

**00:00 – 00:55**

Valentina Riccardi: Good afternoon from Asia. Apologies for the slight delay, but we had some technical issues to start with. So we are going to start now. Thank you for joining us. My name is Valentina, I'm the Director of the Culture Department at the Asia-Europe Foundation. And I'm delighted to be here today with you, and with our speakers to have a conversation on cultural diplomacy, on rethinking cultural diplomacy and looking at innovative approaches and collaborative strategies.

I will immediately give the floor to our newly appointed Executive Director, Ambassador Stoczyńska. Good afternoon Ambassador, for some welcome remarks. And then after that, we will jump into the discussion. The floor is yours, Ambassador.

**00:56 – 05:14**

Ambassador Stoczyńska: Thank you very much, Valentina.

Welcome you all here. I have to say that before my speech, I would like to say that, cultural diplomacy is very close to my heart as a diplomat. I use this, let's say, cultural diplomacy as a tool to bring closer relations with my partners in different countries and it always worked.

So, I really think the role of the cultural diplomacy is more and more important. But coming back to my official speech, which was prepared by the team of Valentina. Thank you guys, as I am a new person. So it's always very helpful to have something prepared.

So I would like to say, good afternoon to distinguished guests, speakers, participants. It is really my great pleasure and honor to welcome all of you to this important webinar on 'Rethinking Cultural Diplomacy: Innovative Approaches and Collaborative Strategies'.

I am very delighted to be here today as the new Executive Director of ASEF and ASEF plays a vital role in fostering connections between Asia and Europe through cultural diplomacy. As many of you know, ASEF is a bridge between governments, civil society, cultural institutions and arts communities from across both continents.

Our role as an intermediary is essential in connecting all actors involved in cultural diplomacy, helping to create dialogues, exchange ideas and facilitate cooperation between cultures that are as diverse as they are rich in history and traditions.

ASEF serves as a platform where this partnership can flourish, addressing both global and regional challenges through culture. Today's webinar is directly linked to our ongoing commitment to this very mission.

It builds upon the insights generated by [ASEF LinkUp | Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab](#), a unique initiative aimed at advancing cultural cooperation between Asia and Europe. ASEF LinkUp provides a laboratory for experimentation where cultural professionals, policymakers and diplomats work together to explore innovative ways of deepening cultural diplomacy.

In its [second edition held last June in Prague](#), 18 participants developed a series of recommendations that we will further explore today, insights on how cultural diplomacy can be more collaborative, inclusive and impactful.

Through initiatives like ASEF LinkUp, we strive to ensure that culture remains central to the Asia Europe dialogue, not just as a shared value, but as a practical tool for mutual understanding and sustainable development. ASEF's role is to facilitate this conversation, act as a catalyst for action and bring together diverse voices and expertise from across both regions.

I encourage all of you to fully engage in today's discussion, sharing your expertise and reflecting on how we can collectively implement the future of cultural diplomacy.

Together, we can enhance our shared efforts to strengthen cultural ties between Asia and Europe, fostering mutual understanding and cooperation. So thank you once again for being here and I look forward to the meaningful exchanges. Thank you so much.

#### **05:15 – 07:42**

Valentina: Thank you so much Ambassador Stoczyńska for this introduction. And as you mentioned, I think today's webinar really builds on the exchange that we initiated with ASEF LinkUp, the project on cultural diplomacy.

Maybe a few words on this before we introduce our speakers. So the ASEF LinkUp started in 2023, and it was meant to provide really a meeting space for government and independent arts sector to meet, to discuss, to exchange ideas and then to reflect on their respective roles in shaping the future of cultural diplomacy. Because we know that it's not anymore about governments only, but it's really about as many actors as possible involved in cultural exchanges to talk to each other and work together.

So today's group of speakers includes two of the representatives, the participants that were in the 2024 edition of ASEF Link Up, as well as representatives of the government sector, cultural networks and universities in Asia and Europe. And with their help, we will reflect on how the principles and ways of working highlighted in the report can be applied to the current landscape of cultural diplomacy.

So two of the main questions that we will address will be how can we bridge the gap between the independent arts sector, government, civil society, as we move forward in the future of cultural diplomacy. And what practical steps can we take to integrate recommendations that are generated from the [report of the Lab](#)?

Let's start with a round of introduction. I will just mention the names and then I will ask my speakers to say a few words about themselves and about their work.

Today with us we have **Giannalia Cogliandro**, the Secretary General of [ENCATC, the European Network on Cultural Management and Policy](#). **Dr Gaia Danese** from the EEAS, European External Action Service. **Malaya del Rosario**, an Arts and Creative Economy Consultant, **Clymene Cristoforou**, Arts producer, Cultural Policy Advisor and the Founding Director of [D6: Culture in Transit](#) and **Dr David Ocon**, interdisciplinary cultural anthropologist and Assistant Professor at SMU, Singapore Management University.

So maybe we start with a few words from all of you. Can I ask maybe Giannalia to start, since you are appearing on the top of my screen.

**07:43 – 08:44**

Giannalia Cogliandro: Thank you so much, Valentina. It's always a pleasure to be part of your initiative. We are linked by very strong ties and thank you so much for inviting ENCATC, the European Network on Cultural Management and Policy, to be part of this conversation.

We are of course, very involved in this topic. It's part of the DNA of the network. But also since 2012, we have started the ENCATC Academy on Culture Relations. So first provided in Brussels for diplomats and the Institutes of Culture based here, but slowly moving to open to the cultural sector. A very successful initiative and the next one will be in April in Bologna.

**08:45 – 10:39**

Valentina: Thank you, Giannalia. May I ask Gaia to join in. Hi Gaia, good morning.

Dr Gaia Danese: Morning. Hello. Good morning. It is really a pleasure to be with all of you this morning. I was listening to the Ambassador saying that cultural diplomacy was close to her heart. I can absolutely say the same thing. I'm a diplomat from a member state of the European Union, from Italy. I've been specialising in my 24 years career more and more on international cultural relations and cultural cooperation as a way to open, establish and nourish dialogues with different countries of the world at first bilaterally.

And then, I was called to join the EEAS for my expertise in a certain sense, to try to give coherence and more coordination, to all the engagement that has started in the European Union in this field, since the joint communication of the HR/VP (High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) and the Commission in 2016 and the subsequent documents that were approved via council conclusion towards a strategy for EU international cultural relations.

So I'm very happy to have the occasion today to exchange with you about the state of play, where we are going and what are the main strategic objectives. Also of course, in relation to geopolitical scenario that is very complicated, unstable and currently shifting.

**10:40 – 12:08**

Valentina: Thank you, Gaia. May I ask now, Lai, Malaya, to join in. Hi Lai, good morning.

Malaya Del Rosario: Good morning and good afternoon. So my name is Malaya or Lai. I'm a programme manager, focusing on art and culture. I work with arts organisations and governments and international institutions to support them with their strategies, fundraising and partnerships. And what really drives my work is the potential and the opportunities that international exchanges bring to a particular art project.

