



# The Art of Encounter

Practices of Dialogue in  
Austrian International  
Relations

*Learning from rivers  
to carry ships  
across rocky beds  
without complaint*

Karl Lubomirski

# The Art of Encounter

## Practices of Dialogue in Austrian International Relations

 Federal Ministry  
Republic of Austria  
Europe, Integration  
and Foreign Affairs



DIALOG  
DER *DIALOGUE*  
KULTUREN *OF*  
CULTURES

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## About this Book

Teresa Indjein

The present publication aims to contribute to structuring the concept of dialogue as a method of communication in diplomatic contexts, and to define its proximity to creative processes. It is published some years after the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue; the 2008 Austrian International Cultural Policy Meeting also focused on the dialogue of cultures. From our practical experience, we have developed a deeper understanding of the impact of dialogue, which also justifies an increased integration of artistic-dialogic creation when dealing with conflict. Developments within Europe and the United Nations, which have integrated experiences with dialogic measures in the prevention of and fight against violent extremism, point in this direction. The Council of Europe has already defined intercultural dialogue activities in these current political challenges as binding under international law. A structured operationalization of this concern, however, is still lacking.

In many phases of its history, which is closely interwoven with the cultural diversity of Central Europe, Austria has again and again been a place of dialogue and resorted to dialogic measures, in particular in times of external or internal change. The first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be a painful exception to this rule. In his contribution, **Emil Brix**, the director of the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, emphasizes this leit-motif from Maria Theresa to the office of Federal Minister Karin Kneissl at Minoritenplatz 8, and explains the historical import of the long-standing and current emphasis on dialogue in Austrian foreign policy.

**Regina Polak**, University of Vienna, addresses relationships as a basis for dialogue from an existential viewpoint, and explores the opportunities and risks of dialogue. The feeling of belonging is a human need that highlights the interconnectedness of human beings. How and with whom we feel we belong can be decisive for the future and requires societal practice.

In his contribution, **Stefan Hammer**, also from the University of Vienna, shows to what extent Austrian constitutional legislation guarantees the preconditions for dialogue by establishing a secure space that people living in Austria can occupy in free self-determination. He goes

on to explain how the interaction between state and civil society activities to uphold and strengthen state goals works to promote dialogue.

To embed dialogue in diplomatic contexts in order to promote understanding as a basis of trust-building and peacekeeping, also is the aim of the article by **Patrice Brodeur**, University of Montreal, in this publication. The greatest incentive for dialogue, also in political processes, is the mutual and complementary increase in knowledge. While we cannot do without decision-making processes, Brodeur identifies a growing awareness of the necessity of dialogic transformation.

**Simon Mraz** and **Christian Autengruber**, both BMEIA<sup>1</sup>, work in Moscow and Vienna and directly collaborate with Austrian and local creative artists who attempt a cross-cultural reflection of basic questions and current issues and thus contribute to processes of transformation. They address the development and implementation of the principles of Austrian cultural diplomacy – »Connect, Motivate, Mediate« – and show how a *regard croisé* combining creative internal and external viewpoints allows new approaches to develop.

The European Union declares its conviction that art and culture are necessary parts of the strategic and interdisciplinary approach of EU external relations and EU development cooperation because they contribute to building long-term relations and mutual understanding, and thus significantly strengthen trust and the credibility of EU policies. **Stephan Vavrik**, BMEIA, summarizes how the EU wants to heighten the potential of cultural activities in external relations by going beyond cultural education and entering into a new spirit of dialogue – of mutual listening and learning.

Vienna is the seat of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which emerged from a geopolitical situation in the 1970s when it was still necessary to develop the ability to talk and the capacity for dialogue on completely new issues. **Florian Raunig** and **Christian Strohal**, both BMEIA, describe how the CSCE process was invented in a geopolitical stalemate characterized by the rapid development of strategic technologies and a growing interest in participation on the part of the civil society. They describe the current desire for dialogue amongst participating states of OSCE, and sketch possible practical solutions.

In the framework of the UN International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), the UNESCO has initiated a process in which experiences in the dialogue of cultures are recorded and analysed globally. The aim is to establish structures of intercultural dialogue and international learning. **Ann-Belinda Preis**, UNESCO, describes the cooperation with Austria in this new field.

