Sometimes it might be unavoidable to use catchall phrases when discussing legislative programmes and policies. Perhaps more often than not, this is even warranted inasmuch as it helps to unite discussants with very different backgrounds and agendas. Catchall policy and catchall law-making risk, however, that people stay united in theory but not in practice.

Cultural diversity is one of those terms that manage to accommodate different meanings and varying concepts. In addition, the term cultural diversity is often deployed together with other concepts as important as social tolerance, freedom of expression and democracy. At the same time, it is held out in defence against perceived threats from a global market and serves as justification for concrete state action in support of the creative industry.

This IRIS plus presupposes that it is important to clarify potential meanings of cultural diversity and arising concepts if we wish to experience cultural diversity in the form of concrete results. The need for clarification becomes more pressing with a view to technological advances which already by themselves, and all the more in tandem with vague concepts, challenge existing legal frameworks. This IRIS plus is a first and very useful step on a long way to go.

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The Promotion of Cultural Diversity via New Media Technologies: An Introduction to the Challenges of Operationalisation

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Introduction

Culture has been described as “an overworked concept with little semantic precision”, and cultural rights as “the Cinderella of the human rights family”. To continue in the same metaphorical vein, the objective of promoting cultural diversity could be considered a jaded ideal, worn-out by unfulfilled ambition and under-appreciation. Preambular provisions of treaties and non-binding standard-setting texts routinely refer to the objective of promoting cultural diversity, but only intermittently attempt to prise open the notion or provide for its concrete application. In recent years, however, the substantive sections of a variety of normative texts at European and international levels have begun to explore the content and scope of cultural diversity, as well as its relationship with new media technologies. The purpose of this article is to examine what cultural diversity actually entails; explain why it ought to be promoted, and assess the important role of new media technologies in advancing that aim. As such, it seeks to engage with the challenges of operationalising cultural diversity.

I. Contextualisation: Theory and Practice

Defining Culture and Cultural Rights

Culture is, as has already been suggested, a very nebulous concept, which explains why international instruments rarely seek to define its content or scope. One notable exception to this general reluctance is the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001), the Preamble of which reaffirms that culture should be regarded as:

- the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

Even if they are in short supply in international instruments, attempted definitions of “culture” are important because they can serve as a basis for defining and determining the scope of cultural rights. In the past (again as already hinted in the Introduction, supra), cultural rights have suffered from relative neglect and their development has proved somewhat stunted as a result. This relative neglect can be attributed to a number of factors, all of which concern perceptions about the status of cultural rights. For example, for as long as the view was entertained that a dichotomy existed between so-called first and second generations of human rights, i.e., civil and political rights on the one hand and economic, social and cultural rights on the other hand, cultural rights tended to be located in the latter category. Nowadays, the dominant view is that all human rights are interdependent and inter-related and purported qualitative distinctions between both sets of rights (e.g., the assumption that economic, social and cultural rights do not give rise to firm State obligations) are consequently dismissed. In any case, cultural rights would be best understood as spanning both categories, as will be demonstrated, infra. Whether cultural rights should be classed as individual or collective rights has also tended to be a perennial subject of debate. A balanced view has been proposed which styles cultural rights as individual rights with a powerful collective dimension. Very often, cultural rights are primarily regarded as minority rights. While it cannot be gainsaid that cultural rights are indeed of vital importance for persons belonging to minorities who wish to protect and develop their cultures, it is inaccurate to claim that cultural rights are the preserve of minorities: dominant societal groups also have very valid and vested interests in maintaining their cultures. It is therefore more correct to speak of the enhanced value of cultural rights for persons belonging to minorities than to claim exclusivity of relevance.

Next to the UNESCO Declaration – with its specific focus on cultural diversity – other more general international human rights instruments also contain occasional references to various rights associated with the enjoyment of culture, but without attempting to provide a comprehensive definition of the concept. For instance, Article 27(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights reads: “Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”. Pursuant to Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities “shall not be denied the right” inter alia “to enjoy their own culture”. Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) formulates the right of everyone to participate in cultural life, to benefit from scientific progress and its applications and to enjoy intellectual property rights.

