

Transnational Cultural Policymaking in the European Union

PATRICIA DEWEY

ABSTRACT. Institutional design, structure, and processes in the European Union (EU) provide a fertile ground for studying a new model of intergovernmental and supranational cultural policymaking. In this article, the author provides a map and an analytical compass to assist researchers and practitioners in navigating the EU cultural policy labyrinth. She offers insight into how transnational cultural policymaking occurs in the EU by tracing the Culture Programme through the agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy decision, and policy implementation stages of the policy process. The author concludes by introducing an emerging process of institutionalized cultural policy transfer that appears to be developing through systematic and incremental policy transfer, policy learning, and policy convergence.

On May 10, 2007, the European Commission adopted a communication titled *A European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World* (2007a), which is the first common European strategy for culture in the European Union (EU). The EU does not officially have an explicit cultural policy, yet many transnational initiatives, actions, and programs that affect the cultural sector exist throughout Europe. The EU provides an excellent example of

Patricia Dewey is an assistant professor in the University of Oregon's arts and administration program and also serves as associate director for cultural policy with the UO Center for Community Arts and Cultural Policy. Her main research interests include international cultural policy, cultural development, and arts administration education. In the fall of 2006, she was a recipient of a Fulbright European Union Affairs Research Program Grant, and she is currently developing a book manuscript on the topic of EU cultural policy. She is the book review editor for JAMLS.

supranational and intergovernmental institutions involved in cultivating international understanding, fostering a shared sense of collective identity, advancing cross-cultural civic engagement, and contributing to regional economic development and competitiveness (Dewey 2007). The contributors to the spring 2007 issue of the *Journal of Arts Management, Law, and Society* provided an insightful introduction to understanding the current cultural policy context of the EU. In this article, I provide a structural overview of how cultural policymaking occurs in the EU.

My exploratory qualitative field research completed in fall 2006 revealed that few people know how to navigate the complicated maze of laws, institutions, policy actors, and affiliated organizations in this field.¹ As Rifkin puts it, “the Brussels’ governing machinery, say European Union (EU) supporters and critics alike, is a labyrinthine maze of bureaucratic red tape that frustrates even the most optimistic Europhiles” (2004, 14). In this article, I provide a map and an analytical compass that will assist researchers and practitioners in navigating the EU cultural policymaking labyrinth. Developing an understanding of transnational policymaking is also increasingly significant because of the potential implications for policy transfer, policy learning, and policy convergence at international, national, regional, and local cultural policy levels. As I argue, formal and informal processes of policy coordination currently taking place in the EU provide great insight into a regional system of policy learning and an emerging model of transnational cultural policymaking.

Many EU actions, programs, and activities affect, support, and involve the arts and culture sector of member states (European Commission 2007b). The Culture Programme (formerly named Culture 2000 in the 2000–2006 budget cycle) is recognized as the EU’s flagship program that is most directly linked to the Culture article (Article 151) in the consolidated Treaties on European Union and is most intentional in its support of European arts and culture. As such, and for purposes of clarification of a highly complex intergovernmental governance system, I focus exclusively on tracing the Culture Programme as it followed through the agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy decision, and policy implementation stages of the policy process. Policy evaluation, while a crucial final step in the cyclical policy process, will not be directly addressed in this article.

INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS OF EUROPEAN UNION POLICYMAKING

In their book chapter titled “Transnational Cultural Policy,” Miller and Yúdice (2002) briefly discuss a range of global and regional institutions that influence cultural policy: the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the General Agreement on Tariffs and

Trade (GATT), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), and the EU. The EU resembles a standard intergovernmental organization, that is, “a voluntary association of states in which many decisions are taken as a result of negotiations among the leaders of the states” (McCormick 2005, 5). The nature of cooperation among the member states, however, characterizes the EU as a supranational institution. Supranationalism is “a form of cooperation within which a new level of authority is created that is autonomous, above the state, and has powers of coercion that are independent of the state. Rather than being a meeting place for governments and making decisions on the basis of the competing interests of those governments, a supranational organization rises above individual state interests, and makes decisions on the basis of the interests of the whole” (McCormick 2005, 5). The EU may be characterized as either intergovernmental or supranational, depending on the institutional structure and processes associated with diverse policy areas. Significantly and systematically diverse modes of EU policymaking can be identified across issue areas (Pollack 2005; Wallace 2005). EU institutions’ powers and roles vary considerably, but Nugent has identified several general characteristics of EU policy processes. These features include “variable institutional roles and powers, compromises and linkages, inter-institutional cooperation, difficulties in effecting radical change, tactical maneuvering, and different speeds” (2006, 417). Richardson argues that the EU is a complex and unique policymaking system by stating that “[i]ts multinational and neo-federal nature, the extreme openness of decision-making to lobbyists, and the considerable weight of national politico-administrative elites within the process, create an unpredictable and multi-level policymaking environment” (2006, 5).

