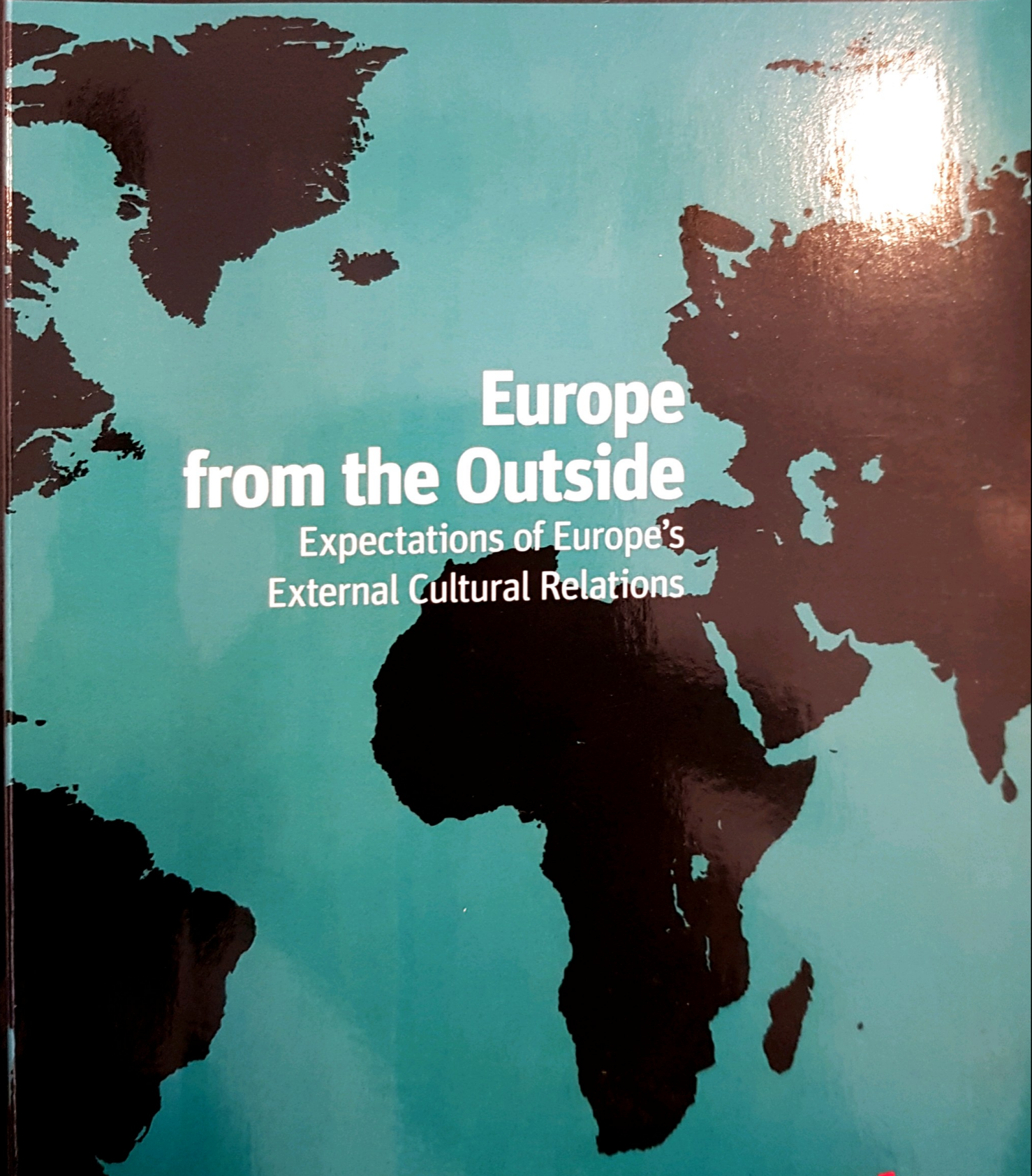


Vol.: 6

CULTURE REPORT

EUNIC YEARBOOK 2013/2014



Europe from the Outside

Expectations of Europe's
External Cultural Relations

CULTURE REPORT

EUNIC YEARBOOK 2013/2014



Culture is more than a book or a play. Culture opens doors and builds bridges to the peoples of the world. Emerging economic powers such as India, Brazil and South Korea have grasped the potential of culture in foreign relations and are already working on their external cultural policies. Europe's history of democracy, tradition of human rights and practice of friendly co-existence means that it has a great deal to offer and it should be investing more heavily in cultural relations with the rest of the world. What initiatives are needed in the area of external cultural policy – and what does the world expect of them? 30 authors from 20 countries look for some answers.

