COUNTRY PROFILES

Spain

The research into literature on Spain’s approach to international cultural policy suggests a positive attitude towards cooperation with other European countries. This is demonstrated particularly in Spain’s role in the Barcelona Process. However, Spain also enjoys its role as an interlocutor between EU Member States and other Spanish-speaking countries; particularly those with which it is involved through the Ibero-American States for Education, Science and Culture (Estados Iberoamericanos para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura -OEI).

It is important to note that Spain consists of seventeen autonomous communities, of which seven have their own languages. These communities enjoy autonomy in issues relating to their own regional culture and some have their own international cultural cooperation units (such as COPEC in Catalonia).

Ministry of Foreign affairs
At state level, the body responsible for international cultural cooperation is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y cooperacion – MAE). The Ministry claims to promote and support the diffusion of Spanish contemporary arts and culture in more than a hundred countries, spread throughout all continents. It also provides grants and support for foreign students and professionals wishing to study in Spain. It is responsible for the Instituto Cervantes, the mission of which is to teach and promote Spanish studies and to organise cultural activities mostly in collaboration with other agencies or host countries and to provide access to Spanish reading materials.

Ministry of Culture
Among the three sub-directorates of the Ministry of Culture, one is specifically dedicated to international cultural cooperation (Subdirección General de Cooperación Cultural Internacional) and there is now a closer cooperation between the two ministries.

State Corporation for Cultural Overseas Action
The Spain’s State Corporation for Overseas Cultural Action is a public institution, set up on 15 December 2000 as the result of a government agreement, for the organisation of international exhibitions and related activities.

It is promoted by the State and its aim is to carry out cultural projects of public interest, collaborating in all cases with international bodies and institutions.

Policy focus
Policy is focussed on the following aims:
• Participate in forums and international organisations, including the European Union, in the area of culture and in subjects related to culture;
• Organise activities that promote Spanish culture abroad and the cultures of other countries in Spain;
• Organise and manage the training and technical assistance in Spain of foreigners whose professional activity is developing in any cultural field.

Geographical focus
Spain is an international cultural player with focus on the EU Member States and non-EU neighbouring countries, particularly those situated in the Mediterranean. This is also reflected in the fact that it houses Institutos Cervantes in thirteen EU Member States and has signed 18 cultural agreements with EU countries. Further, one can see that the same applies for neighbouring non-EU countries.

Spain also boasts a number of events each year in support of the Euro-Mediterranean cause, the most notable of which was the Barcelona Forum which resulted in the Barcelona Process for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of culture and more recently the hosting of the Euro-Mediterranean congress in Barcelona (November, 2005).

In addition to its focus on a “wider Europe” Spain has a particular interest in Latin America especially for trade links in the audio-visual sector.

It maintains its cultural contacts with the USA, certain Asian countries, such as India, South Korea and Japan, and its former colony the Philippines.

Highly recommended reading


The study presents and analyses external cooperation in the culture and audiovisual sectors of a number of states (including Spain) 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.


A detailed report regarding international cultural cooperation giving information about central administration, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Secretary of State to the European Union, Secretary of State for cultural cooperation, Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI), Institute Cervantes, Fundación Carolina, Casa de América y Casa Asia, State Society for exterior cultural action (SEACEX), Ministry of Culture, Sub-secretary for Culture, General Direction for Fine Arts and Cultural Goods, General Direction for books, archives and Libraries, General Direction for Cooperation and Cultural Communication, Museo Nacional del Prado, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía, National Library, Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas and de la Música (INAEM), Instituto de la Cinematografía y de las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA), Sociedad Estatal de Conmemoraciones Culturales (SECC), Ministerio de Industria, Turismo y Comercio, Instituto Español de Comercio Exterior (ICEX), Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, Autonomous Communities, Structures, Government departments, Autonomous organisations, Case studies, International organisations, Local administration etc...


This is the official website of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Spain. It provides copies of all bilateral cultural agreements that have been signed. A power point presentation also gives more information about the Ministries policies and objectives. This website is only available in Spanish.


Official website of the Ministry of Culture, formed in 2000. This website gives fairly limited information but does give directions and brief details of the unit for international cultural cooperation.
Spain's overseas cultural action is conceived as a major undertaking involving the reflection on and diffusion of our country's collective memory along two major axes of activity. On the one hand, there is the mission to reflect the wealth and complexity of the history we share with other peoples, especially in Europe and America. On the other hand, our cultural action must provide the means to drive our current relations with those countries into the future...

E-Doc Link: http://www.aeci.es/unesco/c1.htm
Official website of the Spanish National Commission to UNESCO, celebrating more than fifty years membership of UNESCO.

Real Institut Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos, (2004) La política cultural en España,
E-Doc Link: http://profiles.culturalpolicies.net/down/spain-ol.pdf
Preliminary report available in Spanish for the Compendium of cultural policies: Outlines in chapter 2.4 Spain's international cultural cooperation. It identifies the main actors involved: Ministry for Culture, Ministry of External Affairs, the Technical Secretary General of the Ministry for Education and Science, Instituto Cervantes, La Sociedad Estatel para la Acción Cultural Exterior (SEACEX), Fundación Caralina, Casa de América de madris, Casa de Asia de Barcelona. It mentioned also the significant work of the autonomous governments in external cultural affairs. The autonomous government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Cataluña) created the Consorcio Catalán de promoción Exterior de la Cultura (COPEC)....

E-Doc Link: http://www.seacex.com/i_indexflash.htm
An overview of the programme of SECEX and the exhibitions that it has organised during the four-year period. Nineteen exhibitions were organised during the 2000-2004 period and have been exhibited in thirty-one cities in sixteen different countries.