For present purposes, cultural rights will be understood as a cluster of rights, and as including distinct cultural rights as well as cultural dimensions to a range of other human rights. The exercise of cultural rights therefore entails the right to maintain and develop one’s cultural identity, lead particular lifestyles, participate in cultural life and assemble, associate and organise for cultural purposes. The right to participate in cultural life implies the ability to access and exploit cultural heritage (including as recorded in audiovisual formats). Cultural heritage has been described as “a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.”

Defining Cultural Diversity

When examining the notion of cultural diversity, it is important to avoid terminological entrapment. It is not sufficient to monitor the frequency with which the precise term, “cultural diversity”, appears in normative human rights texts at the international level. One must instead look beyond the term and ensure that terminological variants and adjacent notions are also identified and examined. Thus, “cultural pluralism”, will often be relevant, given its semantic congruence with “cultural diversity”. Furthermore, “cultural heritage” and “cultural rights” can also usually lay claim to relevance, due to their relationship with “cultural diversity”, as set out, supra. The same is true of “linguistic diversity” and “media pluralism.”

Cultural diversity is not a right, as such, or at least not a right that is straightforwardly justifiable. For the purposes of this article, it will be treated as an operative public value, in the sense developed by Bhikhu Parekh. He labels “operative public values” those values “that a society cherishes as part of its collective identity and in terms of which it regulates the relations between its members”, and which “constitute the moral structure of its public life and give it coherence and stability.” To describe cultural diversity as an operative public value is therefore to insist that it...
is more than just a guiding interpretive principle for law- and policy-making. It is to point to the need to operationalise the notion; to incorporate it into regulatory, policy-making and institutional structures and practices and thereby ensure that it is meaningfully applied. Although the term, “operative public value” is academic in origin, the approach it implies is broadly consistent with that envisaged by a number of standard-setting texts at the international level, which employ different terminology. For instance, cultural diversity is described as an “essential public interest objective” in the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers’ (CM) Recommendation Rec(2003)9 to member states on measures to promote the democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting. Irrespective of the precise terminology used, the challenges of operationalisation remain the same.

Rationales for the Promotion of Cultural Diversity

Various rationales are advanced for promoting cultural diversity in normative texts at the European and international levels. For present purposes, they will be loosely grouped as follows: the intrinsic argument; the identity argument; the non-discrimination/equality argument; the democratic argument; the societal argument, and the economic argument. Each of these rationales will now be briefly considered in turn.

Intrinsic Argument

Simply stated, this argument holds that cultural diversity is valuable in and of itself. It is intrinsically beneficial. The argument derives from the view that every culture is an inherent source of wealth and that their co-existence ultimately leads to their mutual enrichment.

Identity Argument

This argument is premised on the view that cultural diversity arises from the co-existence of a multiplicity of cultural identities and practices. As such, the identity argument can be grounded in concerns for individual and group dignity. If individuals and groups are denied the freedom to maintain and develop their identities, including through exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association, etc., their dignity can be adversely affected.

Non-discrimination/Equality Argument

This argument draws on the transversal effects of the right not to be subjected to discrimination: the right necessarily extends to cultural rights. If the principles of non-discrimination and equality were not applied in respect of cultural rights, the prospect of achieving cultural diversity in society would be seriously curtailed.

Democratic Argument

The non-discrimination/equality argument also feeds into the democratic argument, which prioritises participation in public life, including cultural life and public debate. Access to cultural heritage is of considerable practical importance for democratic participation.

Societal Argument

The societal argument holds that cultural diversity is “a source and factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society”. It also holds that “a climate of tolerance and dialogue” is necessary for the realisation of this aim. In other words, pluralistic tolerance is a precondition for cultural diversity, which in turn enhances societal cohesion and stability.

Economic Argument

This argument acknowledges the economic importance of the culture industries. Creativity and diversity (cultural and linguistic) can stimulate economies and (labour) markets. Such acknowledgements complement a strictly human rights-based approach and make for a more multi-faceted approach to cultural diversity. Another dimension to this argument implicates cultural heritage, the active protection of which has been identified as “a central factor in the mutually supporting objectives of sustainable development, cultural diversity and contemporary creativity”.