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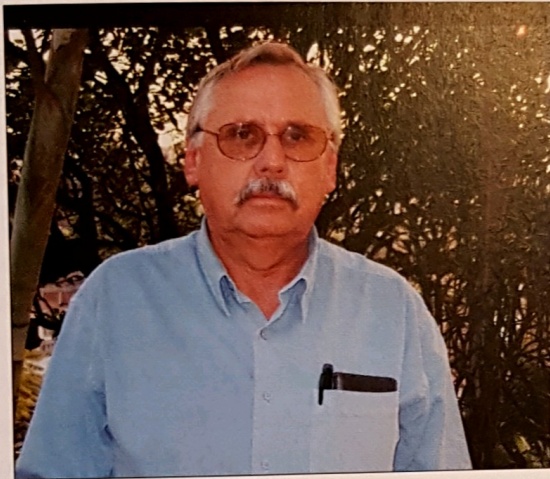
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This spaceship called Earth The dialogue between Latin America and Europe needs to concentrate on three challenges: environment, inequality and financial chaos. We are not short of concepts, but we must also show that another type of management is achievable. This means a major cultural shift. Our Brazilian author is convinced that “we need more culture”. Not culture in the sense of elegant meetings for the happy few, but a culture of change. *By Ladislau Dowbor*



What can we in Brazil expect of Europe? In reality, this question has changed and should now be: ‘what can we expect from each other?’ After all, we are all big boys now, and both sides have a lot to gain.

Latin America and other emerging countries can no longer be considered as late developers who are hoping to find a way of joining the developed world.

There are 7 billion inhabitants in this small spaceship called Earth and we are adding 80 million every year. And because we are all striving to maximise our consumption, we are all in trouble. We have to deal with climate change, soil erosion, water contamination, overfishing, rainforest destruction and other major challenges to the planet. And we are all facing rapidly-growing levels

of inequality. The reality is that we are not succeeding in building a sustainable future, so we all face a common challenge. Simply recognising this fact can be considered a step in the right direction.

In order to face up to the challenges of the environment and inequality, we need excellent collaboration, a strong political will and major communicative efforts. We need to ensure that people everywhere understand just what sort of mess we have got ourselves into and what the potential solutions may be. This means more democracy, and a major shift in the way we govern. We have all the financial resources, technologies and knowledge that we need to overcome these problems, but there are significant flaws in our governance: global problems, very weak multilateral institutions and fragmented national interests. This is why genuine collaboration between countries is now more important than ever.

The power of big business

I believe collaboration is particularly essential at political level. The following statistics on the power of big business come from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology: 737 corporations control 80% of the corporate world, while a nucleus of just 147 control 40%. Some 75% of these corporations are financial institutions. Meanwhile, the Tax Ju-

stice Network claims that between 21 and 32 trillion dollars of investments are held in tax havens – at a time when global GDP is around 70 trillion dollars. The Economist put the figure at 20 trillion, but this does little to alter the fact that we have lost control over global business finances. And yet we need these resources to finance sustainability – to fund a paradigm shift in energy use, for example – as well as to finance the vast social programmes we need to rescue the 4 billion people that the World Bank elegantly refers to as the sections of the world's population that “have no access to the benefits of globalisation”.

I would say that collaboration between Europe and Latin America, and Brazil in particular, must be centred on this triple challenge: the environmental conundrum, the growth in inequality and the financial chaos. This does not mean diminishing the importance of culture, education and science, but it does define their *raison d'être*. Inclusive development, sustainability, a green economy – we are not short of concepts. But it is not enough to simply declare that a different world is possible, we must also show that another type of management is achievable. This means a major cultural shift. We need more culture, not in the sense of elegant meetings for the happy few, but a culture of change.

