

COUNTRY PROFILES

France

Research into literature on France's approach to international cultural policy suggests a positive attitude to cooperation with other European countries, particularly when this relates to promoting positive visions of cultural diversity within a globalised world.

M i n i s t r y o f F o r e i g n a f f a i r s

The promotion of French culture abroad is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The website of the Ministère des affaires étrangères, when mentioning cultural cooperation, states that: "Cultural cooperation contributes to cultural diversity by enhancing and increasing awareness of French culture and cultural knowledge, and by encouraging the development of autonomous cultural policies and productions in the countries with which France cooperates".

The policies laid down by Ministry of Foreign Affairs are carried out through the General Administration for International Cooperation and Development (Direction de la Coopération internationale et du Développement), which is responsible for monitoring France's international cooperation and development policies.

France's official cultural policies are also carried out abroad by cultural departments of French embassies and consulates and some external governmental organisations. The principle external governmental organisations operating in the framework of the policies of the government of France are a network of French cultural centres (Institut Français, numbering approximately 150), and the Alliances Française (numbering approximately 1,073 in 130 countries). Alliance Française was set up to disseminate the French language abroad however they also claim that by doing so they are "advancing greater cultural diversity".

M i n i s t r y o f C u l t u r e a n d C o m m u n i c a t i o n

International programmes of the Ministry of Culture and Communication (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication) is coordinated and carried out by a specific delegation, the Department for European and International Affairs (Département des affaires européennes et internationales - DAEI). They coordinate policy in collaboration with Central Administrative departments (Directions de l'administration centrale) and the Regional Departments for Cultural Affairs (Directions régionales des affaires culturelles - DRAC) and in liaison with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Ministère des Affaires Étrangères).

The Department for European and International Affairs prepares the basis for the Ministry in terms of bilateral relations with foreign states, the institutions of the European Union; and multilateral initiatives, for example: UNESCO, Réseau International sur la Politique Culturelle, Conseil de l'Europe, Organisation Mondiale du Commerce, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, etc.

F r e n c h a s s o c i a t i o n f o r a r t i s t i c p r o g r a m m e s

The Association française d'action artistique – AFAA, established in 1922, facilitates the cultural exchange policies defined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture. The AFAA also works in partnership with numerous local and regional authorities in France (municipalities, départements, regions). It carries out distribution initiatives and

implements cooperation, co-direction, training and residential projects around the world. It is also coordinates foreign cultural seasons in France.

P o l i c y f o c u s

France is clearly preoccupied with the question of cultural diversity as evidenced by many statements on official websites. External activities therefore tend to support the promotion of French culture and language in an increasingly globalised world and these can be seen in four concrete actions:

- reception and training of foreign cultural practitioners and artists;
- support for French cultural industries (cinema, audiovisual, musical industries, publishing, architecture and heritage) (Unifrance for cinema, France Edition for books, Bureau export de la musique française, and a partnership with the Association française d'action artistique – AFAA);
- promotion of European cooperation;
- promotion of foreign cultures in France.

G e o g r a p h i c a l f o c u s

France is an international cultural player, operating worldwide. Though the French Foreign Ministry does not explicitly state its geographical priorities, one can glean a trend by analysing its bilateral cultural agreements, cultural programmes at home and abroad, and the locations of Institut Français and Alliance Français. From these indicators one can see at least that France's foreign cultural policy has a focus on the European Union and its neighbouring countries, above all in the South and the East¹⁰.

At the same time France maintains close cultural ties with its former Colonies in Sub-Saharan¹¹ Africa and in Asia¹² and shows an increased interest in India and China, as do many other EU Member States. Latin America seems to be lower down the scale¹³, as are Australia and New Zealand. However, North America, with the small exception of Canada, has less visibility in French external policies.

France is a member of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF). It is not clear if members of this organisation are geographical priorities for France as this is not clarified in any official French websites.

As is the case with other EU members, France shows an increased interest in presenting other cultures within its multicultural society at home. It has recently supported a broad spectrum of cultural events from Morocco, Algeria, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech Republic, Poland, Québec, China and Brazil.

H i g h l y r e c o m m e n d e d r e a d i n g

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This study presents and analyses external cooperation in the culture and audiovisual sectors of a number of states (including France) and the European institutions with third countries. New Member States and candidate countries for European Union membership are excluded from the category of "third" countries.

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E-Doc Link: http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/ministere_817/missions-organisations_823/index.html

The official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of France detailing its missions and policies.

Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, (2005) La promotion de la coopération européenne,
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Available in French. These documents aim to give an account of the implementation of cooperation and cultural action policies, to encourage reflection on current challenges in international cooperation and to increase awareness of France's international activities, particularly for the general public

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E-Doc Link: http://www.ifa.de/europa-akp/konferenz/download/eu_north.pdf
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DAEI, (2005) La promotion des cultures étrangères en France,
E-Doc Link: <http://www.culture.gouv.fr/culture/dai.htm>
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□ Alliance Français, (2005) Official website of the Alliance Français,
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Official website of the Alliance Français giving details of its programmes and its worldwide network.

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