE and EU, highlighting the possibility for some countries to hold memberships in both organisations or, in some cases, to be members of only one. Typically, states aspiring to join the EU must first become members of the COE. As a result, the Council's population currently reaches approximately 700 million, compared to the EU's 448 million. Furthermore, the image underscores the COE's historical significance in initiating the 1949 European project of constructing a unified space grounded in human rights and democracy. This relates to the EU's subsequent establishment in 1957, which later

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[97] Source: COE official website https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/european-union

broadened its focus to include social and cultural dimensions alongside the political and economic aspects.

Finally, this shared commitment is evident in the active engagement of both legal and technical affairs. For instance, since 1957, the EU has participated in twelve conventions[98] released by the COE and currently cooperates with several specialised bodies within the Council. One example is the European Institute of Cultural Routes, an independent department of the Council, which today represents the technical agency of the "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe"[99] programme and engages in various activities in cooperation with the EU. The formal endorsement has been accompanied by actual support: the EU has demonstrated its commitment by launching forty-seven collaborative programmes across Europe and beyond, worth a total of €207.5 million, aligned with COE's recent objectives of fostering transnational activities through intercultural dialogue tools[100]. Among these, the "Creative Europe Programme", launched in 2021 with a budget worth €2.44 billion to enhance the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors while reinforcing European cultural, linguistic and heritage diversity[101].

The convergence of efforts between the COE and the EU in such domains has to be traced back to the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007, which significantly broadened the European Union's scope of activities to encompass many fields where the Council of Europe has already gained significant experience and expertise. Specifically, as discussed in the previous chapter, the Treaty acknowledges the principles of democracy, the rule of law, and social justice as universal values, rather than exclusively European. Moreover, in line with the COE's core values, it recognises cultural diversity as a principle of humanity and, thus, its

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[98] Further information concerning the Treaties ratified and/or signed by the European Union can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/by-non-member-states-of-the-coe-

[99] Further information concerning the programme can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes

[100] Further information can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/european-union

[101] Further information concerning the programme "Creative Europe" can be found here: https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/about-the-creative-europe-programme

commitment to respecting and preserving "cultural, religious and human rights diversity[102]".

The Treaty of Lisbon has prompted increased cooperation in protecting diversities and encouraging dialogue between cultures in Europe, in order to ensure respect for human rights and better mutual understanding. This has also been exemplified in the "Memorandum of Understanding" of 2007, which states:

"*The Council of Europe and the European Union will cooperate in order to develop intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity with a view to promoting respect for human rights and mutual understanding among cultures in Europe. This dialogue is an important element in the fight against all forms of discrimination, racism and xenophobia.*"[103]

However, the most significant treaty in matters of human rights remains the "European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms"[104]. This Treaty was signed one year after the COE's foundation, in 1950 and since then it has been internationally appealed to for the protection of individuals from any human rights violation. The Convention entered into force on September 3rd, 1953, and was adopted in the same year by the EU. Nowadays, this Convention is recognised as one of the most significant agreements underpinning European democracy. It sets out the fundamental rules and principles concerning human rights and fundamental freedom to be respected and promoted at a European level. Indeed, it has been defined as the "constitutional instrument of European public order in the field of human rights*"[105]*. Furthermore, the principles outlined in the Convention protect rights crucial for cultural development and heritage protection as well. These rights are exemplified in the following words:

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[102] Further information concerning the Treaty of Lisbon can be found here: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/5/the-treaty-of-lisbon

[103] Council of Europe. (2007). *Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and the European Union on Cooperation: Intercultural Dialogue and Cultural Diversity*, 33. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168 0597b32

[104] Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Available at https://www.echr.coe.int/documents/d/echr/convention_ENG

[105] Council of Europe. (1950). *European Treaty Series - No. 5: Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by Protocols No. 11 and 14.* Rome, 4.XI.1950. Retrieved from https://www.eods.eu/library/CoE_European%20Convention%20for%20the%20Protection

"right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, freedom of expression, right to study, freedom of assembly and association, prohibition of discrimination in exercising the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Convention[106]".

The Convention is overseen by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)[107], one of the committees of experts established by the Council of Europe over the years. Established in 1959 and headquartered in Strasbourg, it is a permanent judicial institution, tasked with overseeing the enforcement of the Convention across the Member States. The ECHR collaborates closely with two other main institutions of the COE: the Commissioner for Human Rights and the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities. The former acts as a guardian and adviser, promoting awareness and respect of human rights in Member States through diplomatic missions, while the latter serves as an advisory body aimed at strengthening local and regional democracy across the Council's Member States.

The two decision-making bodies of the COE are the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly. Both play integral roles in the Council's statuary procedures. The Committee of Ministers is composed of the Foreign Affairs Ministers of the Member States, convenes in Strasburg and is responsible for determining the Council's policies. Moreover, it approves the Council's budget and programme of activities. On the other hand, the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) acts as an advisory panel, consisting of 324 parliamentarians from the forty-six Member States. Among its duties, the Assembly elects the Secretary-General, the Commissioner for Human Rights, and the judges of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). Its committees play a fundamental role in providing a democratic platform for debate and examining current issues.

A Member State's adherence to the Council depends on the verdict of the Committee of Ministers and the Parliamentary Assembly, which assess the state's compliance with COE's fundamental principles and its participation in the programmes and treaties enacted by the Council. However, even though international treaties are commonly opened first to the Member States of the COE, many of them are also opened to countries that do not belong to the Council or the EU, but have been involved in the drafting of the

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[106] Chyc, A. (2021). The Council of Europe Activity for Culture. *Studia Iuridica Lublinensia,* 30, 81

[107] Merrills, J. G. (2024, May 2). European Court of Human Rights. *Encyclopedia Britannica.* Retrieved from https://www.britannica.com/topic/European-Court-of-Human-Rights

agreement due to their interest in the matter or in their willingness to adhere to the European project. In such cases, the effectiveness of the treaty depends on the number of signatures and ratifications obtained from the countries.

Facilitating the participation of non-member states in the activities or treaties of the COE is one of the several strategies employed to promote international cohesion. This approach enables non-member-states to benefit as well from the potential advantages offered by the framework established by these agreements. Furthermore, it aligns with COE's objective of protecting human rights and democracy on a global scale, transcending the European context.

In this regard, the COE has attempted to advance this objective, pursuing policies that shape the global scenario through the perspective of intercultural dialogue. The Council identifies this approach as a more suitable tool for addressing the changes occurring in our contemporary societies. The "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" has been the inceptor tool of this new tendency, providing innovative strategies and directions based on interculturality. The document acknowledges that even though cultural diversity is not a new phenomenon, the new millennium has increased the necessity of clarifying the management of diversity, arising from the global events of immigration and cultural globalisation. These two trends have contributed to an increase in cultural diversification, accelerating interconnections and weakening national cultural boundaries in favour of a transnational environment. In this context, the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" of COE remarks the utmost necessity for Member States to adopt an approach based on open-mindedness, pluralism and tolerance. This sentiment has been echoed also by the European Court of Human Rights, which defined the need for an approach centred on:

"*the genuine recognition of, and respect for, diversity and the dynamics of cultural traditions, ethnic and cultural identities, religious beliefs, artistic, literary and socio-economic ideas and concepts*[108]".

In conclusion, in line with the values highlighted by the European Court of Human Rights, the COE has faithfully pursued peace and principles of human rights as its central goal for

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[108] Council of Europe. (2007). *Consultation document: Preparing the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/Source/Consultation_document_EN.pdf

the sustenance and flourishing of human society since its foundation. Accordingly, its administrative structure, systems of cooperation and activities are intended to advance the objective of unity in diversity, not only extending to its Member States but also transcending geographical boundaries.

3.2 Transnational social space: rethinking borders and boundaries

As previously outlined, cultural diversity is an ongoing process occurring in societies, influenced by the constant movement of people, the reshaping of political borders, and technological advancements. Today, rapid technological progress and enhanced mobility have further facilitated the possibility of cultural exchanges, extending beyond physical spaces to include the virtual realm, driven by the digital revolution. This scenario has triggered a reconsideration of the traditional concepts of "distance" and "timeframe", which have been stretched to an unprecedented extent. In this regard, different sociological theories have envisioned a new idea of space, transcending the conventional ideas of borders. Specifically, the traditional notion of space as merely "geographical" is changing and adapting to the realities of globalisation and immigration in relation to the idea of "transnationality". At the bedrock of this theory lies a further reconsideration of the relationship between the concept of "geographic space" and "social space", with the latter defined by the academic Ludger Pries as the "dense and durable configurations of social practices, systems of symbols and artefacts"[109].

Throughout history, the interaction between these two realms has been pivotal in shaping and structuring societies, particularly in terms of their power dynamics. Indeed, any reference or concept related to "space" is the outcome of human reflection. Therefore, any spatial delineation, such as frontiers and borders has been a human-made construct, conventionally perceived as the delimitation of a specific geographic area. This conceptual framework has been useful in societal organisations defining daily activities and systems of interaction. Consequently, people's daily exchanges contribute to the formation and maintenance of these boundaries, which in turn influence people's social behaviour and identity, shaping what Ludger Pries has defined as "social space".

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[109] Pries, L. (Ed.). (2001). *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century.* London: Routledge.

Furthermore, conflicts often arise from the mismatch between the "social space" and the "geographic space". This occurs particularly when a singular social dimension is confined within a geographic area, determined by specific social factors such as political ideology, ethnic identity, and religion, without considering other social dimensions. This frame arises from the longstanding practice of perceiving social realities as fragmented units, where distinct cultural and political entities are confined within defined geographic boundaries. The origins of this phenomenon can be traced back to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648[110], which marked the end of centuries of political and religious conflicts in Europe, finally establishing the principle of national sovereignty. The treaty identified territories as the primary geographic units able to regulate the "social space" in a legitimate and public manner. This shift did not eliminate wars or conflicts between sovereign empires but redirected them towards territorial boundaries. However, from the Peace of Westphalia, the principle of territorial sovereignty has not been challenged anymore. It is in this context that the idea of nation-states began to take shape, with the alignment of the geographical and socio-political space under the principle of territorial sovereignty.

According to the literature, this order progressively developed into the idea of a "nation-state container", which Foucault describes as "the mutual embeddedness of geographic and social space". Accordingly:

"*in one geographic space (state) exists one single social space (nation), and each social space (nation) has and needs just one geographic space (the state)*[111]*.*"

According to Foucault, this would be the main rationale behind the idea of nation-state building, which has been consequently propagated throughout the following centuries. Indeed, the order has never been put into question until the after-war period and the subsequent appearance of the first international organisations, through the recognition of new human rights. Yet, despite the acknowledgement of diversities in cultures,

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[110] The Peace of Westphalia also reaffirmed the precepts outlined in the Religious Peace of Augsburg of 1555, summarized by the phrase: *cuius regio, eius religio* (meaning literally "whose realm, his religion"), which mandated that subjects must adhere to the religion of their ruler. Further information can be found here: Pries, L. (Ed.). (2001). *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century.* London: Routledge.

[111] Crampton, J. (2007). *Space, Knowledge, Power: Foucault and Geography.*

ethnicities and languages, the traditional perception of the nation-state (i.e., that of a container – the existence of one social reality in one geographic space) has persisted over time.