**Shalini Randeria** and **Ivan Vejvoda** analyse Austria's position and significance as a place of international dialogue and academic exchange

1 Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (BMEIA).

at the heart of Europe using the example of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM).

Aiming to show the impact of dialogic approaches in international cultural relations, **Aloisia Wörgetter**, BMEIA, introduces the methodological approaches implemented in the work of the »Dialogue of Cultures« Task Force since 2007. These specifically include dialogic techniques that take into account creative processes and are mindful of results orientation. In her contribution, she highlights the impact of dialogic approaches in international cultural relations.

A number of presentations of concrete examples of how the »Dialogue of Cultures« is applied complete the picture and highlight the inter- and trans-sectoral dimensions of dialogic methods. The capability to work with and in networks has always been one of the strengths of the Austrian diplomatic service.

The practical work of Austrian representations and cultural fora abroad, of bilateral and multi-lateral diplomatic work in general, as well as the programmatic work on issues of integration coordinated in Vienna already implements many of the principles of dialogue described in recent international literature. Over the past years, the work of the »Dialogue of Cultures« Task Force has yielded experiences with dialogic methods that are confirmed by OSCE professionals. These insights are further explored and developed in the context of cultural international relations and diplomatic work in itself.

»The Art of Encounter. Practices of Dialogue in Austrian International Relations« is programmatically and content-wise the eighth recommendation and work programme of Austrian international cultural policy following the music programme »The New AUSTRIAN Sound of Music/NASOM«, the literary programme »schreibART AUSTRIA«, »Dance On Tour AUSTRIA«, »Curate & ART AUSTRIA«, the film programmes »Austrian Short Film Series«, »Tricky Women« and »Ars Electronica Animation Festival«, the programme »Calliope AUSTRIA. Women in Society, Culture and the Sciences«, and »Creative Austrians. Innovators for the society of the future«. I hope it will be an impulse and a stimulus for many.

We would like to thank all of the »Dialogue of Cultures« Task Force's dialogue partners, who have maintained an animated exchange with the BMEIA for more than a decade, as well as the participants in dialogues that were organized by the Task Force over the decades, and all our interlocutors who have provided valuable further inspiration and materials, and the authors of this publication for sharing their knowledge and practice of dialogue.

We would also like to express our gratitude to our numerous project partners who provided spaces for dialogue and contributed to a competent design and implementation of intercultural and interreligious dialogues.

Last but not least, I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Aloisia Wörgetter for drafting and editing this book.

This contribution – just like the publication as a whole – can only sketch the sweeping issue of dialogue. It can however take a clear stand for a continued and increased interconnectedness of diplomatic sectors that has always been the case in Austrian foreign policy, and that today is a desideratum on the EU level and in international organizations, too.

# Dialogue as Communicative Tool of Diplomacy

Federal Minister Karin Kneissl

Creativity and interpersonal skills have always been key qualities in diplomacy. Current global phenomena such as migration, modern communication technology and social media undoubtedly demand that these abilities are further developed and refined. We are increasingly confronted with political, economic and social settings for which we have no experience and which require innovative approaches. Dialogue is a structural and communicative tool used in diplomacy to resolve complex problems for which the best approach has yet to be developed. According to Hans-Georg Gadamer, dialogue means adopting a *learning attitude*. Such an attitude is also necessary for international relations.

Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres considers it the duty of the international community to move away from fearing each other and move towards trusting one another. However, between both these attitudes there often lie seemingly irreconcilable rifts and distortions. Austria's examination of its own history, the bad as well as the good, has taught it to be able to appreciate and acknowledge fears and yet also to remain optimistic. For this reason, our diplomatic services today are able to build bridges and make themselves available for creating them. Our active participation in multilateral forums and involvement in the United Nations Headquarters in Vienna emphasise this attitude.

For several decades now, the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been active in bilateral and multilateral cultural dialogue, and since 2006, it has managed to create structures within its diplomatic service that address methodological questions on dialogue and its possible results conceptually, in active initiatives, and in their implementation. The Task Force »Dialogue of Cultures« designs key dialogue-based projects with the goal of promoting the use of these principles in our diplomatic work, and serves as a point of contact for the implementation of dialogue initiatives. It promotes the creation of networks between dialogue partners and strengthens diplomatic dialogue exper-

tise in such a way that it can become effective within the multilateral sphere, in cultural foreign relations, and in integration where necessary.