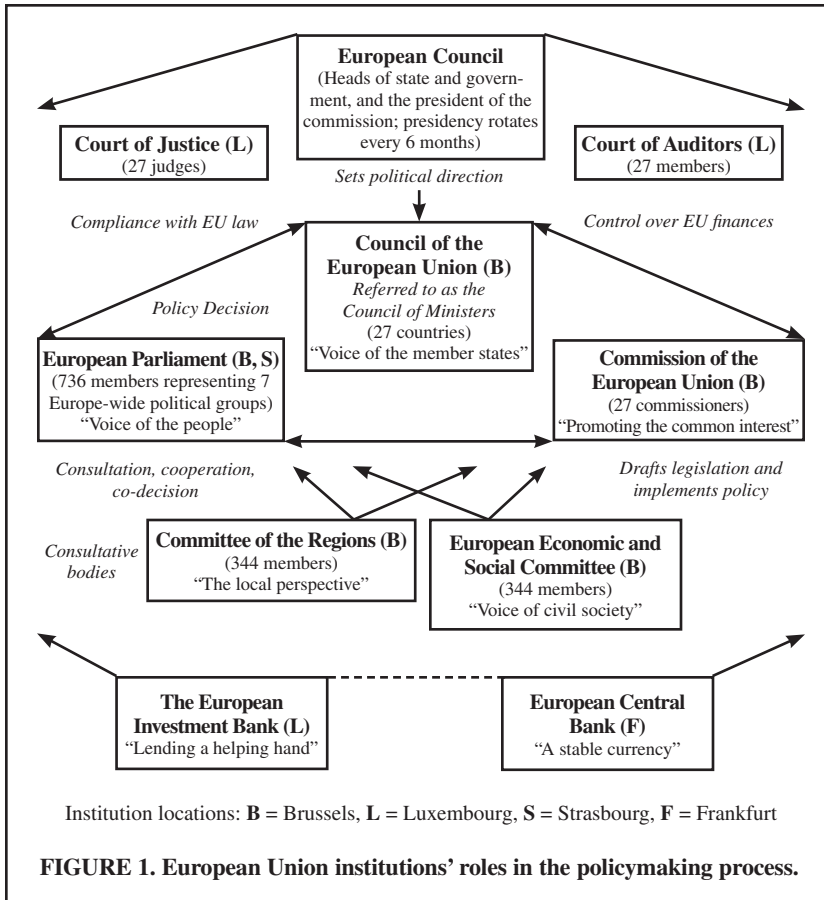
Policymaking in the EU involves a procedural logic that has become an embedded EU policy style. The everyday actions of key stakeholders, policy actors, and institutions may be best understood as “low politics,” which is where institutional governance systems and incremental policy development continue to function in the EU, despite recent enormous contextual changes (Richardson 2006). Most often, cultural policy in the EU involves soft law instruments (such as non-enforceable recommendations and decisions) as well as soft power (the ability to shape the preferences of others [Nye 2004]) in international relations. As a policy area in the EU, culture is officially a competence shared with the member states, although EU-level competence in culture is negligible and restricted to certain actions as outlined in Article 151 of the Treaty on European Union. Member states hold authority for their own cultural policy development, and the EU may not dictate harmonization of cultural policy at the nation-state level. That said, as an intergovernmental system, the EU provides an opportunity in which member states can learn more about each others’ national cultural policymaking. At the transnational

level, the EU presents a forum where policy learning can turn into policymaking that involves policy transfer, adaptation, and/or convergence. The EU is legally restricted from exerting direct, active cultural policy influence on member states. How, then, do EU-level policies, programs, and actions affecting the European cultural sector come into existence? Further, why should cultural sector leaders seek to understand this nascent transnational cultural policymaking system? And finally, how might one best navigate the complex EU cultural policy labyrinth?

An analytical focus aimed at understanding complex cultural policymaking systems and structures might best be approached by analyzing the independent stages of the policymaking process: policy agenda-setting, formulation, decision, and implementation. As Richardson (2006) suggests, the analytical focus would shift according to the policy stage under investigation. In the agenda-setting stage, it may be most useful to analyze the transnational epistemic communities that are the key players in influencing the policy agenda. In the policy formulation stage, the roles of the transnational advocacy coalitions, policy communities, and issue networks should be analyzed. In the policy decision and policy implementation stages, an analytical approach using institutional analysis and organizational behavior may be most appropriate.

THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS

The European Union, in a nutshell, is “a family of democratic European countries, committed to working together for peace and prosperity. It is not a State intended to replace existing States, nor is it just an organisation for international cooperation. The EU is, in fact, unique. Its member states have set up common institutions to which they delegate some of their sovereignty so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at [the] European level” (Europa 2007a). The general roles of the EU institutions are identified in figure 1.² The European Council sets the political direction of the European Union through the summits of heads of state and government that occur twice a year as part of the six-month rotating presidency of the EU. The institutional triad of the Commission of the European Union (often referred to as the European Commission), the European Parliament, and the Council of the European Union (more commonly referred to as the Council of Ministers) is crucial to understand in analyzing the policymaking process. The specific rules and procedures for EU policymaking in areas of competency held by the EU are detailed in the Treaty on European Union. Every proposal for an EU law, program, or action is based on a specific article in the treaty, and is referred to as the “legal basis” of the proposal. The specific article determines whether the legislative procedure of consultation, assent, or co-decision must be followed. The European Commission generally proposes



legislation and the Council of Ministers and European Parliament pass the laws (Guéguen 2006; Europa 2007b)

Several articles in the Treaty on European Union are directly applicable to the European arts and culture sector, but I focus on the ways in which EU policymaking occurs based on Article 151, the culture article. The specific EU programs titled Culture 2000 (in the 2000–2006 budget cycle) and the Culture Programme (in the 2007–2013 budget cycle) can be traced directly to the legal basis provided in Article 151 (see appendix). Clause 5 of Article 151 clearly specifies that the rules of the co-decision procedure between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament must be followed (this procedure is detailed in Article 251), and that the council's decision must be unanimous. The commission proposes legislation and the Committee of the Regions (COR) must be consulted in the decision-making process. In addition, Clause

5 is highly restrictive in nature, as it specifies that only soft law instruments (that is, recommendations, incentive measures, and also that no harmonization of member state laws and regulations may take place in the field of culture) may be implemented at the EU level.