This pattern endured throughout history and has inevitably influenced today's perception and understanding of societal relations and global dynamics. However, the emergence in the last decade of violent ethnic conflicts, such as the one occurring in the Middle East, has dramatically challenged it. In particular, the mixture of different ethnic groups and social spaces embedded in the nation-state revealed once again itself in the face of the "imagined community". Within this context, the idea of the "imagined community" initiated by Anderson[112] became more vivid, showcasing the fact that nation-states are more likely to be communities of diverse ethnic groups and social spaces. Craig Calhoun has also observed that national societies have been imagined as "bounded, integral wholes with distinctive identities, cultures and institutions"[113]. Accordingly, national cultures would attract people "presumed to share common things while excluding those who are believed to lack any mutual connections"[114]. This idea would explain the inherent resistance towards both outsiders and diverse populations, often marginalized, in order to not compromise the "clarity" of the imagined community. The national community seeks to differentiate itself from the outsider, to keep its distinctiveness intact by protecting its borders and asserting its sovereignty. Therefore, belonging to the national community would mean being part of a bounded culture. This perspective recognises the nation-state as inherently prone to anxiety about the "imagined" implication of diversity and complexity, which are viewed as threats to cohesion and unity. Moreover, difference becomes a threat because it is associated with potential causes of fragmentation. Following this line of thought, the national paradigm would privilege cultural homogeneity, remaining constantly concerned about the perceived risks posed by cultural diversity.

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[112] Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism.* New York: Verso.

[113] Calhoun, C. (1999). "Nationalism, Political Community and the Representation of Society: Or, Why Feeling at Home is not a Substitute for Public Space." *European Journal of Social Theory,* 2(2), 217–231.

[114] Verdery, K. (1993). "Whither 'nation' and 'nationalism'?" *Daedalus,* 122(3), 37–46.

However, this latter criticism should not be brought to its extremes, suggesting that contemporary national governments universally adhere to this rationale in their actions and legislation. In reality, in the time of the European nation-states, nearly all governments – from both the West and the East – have naturally responded to the needs and demands of their diverse populations in various ways and with varying degrees of urgency. Over time, diverse legal and constitutional measures have been implemented to acknowledge the reality of cultural diversity. Still, it is noteworthy to point out that, despite the European government's inclinations to promptly respond to this phenomenon, the underlying framework of the national container persists. This enduring structure, deeply rooted in the history of the nations, remains a powerful way of representing and organising social reality. Consequently, there is a tendency to classify diversity more as an issue that has to be managed, rather than a resource to be wisely incorporated into the national context. Nevertheless, this approach has recently demonstrated its ineffectiveness. In an era characterised by global flows and expansions of diversities, misguided attempts at integration have frequently led to segregation and clashes.

In sum, for a long time, the social space of a nation – in terms of configurations of social practices, artefacts and systems of symbols – was thought to necessarily coincide with the geographic space of the state. However, nowadays it is necessary to endorse a new perspective. These two entities must be considered independently and not inherently inclusive of one another. To further clarify: a state is not solely defined by the social behaviour and mental perceptions of its citizens within a given geographic boundary (i.e., container). Rather, the social space must be understood as a composition of social behaviours, symbolic systems, and physical artefacts, interconnected with many other different spatial dimensions. This implies that different social spaces can extend across multiple geographic areas, and conversely, multiple social spaces can exist within a single geographic area.

As a result, today, the idea of constructing "bounded communities" to preserve origins and cultures seems increasingly difficult, if not nearly impossible, given the recent permeability of boundaries in the international landscape. This paradigm has also been challenged by globalisation and migratory movements, which have enhanced social and cultural exchanges among countries. Moreover, as discussed previously in Chapter Two, both "below" movements and "top-down" initiatives challenge the role of the "container

nation-state" in modern society. Specifically, at the national level, there is a progressive strengthening of local and micro-regional authorities, while at the European and international level, networks and communities are emerging, bound together by the common principles of unity in diversity.

This complex landscape has contributed to a natural shift in space's perception, linked it to a transnational perspective, capable of addressing more effectively contemporary needs. The sociologist Kevin Robins has depicted this shift as the evolution of public perception into a "Transnational social space." Accordingly, he has proposed the following definition to highlight the features of this transition:

"*We understand transnational social spaces as configurations of social practices, artefacts and symbol systems that span different geographic spaces, without constituting a new "deterritorialized" nation-state or being the prolongation of one of these nation-states*[115]."

Thus, the creation of a Transnational social space, according to the sociologist, must not be confused with the development of a new independent state entity or the extensions of existing states. Rather, it must be considered as the configuration of various social dimensions spanning across different geographic levels. Those spaces cannot be adequately defined solely in terms of, or by reference to nation-states, thereby referring to single countries. Instead, transnational social spaces are characterized by "cultural porosity and fluidity"[116], which manifest across unbounded spaces. For instance, the academic Ludger Pries has defined them as "multipolar geographic orientation, rather than one limited exclusively to a single coherent geographic space[117]". Furthermore, he underscored how these spaces would have been genuinely created thanks to all those forms of connections and interactions, arising from the flow of people and globalisation processes, which have surpassed the traditional frame of the national "container".

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[115] Robins, K. (2007). Transnational Cultural Policy and European Cosmopolitanism. *Cultural Politics: An International Journal,* 3, 147-174

[116] Wimmer, A., & Glick Schiller, N. (2002). "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences." *Global Networks,* 2(4), 301–334.

[117] Wimmer, A. (2001). "The Approach of Transnational Spaces: Responding to New Configurations of the Social and the Spatial." In L. Pries (Ed.), *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century,* pp. 3–33. London: Routledge.

Therefore, their transnational dimension would be determined by the variety of cultural, social and economic influences deriving from the interconnections with different parts of the world. In sum, within this framework, acknowledging the existence of a Transnational social space means reframing the concept of "space" and "diversity" under the lenses of transnationalism.

The globalisation discourse that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s has contributed to defining this phenomenon – the natural shift in perception towards a Transnational social space – as a direct outcome of globalisation's impacts. It introduced a dynamic perspective on the evolving spatial dimension while departing from the traditional static notion of space. Furthermore, it emphasized that understanding the globalisation process first and foremost entails analyzing the new phenomenon from a social and cultural viewpoint. In line with this, Waters defined globalisation as:

"*a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding*[118]."

Accordingly, globalization is to be intended as a social process, contributing to the reframing of the notion of space into "social spaces". Moreover, some of its effects, such as the advancement of communication technology, have facilitated a growing awareness among people of this transformation. Specifically, people recognize that geographic space is becoming less significant in structuring social and cultural relations due to their transnational nature.

Finally, several scholars maintained that Transnational Social Spaces result from two effects of globalisation: "globalisation as the spatial widening of social relations" and "globalisation as the annihilation of space"[119].

The former, exemplified by Anthony Giddens[120], describes globalisation as the intensification of worldwide social connections, where events in distant locations influence local occurrences and vice versa. Accordingly, globalisation is also a process

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[118] Waters, M. (1995). *Globalization.* London/New York: Routledge. (1995, p. 3)

[119] Pries, L. (Ed.). (2001). *New Transnational Social Spaces: International Migration and Transnational Companies in the Early Twenty-First Century.* London: Routledge.

[120] Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity Press, p.64

where social connections between distant places become stronger. Giddens sees it as a continuous evolution throughout human history, where social relations have expanded spatially, starting from small primitive groups to modern nation-states, extending until the development of the european and global communities. Globalisation then would be understood as the expansion of social relations across different spaces. In contrast to this theory, the thesis of the annihilation of space would, instead, define the process of globalisation as the reduction or vanishing of spatial boundaries concerning social connections. And indeed, according to Harvey[121], the widening of social connections has compressed our spatial and temporal world.

These two different perspectives exemplify how globalisation processes have further contributed to the authentic delineation of Transnational Social Spaces. They underscore the complexity of globalisation's impact on spatial dynamics and social relations. Accordingly, these spatial dynamics have blurred spaces into flows, thereby reducing the spatial constraints on social relations – namely the configurations of social practices, artefacts and system of symbols – making them less confined compared to societies in the past.

3.3 Redefining diversity through intercultural dialogue

The dissolution of traditional boundaries of "social spaces" into flows made clear the necessity to redefine the current perception of "diversity" and effectively manage its integration into spaces, reflecting its natural expansion across borders. The new conceptual frame introduced by the notion of transnationalism has played a fundamental role in addressing the issue. In particular, it has initially helped in reframing the differences and complexities inherent in European culture, moving beyond the simplistic division between "minority" and "majority" proposed by the general literature. In this regard, throughout the 20th century, two main approaches concerning the management of cultural diversities have been influential in Western societies, respectively assimilationism and multiculturalism.

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[121] Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity.* Oxford: Blackwell, p. 240.

The former has been one of the earliest methods implemented to manage plural societies. The scholar Parekh[122] has defined the assimilationism structure as mainly based on a relationship of power, where the dominant or hegemonic culture absorbs the minority one, leading to the marginalisation and isolation of those who persist in keeping their cultural values of origin. Multiculturalism has instead emerged as a response to the repeated failures of the assimilationist model, and, unlike this latter one, it is based on the recognition and respect of cultural differences. Specifically, the theory suggests that "minorities" should maintain their distinctiveness and limit interaction with others to preserve their purity and richness. Nevertheless, this approach tends to "overemphasise" cultural differences, valuing cultural elements simply for their existence, regardless of their interaction with other cultures. As a result, this kind of relationship has accentuated the divide among cultural groups, creating a clear division between "majorities" and "minorities". Furthermore, this approach has often led to clashes and conflicts, sometimes resulting in the resurgence of the assimilationist model in contrast with the principles of multiculturalism.

In response to these challenges, the COE advanced its first "intercultural proposals", with the aim of defining a more suitable approach to human diversity. The idea was to develop a new discourse based on the acknowledgement and respect of the value of cultural expressions while recognizing that social richness emerges from interactions among people. Indeed, soon after its establishment in 1949, several references to cultural diversity began to appear in the COE's documents. One of the earliest examples is the "European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms", which was signed almost two years after COE's foundation. This convention is significant because of its roots in the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights[123]", which was created in response to the racial atrocities committed during the two World Wars. Indeed, both conventions share the common aim to recognize the universal value of human dignity in contrast with the past beliefs of racial superiority. In particular, Articles 9 and 10 of the "European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms" clearly assert that everyone possesses fundamental freedoms, including the right to

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[122] Parekh, B. (2006). *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political Theory.* Basingstoke: Palgrave.

[123] United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* Paris: United Nations. Retrieved from https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

choose and change their thoughts, conscience, and religion, as well as the right to express these freedoms publicly or privately[124]. These two Articles are significant as they were the first legal instruments issued by the Council on the discourse of diversity, wherein the freedoms mentioned above form the bedrock of diversity enrichment. Moreover, they represent an initial step by the COE towards fostering an intercultural dialogue discourse driven by transnational approaches.

The "European Cultural Convention"[125], enacted by the COE in 1954, represents another meaningful reference in this direction. This Convention was aimed at fostering cultural understanding among its Member States while also safeguarding, studying, and promoting their respective cultural elements. The preamble of the Convention defines its goal, through the following words:

"*designed to foster among the nationals of all members, and of such other European States as may accede thereto, the study of the languages, history and civilisation of the others and of the civilisation which is common to them all*[126]".

Fostering cultural interchange thus appears to be a respectful step forward for cultural diversity. However, the Convention was solely endorsed by its signatory states predominantly European nations, as the convention itself was initially opened to Member States only. Article 9 (4) exemplifies this by stipulating that only European states can be invited to participate in the cultural exchange facilitated by the convention:

"*The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe may decide, by a unanimous vote, to invite, upon such terms and conditions as it deems appropriate, any European State which is not a member of the Council to accede to the present Convention*[127]".