Enabling Cultural Diversity

As affirmed by various pertinent texts, the attainment of cultural diversity in society presupposes the existence of a favourable enabling environment for the effective exercise of cultural rights. Cultural diversity can only be achieved when pluralism is safeguarded at societal level, meaning that groups are able to develop and express their cultural identities and to practise their distinctive cultures both in public and in private. This thinking also finds clear expression in the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). It recognises the link between the freedom to exercise cultural rights, societal pluralism and cultural diversity, inter alia, in the following provisions:

Considering that a pluralist and genuinely democratic society should not only respect the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of each person belonging to a national minority, but also create appropriate conditions enabling them to express, preserve and develop this identity; (Recital 7, Pre-amble to FCNM).

The Parties undertake to promote the conditions necessary for persons belonging to national minorities to maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage. (Article 5(1), FCNM).

The right to freedom of expression is a prerequisite for the exercise of cultural rights and for the enablement of cultural diversity. As stated succinctly by the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers: “Cultural diversity cannot be expressed without the conditions for free creative expression, and freedom of information existing in all forms of cultural exchange, notably with respect to audiovisual services.” This approach also logically requires that expressive and dialogical fora are available and accessible on a non-discriminatory basis. By extension, the media, as vectors of culture and cultural identities, are capable of making a major contribution to the promotion of cultural diversity. This observation applies, mutatis mutandis, to new media technologies, as will be demonstrated in the next section.

II. The Normative Framework

The foregoing section elucidated the meaning of cultural diversity; explored the (often overlapping) rationales for its promotion; identified the most important features of a favourable enabling environment for the realisation of cultural diversity, and introduced the importance of freedom of expression and the media for the promotion of cultural diversity. This section will sketch the normative framework for the promotion of cultural diversity at the European and global levels. Selected focuses within that normative framework which deal specifically with the role of new media technologies in the advancement of cultural diversity, will be examined accordingly.

Council of Europe

Various Council of Europe treaties serve to promote cultural diversity, either directly or indirectly. The ECHR does not explicitly provide for the protection of cultural rights and an initiative proposing to draft an additional protocol to the Convention on
cultural rights in the 1990s never came to fruition. However, given that cultural rights include a range of different rights, as outlined, supra, it is clear that the ECHR does, in practice, afford cultural rights a considerable degree of protection. Indeed, the growing recognition of cultural rights by the European Court of Human Rights accounts in large measure for what has been termed the Court’s “burgeoning minority rights jurisprudence”.

One of the early treaties elaborated by the Council of Europe was the European Cultural Convention. It is deliberately general in character and was designed to “foster […] the study of the languages, history and civilisation of the others and of the civilisation which is common to [all nationals of States Parties to the Convention]”. It is an important point of general reference, but it does not specifically address the potential contribution of the media to the promotion of cultural diversity (or, needless to say, that of new media technologies).

Article 10 of the European Convention on Transfrontier Television (ECTT), is entitled “Cultural objectives”, but its focus is very Eurocentric and does not explicitly embrace the promotion of cultural diversity per se. Rather, it seeks to promote European works/production by requiring broadcasters to devote the majority proportion of their transmission time to European works (Article 10(1)) and to get States to “look together for the most appropriate instruments and procedures to support, without discrimination between broadcasters, the activity and development of European production, particularly in countries with a low audiovisual production capacity or restricted language area” (Article 10(3)). As such, its contribution to the promotion of cultural diversity is limited and specific.

The importance of protecting and promoting cultural heritage and audiovisual heritage for ensuring a favourable enabling environment for the promotion of cultural diversity has already been explained, supra. Two Council of Europe treaties dealing specifically with those issues are the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society and the European Convention for the Protection of the Audiovisual Heritage.

The Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society includes useful measures for promoting the protection of cultural heritage, like the requirement that States develop laws and policies for that purpose. Specific emphasis is within the Framework Convention couple “access to cultural heritage” with “democratic participation” (Article 12) and “cultural heritage, with an emphasis on cultural rights, which couplings underscore the importance of rendering cultural heritage accessible for the realisation of cultural rights and cultural diversity. A further coupling is of particular relevance for the promotion of cultural diversity by new media technologies: Article 14, entitled “Cultural heritage and the information society”. It requires States Parties to “develop the use of digital technology to enhance access to cultural heritage and the benefits which derive from it”, inter alia, by “encouraging initiatives which promote the quality of contents and endeavour to secure diversity of languages and cultures in the information society”.