The EU institutions of greatest significance in understanding the EU decision-making process regarding its Culture Programme in the stages of agenda-setting, policy formulation, and policy decision are the commission, the parliament, the Council of Ministers, and (to a far lesser extent) COR. At the implementation stage it is also important to understand the structure and operations of the Education, Audiovisual, and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Each of these EU institutions has key actors and units involved in cultural policy. While the field of culture is becoming broader and includes instrumental engagement in areas such as citizenship, economic development, social policy, and education, the analytical focus of this article is solely on structure of the policymaking process that resulted in the implementation of the Culture Programme. Limiting this article's focus to this single program helps to provide a clearer framework for assessing the institutional design, structure, and processes of the EU vis-à-vis cultural policy development.

The commission is the key EU institution involved in policy formulation and implementation. However, different functions involved in the cultural policymaking process are executed by different units and personnel associated with the commission. The units are located a significant distance from each other in Brussels. The commission proposes, executes, and manages policy. The commission is the most supranational of the EU institutions; all the civil servants working in the commission are considered to be "denationalized" and "neutral." In its role as "Guardian of the Treaties," the European Commission has political and administrative power (Guéguen 2006, 24–25). The structure of the commission in the field of cultural policy is illustrated in figure 2.

The motor of EU cultural policy development is the Directorate General for Education and Culture (EAC). The Directorate General has the administrative and technical competence to initiate, draft, execute, and enforce a policy regarding the funding of different types of cultural activity. With its hierarchical and highly specialized structure, it is relatively easy to identify the key personnel who drive policy development in the field. The director general for EAC (a senior civil servant) is supported by the director of Direction C, Culture and Communication, under whom is the head of Unit for Culture. Under this individual's leadership, there are approximately five staff members who are involved in cultural policy development every day. These civil servants conduct the initial drafting of EU cultural policy.

The commissioner responsible for culture (a political appointee) oversees the Directorate General. The Directorate General's staff work closely with the staff in the Commission for Education, Training, Culture and Youth. The

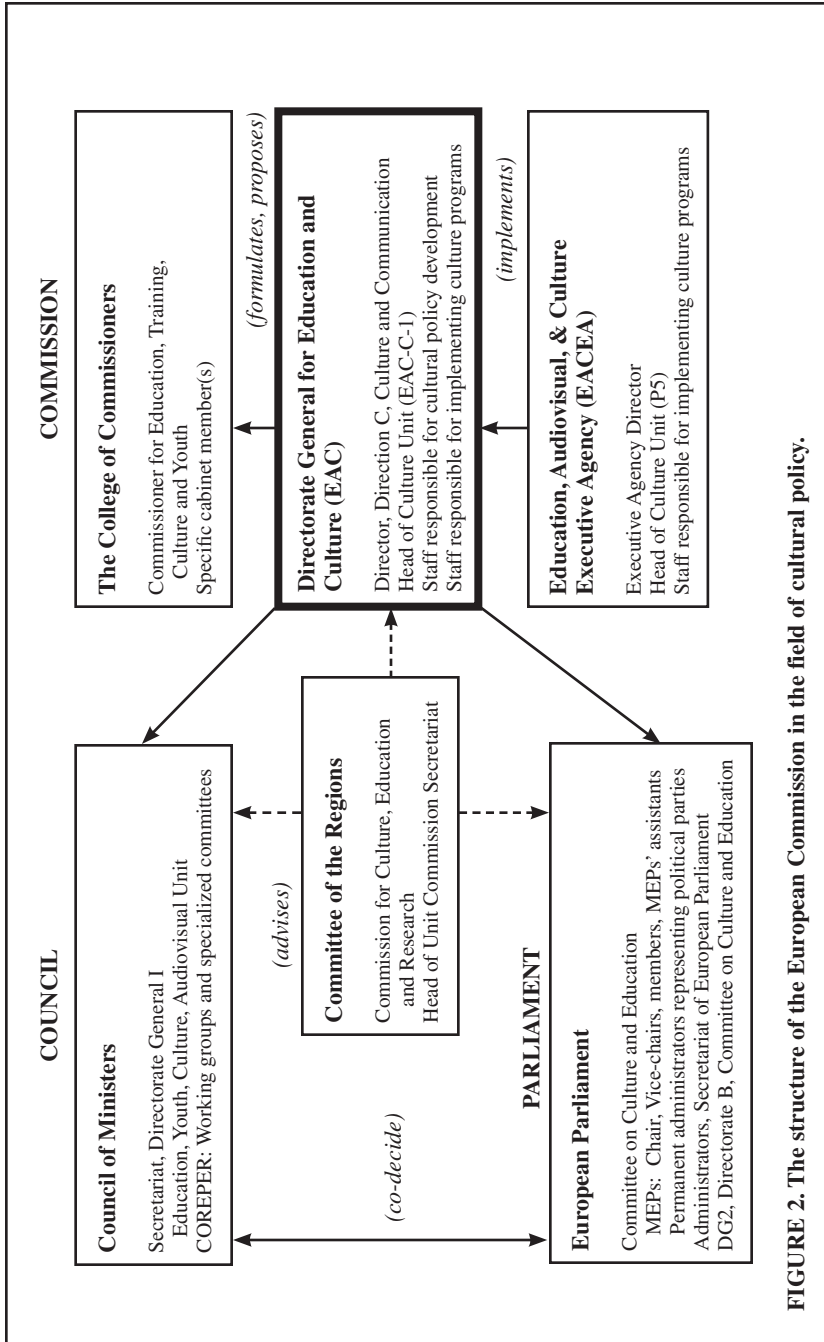


FIGURE 2. The structure of the European Commission in the field of cultural policy.

commissioner in the field of culture has a cabinet member who holds cultural policy in his or her portfolio of responsibilities. Although the commissions are specialized, the policy decisions of the College of Commissioners are collective. Policies the Directorate General drafts in cooperation with the field-specific commission are approved and formally proposed by the Commission of the European Communities as a single entity.