Brazil has come of age. Over the last ten years it has succeeded in bringing its international relations into balance without any major disruptions or grand proclamations. Its excessive dependency on the USA in particular has been reduced, and commercial relations are now more evenly spread between

our neighbours, the EU and the rest of the world. This has been helpful for Brazil and other Latin American countries alike because of the sheer weight of the Brazilian economy. Multiple dependencies mean more autonomy. This has changed the way Brazil can relate to Europe, and allows us to build more balanced cross-fertilisation initiatives.

Access to knowledge

Access to knowledge is a particularly interesting area. Brazil created an important initiative by publicly funding 100,000 scholarships for our students to study abroad. Of course a key issue is access to technical knowledge and in a few years' time these students will return home armed with expertise and a number of friends in different countries. This will help build an important bridge for collaboration, benefiting us and the students' host countries. Foreign ministries are very important, but when it comes to collaboration it is hard to beat a network of personal contacts. Now that Brazil has taken the initiative, how about supporting similar moves from Europe?

But it is not only students that need to travel, but papers too. Building on the open access initiative is another potentially rich vein. The UK is working with Jimmy Wales, the creator of Wikipedia, on a programme that will ensure free access to any publicly funded research. The EU is studying similar moves. This is hugely important for Brazil and the developing world in general, since access to knowledge is the key issue in an increasingly

“Foreign ministries are very important, but when it comes to collaboration it is hard to beat a network of personal contacts.”

knowledge-based economy. Joint initiatives to reduce the onslaught of restrictions that rely on often absurd patents, copyrights and other mechanisms could be of great importance.

We now have a number of important open access initiatives to make available university course content. These include the OpenCourseWare at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), edX at Harvard and some 20 other institutions, CORE (China Open Resources for Education) at the main Chinese universities, along with as 'science spring' initiative which is seeing thousands of scientists leaving heavy-handed middlemen such as Elsevier for PlosOne, ArXiv and similar open access spaces.

The 2003 Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities has already been signed by more than 450 institutions. A more modern coordinated approach to the negotiations on TRIPS (Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) and WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organisation) would certainly make a difference.

One of the defining aspects of knowledge is that it is not a rival good. If I give my watch away, then someone else will have it. This is typical of the 21st-century economy. But if I give an idea away, then I still have it. Opening access to emerging countries will generate more markets, improve relations, and promote economic activities for all. Waiting for poorer countries to create these technologies themselves is just not realistic. And banning countries from producing life-saving medicines is not only economically absurd, it also tends to create a political and social backlash. Not only

is greed not a good thing, it just doesn't work.

A better understanding of social policies is another promising area. Brazil has been innovative here too. Around 150 government programmes, many of them in partnership with the non-profit sector and private companies, have helped to lift 36 million people out of poverty, generate 18 million decent jobs and create investment for the new generations. They will not necessarily bring about an immediate growth in GDP but are essential for the future. The Bolsa Familia programme is well-known in Europe, but we have more than a hundred other inclusive programmes that may also be of interest.

Stimulating bottom-up initiatives

One lesson we have learned is that stimulating bottom-up initiatives leads to better business for the traditional economic sectors and has enabled Brazil to navigate safely through the economic turmoil. More importantly, I believe we could also develop effective tripartite initiatives – with Africa, for example. I once accompanied former President Lula on a visit to several African countries. They are clearly on the move, and their receptivity to the idea of collaboration with Brazil is enormous. We face many similar challenges, such as maximising the potential of the African savannahs and the Brazilian Cerrado.

Tripartite joint-ventures could be much more effective than traditional bilateral programmes, where Europe has to carry the weight of its colonial past. I recently partici-

pated in a graduate management course where students from Portugal, Angola and Brazil, ten from each country, each spent a semester in Porto, Luanda and São Paulo. Such programmes could be developed in conjunction with public, private or non-profit sectors.

Social technologies, such as the water-gathering cisterns in the Brazilian Northeast, have proven to be enormously successful. Ensuring one's neighbours remain impoverished is not only poor policy but is also very short-sighted. How many walls are we going to build on the borders of Mexico or Palestine, how many rescue ships in the Mediterranean? We must give these people a better chance in their own countries.

One very practical and efficient way of cooperating can be achieved by forging agreements between cities. Organising major events certainly generates media coverage, but serious long-term relationships only really develop when individuals and groups get together to plan some form of lasting collaboration. There is a great deal that cities can learn from each other. Many Brazilian cities currently face the compounded challenges of poverty, inequality and fragile social services. While developing a number of recent initiatives, including Nossa São Paulo and the Cidades Sustentáveis network, we regularly turned to European cities for their help and expertise. Cidades Sustentáveis is in itself a cooperation network, involving roughly 30% of the Brazilian population.