And I'm driven by, you know, the need to support the creative ecosystems, through different levels. Not just working with artists, but also through policy and actually multi-sectoral collaboration. So that's really I guess, what motivates me in my work. I'm originally from the Philippines and I've worked with international cultural organisations and I'm currently based in Switzerland, in Zurich. I am actually working also for an organisation called [ArtLink](#), who is supporting artists across the world.

So, I don't necessarily see myself or I didn't see myself as a cultural diplomat until all these discussions started taking place. So I'm really thankful to be invited to the table today.

**12:09 – 15:42**

Valentina: Thank you, Lai. That's a good starting point because I think we're going to go in there and discuss more about who is into cultural diplomacy.

Maybe let's continue with Clymene. Clymene, good morning. Thank you for joining so early. I know for you it's earlier even than the rest of the Europeans.

Clymene: That's quite alright. And my mouth will catch up with my brain very quickly, I hope. Good morning everybody in the zoom room. Like Lai and the others, I'm delighted to be here, thank you so much for inviting me. So my name is Clymene, I'm a visual arts producer. I work with an organisation called D6, based in the UK and based in Cyprus, quite extensive transnational programmes. Programmes which are particularly interested in the role of culture in supporting very human values, values of care, of generosity, of curiosity and of building communities.

Because we know how the arts can build bridges between those who perhaps might not have encountered each other. Themes of social and environmental justice are very key to what we do. We are currently running a huge programme internationally with European support, looking at European colonial legacies.

So thinking about this in a more global way, we're working with European partners, with partners from South America and partners from Africa. And it's a dialogue between artists and the keepers of our European colonial heritage. So that might be an archive, that might be a museum, that might be a community for something that's less tangible, through exhibitions and through residencies and through conferences. So it's a huge project.

We have 22 artists, 19 partners, across 10 different geographies. For us at D6, we're also running an ethics group, which is very closely monitoring how we deal with some of these contested dialogues that might come on, from all number of places, whether that's to do with the collections and how and what's held. Whether it's to do with the interpretation or whether it's to do with a methodology of practice that we use on the ground when having these conversations at a very local level.

So I'm really interested in this process that we're doing here, as I said, and thank you so much, as I say, for inviting me to be part of the Lab previously. I've long been interested in the connection or the relationship between practice or indeed, community and policy. So how do we develop our policies from the ground up? How do we engage practitioners? How do we engage communities?

In the UK, I sit on the culture board for our combined authority, which is 5 municipalities together. I also work as an expert for the United Cities and Local Government on a Pilot Cities programme, which is looking at the role of culture in sustainable development in cities. I was on the board of Culture Action Europe, which is the political platform for culture based in Brussels, and I'm currently on the board of a brilliant network called On the Move, which looks at how we encourage artistic mobility, with a focus of interest for me on how that relates to artists in exile, whose situation might be very different from others. I'll stop there.

But thank you so much for inviting me. I like Lai, I've never thought of myself as a cultural diplomat in this way. So it's an interesting conversation to be a part of. So thank you so much.

**15:43 – 17:27**

Valentina: Thank you Clymene. Let's move on to David. David. Yes, if you want to say a few words. Hi. Good afternoon.

Dr David Ocon: Hello. Good afternoon. Can you hear me?

Valentina: Yes.

David: Yeah. That's great. Thank you. Thank you everyone, for joining the session. I can see it's 173 and growing and the number of people connecting. 172 now. Thank you ASEF culture360 and ENCATC for coming up together with this project and also for inviting us to join the session.

I guess, I approach cultural diplomacy from a more, I mean, academia and I've been in academia for the last 10, 11 years. I'm now with the Singapore Management University and I approach cultural diplomacy from that perspective, always looking at the challenges that are there. The opportunities, the possibilities, and also thinking beyond, like can we put together some recommendations for policymakers, who ultimately are the ones deciding on the complex things like the money, to basically move forward.

Apart from being in academia, before my academia life, I had another life in practice. So I used to work for ASEF. I used to work for ENCATC, the two partners that have converged for this, for this forum. And I used to work also for the Spanish foreign service, as a Head of Culture of Instituto Cervantes, the Spanish cultural center.

So, yeah. thank you very much for inviting me.

**17:28 – 20:26**

Valentina: Thank you, David. So I think we have a really very rich and diverse group of participants today. And that was really the mission and the aim of this conversation. It was to kind of start from the result of the last meeting of LinkUp, but then adding in different dimensions to the conversation, to really understand. First of all, I would say also, what is this field? What is cultural diplomacy? Is it still something that really only has to do with government to government conversation? I don't think so from what we've been discussing.

And therefore, let's see in which way everyone can contribute to this fascinating area of work. And especially because I think as Gaia was mentioning, there's so many other ways in which the world is disrupted today.

And I think, Ambassador Stoczyńska mentioned that the culture is really becoming so central. At the same time, it seems that in more policy related documents, in government to government relations, strangely enough, culture is not so central as we would expect it to be. Because when it comes to conversation like this to projects that happen at the civil society level, there is so much happening in culture.

So maybe these are also some of the points that we will try to address today.

I would like to start maybe with Lai and Clymene, because you guys were really in the LinkUp project. So you were together for 4 days, and at the end of these 4 days, where the group of 18 of you took part, you came up with some sort of statement, document, report, call it whatever way.

But what is interesting to me, and I think to you and I want to listen from you, is really that it was a conversation that happened from many different perspectives with people who actually said, I also don't understand why I was invited here. I didn't feel initially that maybe this was something that related to me. Maybe from the independent arts sector.

And then from the government sector representative or the Institute of Culture for example, who were very like blown away by these conversations who were happening with the independent arts sector. As if it was something that had not happened to them before, because in some way they were kind of always operating in some very clear, in a framework. So it was kind of a way to really get out of that.

So maybe if you could share with us, some of the takeaways from that report that you actually in the last 3, 4 months. So we're talking about end of June to today, you feel have inspired you or are resonating with the way you work since then and how that happened? So maybe just a sharing in relation to what you have worked on and what you have drafted back in June. I don't know if, who wants to start? I leave it to you to decide.

**20:27 – 24:25**

Clymene: I don't, I don't mind starting Lai, I can't see you on the screen, maybe you're shaking your head.

Lai: Go ahead Clymene.

Clymene: So thank you, thank you Valentina. So this was a really interesting few days. It was in a way that these international meetings can generate some of the most intense conversations. It was structured to allow moments of our individual truths to come through. So congratulations firstly, on the structure of that process and the people in the room.

So it's quite hard to summarise what we did in that period of time, in such a short period. But to give an idea of what came out of it, we ended up with a paper which looked at three areas.

We identified the challenges that we have working in this sector. And as Valentina said, we were a whole range of people, from individual artists to cultural organisations, to those working more formally within diplomacy and governmental roles. But we identified joint challenges or challenges that we could all recognise. And I'll just really maybe quickly start with those, because I think these lay the ground for the issues that we need to, we need to address.