The commission also implements policy. In the cultural field, implementation involves personnel working in both the Directorate General for EAC and the EACEA. The new Executive Agency, which was established in 2005, was based on a 2004 proposal for a new “rationalized management” model for management of certain EU programs. The Executive Agency is responsible for the day-to-day operations of various programs, such as the Culture Programme. The head of Unit for Culture reports to the director of the Executive Agency, and several staff members support cultural program implementation in the agency’s culture unit.

Although it is an officially independent institution, the agency reports to the Directorate General, and each operational unit in the agency has a “mirror unit” in the Directorate General. Although a close relationship between these institutions is depicted in organizational charts, the agency is actually a significant distance from the Directorate General and commission offices. Moreover, the clear distinction made between responsibilities for policy development that occur in the Directorate General and responsibilities for program administration that occur in the agency does not seem to acknowledge the important policymaking power that occurs during implementation. Further, EU cultural programs of a “symbolic” nature, such as the European Capitals of Culture Programme or the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, are administered by civil servants in the Directorate General, rather than in the Executive Agency. The relationship between the three divisions of the commission working in the cultural policy field is unclear to external observers and needs further investigation.

The Council of the European Union, most commonly referred to as the Council of Ministers, holds the main policy decision-making authority in the EU. The most intergovernmental of the EU institutions, the Council of Ministers amends or adopts—alone or jointly with the European Parliament—proposals from the European Commission, to which it delegates the power to implement decisions (Guéguen 2006). The council is composed of nine technical councils, which are termed *configurations*; one of these is “Education, Youth and Culture.” Personnel representing the cultural ministry of each EU member state participate in this council.

These civil servants from the member states compose the permanent representatives committee (referred to as COREPER, an acronym from its French name), which is charged with preparing council decisions. Roughly

250 working groups and specialized committees constitute COREPER, and the technical and political analyses these groups conduct provide a basis for reaching intergovernmental compromises and preliminary agreements on policies under consideration within the policy area's respective technical council. The secretariat of the Council of Ministers also plays a key role in informing policy decisions. The relevant unit of the secretariat in the field of cultural policy is "Education, Youth, Culture, Audiovisual" and falls under the auspices of the Directorate General I. During each member state's presidency, the member state and its COREPER operators have significant capacity to drive the agenda and timeline of meetings in accordance with each member state's strategic priorities.

The European Parliament is increasingly powerful in European policymaking processes. Where previously its power was limited to simple consultation, the parliament has transitioned over the years to now hold important authority as co-decider on many vital areas of EU policy. The parliament consists of seven Europe-wide political groups. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are elected by direct universal suffrage by varying electoral procedures; an MEP is elected for a five-year term in office. Each political party has numerous means of policy influence at its disposal, as political parties have resources and specialized permanent administrators who prepare the agenda and the work of the committees and plenary sessions. The twenty parliamentary committees—each has one chairman, three vice-chairmen, and a variable number of MEPs—prepare the debates of the parliament. In the cultural policy field, a Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) is supported by the work of four permanent administrators, representing each of the four principal political groups in the European Parliament. The committee's work is also supported by civil servants working in the European Parliament's Secretariat. Generally, the committee is perceived as being rather weak, and it does not tend to attract participation by powerful MEPs.

It is required in EU cultural policy development that COR be consulted on policy proposals submitted by the commission to the European Parliament and Council of Ministers. COR is identified as the guardian of the subsidiarity and proximity principles and ensures the representation of local and regional interests in the EU's decision-making process. However, member states are still responsible for regional policy, and COR remains largely an advisory body that is not particularly influential. Within COR, six specialized commissions composed of COR members study the proposals on which COR is consulted and draft opinions. The permanent secretariat of the Commission for Culture, Education, and Research collects and represents local interests at the EU level. The significance of this role, which is currently negligible, may increase in importance as municipalities and regions engage more actively in EU policymaking.

In sum, the main EU institutional constellation involved in cultural policy formulation and implementation is depicted in figure 2, which essentially illustrates an EU cultural policy sub-government. A more thorough discussion of the European Commission's involvement in implementation of the Culture Programme is provided later in this article.

I now analyze the institutions and policy actor behavior involved in *low politics* development and the construction of *soft law* instruments in four stages: agenda-setting, policy formulation, policy decision, and policy implementation. This analysis concentrates on the institutions, organizations, and stakeholders strategically involved in formulating and implementing policy, rather than the actual content of EU cultural policy. The EU cultural policy community includes all these stakeholders, and the precise constellation of issue networks varies according to the policy under consideration. I use the development of the new Culture Programme for the 2007–2013 EU budget cycle as the focus of this analysis.

Stage 1: Agenda-Setting

It may be helpful to frame the structure of agenda-setting by looking at the roles and functions of the transnational epistemic community. I first focus on the mobilization of stakeholder participation as the ever-evolving streams of policies, politics, and problems converge (Kingdon 1984). Questions that frame this analysis focus on the individuals and organizations that have an interest in EU cultural policy development; the identification of the framework within which these stakeholders are organized and mobilized; and the mapping of potential avenues of cooperation in coalitions and alliances within this policy network. Figure 3 provides a schematic that profiles the mobilization of stakeholder participation in EU cultural policy agenda-setting.

Several key examples of specific organizations and initiatives in each of the stakeholder groups identified in figure 3 provide more insight into specific agenda-setting actions that led to the ongoing development of the Culture Programme. While each of these example organizations and initiatives needs extensive elaboration, only a brief snapshot is provided.