The management courses we have been organizing provide many examples of potential European solutions, and supporting this

kind of initiative on a larger scale, including arranging technical visits and training could be very useful.

Brazil now has 85% of its population living in cities as a consequence of a chaotic and accelerated rural exodus that has created deep imbalances. Decentralised collaboration networks that create a kind of 'cosmopolitan democracy' could certainly use some support from national and EU policies. We are all bound to become culturally diverse societies in the long run. The planet is shrinking and intercultural coexistence and enrichment is a huge challenge for all of us.

Racial differences can easily be exploited to stir up volatile emotions. While Brazil is still a long way from having overcome such problems, it has tried to address them with a range of initiatives, including university quotas and support for quilombola communities (ancient communities created by escaped slaves).

Integration through cultural initiatives can be a particularly enriching experience when it is supported by productive inclusion. In spite of all the difficulties, it is possible to develop a kind of cheerful approach, a propensity to amused tolerance, which may not look very *hochkultur* but is prodigiously efficient in building bonds between communities. There is much potential for collaboration here – making people happy can be very productive.

What do we expect from Europe? Certainly not big banks, big business, big pharma or advanced weaponry. Europe is generally a nice place to be and this is hugely significant.

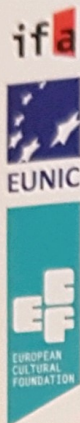
"More importantly, I believe we could also develop effective tripartite initiatives – with Africa, for example."

as leading a pleasant life is basically what we would all like to do. Europe has definitely created its own culture. Americans say they are from Mars and Europe is from Venus. In Brazil, I think we tend to prefer the Venus approach. It is from Mars that we inherited our violent dictatorships. We are all hoping that this chapter is now closed. Let us just say that there is plenty of room for cultural and educational cooperation – and much goodwill besides – because we generally have positive impressions of each other. I think that what we expect from Europe is support in creating a new development culture, centred on quality of life, respect for future generations, respect for nature and a society built on solidarity. There is no reason why so many people should be suffering on what is, after all, an incredibly rich planet.

The French economist, Delavoye, wrote that it is easier to take necessities from the poor than the superfluous from the rich. I think we need to change this, and there is sound economic reasoning behind this belief. I believe we need to look again at what Willy Brandt had to say in North-South, the seminal document he wrote in the 1980s. America profited enormously from helping to rebuild Europe after the war, while Europe profited enormously from social and economic inclusion during the 30 golden years before 'greed is good' became the motto of the day. We can regard the huge challenges we face as problems, but also as opportunities. As we learned in Brazil, taking care of the poor, the abandoned territories and despairing parents who lack the means to provide for their fami-

lies can be good for everybody. It is certainly more efficient than building more walls and creating an invasive world security system. There is an apt Brazilian proverb: "Respeito e caldo de galinha faz bem à saúde", "Respect and chicken broth are good for your health". The doors are open.

Ladislau Dowbor is an economist. He teaches at the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, works with numerous governmental and non-profit organisations and various United Nations agencies. He is the author of more than 40 books and a series of technical papers in the area of development planning. His publications can be viewed on his website <http://dowbor.org> and may be freely used for non-commercial purposes (Creative Commons).



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Culture is more than a book or a play. Culture opens doors and builds bridges to the peoples of the world. In Africa, America, the Arab world and Asia, centuries-old trading and communications routes are being redrawn. Culture could present Europe with the opportunity to forge a 'New Deal' with the world. The situation in Europe's neighbouring regions, North Africa and the Middle East, requires the old continent to draw up a common strategy. In Africa, relations need to be started afresh in order to build greater trust.

The dialogue with Latin America has to encompass climate change, soil erosion, water pollution and over-fishing. Globalisation has created a new context for democracy, and it is not just in Asia that it needs to be debated afresh. What initiatives are needed in the area of external cultural policy – and what does the world expect of them? How is Europe perceived by the rest of the world and how can European culture play a role in external relations? And finally, how can EUNIC – the European network of national institutes for culture – make a truly effective contribution?

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