So things like we need to we need to look at how we. Sorry I'm thinking about the principles, rather than the challenges. Something we need to understand, the navigating the inequalities and the starting points are very different. So these challenges, we come with our baggage, we come with our understanding, but we have to also come with our bias and our prejudice in order for us to understand what the challenges are that we all face.

We also understand that within a political context, there is a high turnover of political administration. So how do we in the cultural sector, who arguably are more stable, we carry on

beyond the political administrations? How do we help drive a healthy system for engagement in this way? The third challenge that we looked at was how do we bring in? We called it a bottom up, but how do we bring in the producers on the ground? How do we bring in the communities to be part of that conversation with us? And then how also do we look at the disparities in mobility and accessibility? So for some, travelling is easy, depending on your passport, on your finances.

For others, it's very difficult if you do not yet have a status for example, in the country that you're currently living in. So how do we navigate all of these issues?

And how do we measure was the final one really. How do we measure impact when we are dealing with so many different platforms and different areas of practice?

So you know, we spent some time not, not complaining, but really drilling down into what the barriers are. Maybe just to stick on the very broad things. We came up with some recommendations, which again, are very broad. So we know that in order to address these challenges, we need to strengthen the participatory processes between the sector and the governmental roles or local authority roles as public sector.

We need to strengthen regional cooperation in culture, so the systems are not all there to support cultural diplomacy. So how can one help the other? We do need to find a way to measure our impacts. Big words, but how do we do this? How do we know what does success look like? I guess in another term.

And I guess really interesting for me, I maybe go on to that later, is how do we build capacity through networks. Through networks. like this network that we're starting here, through this, through the Lab that we've just had.

So maybe I'll stop there Valentina.

#### **24:26 – 28:16**

Valentina: Yeah, thanks Clymene. Lai, what about you? What's your, I would say, how do you basically also took what you all discussed and somehow, is it really useful? Is it something that stays very abstract? Or you feel that some of those points can also be really practically integrated in your work?

Lai: Yes, so definitely I mean it was very useful and it gave me some new reflections in relation to my work as a programme manager. Because when we are. I mean, I mentioned before, I don't see myself as a cultural diplomat. But I was thinking about like how, how did we all end up here, with diplomats and artists and other heads of organisations?

And I think what we had in common in the group is the fact that we see, international cooperation and knowledge exchange, cultural exchange as giving added value to the work.

It makes our work stronger and more impactful. But also what makes our work, kind of diplomat or like contributing to diplomacy in a way, it's that, it builds trust across different groups. So it's like an unintended meaning or an additional layer to my work that I didn't realise before, but I think, it makes perfect sense. Because you know, because like you know, art does have the ability to provide spaces for a dialogue and to build trust.

So I think I wanted to actually focus on this. It's one of the principles we discussed a lot. You know, diplomacy is about trust building. But in relation to, I guess my perspective coming from Southeast Asia, the question then is how do you build trust in an unequal context? I've always been passionate about like, opportunities for exchange between Southeast Asia and Europe, just because of the diversity of both regions.

But then you know, it's very clear what the power dynamics are between Southeast Asia and Europe. You know, who holds the funds and most of the time, who has a status quo? What are the, what's the historical baggage? You know, and in our case, it's, it's actually, you know, probably most of the times, stakeholders from Southeast Asia who are often the 'donee', the grantees, the beneficiaries, and the European counterparts as the donors, the funders, the decision makers.

So I think just like having this context in mind. If you are a programmer, a curator, you know, it will already kind of influence how you even start designing your projects or how you start approaching the projects when you're talking about cultural exchange between Asia and Europe.

One other learning for me is that, it's very easy to get cultural diplomacy wrong. It's not something you learn. You don't get a degree from it instantly, you know. Because it's about culture and people and it's about promoting identity and very often, they're emotionally charged themes. And the approaches we may be using in some projects may not necessarily work in a different time or in a different context. So I think again, coming from my perspective as a programme manager, it's just about constantly adjusting and being sensitive to these issues.

And while making sure that you're making your funders, you know, happy and your partners happy, understanding that they also have their different agendas in the project.

Valentina: Thanks. Sorry, do you want to add something? I didn't mean to interrupt.

Lai: I think I'll stop there.

### **28:17 – 29:52**

Valentina: It's, it's actually what you're seeing makes absolute sense when you think about the. It's kind of layers right, of really very complex ways of seeing things. And as you said, it's really about people, building trust. But that trust also requires time. So this is why also sometimes, attempts are made, but these attempts maybe don't necessarily have enough time to create that trust since we come from very different backgrounds, very different conditions that bring us into this sort of exchange and cooperation. So that's an aspect also that, it would be interesting to discuss. And I think with David, we will talk more about EU, European and ASEAN exchanges and power dynamics as well.

Before going to David, I wanted to ask Giannalia. Because for you, as you know, as the Secretary General of an important European network, who is really looking also at expanding globally, you have already so many universities joining from all over the world. What is your experience with Asia?

And do you feel that what Clymene and Lai, do you resonate with, with the challenges that you face in reaching out and connecting with other countries out of Europe? In the sense that ENCATC



is a very European network and how does that sort of bring itself out when engaging with partners or other organisations out of Europe and maybe in Asia, specifically?

**29:53 – 36:58**

Giannalia: Yes. Thank you so much Valentina, for giving me the possibility to share my experience and experience of our members. I have to say that, I did not have the chance to participate in this event, but we were represented there by Pravali and Carla. But I read with strong interest the report and also followed the presentations that were done there.

Everything that's written in the report, all the recommendations, is everything that I found in our events and also echoed by our members. So and also be captured by research or articles that are published in our journal or other books. And also, many of these recommendations are also echoed in the Academy's recommendations of ENCATC.

It's really important, this concept of the trust, of co-sharing, of co-shaping. All these wordings resonate quite a lot. From our experience, also listening to the conversation of today, I think that we, we don't need to feel a cultural diplomat in our activities because I believe we are not. So Gaia is a cultural diplomat, the ambassador of ASEF is a cultural diplomat. But all of us are academics, practitioners, managers, we act as an engine for culture external relations in our activities.

And I believe that today, through education, we need to provide the skills and competencies, that allow to develop a mindset of culture external relations in our activities. That means that when we are going to design a project or manage projects, we should have these skills, the capacities that allow us in relating and exchanging with our counterparts, to create this trust building, to understand, to have empathy, to understand the culture of the others, to create a bridge and this is very important.

So it's for me, a mindset rather than a position. So I don't feel to be a cultural diplomat, but I feel to be a person that while developing in my activities, I need to create the conditions for culture external relations. So this I think it's very important. Otherwise, we also lose the opportunities that we can have in our activities. Because we, we can be misunderstood in what we are doing, if we believe we are a cultural diplomat. On the contrary, we are there also to support the culture diplomat, with our knowledge, with our activities.

And this it's surprising, but the truth. A few days ago, I met an ambassador here in Brussels that will be invited to organise together with us an activity. And, I genuinely say that I didn't know that I was an engine for cultural diplomacy. So again, there are many people who have these ideas when they do diplomacy, but often is not the case.