International/Intergovernmental Organizations

Among the key major intergovernmental organizations to consider are UNESCO and the Council of Europe. The UNESCO Convention on Cultural Diversity, which representatives from the European Commission negotiated en bloc, must be discussed. This negotiation was highly significant as it was the first time the member states of the EU negotiated with an international organization as a single group. The European Community and twelve EU

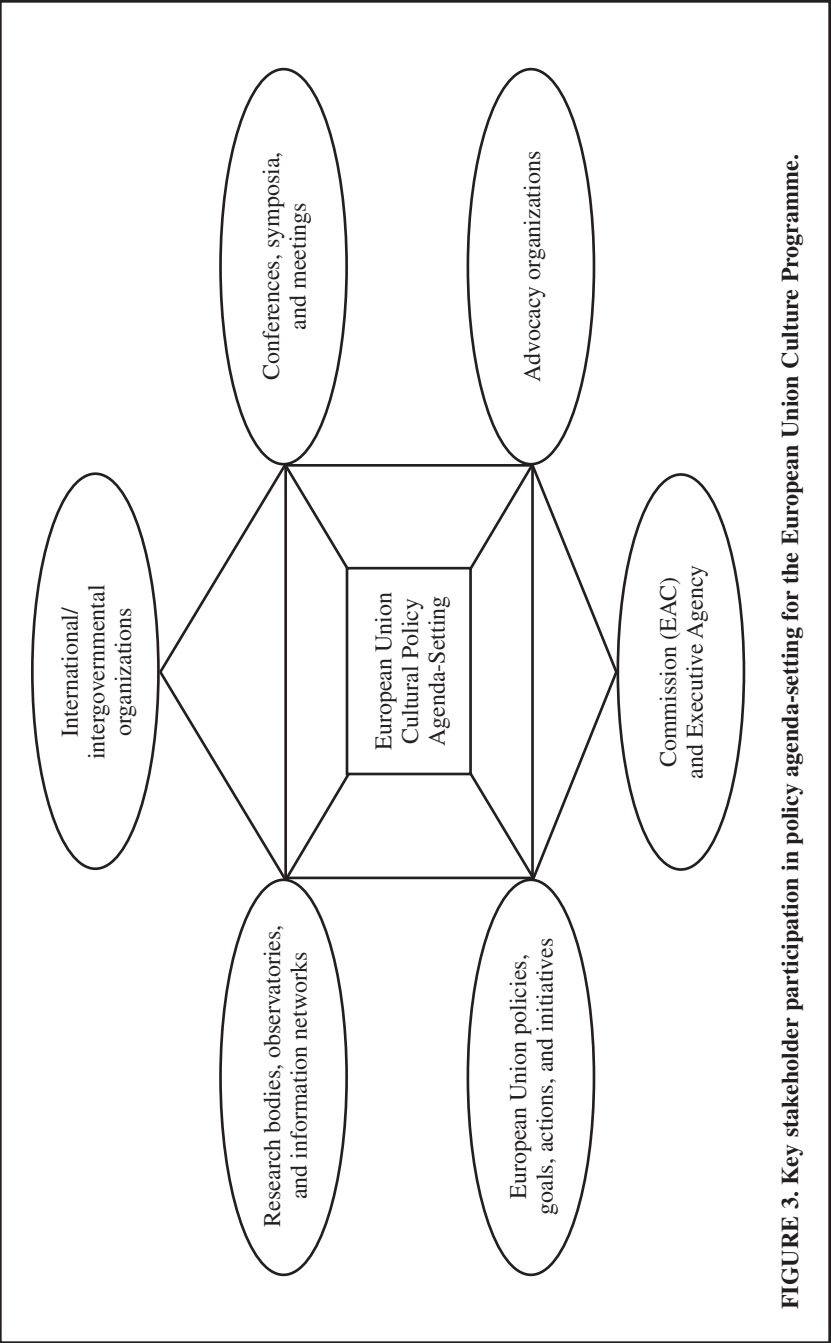


FIGURE 3. Key stakeholder participation in policy agenda-setting for the European Union Culture Programme.

member states ratified the convention on December 18, 2006. The Strasbourg-based Council of Europe (a separate institution from the EU) needs additional research in how its cultural programs and initiatives have led to and may work in consort with EU cultural policy.³ Various OECD initiatives exploring and advocating the cultural dimension of development also require further investigation. The intersection of EU cultural policy with other international organizations will likely increase in the future, as an increased focus on the role of culture in foreign affairs is anticipated in accordance with the objectives proposed in the commission's May 2007 *Communication on Culture* (2007a).

Research Bodies, Observatories, and Information Networks

Many research-based and information-exchange organizations exist in Europe at the local, national, regional, and pan-European levels. Each organization serves a slightly different constituency, although there is much cross-over among the individuals involved. The most significant networks with a Europe-wide focus include ERICarts, which works with the Council of Europe on its annually updated Compendium project, and Cultural Information and Research Centres Liaison in Europe (CIRCLE). Lab for Culture, Interarts, the Budapest Observatory, and ECUMEST are also considered important regional cultural policy information networks. A highly under-used information network is the Cultural Contact Points network, which the commission established as a tool for information and liaison purposes and to help implement the Culture Programme in each member state.

Conferences, Symposia, and Meetings

Innumerable forums and meetings occur on a regular basis to discuss EU cultural policy, but a recent series of large conferences is especially worthy of identification. The "A Soul for Europe" pan-European cultural policy conferences began in Berlin in November 2004, with subsequent follow-up conferences in Budapest and Madrid. A second "A Soul for Europe" conference occurred in Berlin in November 2006, and a major conference focusing on EU cultural policy occurred in June 2007. The European Cultural Foundation also organized a major "Sharing Cultures" conference held in Rotterdam in July 2004. Conferences and symposia provide meeting places for scholars, advocacy groups, policymakers, and practitioners. As key communication and networking avenues for the transnational epistemic community, they help define cultural policy issues and articulate the policy agenda. Although conferences and meetings that focus on European cultural policy are frequent and sometimes high-profile occurrences, the process by which and the extent to which these gatherings influence policymaking require further study and analysis.