I would like to lay the groundwork for action with a new way of listening, in which we perceive nuances and therefore also communicate in a nuanced manner within the implicit realm of culture. After all, we are confronted with new complexities. Due to its descriptive nature, analysis based on observation alone is not enough to establish interest-oriented action. On the contrary, communication based on dialogue is needed in order to develop viable and sustainable decisions. Conflict, however, is not the only issue requiring diplomatic attention: Foreign policy is also an important agent in maintaining and encouraging cooperative behaviours – a beneficial influence that needs to be emphasized more clearly.

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Cooperation between diplomatic actors and proponents of civil society has a great tradition in the dialogue-based work of Austrian foreign policy, and it has also acquired an important status within the European Union's global strategy. This is the first publication focusing on Austria's historical, legal and cultural political qualifications as a player in intercultural dialogue and as a place of dialogue. Neither has our approach to dialogue, a result of the long-standing experience of Austrian international cultural policy, been formulated and summed up before. Following the intense period of Austria's third Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the present publication therefore aims to provide an insight into the development of Austria's approach to dialogue, its principles and methods of implementation, and to contribute to clarifying the innovative methods mentioned in the global strategy in international policy.

One should thank those  
who plant the roses  
that we pass  
the lakes  
that send swans to their shores  
We should thank our limbs  
that they do not cease to serve us  
One should thank  
whoever still shoulders the heart of the world  
who helps the aged the weak the frail  
the animals and the trees  
whose mercy empties prisons  
whose courage topples tyrants  
One should thank those  
who hold our hand at night  
and do not leave  
till softly hope  
replaces them once more.





## Art Paving the Way for Dialogue

Teresa Indjein

»A vida è arte do encontro.« Vinícius de Moraes, a much-loved Brazilian poet who was a diplomat before wholly devoting his life to art, coined this inspiring sentence, comparing life to an art of encounter. We might always bear it in mind when working in Austrian and European international cultural relations, in cultural diplomacy. We could equate it with our ideals, with our hopes that our endeavours to promote good international relations have valuable and positive results for peace and reconciliation.

Austrian International Cultural Relations are wholeheartedly committed to the basic concept of dialogue. It strives to approach the art of dialogue, a much-extolled and highly complex field. The dimension of art, which naturally plays a decisive role in Austrian cultural diplomacy, brings its own special flavour to it, as art is capable of much. When we absorb its finest and most profound properties, it can have a healing effect. It can guide us human beings to our selves in an incomparably delicate and yet compelling manner – just think of Bach’s music. To this other, larger, more serene self we often forget in the anguish of events.

Where dialogue and reconciliation are needed, art can be a godsend from which other forms of beneficial collaboration can develop. For the shared experience of art can lay the foundations for a dimension of feeling in which new things become possible because there is room for inspiration to take shape. Shared feelings turn into joy, friendship, and trust. Co-creation turns into cooperative partnerships. Trust is extraordinarily important in this context. It is the basis of any joint endeavour with any chance of success. Human relations and encounters that include an artistic dimension can result in deep understanding and a special kind of intimacy.

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Despite such hopeful notions, we are surrounded by powerful and painful realities: war, weapons, victims, wounds, want, hardship, old pains and old accounts, retribution, lies, envy, greed, calculation and cold

interest. What can we do? We make an effort for those areas and projects that we hope we can shape in a positive and transformative way to some extent. These may be about art and therapy, about telling stories and listening, about being aware of pain and giving hope. The field of dialogue, whether it is intercultural, interreligious, or interdisciplinary, comes in all kinds of shapes and sizes. There are no limits to establishing creative connections between art and science, history, psychology, and the so-called craft of diplomacy. Very often, however, what is also key is an intuitive understanding of sensibilities. To achieve this, we need knowledge of history and cultures as well as empathy. On the path to harmony, there is no way around a conscious knowledge of diversity. Accepting external diversity clears the path to a shared inner world.