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[124] Council of Europe. (1950). *Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (including all Protocols),* ETS No.: 005. Council of Europe, London. Section I, Article 9, Freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

[125] Council of Europe. (1954). *European Cultural Convention,* CETS No.: 018. Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/european-cultural-convention

[126] Council of Europe. (1954). *European Cultural Convention,* CETS No.: 018. Council of Europe. Preamble of the Convention.

[127] Council of Europe. (1954). *European Cultural Convention,* CETS No.: 018. Council of Europe. Article 9 (4)

According to Juan Luis Fuentes[128], this initial approach failed to fully encompass the inherent richness of cultural diversity, reflecting instead a Euro-nationalist strategy. Moreover, several scholars argue that due to its limitation to COE's Member States, the Convention would only acknowledge some European cultures, without considering the diverse cultural landscape existing in the whole of European societies.

Moving forward to the 1970s, the discourse of managing diversity tended to fall once again into the assimilationist approach, despite the COE efforts. An example of this is the "European Social Charter"[129], a treaty ensuring fundamental economic and social rights and working as a complement to the European Convention on Human Rights, which primarily focuses on civil and political rights. Notably, the assimilationist influence seems evident in the Charter's additional measures, which mandate a commitment from the parties to assist immigrants and their families in learning the language of their host country, while promoting the learning of their mother tongue only "as far as practicable". This approach promoted as its main goal the integration of minorities into the dominant culture, rather than focusing on the preservation of their cultural identities. Furthermore, the Convention lacks explicit language in support of cultural diversity and the intergenerational transmission of minority cultural traditions.

Another example often considered one of the most representative of the assimilationist model, is the "European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers"[130] adopted in 1977. This Convention proposed several actions aimed at encouraging newcomers to adopt the cultural norms prevailing in the host country. For instance, Articles 6 (1) and 6 (2) of the Convention recommended previously informing migrants about the living conditions present in the host country, specifically about, "the cultural and religious conditions in the receiving State", to enable them to make informed decisions[131]. While this may appear like a strategy aimed at facilitating integration, it inadvertently

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[128] Fuentes, J. (2016). Cultural diversity on the Council of Europe documents: The role of education and the intercultural dialogue. *Policy Futures in Education,* 14

[129] Council of Europe. (1961). *European Social Charter,* ETS No.: 163. Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-social-charter

[130] Council of Europe. (1977). *European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers,* ETS No.: 093. Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680077323

[131] Council of Europe. (1977). *European Convention on the Legal Status of Migrant Workers,* ETS No.: 093. Council of Europe. Chapter II, Article 6 (1), Information

strengthened assimilation by suppressing the development of migrants' cultures and increasing existing tensions.

As a result, many of the assimilationist policies implemented in Europe during the 1970s acted more as dividers than facilitators, often causing harm and, in some cases, undermining principles of human dignity. According to scholar Garcia Garrido[132], this approach violates fundamental human rights by assuming that individuals are incapable of freely choosing their cultural affiliations. Consequently, despite eventually gaining citizenship, within this framework, migrants are labelled as "migrants" or "foreigners" regardless. In sum, this approach perpetuates marginalisation and limits interactions to economic matters, reducing migrant workers to mere tools rather than recognising their intrinsic worth as individuals.

However, this general trend, indirectly influenced by the Council's official declaration, saw a decline by the end of the twentieth century. This shift is particularly evident in the introduction of the "European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages"[133], which now recognises the significance of linguistic diversity, as an opportunity for society's cultural richness. Accordingly, the Charter explicitly states that the Parties shall base their policies and legislation on the principle of "the recognition of the regional or minority languages as an expression of cultural wealth"[134]. Furthermore, the Charter is the first official document released by the COE introducing the concept of "interculturalism". Indeed, as declared in the Preamble of the Treaty, the signatory Member States are committed to:

"Stressing the value of interculturalism and multilingualism and considering that the protection and encouragement of regional or minority languages should not be to the detriment of the official languages and the need to learn them."

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[132] García Garrido, J. L. (2004). Educación intercultural en Europa: Un estudio comparado [Intercultural education in Europe: A comparative study]. In A. Medina & I. Rodríguez (Eds.), *Interculturalidad y formación del profesorado.* Madrid: Pearson, pp. 13–26.

[133] Council of Europe. (1992). *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,* ETS No.: 148. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680695175

[134]Council of Europe. (1992). *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages,* ETS No.: 148. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Part II – Objectives and principles pursued in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 1 – Article 7 Objectives and Principles 1 (a).

Even though the term "interculturalism" is only present in the treaty's Preamble, without any thorough explanation within the document, the change in strategy from imposing majority cultures to greater recognition of the value of cultural expression seems evident[135]. Furthermore, the increasing number of treaties addressing cultural diversity within the COE, in the following years, reflects the growing awareness European societies have paid to cultural diversity over these years. This trend culminated in 1995 with the adoption of the "Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities"[136], which can be considered a representative document of the COE's new intercultural approach. The preamble of the Convention encapsulates this shift with the following statement:

"a pluralist and genuinely democratic society should not only respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity.[137]*"*

This Convention explicitly recognizes the existence of a pluralist society and also acknowledges the failure of social assimilationism, which has primarily resulted in the discrimination and segregation of minority cultures. It clearly expresses the need for our society, as a democracy, to not only recognize the social wealth stemming from diversity but also be committed to creating adequate conditions for the flourishing and development of such diversity. According to critics, some scholars perceive traces of the multiculturalism approach in this Convention, indicating a tentative effort to blend different cultures into one. However, the treaty does not explicitly promote the merging and disappearance of the distinctions among communities but rather fosters the safeguarding and promotion of cultural minorities. Additionally, the significance of this document lies in the fact that nearly all Member States of the COE have ratified the Convention, totalling 39 adherences. Presently, only Andorra, Monaco, France and

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[135] Fuentes, J. (2016). Cultural diversity on the Council of Europe documents: The role of education and the intercultural dialogue. *Policy Futures in Education,* 14.

[136] Council of Europe. (1995). *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,* CETS No.: 157. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/168007cdac

[137] Council of Europe. (1995). *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities,* CETS No.: 157. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Preamble of the Convention.

Turkey have yet to ratify the Convention, as they perceive it to be incongruent with their principles of national identity[138].

As the new millennium dawned, the COE organized a series of conferences and meetings aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the role of intercultural dialogue in managing cultural disparities. Subsequently, the COE's Conference of European Ministers responsible for local and regional governments in Helsinki in 2002[139] emphasized how intercultural dialogue could serve as an effective tool for achieving social cohesion. The following year, the outcomes of the conference led to the adoption of the "Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention"[140]. This treaty, also known as the Opatija Declaration, defined intercultural dialogue as a crucial mechanism for promoting social cohesion and preventing conflicts. Furthermore, the Declaration outlined it as a fundamental instrument for enhancing cultural participation in increasingly globalized and transnational societies.

One of the key aspects highlighted by the COE in this new model of intercultural dialogue has been enhancing dialogue among all members of societies. For instance, improving public participation has been the central goal of the "Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage Society"[141] adopted in 2005. This latter, also known as the Faro Convention, explicitly considers all members of societies as active participants in defining a common Cultural Heritage. Article 7 of the Convention urges Member States to carefully consider the ethics and the methods used to present cultural heritage to the public, ensuring that diversity is presented respectfully. This principle finds expression in the Convention through the following statement: "encourages reflection on the ethics and methods of representation of the cultural heritage, as well as respect for diversity of

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[138] Further information can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/minorities/etats-partie

[139] Council of Europe. (2002). *Declaration of Helsinki, 7th Conference of Ministers Responsible for Migration Affairs.* Helsinki: Council of Europe. Retrieved from

https://www.coe.int/t/dg3/migration/archives/Ministerial_Conferences/7th%20Conference_Helsinki

[140] Council of Europe. (2003). *Opatija Declaration - Declaration on Intercultural Dialogue and Conflict Prevention, Conference of the European Ministers Responsible for Cultural Affairs.* Opatija: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://ericarts-institute.org/web/files/131/en/OpatijaDeclaration.pdf

[141] Council of Europe. (2005). *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society,* CETS No.: 199. Faro: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680083746

interpretations"[142]. Furthermore, Article 4 establishes the right of individuals, both individually and collectively, to benefit from cultural heritage and contribute to its enrichment, being their right to be involved and participate in it. Heritage is thus framed within the context of individual rights, based on human rights and liberties, serving both as a source and resource for the exercise of freedoms[143].

In addition, the Faro Convention recognizes the human being as the foundation of cultural diversity, from which the concept of "Common Heritage of Europe" arises. This has been exemplified in Article 3 of the Convention through the following words:

"*The Common Heritage of Europe originates from the ideals, principles and values, derived from the experience gained through progress and past conflicts, which foster the development of a peaceful and stable society, founded on respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.*[144]"

Thus, the "Common Heritage of Europe" is defined as a dynamic process that evolves and adapts its meaning and importance based on the changing nature of societies and their interactions with the environment. In line with the Faro Convention, cultural heritage embodies continuously evolving values, beliefs, knowledge, and traditions that today are rooted in the universal principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. Consequently, cultural heritage can be viewed as a democratic tool encompassing universal values, and its protection and promotion are vital for human progress and the enhancement of the quality of life. Accordingly, Article 1 underscores that: "the conservation of cultural heritage and its sustainable use have human development and quality of life as their goal"[145].

As outlines above, the dynamic nature of culture reflects the changes and interactions between spaces and social dynamics. This explains the evolution of Transnational culture

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[142] Council of Europe. (2005). *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society,* CETS No.: 199. Faro: Council of Europe. Section II, Article 7, Cultural heritage and dialogue

[143] Council of Europe. (2015). *Cultural Routes Management: From Theory to Practice - Step-by-step Guide to the Council of Europe Cultural Routes.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing

[144] Council of Europe. (2005). *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society,* CETS No.: 199. Faro: Council of Europe. Section I, Article 3, The Common Heritage of Europe

[145] Council of Europe. (2005). *Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society,* CETS No.: 199. Faro: Council of Europe. Section I, Article 1, Aims of the Convention

in our contemporary society. Indeed, its flourishing originates from the natural shift undergone in space perception, transitioning from the traditional idea of "geographic space" to a Transnational social space. A Transnational culture has its bedrock in cultural diversification and is shaped by the modern notion of space, in line with the principles of globalization where boundaries have become porous and less capable of containing "transnational" challenges. The continuous movements and migrations of people disseminate cultures and languages across continents, contributing to the determination of a Transnational Culture. Recalling the words of David B. Willis[146], a Transnational Culture transcends boundaries and involves participants from different languages, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds in its creation process. Additionally, it can be defined as a shared pattern of socialisation that includes learned and transmitted symbols, values, and experiences, often stemming from interactions among individuals with diverse cultural identities.