Transnational Cultural Policymaking in the EU

Advocacy Organizations

Although systematic transnational cultural policy advocacy and lobbying efforts are nascent at the moment, a close link in Europe among research bodies, observatories, information networks, and advocacy organizations exists. The commission identified the European Forum for Arts and Heritage (EFAH, which recently re-named itself CultureAction Europe) as a main voice for representing the cultural sector. The European Cultural Foundation (ECF) is also an important organization in pan-European cultural policy development, although it often seems to work as a “behind the scenes” policy broker. An influential Europe-wide advocacy campaign from 2004 to 2006 was the “70-cents for Culture” campaign, jointly conceived and implemented by EFAH and the ECF. This campaign raised awareness among key public stakeholders of the low level of funding for cultural initiatives as part of the European project. Europa Nostra, which is a strong and elite advocacy network that focuses on the heritage sector, is also an important advocacy organization.

EU Policies, Actions, Initiatives

EU cultural policy development takes place as integrated with other—far more influential— institutional developments and goals of the EU. One finds that soft cultural objectives are constantly being embedded into hard objectives of regional, economic, and political union through a familiar process of instrumentalization. Of particular importance to EU cultural policy development are the Lisbon Agenda, which focuses on developing a competitive knowledge-based economy; the Bologna Process, which focuses on harmonizing higher education; and developments in Cohesion Policy, which strongly affect funding amounts associated with EU structural funds. In addition, there is much increased attention placed on “cultural integration” by EU political elites in the wake of the failed Constitution. A strong drive toward developing a more visible EU presence internationally is also crucial to consider in cultural policy development. Although such influences are often more contextual in nature, all these EU policies, actions, and initiatives have programs, personnel, and budgets that intersect with EU cultural policymaking.

Commission and Executive Agency

As identified in figure 2, commission and executive agency civil servants who are responsible for cultural policy development and program implementation play a crucial role in EU cultural policy agenda-setting. Over the years, the commission has commissioned and collected many reports and analyses that inform the design of the new culture programs. A few examples

include a report on *Cultural Cooperation in Europe* (2003); the *Study on the European Cities and Capitals of Culture and the European Cultural Months* (2004); and *The Economy of Culture in Europe* (2006). Extensive input from reports, as well as information-collection initiatives and meetings with cultural sector representatives, contribute significant content to initial drafts of legislation, for which the commission is responsible. The *Inventory* and the *Communication on Culture* released by the commission in May 2007 are imperative to view as soft law instruments that set the agenda for ongoing cultural policy development with an aim toward formulating policy for the next (post-2013) EU budget cycle. This current commission initiative is discussed later.

Stage 2 and Stage 3: EU Cultural Policy Formulation and Policy Decision

In the second and third stages of EU cultural policy development, it may be helpful to analyze the policy process by looking at the behavior of the policy community, the issue network, transnational advocacy coalitions, and key EU institutions involved in policy formulation and decision making. While all the stakeholders depicted in figure 3 play important roles in the cultural policy community, different groups of stakeholders identified in figure 3 may be identified as an issue network, depending on the specific cultural policy issue under discussion. Building on agenda-setting framed by the policy community, the European Commission (that is, mid-level cultural policy development personnel in the Directorate General) plays the key role in drafting policy proposals. Policy formulation continues through consultative input from COR (and sometimes from the European Economic and Social Committee). A policy decision is negotiated between the Council of Ministers and the parliament. The role of *comitology* (formal EU committee procedure) is very important as the legislation under review and consideration goes through proper policy decision-making channels in each EU institution.⁴ The ongoing meetings, discussions, strategic steps, and low-level negotiations that occur every day among civil servants in Brussels are crucial in ushering EU cultural policy from the initial proposal through revision and conciliation to the final adoption of legislation.

Cultural matters within the EU require the *co-decision procedure* (Article 251) and *unanimous agreement* (Article 151). While the co-decision process has become standard for most policy areas involved in European integration (and reflects the ever-increasing power of the parliament), culture is one of few areas that still requires a unanimous decision by the Council of Ministers. A synthesis of EU cultural policy decision-making procedures (based on Article 151) is depicted in figure 4. It is mainly civil servants,

