

ifa ECP Monitor

Approach and Methodology

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The External Cultural Policy (ECP)-Monitor is an online system initiated in 2021 that presents key data and information about the external cultural policy of countries in a structured and systematic way. Organized in the form of country profiles and comparative reports, its emphasis is on quantitative data and contextual information, with links and references to relevant official documents, academic literature and other source material. The ECP-Monitor presents data and information in succinct ways that range from summaries to detailed reports and data presentations.

For the purpose of ECP-Monitor, we define external cultural policy as the ways and means by which states use culture and the arts, language, education, research, and media to exercise influence abroad for enhancing their geopolitical positioning. Understood in this sense, ECP can complement and substitute other economic, diplomatic, and military means of leverage.

The ECP-Monitor complements the Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends in Europe¹ and its extension, WorldCP.² While the Compendium and WorldCP are designed for domestic cultural policy only, the ECP-Monitor exclusively reports on external cultural policy including externally-oriented activities that take place in the respective country itself. Moreover, while both the Compendium and WorldCP have a primary focus on arts and culture, the ECP-Monitor covers a broader range of policy fields. In addition to arts and culture, it covers education and research, language, and foreign media.

In approaching the development of the ECP-Monitor, we first focused on a framework for data collection, analysis, and presentation.

1. Conceptual Frame

The ECP-Monitor has two main parts. The first one focuses on the general contours of a country's ECP, where the second one probes into various subfields. Note that the content structure is a provisional one and will be reviewed and revised as the project develops.

Part I. General ECP Contours

- **Terminology:** how does each country refer to, and regard, what the ECP-Monitor defines as external cultural policy?
- **Goals and Priorities:** what are the stated ECP goals and purposes?
- **Thematic Focus:** does the country's current ECP have any thematic priorities, linking it more closely to other major policy areas such as security, trade, R & D or economic development?
- **Regional Focus:** does the current ECP have any explicit regional foci or priorities?
- **Decision-making:** which departments/ministries or agencies are involved in policy development and decision-making? How is ECP decided? Which actors are on the institutional "map" of ECP, and how do they relate to each other?
- **Implementation:** which departments/ministries or agencies are involved in policy implementation and program administration?

¹ <https://www.culturalpolicies.net>

² <https://www.culturalpolicies.net/database/worldcp/>

- **Resources:** how much does the country spend on ECP in total; what share of ECP budgets does government funding comprise; what is the total number of staff, volunteers, and interns involved in ECP; what are the expenditure, both domestic and abroad?

Part II. Major ECP Fields

While the specific program names vary from country to country, five main ECP subfields constitute the bulk of activities. These are:

- Arts and culture
- Language
- Education
- Science and research
- Media and communication

Depending on the circumstances of a particular country, and if relevant, other fields, such as religion, sports or the cultural industries may be added in the profile.

The focus of the ECP-Monitor is on government policy and activities, including public agencies and arms-length institutions. It does not cover private actors, their objectives and activities. Thus, philanthropic foundations, non-profit and nongovernmental organizations do not fall within the compass of the Monitor, and neither do businesses and private individuals active in the field of cultural policy. However, we acknowledge the role of such private actors in the country reports in cases where they are relevant.

2. Presentation and Dissemination

The ECP-Monitor has a dedicated website hosted by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen/Institute for International Cultural Relations). The website allows for easy navigation to the main content components, all downloadable and open access. Each country's ECP information comes in four parts – a Report, At a Glance, Data & Facts, and References & Sources. The country report, which is usually about 12 to 15 pages, gives in-depth elaboration and analysis of the country's ECP, including more data as well as relevant qualitative information. At a Glance is a four-page tableau that summarizes key facts and facets. Facts & Data present the set of data collected based on key indicators and variables defined in the Glossary (see below), showing detailed data for each field. References & Sources offers full citations of the material used, including links to documents and websites.

Because we have tried to establish consistent standards for collecting and organizing data, we can draw comparisons across nations in subfields. Comparative reports have so far covered the topics of arts and culture, higher education, K-12 education, science diplomacy, language, media, and digital diplomacy. In addition, an ECP dataset is compiled with key indicators across subfields for comparing, tracking, and analyzing key figures. Based on the scale of ECP involvement indicated by the dataset, countries are ranked as global, major, medium, and minor ECP actors. The current ECP ranking is found [here](#).