The Convention for the Protection of the Audiovisual Heritage, as its name suggests, focuses on audiovisual material recording and expressing cultural heritage. Its central aim is to:

- ensure the protection of the European audiovisual heritage and its appreciation both as an art form and as a record of our past by means of its collection, its preservation and the availability of moving image material for cultural, scientific and research purposes, in the public interest.

This aim is informed by the realisation that “Europe’s heritage reflects the cultural identity and diversity of its peoples” and the recognition that “moving image material” as “a form of cultural expression reflecting contemporary society” and “an excellent means of recording everyday events […]”, is a valuable cultural resource meriting concerted protection by States. Importantly, the Convention anticipates the potential of future technological developments for enhancing the preservation of audiovisual heritage. Article 18 explicitly provides for the conclusion of new Protocols “dealing with moving image material other than cinematographic works […] with a view to developing, in specific fields, the principles contained in this Convention”.

Two examples of treaties which contribute to the promotion of cultural diversity, without that objective being their central concern, are the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). The Preamble to the ECRML acknowledges that:

- the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages in the different countries and regions of Europe represents an important contribution to the building of a Europe based on the principles of democracy and cultural diversity within the framework of national sovereignty and territorial integrity. (Recital 7, Preamble to ECRML).

Article 12, ECRML, is entitled, “Cultural activities and facilities” and comprises a list of possible measures to be taken by States Parties with a view to enhancing cultural activities and facilities in regional or minority languages. The activities and facilities include “especially libraries, video libraries, cultural centres, museums, archives, academies, theatres and cinemas, as well as literary work and film production, vernacular forms of cultural expression, festivals and the culture industries, including inter alia the use of new technologies”. Thus, the exploitation of new media technologies is expressly envisaged for the development of cultural activities and facilities.

Whereas the title of the FCNM may suggest a certain narrowness of focus, it actually addresses many issues concerning society as a whole, and not only persons belonging to national minorities. It enshrines the central objective – the protection of national minorities - in a complex, majority-minority dialectic. In other words, it strives to assure the protection of national minorities within the broader context of pluralist society. The importance of the FCNM has already been referred to in the context of the so-called “societal” argument for promoting cultural diversity. Other provisions of the FCNM provide further evidence of the strong linkage between the goals of promoting tolerance, intergroup understanding and cultural diversity, and in particular, the instrumental importance of the media in respect of each goal:

- The Parties shall encourage a spirit of tolerance and intercultural dialogue and take effective measures to promote mutual respect and understanding and co-operation among all persons living on their territory, irrespective of those persons’ ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, in particular in the fields of education, culture and the media. (Article 6(1), FCNM).

In the framework of their legal systems, the Parties shall adopt adequate measures in order to facilitate access to the media for persons belonging to national minorities and in order to promote tolerance and permit cultural pluralism. (Article 9(4), FCNM).

Although the actual text of the FCNM does not distinguish between traditional broadcasting and new media technologies, their functional differences are increasingly being explored in the official monitoring processes of the FCNM and also by the Council of Europe’s Committee of Experts on Issues Relating to the Protection of National Minorities (DH-MIN).

Alongside the treaty-based standard-setting work of the Council of Europe concerning the promotion of cultural diversity via (new) media, a host of relevant standard-setting measures have also been adopted by its Committee of Ministers, the most important of which will now be presented in tabular form:

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**Table: Treaty-Based Standard-Setting Measures for Cultural Diversity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ECHR</td>
<td>European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECTT</td>
<td>European Convention on Transfrontier Television</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECRML</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>FCNM</td>
<td>Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Declaration (2008)
- Allocation & management of the digital dividend & the public interest