And then I see our role as educators, also foreign diplomats, to make them understanding that by developing actions for their own country, they can also be an engine to create a better relations between the people and the countries. So this is my, I mean, a measure of the contributions to the discussions that we have done so far.

When it comes to how we generate the connections through ENCATC between Europe and Asia, I have to say that thanks to the cooperation with ASEF, this has boosted our capacity to reach Asia. Because of course, it is not easy from Europe to connect, even just starting to find information or to find the right people for our activities.

So this kind of cooperation that we have set is extremely important. And it has allowed us to understand better Asia. It is complex, with many different facets. And so again, the importance of the right partnership with the, the right people is extremely important.

We also have since several years cooperated with several networks based in Asia such as ANCER, but I see the importance of having funds for mobility to make them more sustainable.

So at the moment, we have a very solid change in terms of research, that are developed between the members of the network. And we have also a solid cooperation in producing joint projects. But when it comes to meeting the people in person and changing lives, and this is where you build the trust, then I see the difficulty on funds.

And this is something that we would like to work more with the support of the governments. So how we can create, not only avenues and platforms for online exchange, but also possibility to, to be together in a room like you have done in Prague, and really connect in person, with the people. Because trust comes when you look people in the eyes, rather than writing an email and this is a slow process, but is the one that lasts over the years.

### **36:59 – 39:46**

Valentina: Yeah, absolutely. Thanks Giannalia. Yeah, I think we all agree on that the physical face to face component of the, you know, building trust, understanding each other, getting to know each other is fundamental.

Online dimension also helps to prolong the exchange. But there has to be also absolutely, a face to face meeting. Thanks also for your points. And I think the point about the education and building a curriculum for international cultural relations is also something that was discussed also by the group of LinkUp.

Because it's true that if this is something that started already with the, the education and sort of training level, it's something that then will enrich the way people approach their work in the cultural sector internationally. And then, I think the point about the intermediaries, of course, that resonates a lot with us, with what ASEF is doing. Because I think sometimes it's very difficult for the independent arts sector to even reach a dialogue with the governments. And when you have organisations in between that can facilitate that, that really helps.

And this brings me to David. Because the reason why I also invited David is that, David was part of the ASEF LinkUp. In the sense that he took part in one of the online sessions before we all met. Because he was at that time, in May, finalising a research on the relations, cultural relations between the EU and ASEAN at a government level, I would say. And for me, this was extremely interesting to see because we don't have that much information.

At the same time, we know that right now, EU and ASEAN relations are getting stronger. And there is like a really formal understanding and intent to really build stronger connections. The point is, is culture there?

And David's research is something that in a way, gave us some answers. So I invited him back then to share some initial findings. And now that the research has been published, he will be able to give us a little bit more information on that. I think that's really also quite relevant again to this

discussion to really understand, in which way the government level and the civil society level also can connect better, but then also at the two levels, things are happening.

So what is, what was your assessment from this research? And are you more optimistic or less optimistic after seeing the research results?

**39:47 – 46:50**

David Ocon: Well, I mean, the first thing I would like to say is. I was, I was listening to, to what some of you were saying about cultural diplomacy. Are we cultural diplomats? Are we, what are we? Cultural practitioners?

And I think it's, it's a very valid question. I mean, for most of my career, I thought I was doing cultural cooperation for the different organisations I was working with. And when I came to academia, it turned out that I was also doing cultural diplomacy. And it happened that when I was meeting with artists and cultural practitioners, I was doing cultural relations.

So I mean, sometimes we use all these terms, as silo units and they have very blurred boundaries. Sometimes we do cultural diplomacy, at the same time that we do cultural relations, we engage in cultural cooperation. And we can do cultural diplomacy and relations at the same time. So I think, I think that sometimes we are a bit anxious about terms and definitions.

In terms of the [report we engage with](#). Here's the title of it. So it was, it was a research commissioned a few months ago by [ifa](#), through their cultural and foreign policy programme, research programme. So I put the QR code there for those of you who are interested, it was published about 5 or 6 weeks ago I think, so is still quite recent.

And it was co-authored with, with my partner in crime for this, which was, Professor Lluís Bonet from the University of Barcelona, who cannot be in this session today. I think to, to really summarise, summarise the, because I think I have like 3 or 4 minutes no more. We can go to the next, next slide.

It's funny, like, as a lecturer, I'm using the slides for my, my introduction. I think we can go straight to the recommendations, just to give you a very brief idea of what we did. We did a comprehensive historical mapping of the relationship between cultural cooperation relationships between the EU and ASEAN so over, over 50 years.

And then we do it. We did a survey with about 40, exactly 40, experts from the ASEAN context, and from the European context. And by experts I mean, diplomats, academics, artists, cultural practitioners, etc.

And then we did 12 in-depth interviews with, with people with the same profile, like trying to have a couple of people from the, the diplomacy, a couple of people from academia, a couple of artists and so on.

We put all their comments, all their ideas together, we came up with three levels of recommendations. Strategic, conceptual are the first 2. So the first one was basically the necessity of enhancing the centrality of arts and culture as part of the ASEAN-EU institutional cooperation.

And this is particularly important because, it looks like ASEAN and the EU are cooperating at all levels. And by all I mean, at all levels except culture. So there is, there is cooperation at the individual level, at the bilateral level, but there is very, very little multilateral cooperation. So that's one of the things that we are, that we wanted to emphasise.

There is an ASEAN-EU plan of action. There's been several in place in the last few years. The next one kicks off, unfortunately in 2028. So we're still quite far away. So we are proposing a 2 year pilot project where we can just test the waters and get started.

In terms of conceptual, what kind of recommendations? The areas where we identified that are more challenges and there is more interest for cultural cooperation between the two, are these six that you have here. From professional development to education and training programmes. So that connects with what we are doing here a lot. But also mobility and exchange opportunities, co-creation initiatives, cooperation between civil society organisations and heritage. There seems to be very important, particularly in the ASEAN, in the ASEAN context.

And next slide for the last pillar of the recommendations is more operational.

I think this is the key or the question, how do we action this, what kind of things we can do? And I think, is a very obvious thing. But I think with a report at least, we have the data and the support, that with numbers and statistics says that we need money. There's the core need for budget, for inter-regional culture cooperation between the two. Now the, the issue is who puts the money but the need is there.

It's interesting as well and this was not anticipated in our, when we started the study. But there seems to be a recurrent desire from practitioners, artists as well as those in diplomacy, for a recurrent event that happens every year or every two years, that marks the relations in between the two.

That's also because it's an opportunity not just for the showcase. But also almost as an excuse, but also as in this space, basically for collaboration and cooperation initiatives, co-productions and so on.

And then something very important but we don't really know how to get this going, is to address the challenges, very obvious challenges, particularly that the EU imposes in obtaining short term stay visas for most ASEAN nationals to enter the EU and the Schengen countries. So I mean, this is a larger issue than what we are talking here. But it's very difficult to participate in a cooperation programme or in an artist in residence, if your visa takes three months or it never arrives.