Promoting a Transnational Culture perfectly aligns with the COE foundational principles of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. Indeed, this conception of culture is characterized primarily by universal values rather than individual ones, due to its "unconventional" extension to everybody, without any distinction. Thus, according to the Council's "Declaration on Cultural Diversity", diversities can no longer be effectively addressed solely at the national level but must be recognized as a worldwide dominant characteristic and a fundamental political objective in the European construction process[147]. Article 3 of the Convention, emphasizes the importance of "Sustaining and Enabling Cultural Diversity":

"Member states are urged to pay particular attention to the need to sustain and promote cultural diversity, in line with the relevant Council of Europe instruments, in other international fora where they might be called on to undertake commitments which might prejudice these instruments.[148]"

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[146] Willis, D. B. (1992). Transnational culture and the role of language: An international school and its community. *The Journal of General Education, 41*, 73–95

[147] Council of Europe. (2001). *Declaration on Cultural Diversity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/16804bfc0b

[148] Council of Europe. (2001). *Declaration on Cultural Diversity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Article 3 (3.2)

In the same way, the Convention states that the relevant bodies of the Council are tasked with identifying specific aspects of cultural policy that require special attention within the framework of the new global society. They are also expected to develop a list of measures that Member States can utilize to maintain and promote cultural diversity[149].

Against this backdrop, the official inception of this new democratic approach to diversity, defining 21st-century European societies, began with the launch of the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue"[150]. This document was presented by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs on behalf of the governments of all the forty-six Member States, maintaining that "only dialogue allows people to live unity in diversity". The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue stands as the first official document outlining directions and strategies to safeguard the freedom and well-being of all individuals while supporting the genuine embedment of cultural transnationalism. Under the terminology established by the COE, intercultural dialogue is thus defined:

"Intercultural dialogue is understood as an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It operates at all levels within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world.[151]"

From the very beginning, the document states how "diversity" is not a new phenomenon in the European continent. Indeed, "intra-continental migrations, redrawing of borders, colonialism and multinational empires"[152] are historical factors that continue to influence the continent's shaping. Consequently, diversity emerges as a constitutive aspect of all cultural orders and spaces. However, the advent of the new millennium raised interest in this phenomenon, driven by the revaluation of the concepts of space, time and culture.

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[149] Cultural Diversity Declaration: https://rm.coe.int/16804bfc0b

[150] Council of Europe. (2008). *White paper on intercultural dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white

[151] Council of Europe. (2008). *White paper on intercultural dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Introduction, 1.4, Key Terms

[152] Council of Europe. (2008). *White paper on intercultural dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Embracing cultural diversity, 2.1, Pluralism, tolerance and intercultural dialogue.

Accordingly, the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue" of the COE addresses this need by offering a new framework for interpreting contemporary challenges, providing a solution for both Member States and the international community in managing today's cultural diversity. In line with the "Declaration on Cultural Diversity", the COE's most notable contribution to the document is the proposal of five policy approaches to develop intercultural dialogue[153]. These approaches are grounded in the active cultural engagement of a diverse array of stakeholders, including public authorities, civil society associations and individuals.

Certainly, the primary contextual framework for the development of intercultural dialogue lies in establishing *democratic governance of cultural diversity.* Accordingly, this is the first policy approach established by the White Paper, which outlines several recommendations within. For instance, it remarks on the need for establishing a neutral legal framework, directing all legal and policy strategies towards eliminating discrimination in all its forms. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of consistent efforts to promote intercultural dialogue, suggesting the creation of an institution tasked with coordinating such endeavours through national plans. Additionally, it advocates for the active participation of civil society, including minority groups, in these efforts and it encourages public debate that respects cultural diversity. Moreover, it highly recommends the implementation of "positive measures" aimed at safeguarding the rights of marginalized groups and preventing any form of discrimination.

On the other hand, the second policy proposal focuses on *citizenship and democratic participation*. Here, the Council tries to face this complex issue by providing some recommendations based on existing Conventions and best practices. For instance, it underscores the positive outcomes obtained through the "Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at the Local Level"[154]. Specifically, the latter recognizes the active engagement of foreigners in the local community and public affairs as a key element for improving integration and social cohesion. Moreover, the document underlines how political participation goes beyond elections, involving human dignity

[153] Council of Europe. (2008). *White paper on intercultural dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Chapter 4, Five policy approaches to the promotion of intercultural dialogue

[154] Council of Europe. (1992). *Convention on the Participation of Foreigners in Public Life at Local Level,* CETS No.: 144. Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/168007bd26

and equality in participation and decision-making processes. This section demonstrates how inclusive policies by Member States, empowering all individuals, are indispensable for constructing resilient and inclusive societies.

The third policy approach is centred on t*eaching and learning intercultural competencies*. While the White Paper does not provide a clear definition of these competencies, it outlines a few suggestions. These include, for instance, recognizing the equal dignity of all individuals, fostering openness, curiosity, commitment to dialogue and cultivating a positive attitude towards both differences and similarities. Additionally, the document proposes recommendations for intercultural education, emphasizing the importance of promoting language learning thanks to its cultural richness and communicative utility. Furthermore, it underscores how learning both about one's own culture and the others through history lessons helps us better understand different cultures, promoting intercultural understanding.

Enhancing *Intercultural dialogue in international relations* is the fourth policy proposal. Its central focus is on fostering dialogue with citizens, societies, and cultures beyond the European context. Indeed, the richness inherent in diversity is the starting point for intercultural dialogue and should accordingly encompass the entire community. This approach must not rely exclusively on the traditional geographical criteria, but on the transnational ones as well. As Marìn Ibànez stated:

"Europe yes, but not only its twelve countries, but beyond that, open to north and east and in cooperation with all nations of the Earth. We care about the Europeans, but more about the citizens of the world"[155]*.*

Therefore, intercultural dialogue should be promoted at the international level in order to facilitate mutual understanding and the acceptance of a Transnational Culture. In this regard, the document highlights the significance of transfrontier links and systems of cooperation between Member States and other international organisations, such as the EU, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OCSE) and UNESCO, which play pivotal roles in facilitating transnational intercultural dialogue.

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[155] Marín Ibáñez, R. (1994). Cristianismo, Europa y educación intercultural [Christianism, Europe and intercultural education]. In AAVV *Educación Intercultural en la Perspectiva de la Europa Unida.* Salamanca: Anaya, pp. 913–925.

Finally, the last policy proposal approach relates to the establishment of *spaces for intercultural dialogue.* It is thus concerned with the promotion of environments, where to develop intercultural activities open to everybody without discrimination. According to the COE's document, successful intercultural governance at any level depends on the existence of these spaces, which can have both a physical or virtual nature. Examples of physical spaces could be, for instance, universities, museums, and cultural or social centres; on the other hand, digital platforms and new media could be models of virtual spaces where to promote open-minded approaches. In particular, this section of the White Paper focuses on the role of culture and the arts: "Arts and Culture create a space of expression beyond institutions, at the level of the person, and can act as mediators"[156]. Therefore, they have an intermediary role in the COE's policy proposal's objectives, namely that of transforming territories in shared public space, while sharing transnational principles of unity and cooperation. Specifically, the "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe" programme exemplifies one of the initiatives undertaken by the Council to foster intercultural dialogue at the European level, through the establishment of a dedicated space. The programme is presented within the document as an example of intercultural governance, involving the management of diversity at the local and international levels. The initiative contributes to the recognition and promotion of Transnational cultures by managing cultural itineraries that extend across the European territory. The "Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe" aimed to discover the history of intercultural exchanges that have shaped the European common cultural heritage, while contributing to its actual promotion, fostering transnational cooperations across the routes.

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[156] Council of Europe. (2008). *White paper on intercultural dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Chapter 5, Recommendations and policy orientations for future action: the shared responsibility of the core actors

3.4 Final remarks

To conclude, the Council of Europe's role in advancing the idea of a Transnational Culture has been instrumental in ensuring stability across the European and international landscape. As analysed through the Chapter, this conception of culture, is the one that extends universally beyond national boundaries, is not merely a "top-down" initiative imposed by the COE, but rather a grassroots human-based process. As outlined in the Faro Convention, culture is a dynamic entity, evolving in response to societal changes and interactions with the environment. According to the mainstream sociological perspective, our contemporary society has been characterised by a shift in perception of the traditional ideals of "geographic space" and "social space". This phenomenon has been triggered by the globalisation process and migratory effects which have weakened the idea of boundaries and gave strength to the concept of transnationality. Over the years, the COE has worked to reframe the perception of cultural diversity in nowadays evolving societies, implementing legal measures and a system of cooperation to uphold peace and fundamental human rights. Its latest emphasis on intercultural dialogue reflects a deeper understanding of current societal needs. Indeed, this new approach focuses on the profound ideal of "Living together as equals in dignity"[157], suggesting that a common culture or identity can be established only if it is built upon shared fundamental values, such as respect for cultural diversity, common heritage and the equal dignity of every individual. This approach embodies the essence of a Transnational Culture as a democratic tool rooted in universal values. By acknowledging and adopting this perspective societies can mitigate ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divisions, fostering a more cohesive and inclusive global community.

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[157] Council of Europe. (2008). *White paper on intercultural dialogue: Living together as equals in dignity.* Strasbourg: Council of Europe. Retrieved from https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white

4. The Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe

The official launch of the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe programme can be traced back to 1984 when the Parliamentary Assembly of the COE adopted Recommendation 978[158], urging the Committee of Ministers to revitalise the ancient pilgrim routes across Europe, starting with those leading to Santiago de Compostela. Three years later, this recommendation materialized with the establishment of the first Cultural Route of the COE, namely the *Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes*. The initiative was regulated by the "Santiago de Compostela Declaration"[159], launched in October 1987 by the COE, representing the programme's first official step. Here, the fundamental principles of the initiative were outlined, and so were the criteria to determine which routes could be classified as "Cultural Routes of the COE". According to the Declaration, the programme recognizes the following principles as its bedrock:

"The human dimension of society, the ideals of freedom and justice, and confidence in progress are the principles which, throughout history, have forged the different cultures that go to make up the specifically European identity[160]."

The Declaration underscored how European identity has been shaped by the existence of a European space. This space is defined by collective memories and roads, which transcend distances, borders, and language barriers[161] continuing to shape today's European cultural identity. Within this framework, the "Santiago de Compostela Declaration" puts forward the revitalisation of one of these paths, as a frame of European cultural roots. Moreover, it encourages Europeans to retrace these paths as "modern pilgrims", in order to rediscover the historical and cultural significance these roads have had in the making of Europe. The Cultural Routes want to transcend national differences,

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[158] Council of Europe. (2015). *Cultural routes management: From theory to practice. Step-by-step guide to the Council of Europe cultural routes*. Council of Europe Publishing. Retrieved from: https://rm.coe.int/gestion-des-itineraires-culturels-de-la-theorie-a-la-pratique/168098b061

[159] Further information concerning the Santiago de Compostela Declaration of 1987 can be found here: https://rm.coe.int/16806f57d6

[160] https://rm.coe.int/16806f57d6

[161] Council of Europe. (2011). *Impact of European cultural routes on SMEs' innovation and competitiveness*. Council of Europe Publishing. Retrieved from: https://rm.coe.int/1680706995

extend their initiatives across Europe and beyond, and celebrate the diversity that has shaped our European cultural landscape. They aim to inspire young travellers to build a society based on the principles that have shaped Europe's identity-building. Accordingly, the Declaration concludes by calling for a more united Europe:

"May the faith which has inspired pilgrims throughout history, uniting them in a common aspiration and transcending national differences and interests, inspire us today, and young people in particular, to travel along these routes in order to build a society founded on tolerance, respect for others, freedom and solidarity"[162].

Beyond the revitalization of pathways, the programme aims to promote public participation and understanding: these itineraries mean to embody visible representations of the multiple cultural and spiritual identities across Europe. Indeed, these Routes are spaces where intercultural dialogue can flourish through a profound reflection on Europe's shared heritage and identity, thanks to this bond's revitalisation and a renewed sense of social cohesion.