### Rec (2007) 16
- Promotion of public service value of the Internet

### Rec (2007) 3
- Remit of public service media in the information society

### Rec (2007) 2
- Media pluralism and diversity of media content

### Declaration (2007)
- Protecting role of media in democracy & in context of media concentration

### Declaration (2006)
- Guarantee of the independence of PSB in the member states

### Declaration (2005)
- Human rights and the rule of law in the Information Society

### Rec. No. R (99) 1
- Measures to promote media pluralism

### Political Message (2003)
- Political Message to WSIS

### Declaration (2003) 4
- Promotion of democratic and social contribution of digital broadcasting

### Political Declaration (2000)
- A European policy for new information technologies

### Declaration (1999)
- Measures to promote media pluralism

### Rec. No. K (99) 14
- Universal community service concerning new communication and information services

### Rec. No. K (96) 10
- Guarantee of independence of public service broadcasting

### Declaration (1982)
- Freedom of expression and information

Instead of conducting an itemised analysis of these CM texts, their essence will be examined in the context of public service broadcasting/media and, more generally, public service values. Beforehand, though, it is necessary to briefly signal the importance of relevant texts emanating from other limbs of the Council of Europe. The promotion of cultural diversity via the media has regularly appeared on the agenda of the European Ministerial Conferences on Mass Media Policy. The prioritisation of the objective in respect of the digital environment, including the potential role of public service broadcasting, was emphatic in the most recent Ministerial Conference in Kyiv, especially in Resolution No. 2, adopted at the Conference: “Cultural diversity and media pluralism in times of globalisation”. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has also adopted texts dealing with these issues, most pertinently its Recommendation 1067 (1987) on the cultural dimension of broadcasting in Europe: Resolution 1313 (2003), “Cultural co-operation between Europe and the south Mediterranean countries”; Recommendation 1641 (2004), “Public service broadcasting”, and Recommendation 1674 (2004), “Challenges facing the European audiovisual sector”.

### Public Service Broadcasting/Media

By virtue of its philosophy and mandate, public service broadcasting (or public service media, as they are increasingly being called in deference to the diversification of technological forms across which they (may) operate) is simultaneously an ideal agent to, and an ideal forum in which to, promote cultural diversity. The promotion of cultural diversity is widely regarded as a general objective of PSB, but it can also feature in a more detailed fashion among the more specific objectives of PSB. For example, the CM’s Recommendation on the remit of public service media in the information society emphasises that:

> In their programming and content, public service media should reflect the increasingly multi-ethnic and multicultural societies in which they operate, protecting the cultural heritage of different minorities and communities, providing possibilities for cultural expression and exchange, and promoting closer integration, without obliterating cultural diversity at the national level.

It should be noted that the Recommendation understands cultural diversity in an open, inclusive way – there is no question of the notion being restricted to European cultural diversity, as in the aforementioned regulatory measures prescribing the transmission of European audiovisual works. This is clear from para. 24 of the Recommendation, which states: “Public service media should promote respect for cultural diversity, while simultaneously introducing the audience to the cultures of other peoples around the world”.

PSB is currently in a state of transition, but as Karol Jakubowicz has noted, “there was hardly a time in the eight decades of PSB’s existence when it was not ‘in transition’”. He describes the challenges constantly faced by PSB as being “at once conceptual and contextual”: different understandings of the role of PSB and the fact that “changing contexts of PSB operation have always affected the shape, nature and objectives of that media institution and positioned it in society and on the media scene in a variety of ways”. The current state of transition has been triggered by technological, market-related and socio-cultural trends. How PSB engages with these new trends will largely determine its future, but its engagement must also remain within relevant parameters set by EU law, e.g. rules and guidelines governing State funding for PSB and the relationship between such funding and PSB mandates. Broadcasting technologies are becoming inexorably digitised and converged. If PSB is to retain its previous (or even current) level of influence in this new technological environment, it is imperative that it develops into an effective player across diverse media types and formats.

Calls for increased general PSB exploitation of new technological opportunities are also increasingly being linked to the specific goal of promoting cultural diversity. For example, again in its Recommendation on the remit of public service media in the information society, the CM stated:

> Public service media should play a particular role in the promotion of cultural diversity and identity, including through new communication services and platforms. To this end, public service media should continue to invest in new, original content production, made in formats suitable for the new communication services. They should support the creation and production of domestic audiovisual works reflecting as well local and regional characteristics.