So kind of like, these are like a very brief summary of the report. If you want to read it again, it's like 70 pages and it's in the link that you have there.

But I think summarising it to two main actions here. I was last week at the, participating in the SOMCA (ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting for Culture and Arts) meeting in Malacca, organised by ASEAN, where the arts and culture Ministers of Culture were participating.

And I get the chance, I got the chance to, to speak in in there for about 15 minutes. And there was a lot of interest. And, but the first question that was asked is like, okay this is great, finally we can

get culture, a part of this process of cooperation. How do we get started? What do we do? So that was the first question.

And the second one was like, who leads on this? Who will basically provide the space, the place, the mechanism to get the things, to get the things going? So I'll leave it there for the time being.

**46:51 – 48:27**

Valentina: Thanks, David. Yeah, I think there's a lot of food for thought as well already from what you're saying.

And I think now Gaia, I have to come to you. Because being in this conversation, the representative, government representative, but especially representative of EEAS, as the diplomatic service and foreign body of the EU. I think EEAS' role has been to really make sure that culture is recognised, as you were saying also at the beginning, for its vital, fundamental role in enhancing cultural relations and between the EU and also non-EU countries.

So maybe we can look at it from the point of view of ASEAN and EU, what is your sense also listening to what David was saying. Has there been some actions taken, in this kind of, trying to bring culture more into the conversation between the two regional bodies?

Do you think it has advanced and in somehow, what can be better done then? What is the perspective from, from your point of view of, of this conversation on culture and how we can better bring it forward? I think you're muted.

Gaia: Okay. I finally managed to get in from the computer, but without the background.

Valentina: Alright, that's okay. No problem.

**48:28 – 58:09**

Gaia: At least it's more comfortable because from the phone, all is very small. And, and yeah, I can see you all, and it's a nicer possibility to interact. So thank you, because it is very interesting for me to listen to practitioners and academia's' point of view on this issue.

Allow me just to make a, a general comment about what is happening now, in the European Union External Action in culture. As I was saying in my introduction, there are, there is a policy framework that is still valid, which is the one that was approved, around 2019 and 2021.

So in general on ICR (International cultural relations) and on cultural heritage protection and it is based on three pillars, as you know. Culture for sustainable development. I'm, I'm being very quick, of course. Culture to, to nurture intercultural dialogue, peace and resilience and culture for the protection and the engagement of the EU, for the protection of cultural heritage.

Now, what has happened is that the framework is still valid, but there has been a shift. And this shift is very interesting. When (Federica) Mogherini started to speak about the External Action of the European Union in culture, she was talking about soft power. She was placed very much in, in a cultural diplomacy approach, which is not a wrong approach. It is just a limited approach if we have to interact with other countries, societies and not just state to state and not just showcase our power in culture to, to rule by attraction in a certain sense.

So this is something that probably, it's the field of member states now. It's the field of national interest to, to pursue the cultural action in that way.

But where the European Union can add value, it is exactly in what you are all talking about. In generating people to people connection, in making civil society talk to each other. And this is why in practice, we have moved more and more towards a concept of international cultural relations. Which I don't have to explain to you, which are practitioners. But as the, the focus on co-creation, intercultural dialogue and generating a sense of ownership and values that are shared. So no longer we going around with our culture, we or other countries, showing that our values are better than yours, but trying to find common values.

And, and this is absolutely crucial. And I'm now touching the problem of the geopolitical scenario, which is very complicated. Because we can imagine that we are risking to be in a clash of civilisations scenario. And now I'm being very realistic.

But there is. But on the opposite, there is what we can call a community of sense scenario. And to move, to shift from one to the other. International cultural relations are key. But they can work only if they are done together with all stakeholders. And all stakeholders means states, governments, but also people, civil societies, private sector. And need I rejoin you David, on the question of funding, money because it's also about money.

But money cannot only be found anymore in European institutions. Money cannot be found only in member states. Money have to be found in private sector. Because also this means that society is engaged and believes in this, invests in this. That I mean, the private sector starts to find appealing investing in big international cultural relations projects. And this is very important.

So I'm telling you all this because this is exactly where we are now, and not only with Asia, but with all world regions. We are trying to in a certain sense, give coherence to what has been done until now. Because it's not that nothing has been done. You're all familiar with many very interesting projects and programmes that have been done in, in different regions. I can give you examples.

Let's think about the European spaces of culture. That, that has developed very interesting initiatives and demand civil society associations all over the globe and together with EUNIC (European Union National Institutes of Culture)., which is the network of cultural institutes of the member states. And it's our best partner to the point that we have an agreement with EUNIC. Not that it is some kind of structure in our relationship with EUNIC.

Now, there have been a lot more that would that would take me hours to tell you what each, each DG (Directorate-General) commission does in every area of the world. But what has been lacking is giving the sense of structured action plan in what we do.

And this is what EEAS is now doing together with the colleagues in the commission. We have created an informal taskforce that will actually, classify and register all that we've done with an idea of creating a single entry point. So that also the civil society can see what the European Union is doing, with which money, with which partners, and can also collaborate and contribute, and propose to share initiatives that maybe we don't even know are happening, because this is also what is going on now.

And on the other hand, create a set of actions that are replicable. I give you another example. This is a flagship that we did by going to the Guadalajara Book Fair in Latin America, as European Union, as guest of honour with our own pavilion. This was the first time and we have generated so many sustainable relations, residencies, co-creations.

We are now permanently present with a pavilion at the fair, together with the member states and the editors. So private sector and other institutional sectors. That we can reuse now that paradigm, for instance to go to Osaka. And I'm talking about Asia, what are we doing in Osaka?

We're having our own pavilion, but we are generating our own culture programme that we are doing hand in hand with artists, organisations and civil society organisations. So that it's not just the European Union showcasing the European Film Festival. But with the European Film Festival, there will be B to B's, there will be residencies.

We are also preparing a very interesting project on fashion and textile, on how to work on the ancestral knowledge in textile. And we are going again to have residency. We're going to work with foundations. We're going to work with fashion organisations and creators. So these are really. Sorry to be, in a certain sense, and not to be able to give all the examples I would like to give because this will become a master class.

But it's important for me to share with you, this idea of a change going on. Of, of an investment of the European Union, more and more systematic in this field. And ideally, I think I would like to stop here and maybe if you then want to me to come back or, you know, because I don't want to take a lot of place.

I didn't say everything that I want to say, but I think I gave you an idea of where we are.

#### **58:10 – 59:17**

Valentina: Yeah, yeah, thanks, no thanks. This is just good as a starting point, because again, as you being a representative of an institution like the EU in this conversation, I think it's really interesting for us who are here talking, but also for everyone who's joining in. To understand where we are at, as you said, because, we know that things happen.

But sometimes when we are talking about political entities, they're not so easy to approach. They're not so easy to understand, especially coming from the perspective of someone who's on the ground working as an artist, for example.

So the fact that you mentioned this shift and the fact that already there's a real understanding and a real willingness from the point of view of the EU to involve all levels of society, I think it's a, it's a great thing to do because we are now going to go beyond the government to government relationship and involve also civil society.