Openness to dialogue is an attitude that includes the readiness to change, which requires trust, humility, the will to learn and the wish to surpass oneself, but also openness and curiosity, sufficient imagination to ask new questions, and the courage not to universalize one's own narrow certainties – and for us diplomats, it also includes the endeavour and the desire to create a positive impact for Austria on the international stage.

**Annually, 6,000 to 7,000 projects emerge from within the network of Austrian international cultural activities. Many of them have a dialogue approach and focus on the value of relations, the creation of relations, or the transformation of relations. Their point is always to find ways of embarking on true dialogue with one another, of learning from and working with each other. This is part of the potential of cultural diplomacy.**

Depending on the depth and creativity of our perceptions and our international networks, we are able to open up fields of dialogue. If we want to be seen as a country of dialogue, we have to make an effort, for things depend on the effort we make for them. The capacity for dialogue is a matter of practice. Its potential will also serve us well in the intensifying common European international cultural activities. Some fields where this already is a reality today will be presented in this book.

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WE SHOULD TALK to daisies  
more often  
to the cedars  
to the large bright things  
we should stroke old portals  
the way you stroke an old man's brow  
without asking.



# I. Austria and Dialogue



From no journey  
I returned  
the same  
a piece of me left here  
another there  
don't look for me

from my place  
songs arise.





## On the History of Dialogue in Austrian Diplomacy

Emil Brix

Particularly in times of crisis of the world order, diplomacy becomes especially important. It is supposed to peacefully resolve conflicts in dialogue. In international relations, there have always been and still are a »logics of war« and a »logics of dialogue«. At least since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Austria has been one of the states in Europe that increasingly strove for a logic of dialogue, and, in particular since the Congress of Vienna, Vienna has been considered a »world capital of diplomacy«. Already in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, Maria Theresa founded the world's oldest state diplomatic school here, and the rules still valid today in global diplomatic practice were established here in the »Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations«. Maybe it is a symbolic reference to a revival of this diplomatic tradition of dialogue that the office of the new Austrian foreign minister features a portrait of Maria Theresa in a prominent spot.

The Diplomatic Academy of Vienna not only is the oldest institution of its kind, but even its foundation was a reaction to the concept of dialogue. When relations with the Ottoman Empire improved and became more important towards the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the demand for well-educated officials speaking the languages of that part of the world increased. Following her chancellor Kaunitz' suggestion, Maria Theresa therefore established the Oriental Academy in 1754, which is now known as the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna.

There is a long history of Austrian contributions to a dialogue-oriented diplomacy. Disregarding the proverbial marriage politics of the Habsburgs, its history can at least be traced to the Russian missions of the imperial envoy Sigismund Herberstein, who, while he was unable to achieve much in his mediations in Moscow at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is still known today for his book on the history, geography, religion, and customs of the Muscovites, which formed a model for the concept that diplomatic dialogue presupposes a knowledge of the »other« that is as precise as possible.

Permanent legations (»embassies«) already began to evolve in the early modern period, because it proved useful to have delegations not only for specific negotiations, but permanently in situ, and to maintain continuous relations. This required a well-founded education in languages, which soon proved extremely weak in the case of the Ottoman Empire. While the educated nobility was proficient in French, Italian, and Latin, hardly anyone was conversant in the multiple languages of the Orient. In addition to a degree of professionalization, the creation of a training establishment – the mentioned Oriental Academy – led to diplomatic functions no longer being the exclusive preserve of members of the nobility (five of the first eight students were commoners).

In addition to a general education, the students, initially called »language boys« – at the time, there were only boys, the youngest being eight years old –, were mainly taught Turkish, Persian, and Arabic.

According to the disciplinary regulations for the students, the Academy had been »established and maintained by the fatherly care of our most gracious sovereigns in the exclusive aim of educating worthy representatives of the political and commercial interests of the Austrian monarchy in the Turkish Empire«. One fact already became apparent at this early stage: which regions bore a particular weight in foreign relations always partly depended on economic interests and the political clout of the respective states. This also changed the orientation of the Academy over time – first the Oriental, later the Consular Academy, and today the Diplomatic Academy. This, in turn, became manifest in the changing focus of linguistic training – from Turkish, Persian, and Arabic to the languages of the Balkans, Russian, Japanese, Chinese, and of course French and later a focus on English. On the other hand, linguistic training became less important and was upstaged by economics, law, and general international relations.