Nowadays, the *Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route of the COE*[163] remains one of the most representative itineraries of the programme and arguably the most symbolic. According to the COE, "The Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route symbolises first and foremost the process of European construction and can serve as a reference and example for future projects"[164]. Indeed, since the Middle Ages, the Santiago de Compostela route has been among the most visited pilgrimage sites, attracting people from all over the world. Furthermore, as the first certified Cultural Route of the COE, it traced the symbolic theme of the "pilgrim" for the subsequent ones, which still today conceive their itineraries as "pilgrim routes". According to the COE, pilgrimage journeys cultivated in individuals a "feeling of belonging to a family of nations, each distinct from the others, but all sharing the same basic values and linked by a common civilisation"[165]. Accordingly, this retracement of pathways of pilgrimage may deepen individual experiences by

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[162] Santiago de Compostela Declaration: https://rm.coe.int/16806f57d6

[163] Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certified in 1987 https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-santiago-de-compostela-pilgrim-routes

[164] Council of Europe. (2020). *Cultural routes in the EU macro-regions: Step-by-step guidance on certification and implementation*. Council of Europe Publishing

[165] Further information can be found here: The_Council_of_Europe_cultural_routes_2001.pdf

rediscovering cultures, rituals and languages. Pilgrimages have the ability to foster shared experiences and intercultural dialogue by attracting diverse social groups and cultures across different spaces. Today's forty-seven Cultural Routes of the COE highlight the role of the "modern pilgrim" in the contemporary Transnational social space, by considering the breaking down of barriers as an opportunity for cultural enrichment and mutual understanding.

Furthermore, the certification of the Santiago de Compostela itinerary as a Cultural Route of the COE was symbolically linked to the end of the dictatorship period on the Iberian Peninsula, which finally adopted a democratic constitution in those years. It is not by chance that the programme was established there: it both celebrated the triumph of democracy and served as a diplomatic tool. This initiative reaffirmed the democratic ideals in the Peninsula and helped reestablish diplomatic relations with the democratic governments of the COE. Thanks to this geopolitical resonance, the Cultural Routes can also be considered a "soft power" tool, able to increase countries' democratic reputation and reinforce a sense of belonging to the COE's framework. The bedrock upon which the Cultural Routes programme is construed is the main charters and recommendations issued by the COE and the international community. While fostering cultural heritage, the Cultural Routes also provide a solid platform for the creation of political relations, promoting mutual understanding and stability across the continent. For instance, the COE "Varna Declaration of 2005"[166] contributed to reconciling Southeastern Europe by creating "cultural corridors" in cooperation with the Programme, which focused on preserving and sharing cultural heritage to foster mutual understanding and respect. According to the Convention, the signatory members were committed to:

"Contribute to the promotion of cultural heritage and cultural corridors within the region using modern dissemination technologies, in cooperation with the European Institute of Cultural Routes, Luxembourg, and other specialist institutions.[167]"

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[166] Regional Forum. (2005, May 21). *Cultural corridors of South East Europe: Common past and shared heritage - A key to future partnership. Varna Declaration.* Retrieved from: https://seecorridors.eu/filebank/file_77.pdf

[167] Regional Forum. (2005, May 21). *Cultural corridors of Southeast Europe: Common past and shared heritage - A key to future partnership. Varna Declaration.* Varna, 3 (c) commit to. Retrieved from: https://seecorridors.eu/filebank/file_77.pdf

In this regard, the Convention additionally acknowledges the political importance of the cultural heritage of Southeast Europe as a key element for improving regional and global cooperation. Furthermore, in line with the UNESCO "Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity 2001[168]", the Varna Convention emphasises the importance of preserving cultural heritage, in all its forms, to promote genuine dialogue among cultures for future generations.

As showcased by the Varna Convention, Member States are accompanied in their cultural diplomacy efforts through cooperation with the European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR)[169]. The Institute is the technical agency currently implementing the Cultural Routes programme and providing support and technical guidance to the network of the Routes. The Institute was established in 2011 and was created as a result of an Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA)[170] between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg[171] and the Secretary General of the COE[172]. The agreement officially established the Institute headquarters in Luxembourg and designated the Executive Secretary of the EPA as its director, at present, filled by Dr. Stefano Dominioni. Specifically, the Cultural Routes programme falls under the Directorate General of Democracy and Human Dignity of the COE[173]. The EPA is a particular form of cooperation within the Council of Europe, enabling Member States to participate in specific programmes or areas of interest for which they provide targeted funding. For instance, the EPA members of the Cultural Route programme finance its activities through an annual contribution calculated in proportion to their involvement in the COE's ordinary budget. This agreement was created to ensure continuity to the programme, which before 2010 was considerably restrained in its activities by the limited funding of its ordinary budget.

The EPA follows the policy guidelines of the Council, outlining the strategy of the programme and awarding the certifications of the "Cultural Routes of the Council of

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[168]   Further information concerning the Convention can be found here: human-rights-education-training/19-unesco-universal-declaration-cultural-diversity-2001

[169] https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/european-institute-of-cultural-routes

[170] Further information concerning the EPA can be found here: coe.int/en/cultural-routes/about-the-epa

[171] Jean Asselborn Minister of Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg (2004 – current)

[172] Thorbjørn Jagland Secretary General of the COE (2009 – 2019)

[173] Further information can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/democracy-and-human-dignity

Europe". In Article 1 of the Committee of Ministers Resolution[174], the aim of the EPA is defined as follows:

"The Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA) shall contribute to the promotion of European identity and citizenship through knowledge and awareness of Europe's common heritage, and the development of cultural links and dialogue within Europe as well as with other countries and regions. It shall seek to shape a shared cultural space through the development of cultural routes aiming to foster awareness-raising about heritage, education, networking, quality and sustainable cross-border tourism and other related activities".

The EPA is composed of two statuary bodies, respectively the Governing Board of EPA and the Statutory Committee of the EPA. The former puts together the representatives from the ministries of the Member States, is responsible for the direction of the programme and awards the certification of the "Cultural Route of the COE". On the other hand, the latter comprises representatives from the Foreign Ministries of the Member States, and it gathers annually to oversee the programme's activities and approve EPA's budget.

The establishment of the Cultural Routes programme in the form of an Enlarged Partial Agreement ensured that political and financial decisions were made by a group of countries deeply committed to promoting Europe's cultural heritage through the COE's Cultural Routes. Moreover, this framework was designed to provide the programme with a more autonomous and flexible budget structure compared to the previous one, composed only by the COE financial resources. Instead, the EPA offers the possibility to further expand the Cultural Routes budget as more countries adhere to the initiative. Furthermore, the EPA structure facilitate cooperation beyond Europe, first and foremost in the Mediterranean area. Indeed, as suggested by the name itself, the EPA allows also non-member states to join the initiative for the promotion of cultural heritage. This strategy aligns with COE's objective of fostering global and social cohesion through the

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[174] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA)*. Council of Europe. Article 1 (1.1) Aims and Tasks Retrieved from: https://search.coe.int/cm#{%22CoEObjectId%22:[%2209000016805c69ac%22],%

promotion of a Transnational idea of culture (the roots of which have been discussed in the previous chapters).

The image (2) below is taken from the official page of the COE and shows the forty states that are nowadays officially recognized as members of the EPA on the Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, each one contributing annually to the programme. Among these, two are non-members of the COE (the Holy See and Lebanon), and fourteen are non-members of the EU[175]. Recently, the Netherlands and Estonia, both Member States since 1949 and 1993 respectively, have become observers States of the initiative under the EPA. As previously noted, this agreement allows all countries interested in promoting and supporting this form of transnational cultural cooperation to participate in the programme, as long as they adhere to the principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law of the COE. For instance, in 2022, the Russian Federation was excluded from the programme due to non-compliance with these principles and criteria, and subsequently, expelled from the COE after twenty-six years of membership[176].

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[175] EU non-member states adhering to the Cultural Routes programme: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, Switzerland, Turkiye, Ukraine.

[176] Further information concerning the topic can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/-/the-russian-federation-is-excluded-from-the-council-of-europe
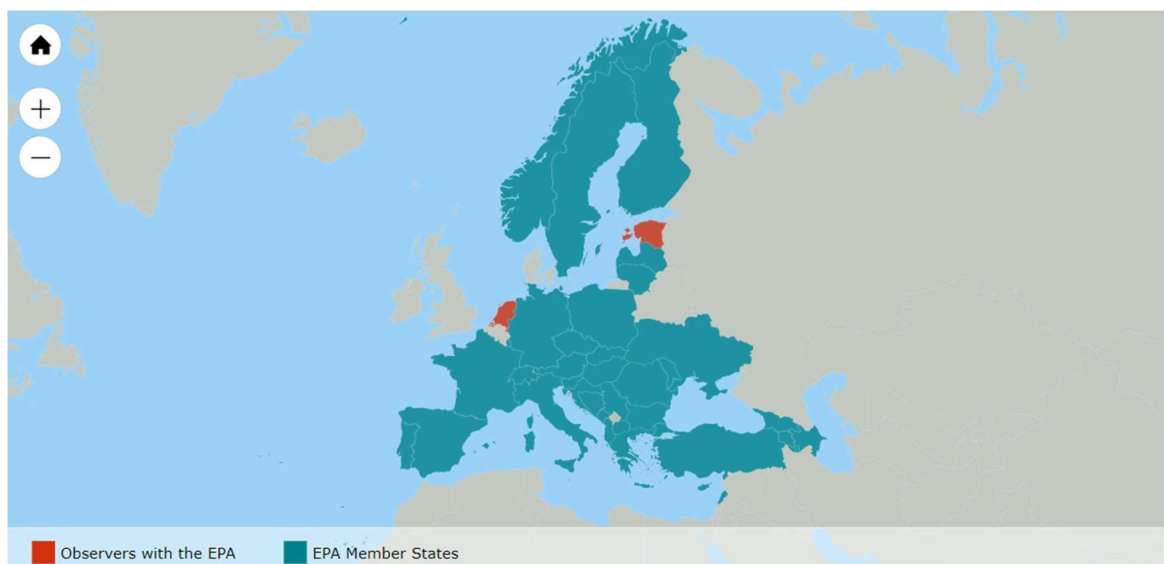
EPA MEMBER STATES

Albania (2022)	Greece (2011)	Portugal (2011)
Andorra (2012)	Holy See (2018)	Republic of Moldova (2023)
Armenia (2015)	Hungary (2013)	Romania (2013)
Austria (2011)	Italy (2011)	San Marino (2017)
Azerbaijan (2011)	Latvia (2019)	Serbia (2012)
Bosnia and Herzegovina (2016)	Lebanon (2022)	Slovak Republic (2014)
Bulgaria (2011)	Lithuania (2012)	Slovenia (2011)
Croatia (2016)	Luxembourg (2011)	Spain (2011)
Cyprus (2011)	Malta (2023)	Sweden (2020)
Czech Republic (2023)	Monaco (2013)	Switzerland (2013)
Finland (2018)	Montenegro (2011)	Türkiye (2018)
France (2011)	North Macedonia (2022)	Ukraine (2021)
Georgia (2016)	Norway (2011)	
Germany (2013)	Poland (2017)	

EPA OBSERVERS

Estonia (2023 - 2024)

Netherlands (2024)

Figure 2: Members of the EPA on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, and two States are Observers - as of 10/01/2024[177]

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[177] Figure retrieved from: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/epa-member-states

Before delving deeper into the structure of the Cultural Routes programme, let us first define more specifically the characteristics of a Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, starting from its definition. It is important to clarify that the notion of "route", should not be interpreted in the limited sense of a physical pathway. Instead, it must be understood in a broader, more conceptual way, as a "social space". Indeed, the Cultural Route concept also refers to a network of sites and geographical areas connected by a common theme, which can take various forms depending on the unique "identity" of each site or area. In this sense, a Cultural Route is conceptually closer to the idea of a "Transnational social space" rather than one merely "geographical".