So this is something that I want to go back to David and to the others also, to understand what they think about.

#### **59:18 – 01:01:04**

Gaia: Valentina, before you do that. If I can interrupt you a second because I was thinking that there is another fact that you have to know. That the actual work plan for culture, starting in 2023,

set as a fourth pillar, the international cultural relations. So now we are part of the EU work plan for culture. And there is an open method of coordination, group of experts of member states coming from the Ministries of Culture and the Ministries of Foreign Affairs that is going to deliver very soon, recommendation on the governance of ICR and governance means exactly how do we put all stakeholders together? How do we decide who does what? And how we do things together?

And related to this, we have even anticipated one of the recommendations because of course, it was suggested by the EEAS. With the Hungarian presidency, we managed to create a working to let's say, to put international cultural relations and protection of cultural heritage also in the relics subgroup.

Which is you know, the working party of the Council, the working parties of the Council. This one is a horizontal subgroup that works with global gateway, for instance with climate change, with horizontal themes. And we included ICR there, so this is very new. It means that we talk about ICR, we already started with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, not just in the Culture working party with the Ministries of Culture and this is very important.

**01:01:05 – 01:06:00**

Valentina: Yeah, yeah. Thanks for pointing that out because that's something also that is always kind of missing, missing that link between what's happening in culture and what's happening in foreign affairs. So it's good to hear this. I think it's, it's a very good starting point.

Maybe if I could just understand from you. What you're describing now is something that happens within the EU. So all this effort would be efforts that have a European dimension, which is absolutely understandable. What happens when you try to create this exchange outside of the EU?

So going back to what David was doing in his research, what are the steps, taken by EU, EEAS, in terms of implementing some of these points when relating to other, other regions? So in the case of ASEAN and the ASEAN region, for example. Is there already something happening or it will first happen at a European level and then kind of go outside?

Gaia: No, no, absolutely. It is in parallel. Because what we are doing is that we are preparing and almost finalised a training for the cultural focal points in the delegations. Which is in, in collaboration with the Cultural Relations Platform and a group of experts that are working with an advisory board integrated by all the services of the Commission. So again, coherence for the first time.

These trainings are not given separately by DG INTPA (Directorate-General for International Partnerships), DG EAC (Directorate-General for Education and Culture), all with you know, slightly different approach. We are, we have prepared an integrated training that is going to be given to cultural cooperation agents of DG INTPA, to FPI (Service for Foreign Policy Instruments) agents in the delegation and to the EEAS cultural focal points. Imagine how interesting this is.

Valentina: Yeah.



Gaia: And what we are going to say in this thing is exactly. We're going to tell them very practically, how to reach out for financing, how to partner up locally and globally, how to generate also, site specific projects because this is very important, this is where the civil society gets in really.

If you come from the European Union with a big project and with a consortium, and then you have to find some partners a la carte, just to be sure that your funds are justified. Sorry to be so not diplomatic.

Valentina: No no, no no. That's exactly what we wanted to hear.

Gaia: You know your bubble. You have organisations that are related to the bubble also on your side, and you refer only to them. Whereas in this way, we encourage the delegation to browse the territory, to find partners, to pick up, to pick out interesting situations that are site specific of that area. Also knowing the sensitivities, the complications. So there is a lot, it's a very complete training because you cannot do the same type of events everywhere.

If you are talking about our colleagues in Africa. You cannot do a very big festival of electronic music in Africa in many places, because you will end up having a riot, you know. Because there are you know, there are things you have to take into account. So maybe it is better to work with, residency, artists residence, residencies. So you need to know your territory.

And this is the way in which we want to enhance the role of the delegations and the productivity of the delegations. Some of them for instance, in Central Asia, in Armenia, they are super proactive. And they have created a country plan for cultural relations, with, with Armenia in the region.

And this is what we encourage them to do. And Cultural Relations Platform assist them if they want to generate a specific country plan of action. You know, so this is how we are moving. And I'm talking always, consider that I talk from the EEAS perspective.

Valentina: Yeah. Yeah.

Gaia: I'm not doing international partnership. I don't have the money to do that.

Valentina: Yes.

Gaia: But yet, I can dialogue with DG INTPA on methods, patterns, ideas, flagships, principles. And, and this is what we are doing now.

**01:06:01 – 01:06:53**

Valentina: Thanks. Thanks for adding that in. So I think this is also a good point for me. I want to hear what Clymene and Lai have to say about this. Because it looks like on the EU level, things are moving in the direction of, at least opening up to participation from the civil society much more.

On the other. On the other hand, I hear from David that the ASEAN side is also very excited to come into this kind of exchange. So I think the situation is changing for the best. The question is how concretely can we also play a role in this? Because as Gaia was saying, now it's really something that has to do with a lot more people involved.

Clymene, what do you think of this? What is your, your?

**01:06:54 – 01:09:19**

Clymene: Thank you for that. But also thank you to everybody who's putting questions in the, in the question box. So I've been following, following the thread of conversation there. And it is mirroring, in some sense, Gaia, some of the, some of the queries you're putting forward.

There is a very first question that came up which was, is cultural diplomacy doing enough to reveal intricate and social cultural realities within countries? Or is it a curated image that aligns with the nation's strategic interests, etc.? That this, this, this kind of question comes throughout is what is the role? What is the difference I guess between or perceived difference between cultural diplomacy and cultural partnership or cultural relations?

Has been that cultural diplomacy is we, we as a nation. We show our best, we show our best, and our best is often measured in terms of economic value, to be honest, rather than something else. Artistic value, of course, on top of that. Our best is often and we tell you how to do it rather than we listen to what you're doing. So we have these structures which are, which are kind of deep set. They may or may not be true.

And these are the barriers that we need to break down. Because on the side, from the perspective of production, we think of ourselves as building curiosity and trust and empathy and constructive dialogue. We, as you say, Gaia, we journey together from the beginning. In building the thing that we make together, rather than making the thing in our own country and in some sense, selling it or marketing it somewhere else.

So the coming together of these, where it feels more difficult on national levels to express our vulnerability. But only by expressing our vulnerability, can we build trust and empathy with other countries. We very rarely do diplomatic projects that say, look how rubbish we've been on this, what our problems were, look at what our challenges were. We show the thing that we are most proud of at the end of the day. So these kinds of conversations are so important and we can see small examples.

And Gaia, you had there a couple of programmes, which are getting to understand better the values of this collaborative journey through residencies or through programmes that are defining themselves as they go along.

**01:09:20 – 01:13:23**

Valentina: Thanks Clymene. Lai, if you want, I'll give you the floor first. And then I'm going to start to look at some of the question, because as you said, there's so many. And unfortunately we are also, don't have much time left.

So maybe I'll move into the questions instead of asking you another question and we can take it from there. But Lai yes, what are your thoughts on what was shared so far?

Lai: Yeah, I think just coming from a Southeast Asian perspective or specifically a Philippine perspective where I've been practicing for, for many years. And talking about like, what's stopping us from really like collaborating more, you know?