Again and again, the Academy not only trained a series of senior officials and foreign ministers, but also became a centre of Oriental Studies and research, one example being Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall (1774–1856), who also became the first president of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. Austria thus also was a »gateway to the Orient«.

However, the added value of excellent knowledge, not only in linguistics, but also in politics, became especially apparent in times of conflict that called for dialogue. In addition, the foreign minister of Austria-Hungary, for instance, several senior members of the delegation to the Berlin Congress in 1878, which aimed to settle the open issues on the Balkans with the Ottoman Empire, were graduates of the Oriental Academy.

From a historical point of view, Austria's largest undertaking on the diplomatic stage clearly was the Congress of Vienna, which, for a year in 1814–15, negotiated nothing less than the new European order following Napoleon's defeat. En passant, it also established binding rules of diplo-

matic law, in extensive negotiations in commissions and committees – which also was a novelty. With the tour de force of the Congress of Vienna, the city took its place on the map as a centre of dialogue and negotiation.

One hundred years later, following the decision of parts of its ruling elite for the »cleansing storm« of a war instead of dialogue, the Habsburg Monarchy was to set in motion the disasters of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And only the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, which was achieved in laborious dialogue, and its commitment to »perpetual neutrality«, signalled the beginning of the recent history of Austria as an attractive place of international dialogue.

One of the milestones in the regulative definition of methods of dialogue and tools of diplomacy is the still-valid 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. Once more, Vienna was a centre of dialogue. After all, in this convention, the community of states defined two basic principles of dialogue in intergovernmental relations: voluntariness and reciprocity. The convention thus promotes the development of rules of dialogue in intergovernmental exchange by specifying the diplomatic protocol that provides diplomatic players with a secure framework for interaction and reaffirms reciprocity as a key element of diplomatic relations.

Over the past 50 years, Vienna has become one of the most important official residences of international organizations globally, and therefore presents itself as a platform for the promotion of peace, security, and trust. Not only the United Nations and a number of its specialized agencies have their seats in Vienna, but also a total of around 40 international organizations. Geopolitical location is one element that makes Vienna particularly suitable for them. The »neutral« location is a major advantage, not only for international organizations, but also for bilateral and multi-lateral negotiations and talks (recent examples are the nuclear negotiations with Iran, or the Syria talks). During the Cold War, too, Vienna was used as a platform for dialogue between East and West. The legendary summit between US president John F. Kennedy and the head of the Soviet government Nikita Khrushchev in 1961 is one example. Austria successfully presented itself as a neutral mediator with the capacity to build trust on both sides. In particular by means of cultural diplomacy, a much more intense dialogue with the »other Europe« was maintained during the Cold War period than other Western states could offer. During the office of Foreign Minister Alois Mock, cultural institutes and later Österreich Bibliotheken (Austria Libraries) were established, the main goal of which was cultural dialogue, and also, in particular, dialogue with opposition forces.

The Vienna Diplomatic Academy (DA), which was reopened by then Foreign Minister Bruno Kreisky in 1964 with a view to professionalize

and democratize the diplomatic service, also reflects this concept of dialogue between different cultures, different political and social backgrounds. From the beginning, its students hailed from all over the world, also from the Soviet Union and other states beyond the Iron Curtain.

Another contribution to Austrian foreign policy and to improved dialogue are the »special courses« for young diplomats and other public servants from regions like Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East, and, mainly, East and Southeast Europe. These courses have been organised regularly – in most cases with support from the Austrian Development Agency – since 1990. Many of the graduates of special courses, by now more than 1,000, have since occupied key positions in their countries of origin and are therefore important partners in dialogue.

Currently, approximately 180 young people from nearly 50 countries on all continents, speaking different languages and practicing different religions, with different cultural backgrounds, study in the DA's academic courses each year. This means that dialogue is not only taught, but also practiced in this »international family«. Expertise and linguistic and practical skills are an absolute must for an international career, which is why the standards of quality are high; but for success in modern diplomacy, in negotiations and in dialogue in general, the prerequisites are a cosmopolitan outlook and an understanding for others.