The first attempt to define a Cultural Route occurred in the 1980s, during the launch of the programme. The definition was initially developed according to the three main objectives established by the Bureau of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) for the Cultural Routes Programme[178], namely: to raise awareness of European culture through travel, to explore the possibilities of establishing tourism networks connected with Europe's cultural geography, and finally to promote major sites and crossroads of European civilization as attractions for tourists. Therefore, in consideration of these elements, the CDCC puts forward the first definition in 1987:

"The term European Cultural Route is taken to mean a route crossing one or two more countries or regions, organised around themes whose historical, artistic or social interest is patently European, either by virtue of the geographical route followed or because of the nature and/or scope of its range and significance. Application of the term "European" to a route must imply a significance and cultural dimension which is more than merely local. The route must be based on a number of highlights, with places particularly rich in historical associations, which are also representative of European culture as a whole[179]."

This definition described a Cultural Route as a journey connecting significant cultural and historical sites across Europe, rather than a physical trail. Moreover, for a route to be

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[178] Council for Cultural Co-operation. (2000, June 26). *Abridged report of the meeting of the Bureau (Strasbourg, 24-25 May 2000)* (CM(2000)93). Council of Europe. Retrieved from: https://rm.coe.int/1680508966

[179] Council of Europe. (2015). *Cultural routes management: From theory to practice. Step-by-step guide to the Council of Europe cultural routes.* Council of Europe Publishing, p. 14

considered "European", it had to possess a cultural dimension beyond the local that extends to the European culture as a whole. A few years later, the Director of Education and Sport of the COE, Raymond Weber[180], further clarified the meaning of routes as "cross-cultural and pan-European spaces giving the freedom to "pilgrims" to transcend the state's boundaries and the constraints of the system of beliefs"[181]. Additionally, he further acknowledged them to be complex projects interacting with several realities along their ways. In line with this perspective, the Cultural Route definition was updated, and the rules for the award certification were revised with Resolution CM/Res (2013)66[182], the enactment of which coincided with the official establishment of the EPA, in 2013. Here, the Committee of Ministers recognized the Cultural Routes as a "cultural, educational heritage and tourism co-operation project". The Resolution thus underscored the transnational dimension of the project:

"The project aims to contribute to the development and promotion of an itinerary or a series of itineraries based on a historic route, a cultural concept, figure or phenomenon with a transnational importance and significance for the understanding and respect of common European values.[183]"

This new definition highlighted another relevant aspect of the Cultural Route: its project-based dimension: a Cultural Route is the result of a collaborative project including cultural, educational, and touristic entities that cooperate on a transnational level to define a common European theme, reflecting the complexity of today's European landscape. Indeed, the first step in developing a Cultural Route is to define a common theme that must be coherent across all the countries comprised in the itinerary. This criterion serves as an initial benchmark for evaluating a Cultural Route itself. To officially become a "Cultural Route of the COE," it is first necessary to obtain a specific certificate

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[180] Raymond Weber, Director of Education, Culture and Sport of the COE (1991-2001)

[181] Council of Europe. (2015). *Cultural routes management: From theory to practice. Step-by-step guide to the Council of Europe cultural routes.* Council of Europe Publishing, p 15.

[182] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA).* Council of Europe. Retrieved from: https://search.coe.int/cm#{%22CoEObjectId%22:[%2209000016805c69ac%22],%22sort%22

[183] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA).* Council of Europe. Article 1 (1.1) Aims and Tasks, Definitions.

assessing the quality of the Route and its adherence to the principles and standards set by the COE. Accordingly, Article IV (3) of Resolution CM/Res (2013)67 states:

"The Cultural Routes networks must submit every three years a report enabling the Governing Board of the EPA to evaluate their activities in order to ascertain whether they continue to satisfy the criteria.[184]"

The certificate is issued by the Governing Board of the EPA, the organism in charge of making the final decision on whether to issue or revoke it. This certificate must be renewed every three years, subject to a specific evaluation procedure supervised by the EICR. The Institute selects and trains a group of independent experts who assess the quality of the Cultural Route, examining the itineraries and proposed activities. Based on their experiences and expertise, and according to the evaluation criteria defined by the Resolution, they identify the strengths and weaknesses of the route, submitting a final report. The entire procedure is overseen by the EICR, which prepares a final evaluation dossier for each Cultural Route to submit to the Bureau of the Governing Board of the EPA, gathering once a year for the occasion.

According to the aforementioned Resolution, there are five fundamental steps for the development of a Cultural Route project, which are assessed as part of the evaluation procedure by the independent experts and the EICR. The five steps are as follows[185]:

- ➢ *Step 1*: selecting a common theme,
- ➢ *Step 2*: identifying the heritage elements of the route,
- ➢ *Step 3*: creating a European network with legal status,
- ➢ *Step 4*: coordinating common activities in the main field of actions defined by the programme,
- ➢ *Step 5*: creating a common visibility strategy and coherence of the project among the involved countries.

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[184] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification*. Council of Europe. Article IV (3) Certification.

[185] Further information can be found also on the Cultural Routes of the COE official website: https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/becoming-a-cultural-route

Starting from *Step 1*, each Cultural Route must be centred on a topic that spans across Europe, presenting a coherent narrative through the journey. According to Section I of Resolution CM/Res (2013)67[186], the theme of the route must satisfy a set of criteria, which are listed below:

1. The theme must embody European values and be shared by several countries in Europe.
2. The theme must be researched and developed by groups of multidisciplinary experts from various regions of Europe to ensure that the activities and projects illustrating it are based on consensus.
3. The theme must depict European memory, history, and heritage, contributing to an understanding of the diversity of present-day Europe.
4. The theme must facilitate cultural and educational exchanges for young people, aligning with the Council of Europe's ideas and concerns in these fields.
5. The theme must enable the development of initiatives and exemplary and innovative projects in the field of cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.
6. The theme must facilitate the development of tourist products in collaboration with tourist agencies and operators targeting different audiences, including school groups.

Once the theme of the Route has been decided, it must be framed within a "geographical" context. This phase is also important to determine the heritage element of the route *(Step 2)*, which can be tangible or intangible, according to the different manifestations of the theme and its development across territories. According to the Cultural Routes regulation, there can be three types of Cultural Routes: territorial routes, linear routes and reticular routes. The first type is characterized by territorial contiguity; this form of Cultural Route connects regions that share a common theme. Specifically, it focuses on themes related to the movement of civilizations or specific crops across Europe, blending these themes into the local culture and identity. An example is the *Routes of the Olive*

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[186] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification*. Section I, List of eligibility criteria for themes.

Tree[187], which explores the impact of the olive tree (the heritage element of the route) on Mediterranean cultures, connecting regions through their common history of olive cultivation and its impacts on local customs, food and traditions. These routes extend from Greece to multiple Euro-Mediterranean countries, crossing more than fifteen nations across Europe. Along the route, travellers can experience several activities such as exhibitions, concerts, and tastings, offering an immersive experience of the olive tree's heritage in Europe.

The second type of Cultural Route is the "Linear route", which represents historical travel pathways that have been crucial for centuries for the movement of people and goods and have been influential in creating interconnections along their paths. Specifically, these itineraries focus on the historical infrastructures that characterise land and maritime trade routes, shaping landscapes and becoming integral parts of them. These routes have connected different civilizations, influencing the structure of villages, towns and other buildings, which have developed along their paths and today can be revaluated as a tangible heritage through the network of the Cultural Routes. For instance, along the *Phoenicians' Route*[188], travellers can learn about the major nautical routes used by the Phoenicians since the 12th century BC. They can discover their heritage by exploring the settlements and the historical infrastructures developed along the route around the Mediterranean basin. Its network of museums and archaeological parks shows how ancient Mediterranean civilizations have influenced the European landscape.

The last type of a Cultural Route is the "Reticular route", also defined as a "virtual itinerary" because, unlike the territorial and linear routes, this one is not defined by territorial continuity. Indeed, these routes are networks of pathways connecting various individual sites or goods based on a common theme rather than a contiguous space. An example of this is the *European Mozart Ways*[189], linking locations associated with

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[187] Routes of the Olive Tree, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certified in 2005
https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-routes-of-the-olive-tree

[188] Phoenicians' Route, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certified in 2003
https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-phoenicians-route

[189] European Mozart Ways, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certified in 2004
https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/european-mozart-ways

Mozart's life and work across Europe. Instead of following a single continuous path, these routes create a network of cultural connections, serving as landmarks for understanding Mozart's cultural legacy and for travellers exploring his influence in Europe.

The figure (3) below provides a schematic representation of the different shapes Cultural Routes can have:
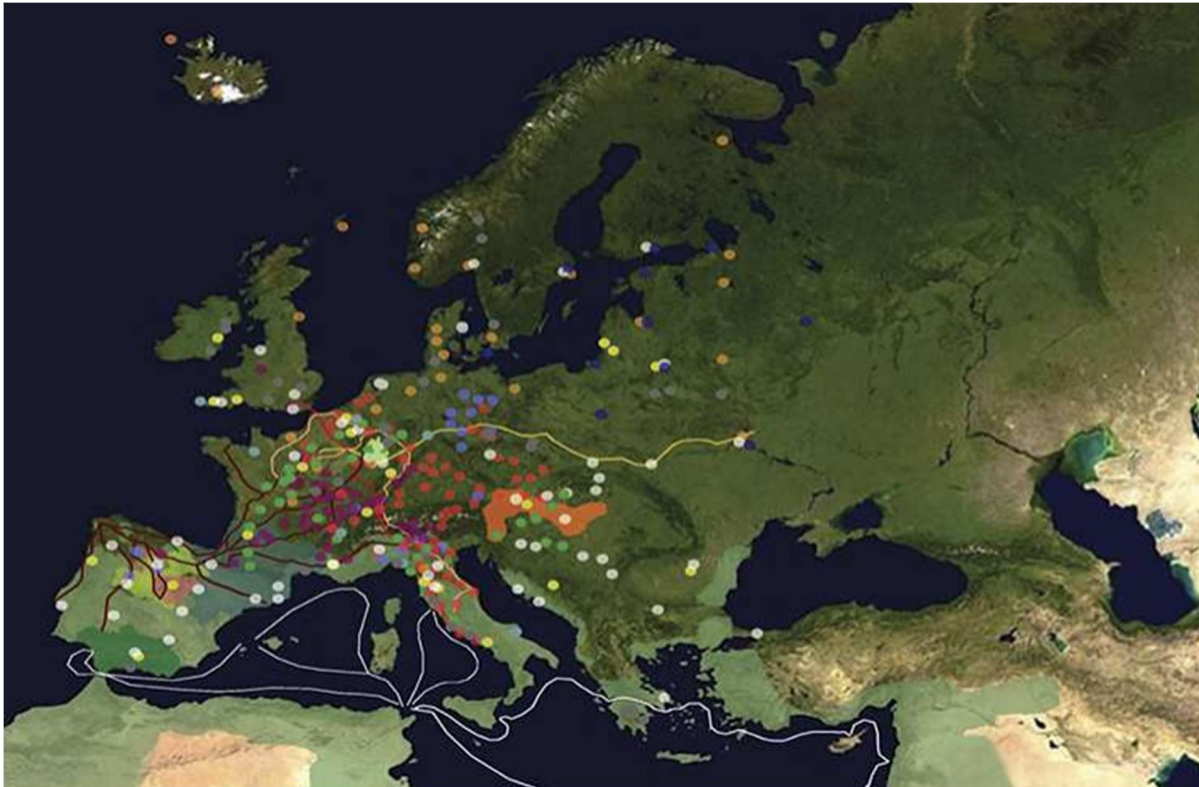