I think the, the motivations of, of governments in Southeast Asia are very different from European counterparts because the, the histories are different.

And, and, so, so when, when we're talking about cultural diplomacy, which is most of the time translated into soft power, this is not necessarily prioritised in foreign policy. Because we talk a lot about culture, which is sometimes translated into cultural policy. But most of the time when we're talking about international exchanges, it is actually foreign policy that's kind of financing it.

So my previous organisation, the British Council, is actually getting some of their funds from the Foreign Affairs Office, not really from the Ministries of Culture. Same for my current organisation, ArtLink, they're getting it from the International Development Agency. So we're, we're talking about funding for international exchange. It's, it's actually very much dependent on foreign policy and international aid priorities.

So, and you know, when we're talking about that also. There is sometimes a conflict, when you're for example, kind of running a, a cultural programme meant for soft power or diplomacy. Because you know artists, they need space for expression. And, you know, you don't always get, you know, the nice and shiny kind of art projects.

So I think, there's a really like, a big question or a big space here for exchange between civil society and governments to better understand the artists' perspectives and how they can really support them, even using foreign aid money or for, you know, foreign affairs money.

Because you know, controlling, regulating, limiting these movements and these expressions will actually not really benefit or it might even backfire in the end.

So I think there's still a lot of like, sensitivities and learnings and discussions to be made in terms of how we're actually going to implement these people to people exchanges and cultural projects. With the idea that we're here to build peace and trust, you know and, and avoid backfiring.

Of course, Clymene was right. To build trust, you also need to expose your vulnerabilities. And you know, if you're a diplomat, you want to show your best foot forward. So like, how do we kind of, make that compromise and navigate that?

But also like with. I think there's also a big gap for support for the artists, precisely who are doing these practices, who are doing these controversial practices, interdisciplinary, you know. So maybe there is like another kind of funding that we can tap, that doesn't need to rely on the diplomatic or soft power kind of bottom line, or outcomes that will give artists the space they need and the support they need to actually be able to, to collaborate internationally.

**01:13:24 – 01:15:35**

Valentina: Yeah. Thanks. This is also a point that I think is very valid, because it's. I just feel as well, that there's still more layers to be able to connect all these levels. And somehow when you are looking at really artistic practice as you said, things that are really interesting out there, are the ones that are less visible, less able to be presented as interesting cultural diplomacy projects maybe. But are those that are more in need to be connected with then organisations on the ground, who are then connected with the governments and try to create projects internationally. So this is one element that I feel we should maybe think about.

And then the other thing that, you were saying and Gaia was also saying, is that sometimes. Most of the times I feel that, when you talk about culture, you either have Ministries of Culture in charge of providing funds for that, and then you have the international dimension, which is Ministries of Foreign Affairs. But these two entities not often are in communication.

And this really creates also a big gap to kind of identify at the civil society level. What are the interesting actors out there that should be involved in this process, in this dialogue?

I want to maybe tap on to some of the questions from our audience. I have to say, I'm really overwhelmed by the participation.

It's been great. We had almost 200 people joining today and a lot of questions. There is one question that I think is a good question for us to kind of start to think about wrapping up things. And I think all of you will have probably, a very interesting answer to give.

The question is what you will advise to be more effective in cultural diplomacy and what resources would you recommend? Can I ask all of you to say a few words on what you think would be the right approach to this?

Who wants to start? Giannalia, you want to go first?

**01:15:36 – 01:19:15**

Giannalia: Thank you also for a role at this exchange that are making also myself, thinking about several comments. And before answering, I really think that we need to develop a mindset rather than a competence, a competence in culture, a competence in international relations, connecting both etc. They are absolutely important.

But at the same time, I think that each of us should have in the moment, in the design of the activity, the capacity to think culture internationally in the same time. Otherwise, we never end this silos approach, that we have in education, in management, in research. I think today everything needs to be interconnected and we need to have a decent cross-sectoral competencies, that leads us in cross-sectoral approach in management, research and policy.

Otherwise, we will spend the rest of our future in trying to connect the different departments, different sections, rather than from the start having these cross-sectoral mindset. So how to do a better cultural diplomacy and where to find the funds?

So again I think creating more connections. We see the work in many different platforms, in many different spaces and we need to break silos. I'm listening to Gaia. So you were explaining, this idea of creating an entry point for projects developed by other DGs and mobility programmes etc, that are already there. And you are right.

The first starting point for us is, where to find the information? Because we are aware that many, many things were already developed in the past 10 years.

Beautiful actions from many platforms, many networks etc. But even for us, experts in the field, it's difficult to find the, the documents to refer to. So having these entry points, where we can inspire and give, for example, information, source of funds. Because I think there are many, but there's usually. It's difficult to find that because each organisation has its own fund, it's own

platform, it's own resources. So how we can find the right resources for the right project and identify what is missing and who should complement?

As rightly said by Gaia, there should also be responsibility of the private sector that need to feel this ownership. So first advice from my side, creating more space for change, interaction, interconnection and avoid working in silos, like what we are still continuing to do. This can be a very positive change in our practice.

Valentina: Yeah, yeah. Thanks Giannalia. Yeah. Yes. Very good point.

**01:19:16 – 01:24:28**

Gaia: Valentina, sorry as I have to go, may I just jump in because I'm very sorry. I also have seen there are a lot of super interesting questions. Maybe we should do a new session just in answering.

Valentina: We should, that's what I was going to propose.

Gaia: And I would love to because they are very stimulating. But just to speak to this question and then I really have to go because I have another meeting. Yes of course Giannalia, this is crucial.

And this is what we're really aiming to, to have a portal that could become the box in which there are all the other boxes, and we could reach out to all the different websites of the projects and of the DGs and so that everything is regrouped. What is happening today for me, like for instance in this webinar is also very, very relevant. Because if we cultivate this type of continuous exchange with civil society actors, with artists, with the practitioners, with cultural agents, this is, this is a 1 to 1 thing we have to do. This why I'm always around, I'm always speaking, I'm always giving lectures and classes, going to conferences. Because otherwise, we don't get to know what is already happening.

For instance, you might know that there is an EU culture funding guide that was published by the Commission, it's an interactive guide. And there is of course, more and more in there about funds to support the creative sector in Europe.

But coming from DGEAC, there are also many aspects of an international dimension. And also if you are well supported in Europe, you can become more prepared to these peer to peer approach that we need in the external relations.

For me, Creative Europe is the key. The external dimension of Creative Europe is the key. So what you do inside Europe to support the creative sector, the same networks should develop their capabilities to support the external action of your associates. Because this is not about state to state.

This is about things that that are happening in spite of the states. And we just have to accompany and listen. So you have to become strong. And to become strong, you have to start thinking that you need to force also DGEAC, through your proposal to more and more engage on the international scene.

And again, I'm not being. When I say force, I know that my colleagues, they want to do it, but it's the machine, that is slow, there are of course a lot of resistances. And you know, because we

always think if we put money for external action, we take out money from, for the support of the creative sector inside.