### Public Service Values

The CM’s Recommendation on measures to promote the public service value of the Internet, picks up on this theme. Its central objective is to prompt States Authorities, where appropriate in cooperation with all interested parties, to take all necessary measures to promote the public service value of the Internet, inter alia by “upholding human rights, democracy and the rule of law […] and promoting social cohesion, respect for cultural diversity and trust” in respect of the Internet and other ICTs. States authorities are expected to draw on the guidelines appended to the Recommendation in their efforts to realise its central objective. The guidelines have five main focuses: human rights and democracy; access; openness; diversity, and security. The guidelines’ focus on diversity strives for equitable and universal involvement in the development of Internet and ICT content. As such, they encourage, inter alia:

- the development of a cultural dimension to digital content production, including by public service media;
- strategies and policies geared towards the preservation of digital heritage;
- participation in “the creation, modification and remixing of interactive content”;
- measures for the production and distribution of user- and community-generated content;
- capacity-building for local and indigenous content on the Internet;
- multilingualism on the Internet.

The CM’s Declaration on a European Policy for New Information Technologies also engages in a detailed way with the specific potential of new media technologies for stimulating cultural diversity. The most relevant section of the Declaration, section (iv) concerning diversity of content and language, includes the following aims:
- to encourage the development of a wide range of communication and information networks, as well as the diversity of content and language, so as to foster political pluralism, cultural diversity and sustainable development;
- to promote the full use by all, including minorities, of the opportunities for exchange of opinion and self-expression offered by the new information technologies;
- to acknowledge the usefulness of these technologies in enabling all European countries and regions to express their cultural identities;
- to encourage the provision of cultural, educational and other products and services in an appropriate variety of languages and to promote the greatest possible diversity of these products and services;
- [...]

These engagements with the specificities of new media technologies and their identification of how they can serve the goal of promoting cultural diversity are welcome. They represent a significant step forward from numerous generalised affirmations of the potential of new media technologies for promoting cultural diversity (which, while welcome in their own right, offered little practical guidance as to how they actually promoted the goal).51

**European Union**

Under the Treaty of Lisbon, the European Union’s commitments to human rights are strengthened considerably including in ways which have implications for the promotion of cultural diversity. For instance, the proposed new Article 1a to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) sets out an extended range of foundational values of the Union, including respect for human dignity, human rights, minority rights, societal pluralism and non-discrimination.52

Relatedly, the reworked Article 2, TEU, states that the Union “shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced”. Very significantly, the new Article 6.1 accords the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union “the same legal value as the Treaties”.53 Under the new Article 6.2, the EU “shall accede” to the ECHR.54 Article 6.3 affirms that fundamental rights, as guaranteed by the ECHR and resulting from the constitutional traditions of Member States, “shall constitute general principles of the Union’s law”.

One of the most important legal bases for the protection of cultural heritage and diversity (including languages) has heretofore been Article 151 of the Treaty establishing the European Community.55 Article 151(1) states: “The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore”56 Article 151(4) follows up on that commitment: “The Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures”.

Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union57 is entitled “Cultural, religious and linguistic diversity”; it reads: “The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity”. It is based on Article 6, TEU, and Article 151(1) and (4) of the EC Treaty.58 Although the explicit reference to cultural diversity is welcome, “shall respect” is a significantly weaker formulation than, for example, “guarantee”, “secure” or “promote”. As such, it involves a considerably lighter commitment for States. Second, the Explanatory Note does not spell out the essence or scope of cultural diversity, which suggests a non-committal attitude to – or wariness of – its actual or potential implications.

The commentary on Article 22 provided by the EU Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights is very brief and does not meaningfully engage with the treatment of relevant legal issues under international (human rights) treaties, including the ECHR.59 The commentary does, however, usefully refer to the link between cultural diversity and broadcasting. It describes the **Television without Frontiers** Directive as being the text that is perhaps the closest to Article 22 of the Charter because of the instrumentality of its quota system for European works for preserving cultural creation and therefore diversity.