Figure 3: Schematic representation of the COE' Cultural Routes categorized by their structure: territorial routes, linear routes and reticular routes [190]

The next step *(Step 3)* in developing a Cultural Route is establishing a Transnational network with legal status. This step is crucial for bringing together the sites and the stakeholders involved in the route and can be achieved through the constitution of an association or a federation of associations. A Cultural Route network is defined by a specific structure comprising five fundamental bodies: a Governing Board with a President, a Steering Committee, a Secretariat, an interdisciplinary European Scientific Committee and an Academic University Network. It is important to emphasize that the European Scientific Committee and the Academic University Network are the principal

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[190] Source: Berti, E. (2012), *Itinerari Culturali del Consiglio d'Europa: tra riceva di identità e progetto di paesaggio*, Firenze University Press, Florence.

engines of the Cultural Route project. These bodies continuously generate new impulses for innovative themes, methodologies, and approaches, ensuring a dynamic framework of knowledge and research. Specifically, the European Scientific Committee is an interdisciplinary team responsible for developing the research project behind the Cultural Route. This body actively collaborates with a wide academic network, including universities and research centres, supporting further investigations into Cultural Routes methodologies and related topics. Moreover, for a Cultural Route to be legally recognised as a transnational Cultural Route network, it is necessary for it to involve at least three COE Member States and a consistent number of partners supporting the network across Europe. According to the "List of criteria for networks"[191] highlighted in the Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, the partners should come from two different dimensions: a spatial dimension (e.g., local, regional, national, transnational, European and International) and a sectoral dimension (e.g., associations, regional political bodies, national governments, cultural organisations, cities and municipalities, NGOs, archaeological and natural sites, tourism stakeholders, small and medium-sized enterprises,…). Each network must operate democratically and participatively, involving all partners equally in sharing responsibilities and tasks. Indeed, the network must present a research-based conceptual framework on the chosen theme, accepted by all partners and COE Member States. Finally, as highlighted in the aforementioned Resolution, the network should include as many States Parties to the "European Cultural Convention"[192] as possible and also those states that have not yet ratified the Convention, if relevant to the theme of the route.

The image (4) above shows the extension of a Transnational network with legal status across Europe. Specifically, it represents the transnational network of *The European Route of Ceramics[193],* certified in 2012 and headquartered in Faenza, Italy. This Cultural Route highlights the rich heritage and social history of ceramic art in Europe, showcasing

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[191] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification*. Council of Europe. Section III, List of criteria for networks.

[192] The European Cultural Convention is an international treaty adopted by the COE in 1954, which aims to promote cultural cooperation among its member states.

[193] European Route of Ceramics, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certified in 2012 https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-european-route-of-ceramics

the industry's impact on economic development and cultural identity across various cities. The route offers travellers the opportunity to explore the physical and intangible heritage of ceramics, from culinary arts to architecture, through interactive tours and hands-on experiences in cities. The map highlights the Member States involved in the Cultural Route project and the names of some of their partners supporting the network across the continent.
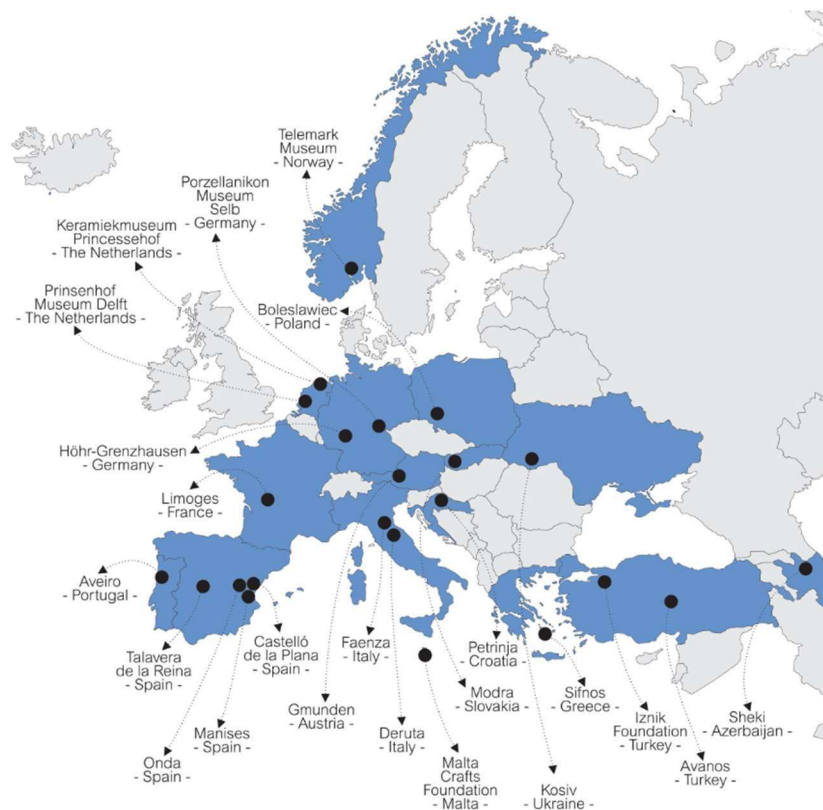

Figure 4: maps of the Member States and partners of the European Route of Ceramics Association[194]

Once a Cultural Route has established a network with legal status, it commits to the development of activities and projects related to the theme of the itinerary (*Step 4*). According to the "List of priority fields of action" Resolution criteria[195], these initiatives should align with specific "fields of action", reflecting the principal European cultural policies and tools of international organizations. This requirement is thus outlined:

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[194] Figure retrieved from: https://www.europeanrouteofceramics.eu/about-us/#association

[195] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification*. Council of Europe. Section II, List of priority fields of action.

"*All the Cultural Routes should take account of and promote the charters, conventions, recommendations and work of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and ICOMOS relating to heritage restoration, protection and enhancement, landscape and spatial planning*"[196].

Therefore, Cultural Routes activities are evaluated in relation to their adherence to the main European cultural policy tools, exemplified through five priority fields of action. Here is the list of these priority fields, as reported in the Resolution:

1. Cooperation in research and development,
2. Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage,
3. Cultural and educational exchanges for young Europeans,
4. Contemporary cultural and artistic practice,
5. Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development.

The first field of action, "Cooperation in research and development", aims to encourage various types of cultural cooperation, stimulating scientific and social debate through Cultural Routes activities. This field of action is, for instance, grounded in the "European Cultural Convention[197]", the foundational agreement for European cooperation in the field of culture and education. The Convention aims to foster activities of cultural significance, promoting national contributions to Europe's common cultural heritage while upholding fundamental values. This policy tool stands at the heart of the Cultural Routes programme, translating the principles articulated by the Cultural Convention into tangible actions through each Cultural Route project or initiative. An example of an activity based on this framework is the international conference organized by the European Association of the Fairy Tale Route last year (2023) in Lodi, Italy. The conference, titled "Landscape of the Imagination[198]", sought to enhance the scientific debate concerning the main themes related to the itinerary; the main idea behind the

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[196] Resolution CM/Res(2013)67, Section II, List of priority fields of action

[197] Further information can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/european-cultural-convention

[198] European Institute of Cultural Routes. (2022). *Activity report 2023: Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme*. Council of Europe Publishing.

European Fairy Tale Route[199] is to link imaginary spaces to real places and highlight the European heritage of myths, values, and model behaviours found within fairy-tale literature. The event gathered an international audience specialised in children's literature and landscapes, describing the linkages between these two dimensions with a specific focus on their relevance for the Europeans. The conference allowed multiple stakeholders to exchange ideas and research insights in an international and interdisciplinary environment that welcomed disparate voices, among which students, professors, artists, and network members. The EICR has recognised this event as a best practice in the field of "Cooperation in research and development," underscoring its alignment with the core principles of the "European Cultural Convention". This recognition is documented in the 2023 Cultural Routes of the COE Activity Report[200].

Another example of a policy tool at the bedrock of the programme is the "Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society"[201], grounded in the "Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage" field of action. The Convention focuses on the ethical and principled use of cultural heritage in Europe within the context of globalization. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of heritage and its role in fostering dialogue, cooperation, democratic debate, and participation among cultures. Furthermore, the Convention recognises the human being as the foundation of cultural diversity. Therefore, in line with these principles and according to the "Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage" second field of action, Cultural Routes initiatives must also be committed to the following activities:

"contribute through appropriate training, to raising awareness among decision-makers, practitioners and the general public of the complex concept of heritage, the

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[199] European Fairy Tale Route, Cultural Route of the Council of Europe certified in 2022 https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/european-fairy-tale-route

[200] European Institute of Cultural Routes. (2022). *Activity report 2023: Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme*. Council of Europe Publishing. Retrieved from: https://rm.coe.int/cultural-routes-of-the-council-of-europe-2023-activity-report/1680af2e20

[201] Also known as the Faro Convention (2005), further information can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention

necessity to protect, interpret and communicate it as a means for sustainable development, and the challenges and opportunities it represents for the future of Europe.[202]"

In this sense, Cultural Routes activities enhance Europeans' awareness of cultural heritage by offering various itineraries that interpret their shared history and heritage. Moreover, these routes highlight both the similarities and differences among European cultures, fostering discussions on a unified European identity based on universal values like freedom and human rights. An example of an initiative developed on the "Enhancement of memory, history and European heritage" principles is the series of events organized by the *Routes of the Olive Tree* in 2023 as part of the "Celebration of World Olive Day"[203]. The initiative featured several conferences and workshops, centred on the celebration of the diverse traditions related to the heritage of the olive tree and its products. The event represented an occasion to raise awareness of important shared values such as environmental protection and the evolution of the European olive landscape.

Another important Convention underlying Cultural Routes activities is the COE "European Landscape Convention[204]". This established landscape as a central concern in political agendas, emphasizing its crucial role in the well-being of Europeans. This Convention encourages cooperation across borders, recognizing the value of landscapes to all Europeans and advocating for their protection and sustainable management. It emphasizes the social responsibility of individuals towards landscape protection and underscores the importance of public involvement in decision-making processes. In this sense, the Cultural Routes represent an important instrument for their management, thanks to their role in increasing public awareness of Europe's diverse landscapes and heritage. By navigating different panoramas, such as industrial heritage sites, pilgrim paths, and ancient trade routes, the Cultural Routes programme represents an

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[202] Committee of Ministers. (2013, December 18). *Resolution CM/Res(2013)67 revising the rules for the award of the "Cultural Route of the Council of Europe" certification*. Council of Europe. Section II, List of priority fields of action

[203] European Institute of Cultural Routes. (2022). *Activity report 2023: Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme*. Council of Europe Publishing.

[204] Further information concerning the Convention can be found here: https://www.coe.int/en/web/landscape

opportunity for Europeans to discover and become aware of the landscape characteristics of their territory.