In an environment of flux and changing diplomatic relations, in an increasingly linked and interdependent world, communication and dialogue change, too. They have become more concentrated, faster, and occasionally also less formal. The basic principles, however, remain the same and just as important. When he was awarded the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 1953, Martin Buber, a Vienna-born philosopher of dialogue who was raised in old-Austrian Lemberg, put it like this: »That the peoples, the men of the peoples are no longer able to have a real dialogue with each other, is not only the most topical, but the most pressing phenomenon of the pathology of our time [...] A real dialogue is one in which each of the partners perceives, affirms and confirms the other as this existing other, even where they are in conflict; while conflict may not be settled in this way, it can be argued out and maybe overcome in a humane way.«

**For success in modern diplomacy, in negotiations and in dialogue in general, the prerequisites are a cosmopolitan outlook and an understanding for others.**

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The notion of a »neutral ground« for dialogue, and its role of a »builder of bridges« between East and West lie at the heart of current Austrian foreign policy. The commitment to dialogue is not appeasement, but an indispensable principle in an international environment that is made more and more dangerous by efforts to allow nothing but black and white.



**Florian Rainer: Journey of Encounter 2014**

In December 2014, Rabbi Schlomo Hofmeister (Vienna Israelite Community) and Imam Ramazan Demir (Islamic Community in Austria) made a joint and therefore unusual trip to Istanbul and Jerusalem and their sacred sites. With their journey, Schlomo Hofmeister and Ramazan Demir aimed to make a clear statement and emphasize that dialogue in difficult situations is possible – even in the Middle East.

# The Value of Relations

Regina Polak

## Relation as Existentiality

Whether in personal, social or political contexts: relations are the basis of any dialogue. Admittedly, the concept of dialogue is just as ambivalent and vague as the concept of relation is unclear. Depending on interests, concerns and goals as well as previous experience, the understanding of relation is embedded in situation-specific contexts. Relations may be understood functionally as »social capital«<sup>1</sup>: as an indispensable resource that guarantees social cohesion and coexistence in a society, but also as a useful tool facilitating access to social recognition, participation, and therefore power. A related understanding of dialogue will thus aim to enhance and promote these resources, and focus on commonalities and cooperation, tending to disregard experiences of difference and foreignness and to avoid conflict.

The Austrian cultural diplomacy's understanding of dialogue, however, has a different focus. It aims for mutual understanding, trust and credibility as well as the development of long-term relations and the promotion of cooperation in keeping with the strategic and interdisciplinary interests in art and culture as the key medium of foreign relations and development cooperation of the European Union.

Such a notion of dialogue takes as its starting point an understanding of relation that considers it as fundamental and constitutive of human existence as such – and this independent of the private wishes of and benefits to the individual. Martin Heidegger speaks of »existentialities«<sup>2</sup>: anthropologically constitutive structures of *Dasein* without which a human being cannot be human. Being human therefore means being-in-

- 1 Pierre Bourdieu and Robert D. Putnam are amongst the authors of this theory.
- 2 Cf. Heidegger, Martin: *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford 1962. The most important existentialities are »being-in-the-world« (*Dasein*), care, anxiety, *befindlichkeit*, understanding, fallenness and speech.

relation, relating-oneself as an inescapable form of *Dasein*,<sup>3</sup> whether we like it or not. From this point of view, human beings find themselves, from the very beginning of their lives, in a quasi invisible, finely woven network of countless relations that they haven't created themselves, but which act upon them, and which they will learn to participate in shaping – more or less aware, more or less ethically responsibly. For human beings cannot not be in relation. They are inextricably connected to each other. This given-ness of relation is the basis of any dialogue – including diplomatic and political dialogue.

Any qualified dialogue can make us experience this basic reality of the fundamental relationality of human beings – beyond all differences and conflicts, even recognising the latter as a source of human growth and cognition. It is not least this experience that allows for resilient and sustainable cooperation in the space of diplomacy and politics. Understanding dialogue's performative inner rationality, its inner »essence«, and its laws is therefore a necessary precondition for a substantial dialogue that also accommodates difference and conflict, the possibility of transformation, and the promotion of cooperation on the basis of diversity.

[...] a substantial dialogue that also accommodates difference and conflict, the possibility of transformation, and the promotion of cooperation on the basis of diversity.