The quota system for European, and independent European, works is set out in Articles 4-5, juncto 6, of the “Television without Frontiers” Directive. Those Articles tend to be regarded as the main provisions in the Directive which, by design or in effect, serve the goal of promoting cultural diversity in broadcasting.60 As no other Article in the Directive deals with cultural diversity per se, it is perhaps predictable that the Articles promoting European, and independent European, works, might, by default, be considered to be the most relevant. However, upon closer scrutiny, the perceived relevance of Articles 4 and 5 turns out to be somewhat specious as the (intended and actual) contribution of these Articles to the goal of promoting cultural diversity in broadcasting is actually quite limited.

Articles 4 and 5 pursue dual economic and cultural objectives, but those objectives are not evenly weighted. The actual wording of relevant preambular Recitals and of the Articles themselves, as well as the **Realpolitik** of their drafting history, all suggest that Articles 4 and 5 were really conceived of as protective economic measures, designed to support the European audiovisual industry in the face of US dominance of global audiovisual markets. The purported cultural objectives of Articles 4-5 suffer from a number of shortcomings: they lack any qualitative criteria; they lack any stipulations about time-scheduling and they lack any requirement to reinvest percentages of profits in new, independent European production. Such shortcomings increase the likelihood of mere pro forma compliance with Articles 4 and 5 by cost-conscious broadcasters who might prefer to meet their obligations by transmitting cheap, low-quality programming at off-peak hours. The reporting system concerning Articles 4 and 5 is primarily statistical, which makes it very difficult to gauge the qualitative impact of the provisions.61 All in all, it must be concluded that any contribution made by Articles 4 and 5 to the promotion of cultural diversity in broadcasting should be regarded as incidental to their primary focus, i.e., the separate objective of promoting European and independent European works. The two objectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but they should not automatically be equated with one another.

The preamble to the Audiovisual Media Services (AVMS) Directive62 is sprinkled with references to the goal of promoting cultural diversity in the European audiovisual sector: most saliently, Recitals 1, 4, 5, 8 and 48. Of these, the first four are, by and large, differently-crafted re-affirmations of the importance of cultural (and linguistic) diversity. Recital 48, for its part, deals more specifically with the goal of promoting cultural diversity specifically in respect of on-demand audiovisual media services. It states that because “On-demand audiovisual media services have the potential to partially replace television broadcasting [...], they should, where practicable, promote the production and distribution of European works and thus contribute actively to the promotion of cultural diversity”. It then suggests different possible support measures for European works, such as “financial contributions by such services to the production of and acquisition of rights in European works, a minimum share of European works in video-on-demand catalogues, or the attractive presentation of European works in electronic programme guides”.

Recital 48, as shored up by Article 3, AVMS Directive,63 carries over the logic that the promotion of European and independent European works constitutes an active contribution to the promotion of cultural diversity. Nevertheless, they do usefully provide illustrative/non-prescriptive examples of how cultural works can be promoted in respect of on-demand audiovisual services.
UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

The UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity elucidates and collates the various rationales for promoting cultural diversity, as outlined in the first section of this article. Its explanatory value is very helpful. It teases out important links between theory and practice. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions\(^{64}\) represents a semantic and conceptual shift from the Declaration. The Convention shows greater attention for means than for ends and for the conviction that cultural diversity is instrumental in securing a range of cultural freedoms and exchange, including the free flow of cultural activities, goods and services.\(^{65}\)

The Convention seeks to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions to create an appropriate climate in which cultures can thrive. Other key goals are to strengthen awareness of and respect for such diversity at all levels and to encourage inter-cultural interaction and dialogue. The Convention also aims to stress the linkage “between culture and development for all countries, particularly for developing countries” and to “give recognition to the distinctive nature of cultural activities, goods and services, as vehicles of identity, values and meaning”. Of particular importance is its reaffirmation of “the sovereign rights of States to maintain, adopt and implement policies and measures that they deem appropriate for the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions on their territory” (see also, Article 5 of the Convention).

Article 2 sets out those “Guiding Principles”: respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; [State] sovereignty; equal dignity and respect for all cultures; international solidarity and cooperation; the complementarity of economic and cultural aspects of development; sustainable development; equitable access, and openness and balance.