An example of an activity framed in the COE Landscape Convention is "J'aime Francigena 2000"[205] organized by the *Via Francigena Cultural Route[206].* The activity falls under the "Cultural tourism and sustainable cultural development" field of action, which focuses on enhancing participatory process, involving local communities in the sustainable management of the landscapes of the routes. The initiative was organized by the Federation of the Via Francigena Cultural Route in cooperation with the French Hiking Federation and the French Ministry of Culture. The objective of the initiative was to foster sustainable tourism practices during summer periods. The route offered several free hiking experiences, covering the most significant stages of Via Francigena, in France. During the journey, participants were accompanied by local tourist guides who presented the cultural and natural landscape of each region. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recognised the event as a best practice for the celebration of World Tourism Day 2022.

Finally, the last step (*Step 5*) for a Cultural Route's development is the creation of a common visibility strategy. Accordingly, each Cultural Route project should build its own brand identity and design a logo for the route. The latter has to be used by all partners in the network on their communication tools, ensuring its recognition and the coherency of the project across Europe. Once the certification is awarded, the logo of the route must always be accompanied by the one of the COE.

Carrying the tag "Cultural Routes of the COE" offers several advantages. Among these, for instance, the possibility of increasing the international visibility of less-known destinations. Indeed, awarding a certification requires identifying and promoting European heritage sites that are less impacted by tourism, such as rural or wild areas. This significantly enhances the visibility of these destinations, elevating their profile from

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[205]   Further   information   concerning   the   activity   can   be   found   here: https://www.viefrancigene.org/it/jaime-francigena-2022-escursioni-in-arrivo-sul-tratto-francese/

[206] Via Francigena, the Cultural Route of the Council of Europe, is one of the most historical routes of the programme, having received its certification in 1994. The route reconstitutes the pathway the Archbishop of Canterbury traversed in 990 AD to meet the Pope in Rome, spanning over 3,000 kilometres today https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/the-via-francigena

a local or national level to a European one. Moreover, this certification is a quality trademark, recognized by international organizations, national governments and tourist stakeholders. Its ongoing assessment, occurring every three years, guarantees the highest quality in heritage interpretation, activities, and organizational management. Furthermore, it also ensures the transparent and democratic governance of the Cultural Route legal framework, reflecting the COE's fundamental principles and the idea of a Transnational culture. Another key benefit of carrying the COE logo is political support. Indeed, the States that are part of the EPA on Cultural Routes provide substantial support for the routes, by developing new standards and strategies for promoting cross-border cultural tourism. This political endorsement helps in the implementation and sustainability of the Cultural Routes, ensuring they receive the necessary attention and resources from national and international bodies. In addition, the transnational nature of the Cultural Routes opens up various EU funding opportunities and grants in support of specific action plans and local economic development. For example, according to the results published in the Activity Report of 2023[207] by the EICR, last year the forty-seven certified Cultural Routes of the COE received nearly 8 million euros of extra-budgetary funding in addition to their ordinary budgets for the implementation of individual and joint projects. The funding originated from different sources, in particular from EU cooperations and funding programmes in the cultural, educational and local development sectors.

In addition, being part of the Cultural Routes network offers the opportunity to participate in various activities organized by the EICR, which creates intercultural dialogue spaces in line with the principles outlined in the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue". Examples include the annual Training Academies[208], held in collaboration with the EICR, which provides training on current issues in heritage management and tourism promotion related to Cultural Routes operators. Academic workshops[209] are also organized to enhance scientific debates among researchers. Furthermore, joint

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[207] European Institute of Cultural Routes. (2022). *Activity report 2023: Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe Programme.* Council of Europe Publishing, p. 54. Retrieved from: https://rm.coe.int/cultural-routes-of-the-council-of-europe-2023-activity-report/1680af2e20

[208] Further information can be found here: coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/training-academy

[209] Further information can be found here: coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/academic-workshop-2023

programmes with the EU, such as the 2017-2020 edition of "Routes4U"[210], seek to promote regional development through transnational cultural routes and heritage policies across four EU macro-regions.

Another significant activity organized by the EICR is the Annual Advisory Forum, an annual event providing all its participants with a space to foster intercultural dialogue approaches in the field of culture. The initiative generally lasts three days and is hosted in one of the COE Member States with the support of the EPA Member States Ministry of Culture. For instance, last year's edition of 2023[211] was organized in the city of Lodz, Poland, in cooperation with the Polish Ministry of Culture. The event was attended by over 300 participants, including the Representatives of the forty Member States of the EPA, the Representatives of the forty-seven certified Cultural Routes, as well as the Representatives of international organisations, such as the UNTWO and UNESCO and finally a consistent number of academics from the Cultural Routes University Networks. Each year, the Forum features a rich programme of panels creating spaces for meetings and exchanges concerning common European themes. For instance, last year, sixty speakers were invited from Europe and beyond to explore the role of Cultural Routes in shaping the social and creative dimensions of cultural heritage in a post-industrial context. Participating in the Annual Advisory Forum is an opportunity for stakeholders to share best practices and form new alliances in cultural projects and initiatives. Additionally, it provides a platform to broaden discussions by bringing together diverse voices, contributing to the ongoing evolution and success of the Cultural Routes programme.

This collaborative environment, run by the EICR, fosters innovation and encourages the development of new transnational approaches, enhancing the impact and sustainability of cultural heritage initiatives across the European continent. To conclude, the case study of the Cultural Routes of the COE programme has provided an example of the European cultural policy role in the field of culture. This ongoing commitment to cultural preservation and promotion not only highlights the richness of Europe's shared heritage but also demonstrates the potential for cultural routes to serve as powerful tools for

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[210] Further information can be found here: coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/eu-joint-programme

[211] Further information can be found here: coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/2023-lodz-forum

fostering intercultural dialogue able to build that much-needed Transnational ideal across the diverse regions of Europe.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to end this research by sharing a few thoughts on my experience as an intern at the European Institute of Cultural Routes. The last chapter outlined the main activities of the Institute and described the procedure to become a certified "Cultural Route of the COE". It expanded on the Institute's political influence in promoting a Transnational culture across Europe, supporting the development of cultural itineraries, and their shared heritage across national borders. Furthermore, the instances of Cultural Routes have given practical credibility to the theoretical discourse framed in the previous Chapters, showcasing the actual implementation of the European cultural policy framework. Indeed, since its inception in 1987, the programme's management and evaluation criteria have evolved in relation to specific policy guidelines established over time by the Committee Ministers of the COE and reflecting the latest achievements in human rights and cultural heritage policy. In relation to specific international agreements and COE Conventions, Cultural Routes are regularly evaluated on these criteria to ensure the highest standards of heritage interpretation and sustainable management. The role of European cultural policy in advancing a Transnational culture has been accordingly analysed through the case study of the Cultural Routes of the COE programme. This programme has proven its effectiveness in promoting principles of transnationality, fostering cooperation among local, national and international stakeholders, as well as principles of intercultural dialogue within cultural, educational, and touristic entities.

The goal of this research has been to raise awareness about the progressive development of a new European policy approach in the field of culture. In this sense, the exposition of Chapter 1, concerning the notion of Transnational culture, presented the academic debate concerning the necessity of conveying culture in its broader definition, namely for its universal and intrinsic values. Under this new light, policy decisions switch from economic to political ones, encompassing principles of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. As a result, advancing a Transnational idea of culture aligns perfectly with the COE's principles and objectives, namely fostering social cohesion within the European and global community.

Despite COE's considerable influence in promoting such values, mainstream sociological perspectives picture the phenomenon as a grassroots, human-based one, rather than a

"top-down" initiative. Indeed, transnational tendencies have been triggered by globalisation and migratory effects, which have weakened the idea of cultural boundaries and redefined the perception of diversity in spaces (Chapter 2). This flourishing environment has favoured the development of a Transnational culture, grounded in cultural diversification disseminated by the flows of cultures and languages across the continent.

In response to these contemporary societal changes, the COE and the EU have advanced a Transnational language within the cultural sector, believing in its capabilities to limit cultural, political and religious divisions, thereby serving as a foundation for societal progress (Chapter 3). Through the development of specific actions, such as funding programmes and intercultural dialogue policy approaches, European institutions raise awareness of the fundamental principles of humankind, deeply rooted in the universal and intrinsic value of culture.

The Cultural Routes of the COE programme (Chapter 4) exemplify these principles through their collaborative environment, fostering cultural innovation and interconnections across Europe, and promoting a common cultural heritage, cemented together by cultural diversity and human rights principles.

As discussed in this research, culture has generally been supported by linking its "utility" to socioeconomic values as a reason to be protected. These instrumental practices have a historically rooted past and currently play a dominant role in the cultural policy field. The Transnational approach pursued by international organisations and exemplified by the Cultural Routes programme represents an instance of the instrumental way of promoting culture. Indeed, a Transnational approach shares the same instrumental concepts, promoting the cultural field by framing it within the political context and attaching policy principles to its value.

And yet, while these practices should not be rejected, I believe they should be understood and conveyed as supplementary factors in cultural support. From my point of view, the diffusion of a transnational discourse on an international scale has the power to reinforce by itself the universal values of culture at the national and local levels, providing policymakers with sufficient reasons to support culture for its intrinsic merit rather than simply framing it within the context of other agendas. In this sense, greater cultural cooperation between European and local institutions may contribute to shaping a new

cultural language that promotes culture as a catalyst for cultural enrichment, unlocking creativity, and human potential.

Initiatives such as the ones of the European Union and the Council of Europe are to be welcomed. Nonetheless, if we believe – as I do – that there is some intrinsic merit in the promotion of culture for the sake of it, the instrumental approach should be complementary to a broader understanding of culture in the policy landscape, which takes into account first and foremost its inherent value.

Appendix

Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe [212]

1987 Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Routes

1991 The Hansa

1993 Viking Route

1994 Via Francigena

1997 Routes of El legado andalusí

2003 Phoenicians' Route

2004 Pyrenean Iron Route

2004 European Mozart Ways

2004 European Route of Jewish Heritage

2005 Saint Martin of Tours Route

2005 Cluniac Sites in Europe

2005 Routes of the Olive Tree

2005 VIA REGIA

2007 TRANSROMANICA - The Romanesque Routes of European Heritage

2009 Iter Vitis Route

2010 European Cemeteries Route

2010 Prehistoric Rock Art Trails

2010 European Route of Historical Thermal Towns

2010 Route of Saint Olav Ways

2012 European Route of Ceramics

2013 European Route of Megalithic Culture

2013 Huguenot and Waldensian Trail

2014 ATRIUM - Architecture of Totalitarian Regimes of the 20th Century in Europe's Urban Memory

2014 Réseau Art Nouveau Network

2014 Via Habsburg

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[212] Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe – by year of certification https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes/by-theme

2015 Roman Emperors and Danube Wine Route

2015 European Routes of Emperor Charles V

2015 Destination Napoleon

2015 In the Footsteps of Robert Louis Stevenson

2016 Fortified Towns of the Grande Region

2018 Impressionisms Routes

2019 European Route of Industrial Heritage

2019 Iron Curtain Trail - EURO VELO 13

2019 Le Corbusier Destinations: Architectural Promenades

2019 Liberation Route Europe

2019 Routes of Reformation

2020 European Route of Historic Gardens

2020 Via Romea Germanica

2021 Aeneas Route

2021 Alvar Aalto Route - 20th Century Architecture and Design

2021 Cyril and Methodius Route

2021 European Route d'Artagnan

2021 Iron Age Danube Route

2022 Historic Cafés Route

2022 European Fairy Tale Route

2022 Women Writers Route

2023 Transhumance Trails

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