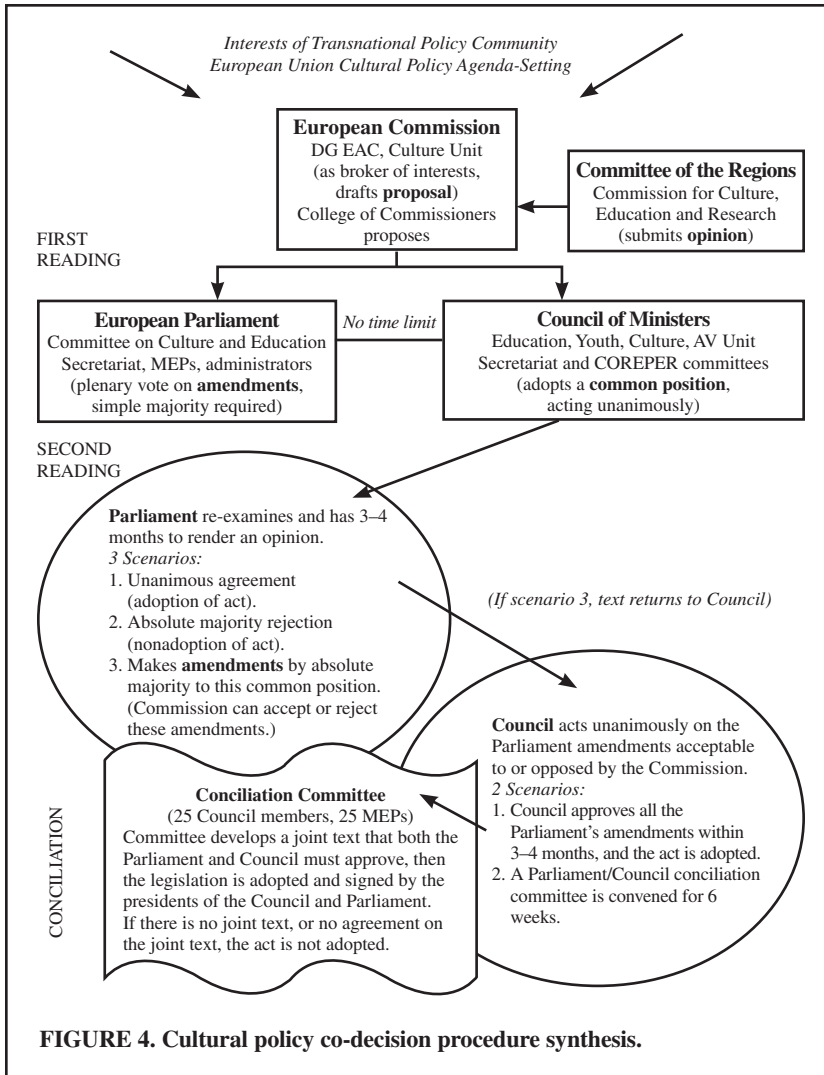


FIGURE 4. Cultural policy co-decision procedure synthesis.

administrators, and various assistants employed in each of these institutions who draft policy, broker interests, negotiate, reconcile differences, and ensure accuracy of policy language. Policy formulation and decision making develop simultaneously throughout this process, and diverse stakeholder interests enter into the deliberations. Policy formulation and co-decision procedures generally require several years to move through the required stages of decision making.

As a brief illustration of this policymaking process, the timeline involved in establishing the Culture Programme for the 2007–2013 budget cycle can be traced through figure 4 as follows. The initial commission proposal was submitted in summer 2004. The parliament and the council did a first reading, and initial amendments were made during 2005. With this groundwork laid, it was necessary to postpone further action on this policy, since the initial EU budget for 2007–2013 was not passed on schedule. In spring 2006, during the Austrian EU presidency, the council adopted a common position on the proposal. A decision on the EU budget was reached in 2006, which allowed an agreement on the budgetary terms and negotiation of the final amendments to the Culture Programme legislation. In fall 2006, the parliament and the council were involved in the second reading, and reached an agreement on the establishment of the Culture Programme for 2007–2013. The supranational decision made to establish the Culture Programme for the EU's 2007–2013 budget cycle is effectively a conjoint authorization and appropriation for a seven-year cultural “policy” (or “action” or “initiative,” as most European scholars and practitioners term it). The documentation associated with this decision reveals the complexity of EU policymaking in combining policy content and resource allocation into one piece of legislation. Because of the late notification of the program for potential program recipients, a conditional call for proposals was published in late October 2006. The official call for proposals was published in January 2007.

Stage 4: EU Cultural Policy Implementation

With the policy decision made and published regarding the Culture Programme, the responsibility for implementing and evaluating the program returns to the European Commission. Officially, the decision has established the Culture Programme with €400 million of funding to be implemented from January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2013. As the program's Web site states:

The general objective of the programme shall be to enhance the cultural area common to Europeans through the development of cultural cooperation between the creators, cultural players and cultural institutions of the countries taking part in the programme, with a view to encouraging the emergence of European citizenship.

The specific objectives of the programme are:

1. To promote the transnational mobility of people working in the cultural sector;
2. To encourage the transnational circulation of works and cultural and artistic products;
3. To encourage intercultural dialogue (Education Audiovisual 2007).

The Culture Programme supports culture through three initiatives. The first initiative (approximately 77 percent of the budget) supports cultural actions designated as multiannual cooperation projects, cooperation measures, and special actions. The second initiative (approximately 10 percent of the budget) supports bodies active at the European level in the field of culture. The third initiative (approximately 5 percent of the budget) supports analyses and information dissemination activities. The remaining 8 percent goes to program administration.

The EU's new Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) administers the Culture Programme. The EACEA has two parent Directorates General: the Directorate General EAC, which is responsible for the majority of the programs implemented by the agency, and the Directorate General Information Society and Media, for which the agency is responsible for administering the MEDIA Plus and MEDIA Training programs. The agency has a steering committee, is financially autonomous, and is authorized to manage specific programs with specific budgets. The EACEA contains eight operational units and two support units with functions such as human resources, communications, and accounting.

EU cultural policy program implementation is highly complex. Many EU initiatives involve support of the cultural sector or involve a significant cultural dimension, even if the policy is not specifically designed to do so (European Commission 2007b). The Culture Programme is the most directly linked policy action to Article 151 of the Treaty on European Union, but much more EU funding is available to the cultural sector through other programs. The considerable EU resources invested in cultural projects from these other policies and programs have never been comprehensively mapped. The diverse EU policies, initiatives, and programs impacting the cultural sector throughout Europe require a much more detailed investigation, analysis, and discussion.