Article 6 proceeds to explore a range of measures that States Parties may adopt with a view to protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions. A list of illustrative examples of appropriate measures is preferred to a general definition of the same. The indicative list of measures includes: regulation; public financing; provision of opportunities for the “creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment of such domestic cultural activities, goods and services, including provisions relating to the language used for such activities, goods and services”; ensuring effective access for “domestic independent cultural industries and activities in the informal sector” to “the means of production, dissemination and distribution of cultural activities, goods and services”; encouragement of [efforts of] non-profit organisations, public and private institutions, artists and other cultural professionals; establishment and support of public institutions, “as appropriate”. Last, but certainly not least, “measures aimed at enhancing diversity of the media, including through public service broadcasting”, are also contemplated.

Under Article 7 (“Measures to promote cultural expressions”), States Parties “shall endeavour to create in their territory an environment which encourages individuals and social groups” to carry out a number of activities. Reliance on weak wording like “endeavour” and vague aims like the creation of an environment which encourages certain action, does not augur well for the effective attainment of the aims in question. For example, the Article states that individuals and social groups should be encouraged:

- to create, produce, disseminate, distribute and have access to their own cultural expressions, paying due attention to the special circumstances and needs of women as well as various social groups, including persons belonging to minorities and indigenous peoples; effect of local and/or indigenous languages in ICTs; and to generally continue to “promote and protect cultural diversity, as well as cultural identities, within the Information Society”.\(^{71}\)

World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

The Declaration of Principles adopted at the Geneva Phase of WSIS brackets cultural diversity and identity with linguistic diversity and local content.\(^{68}\) Its approach to the promotion of cultural diversity is content-oriented and technologically-informed. Like the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, WSIS explicitly links the wider goal of promoting cultural diversity to the discrete goals of promoting the production of and accessibility to, different types of content in diverse languages and formats.\(^{69}\) These goals are, in turn, linked to the goal of promoting wide and inclusive participation in the Information Society.\(^{70}\) It also emphasises the instrumental role that technology can play in preserving cultural heritage, which it recognises as “a crucial component of identity and individuals that links communities to their past.”\(^{71}\) At the Tunis Phase of WSIS, signatory States committed themselves to “promote the inclusion of all peoples in the Information Society through the development and use of local and/or indigenous languages in ICTs and to generally continue to “protect and promote cultural diversity, as well as cultural identities, within the Information Society”\(^{72}\) In the context of follow-up work to WSIS, relevant issues continue to be addressed, \textit{inter alia}, by the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), under so-called Action-line C8 (cultural diversity).

Conclusion

This article has briefly mapped emergent trends in European and international standard-setting texts seeking to promote cultural diversity. Those trends reveal broad congruence in their understandings of how the potential of new media technologies can be harnessed in order to advance the objective of cultural diversity. Engagement with the specific features of new technologies is essential, as is the unravelling of the concept, “cultural diversity”, and its contextualisation in the broader perspective of culture and cultural rights. This article hopes to have provided some introductory orientation for more detailed engagement with the challenges of operationalisation.\(^{73}\)
Preamble, on the Declaration on the guarantee of the independence of public service broadcasting in the member states, 27 September 2006; Preamble, CH Recommendation Rec(2003)9 on measures to promote the democratic and non-commercial contribution of digital broadcasting, op. cit.; Declaration on Cultural Diversity, op. cit., para. 2.5.


For an overview of relevant Council of Europe standards in this area, see: Susanne Nikoltchev, Ed., IRIS Special: The Public Service Broadcasting Culture (Strasbourg, European Audiovisual Observatory, 2007), at 400-401.

For an overview of the process, see: Patrick Thornberry & María Amor Martín Estébanez, European Cultural Convention,ETS No. 199, 27 October 2005 (seefurther, op.cit., at 28).


The multivalent character of the notion of cultural diversity is captured in Article 6 of the UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity, cited in Nijhoff Publishers, 2007).

For an overview of the Convention, see: Susanne Nikoltchev, Ed., IRIS Special: The Public Service Broadcasting Culture (Strasbourg, European Audiovisual Observatory, 2007), at 400-401.


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