You know, you can imagine all the kind of difficulties, also coming from the member states that we have to convince. And so this is very good that we speak to Foreign Affairs Ministries because they are more sensitive to the external action argument. Even if Ministries of Culture are more and more aware of the importance of this, of this dimension. So this is, what I would say very quickly. There is a lot more of course but...

Valentina: It's a starting point.

Gaia: Because really, this was very enriching for me. For me, having to think about these policies. Another instrument I want to tell you about. It's this book, booklet on. It's a brochure on all that we do in Ukraine. There were many questions about Ukraine.

This is a very easy to find also on the internet. Sorry if I don't send you the link, but maybe we can provide it after. But there is now a complete view on what the EU is doing to protect the culture, heritage and to support artists in Ukraine. So this is a very interesting source also.

Valentina: Yeah, we'll try to share. Thank you Gaia. If you have to go, we will understand. Thank you for joining us today. And yes for sure, we will try to make sure we have some more conversations continuing. It's not a one time. So thank you.

Gaia: And please reach out to me, give my email to all the colleagues.

Valentina: Yeah, because maybe you can share some of the links as well. If we can't find them, we'll reach out to you and we can share it with everyone later on. Okay. Thanks.

Gaia: Thank you very much. Bye. Bye everybody. Bye.

**01:24:29 – 01:26:45**

Valentina: So maybe for all of us, I see that the time is also running out. Please can I get some last comments about maybe about this question that we were discussing before?

There's so many things. I was looking at the questions and everything, so I don't know. Please, one last comment or maybe feedback on the question. David, yes?

David: Yeah, yeah. Thank you. I think I think one, one of the key things. I mean some of the, some of the discussions are fascinating and some of the issues definitely need a follow up. And in fact I think, I think having follow ups is good news of these discussions or other discussions. I think in the, in the context of the, of the project I was mentioning, that's precisely what we did.

Okay, so now what? Getting the feedback also from ASEAN and also, hearing now Gaia's emphasis on the newer structure and the, the new plans and the new ideas that the EU is also coming up with.

We propose a close, a closed door meeting where, where the actors can meet, where the ASEAN secretariat can meet with the different DGs as well relevant for this. Can meet with some experts and consultants from the field can meet and decisions can be taken. And I think that's the, that's the next level. I mean talking, that's great. But we also need, I think. And maybe one more thing is

also, you know, like there's been a lot of bilateral work between individual ASEAN countries, European Union, European Union and individual countries.

As Gaia was saying, there's the EUNIC network that are like different from the EU delegations. They have many mechanisms. But from my, my little experience in the, in the Foreign Ministry of Spain, the agendas are also very big at all these bilateral levels and I think having a multilateral approach doesn't fully remove the agendas. It never does.

We all have agendas in what we're doing. But it nuances some of the agendas. And I think that's important as well. And I think for us, the insistence in the report is also the importance of multilateralism. Because that softens basically some of those agendas.

**01:26:46 –**

Valentina: Yeah. Thanks for this point. Which of course also, I feel strongly about I think that what you're saying is absolutely right. We have to keep the multilateral dimension in, because it's really the only way to also bring in different voices. This is something that we say all the time, but it's not so obvious.

Even when Gaia was saying, oh there's so many things happening, so many mechanisms. But then I see also some of the question from the people who are taking part.

Yes but for us, you know, we work on the ground, we don't even know how to approach. We don't even know how to approach EUNIC, who maybe is doing a cluster project in Indonesia, but maybe EUNIC knows how to approach the institutions that are there. But then that doesn't necessarily include indigenous people or minorities communities. So there is still a lot of work to do. And I think the multilateral aspect is where this can happen.

I kind of wanted to mention this because it's also a big challenge, the Asia-Europe Meeting or ASEM, which is basically the political dialogue created by governments of Asia and Europe more than 27 years ago. It was meant to create this space of dialogue at the government level.

And then you know, in connection with the civil society level, multilaterally. And I think that platforms like ASEM are still very valid in that sense because it's a good way to start to bring everyone in the same space to discuss. So this is something that should be taken into consideration I think when discussions happen, at EU, ASEAN, at other levels. I will just stop here.

I want to hear from Clymene and then I think we'll have to close the conversation for today. Clymene, one last thought.

**01:28:40 – 01:29:53**

Clymene: Very quick. Yeah, very quick thought. I think there are ways to empower the cultural sector, the culture, the artists, the cultural operators to do it with, with government, to do it with their countries, to do it together.

The issues that we face are often, if not always, around mobility. So at governmental levels, how can we think about access? How can we think about visas? How can we think about financial support, which is not huge, a small amount to enable some kind of mobility programmes within countries? I know within the European context, we have the i-Portunus programme, which is great.

I can say that from the Cyprus perspective, the Deputy Ministry of Culture provides a small network grant to enable Cypriot organisations to join European or international networks. These aren't big financial commitments, but it, it takes some thinking at local levels to open the doors, to enable artists to do the work in effect for them, if they can support the way to do it.

**01:29:54 – 01:33:19**

Valentina: Thanks, thanks Clymene. Alright, I think we are reaching 540. There's still a lot of people connected. I have to apologise if we can't take more questions. There were a lot of question. What I think we should do.

Well, first thing, we will make the recording of this session available. So whoever wants to, listening or share with the people who are not able to join, please do so.

Give us a few more days to do that and to put it up on culture360. The other thing is that, as you can imagine, this conversation should go on and we really want to continue talking with all of you. So if you have suggestions, if you have things that you would like to see in another webinar, please let us know, reach out to us, to ASEF, to ENCATC, to the speakers, anything.

I mean, this is really a conversation that has to keep going because at the end of the day, I think we are all very passionate about the job that we do and very, very motivated to make sure that cultural projects are more seen internationally and that there is more connections.

One last thing is that the ASEF LinkUp, which was the starting point of this conversation, is also going to continue. And I think, I don't want to say it because we organise it so it doesn't look really like, okay, I'm doing a great job. But I think it's, it's creating some value there. And I think this is proven also by this conversation.

So we are going to continue ASEF LinkUp next year. We are hoping to organise it in Asia, as you know, ASEF always does things between Asia and Europe. So one year Asia, one year Europe. And it will be probably be mid-year next year. So maybe before that we will also share more about the topic. It will be always about cultural relations.

But maybe some more specific aspect of that. And maybe some of the point that we raised today, will be addressed for sure. So I, I think I will stop here. I want to thank all of you, great speakers today. It really is. It was so stimulating to have all of you participate.

I'm really sorry we didn't have time to touch even on half of what I wanted to touch, but yeah, we'll try and do another conversation. I think it would be good to do that.

Thanks so much to all the people who joined. It was really and really, really great turn up and thank you for sharing so many interesting questions in the chat.

I think all the speakers had access to that. So it's a lot of, good thinking for us and for all of us involved in this sector to continue this conversation and to create more bridges and more trust, among each other with time.

So thank you very much. And I hope all of you will have a good end of the day or good afternoon.

See you again soon.



Speakers: Thank you. Bye bye.