INSTITUTIONALIZED CULTURAL POLICY TRANSFER IN THE EU

Concurrent with the launch of the Culture Programme in the 2007–2013 budget cycle, the diverse cultural sector stakeholders have started to gradually and carefully establish a proactive pan-European cultural strategy that may become a full-fledged policy agenda. The outcome of this agenda-setting and policy formulation procedure has been a new soft law instrument, titled the *Communication from the Commission on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World* (commonly referred to as the *Communication on Culture*), which the commission published on May 10, 2007 (2007a). On November 16, 2007, the Culture Council of the Council of Ministers endorsed this communication. They also agreed to introduce a more structured system of cooperation and concrete priorities based on the commission's proposals. In general, the council endorses three major objectives that aim to form a common cultural

strategy for the European institutions, the member states, and the cultural and creative sector. These objectives are the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; the promotion of culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth, employment, innovation, and competitiveness; and the promotion of culture as a vital element in the EU's international relations (European Commission 2007a).⁵

Of particular interest to the analysis of EU policymaking processes is the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) being formally introduced in the cultural field through the implementation of the *Communication on Culture*. As Pollack (2005) points out, the OMC is being increasingly used to address policy areas—such as education and training, youth, and social policy—that have a limited and restrictive scope of EU competence. “Instead of complying with rules, national actors are expected to widen their ideational horizon due to the exposure to European or neighbour country discourses and to reconsider previously held beliefs, expectations and preferences. Europeanisation may take place because the EU had provided an arena for the exchange of ideas and shaped a discourse by identifying general goals or principles, disseminating information and pointing out examples of ‘best practice’” (Lenschow 2006, 66). The OMC is essentially an institutionalized form of policy learning that may result in policy transfer or coordination. The potential long-term effects of implementation of a pan-European OMC are certainly worthy of future study and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

The EU's institutional design, structure, and processes offer excellent examples of intergovernmental and supranational cultural policymaking. While the direct, intentional impact of the EU on member states' cultural policies may be negligible, it is imperative to consider the role of existing transnational policy systems as regional, national, and local policies evolve. The influence of the international sphere on the domestic sphere is of paramount importance in analyzing nascent forms of multilevel governance, such as those now existing in the EU. In the transnational EU environment, the evolving system of institutionalized cross-national policy learning may prove to be essential to effective long-term cultural policy development. It is beyond the scope of this article to assess the potential impact of EU-level cultural policy on Europe's arts and culture sector, but the analytical map and compass I have offered should assist in exploring this complex labyrinth for years to come.

KEYWORDS

comparative cultural policy, European Union institutions, European Union policy, policy transfer

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NOTES

1. While conducting field research in Europe with the support of a Fulbright European Union Affairs Research Program Grant in fall 2006, I visited key cultural policy actors and stakeholders during a pivotal planning phase for the launch of new cultural actions with the EU's 2007–2013 budget cycle and during development of the commission's *Communication on Culture*. My exploratory qualitative research was composed of roughly forty interviews with key informants as well as extensive observation and document analysis.

2. The ideas of Daniel Guéguen (2006) were highly influential in conceptualizing the schematics that appear in this article.

3. Founded in 1949, the Council of Europe is composed of forty-seven member states and "seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals" (mission statement at www.coe.int 2007). The goal of fostering cultural cooperation is addressed through the Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport (see www.coe.int for more information about the Council of Europe 2007).

4. More information about *comitology* and other frequently used EU terms can be found on the helpful Eurojargon lexicon available on http://www.europa.eu/abc/eurojargon/index_en.htm.

5. Although the strategic objectives listed in the *Communication on Culture* are certainly worthy of extensive critical analysis, space limitations require me to focus on the EU policymaking process.

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APPENDIX

ARTICLE 151 OF THE CONSOLIDATED VERSION OF THE TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

1. 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.
2. Action by the Community shall be aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in the following areas:
 - improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;
 - conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
 - noncommercial cultural exchanges;
 - artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the sphere of culture, in particular the Council of Europe.
4. The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures.
5. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council:
 - acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 251 and after consulting the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States. The Council shall act unanimously throughout the procedure referred to in Article 251;
 - acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

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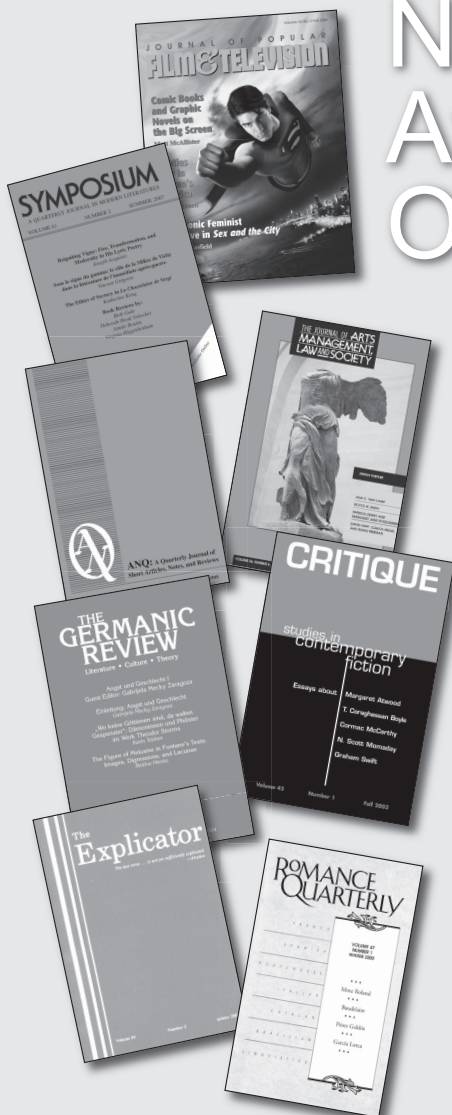
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