3. Country Coverage

The value of the ECP-Monitor for users increases with the number of countries covered and the quality of the comparative data and information presented. As an initial goal, we cover a select set of thirty-nine countries that vary by size, regime type, policy model, and most importantly, the importance they attach to external cultural policy: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, Estonia, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

In the future, we plan to cover all EU member, OECD and G20 countries. In a further tranche, the ECP-Monitor plans to expand its reach by including additional countries.

4. Definitions and Data

The availability of data in the field of external cultural policy is critical. It is a largely underdeveloped field with fewer agreed-upon definitions and reporting standards. There are major gaps in coverage across fields and countries, and serious issues of comparability remain. Timeseries data are all too rare. As a result, analysts and practitioners alike face an incomplete evidence base, which limits the understanding we have of the ECP of relevant countries. It also constrains the assessment of which policy options would be more effective than others.

Over time, the ECP-Monitor seeks to fill these glaring data gaps. This requires a better understanding and documentation of definitions, a systematic search and assessment of data sources, and ways of analyzing and presenting data.

In terms of definitions, we have assembled a Glossary of terms and how they are defined, measured and treated in the ECP-Monitor, covering the following:

1. Key indicators
2. Government funding as percent of total government outlays, by selected fields
3. Rankings
4. Country factsheet
5. Qualitative indicators
6. Culture & the arts
7. Language
8. Education
9. Science & research
10. Media
11. Contributions to multilateral cultural organizations

The Glossary can be found [here](#).

The ECP Monitor uses a wide range of data sources. For basic statistics (GDP, population, government expenditure etc.) we use Eurostat sources for the EU, OECD sources for member states outside the EU, and World Bank sources for all other countries. Nationally, we use

statistics provided by the relevant statistical offices, ministries or agencies. Official data are complemented by extensive desk research of relevant government websites and documents, secondary sources like academic publications and media reports as well as consultations with relevant diplomatic representations and local experts.

The data presented in a first set of twenty countries were collected in 2021 with 2019 as the base year, with more countries added since. We also collected data for to establish an initial time series whenever possible. Country information will be updated from autumn 2022 onwards.

To ensure data quality in terms of validity and reliability, we consulted multiple sources and cross-checked information if possible. In some instances, where no precise data were available, we used estimates based on face validity and plausibility assumptions.

5. Criteria

Given the variation of external cultural policies and the underdeveloped and patchy state of available data, we established a set of standardized criteria that are covered in more detail in the Glossary.

Among the main criteria, we examine:

- **ECP activities** cover the fields of culture & the arts; language promotion; primary & secondary education abroad; tertiary education including student mobility, transnational education, and scholarship schemes; science & research; international media; other relevant communication strategies abroad.
- **The estimated number of countries with ECP activities** is based on the number of countries with diplomatic representations and cultural promotion programs.
- **The number of ECP institutions abroad** refers to on-the-ground venues, liaison offices and branches.
- **ECP staff** is all staff (FTE equivalent or head count) working in ECP institutions abroad in the fields of culture and language promotion, education, science & research, media. Also included is the staff who coordinate external cultural action from within the country.
- **Government financial support** equals the total budget allocations to a directorate or program involved in external cultural policy. If no equivalent programs exist, an estimate is based on government spending in all ECP fields.
- **Financial scale of ECP activities** is an aggregate of expenditure on ECP activities in a fiscal year. The following ECP actors are considered: governments, public agencies and arms-length institutions, and contributions to international cultural organizations and multi-lateral programs.

Excluded are:

- **ECP activities** such as sports, youth and volunteering programs and exchanges, tourism, religion, think-tanks, and international cooperation and development assistance unless they have specific and explicit ECP objectives.
- **Temporary and joint ECP institutions abroad** such as temporary representations, joint institutions (e.g., Franco-German cultural institutes), and tourism offices.³
- **ECP staff** working in cultural affairs unless explicitly involved in external cultural activities as well as part-time local staff and freelancers.⁴
- **Financial scale of ECP activities** excludes the budgets of research institutes, universities, schools etc. unless they are explicitly allocated to ECP activities or can be estimated otherwise.

6. Currency conversion

Currency conversion to Euros uses the annual average exchange rates of the European Central Bank.

³ With the exception of France where the state tourism agency is a part of the cultural diplomacy program.

⁴ When the number of such staff is considerable, e.g., in case of France, it is reported separately.

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