### Current factors of influence: relation as a routine method

Whether and how we are able to realise this fundamental network of relations, however, significantly depends on how we think about relations.

In the highly individualised societies of Western Europe, relations are mostly understood as something we can consciously commit to and shape according to our free will. Christianity and Enlightenment have liberated people in Europe from the relations of dependence that had kept people tied to their familial or social origin.<sup>4</sup> The findings of social studies and human science as well as the psychotherapeutic movement allow insights into the functioning of human relations, and thus expand human autonomy and freedom of action, and are able to improve relationships in sustainable ways.

3 This fundamentally relational character of human life has also been pointed out by the personal-dialogical thinkers of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, e.g. Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Ferdinand Ebner, and others.

4 Mitterauer, Michael: *Why Europe. The Medieval Origins of Its Special Path*. Translated by Gerald Chapple. Chicago 2010.



However, this perspective also has its darker aspects. People can be catapulted from familiar social systems and lose their bearings. Dependencies remain taboo and are suppressed. Caring for relationships is bureaucratically reduced to »relationship work« and is submitted to the dictates of optimization. Relationships are turned into a methodology. The fundamental network of relations becomes invisible. At the same time, (too) many people suffer – often invisibly and far from the spotlight of professional life – from relationship problems, broken relationships, or loneliness. For close ties to family and friends still constitute the most important value for the majority of people, also in modern societies.<sup>5</sup> Not least, there is a suspicion that relationships are also entered into not for the person or the cause, but for individual or political benefit.

Anyone who risks dialogue needs to be aware of these ambivalences of the reality of modern relations, for they make it harder to trust in the elementary connectedness of people. At the same time, it is dialogue itself that – on all levels of society – can initiate new experiences of relation and build trust when it abides by certain structures and rules as presented in this publication.

## Influences

An interdisciplinary perspective shows that the way relationships are organised is also shaped by numerous factors that influence any dialogue.

Factors grounded in *evolutionary biology* shape relations: the need to belong to a group probably is the most powerful factor in social processes. While such belonging was vital for nomadic *homo sapiens*,<sup>6</sup> it can complicate dialogue with »strangers«, even in situations of secure prosperity, as this need can lead to »parochial altruism«, i. e. when solidarity is only extended to one's own »tribe«. The fear of losing one's place in one's group can be so powerful that dialogue with »strangers« is rejected. Conversely, it is dialogue that can encourage people to go beyond their own limits, to explore new affiliations, even friendships, and to learn to experience themselves as part of a single humanity. Such a universalist perspective, however, is vital in a globalised world overshadowed by conflicts, in particular in political contexts, as nearly all current challenges – from migration to climate change – are transnational in character.

5 In all waves of research of the European Values Study since 1980, the value of personal relationships far outranks work, religion, and politics: cf. <http://www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/> (14 January 2019).

6 Harari, Yuval: *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. London 2014.

From a *sociological* and *psychological* perspective, too, people are ineluctably dependent on relationships. Their basis is the human capacity for empathy, i.e. the ability cognitively and emotionally to understand another human being as they understand themselves. However, because empathy can also be used to satisfy self-interest and to manipulate others, it needs to be transformed through complex developmental and educational processes into compassion, recognition, appreciation, and love. Without these, human beings will wither, fall sick, or may even die.<sup>7</sup> These processes of learning and socialisation are well known for being susceptible to dysfunction. Here, dialogue can become a place of re-learning, and even lead to healing experiences of relations because it can function as a space to rehearse such empathy.

*Cultural studies*, on the other hand, show that the manner in which relations are lived is highly heterogeneous in different cultures. Social affiliation is subject to different rules; compassion, recognition, appreciation, and love are expressed in different ways. For example in »warm« cultures, physical contact is considered to be an expression of a trusting relationship, »cold« cultures perceive it as a disrespectful transgression. A culture that teaches to be wary of

**Dialogue can become a place of re-learning, and even lead to healing experiences of relations because it can function as a space to rehearse such empathy.**

»strangers« and to perceive difference as »disruptive« will have more trouble entering into dialogue with »strangers« than people in whose society hospitality is a key cultural value, and where being different is deemed »normal«. Difference can make it harder or easier to establish relations – depending on its cultural connotation. When engaging in dialogue, therefore, we are well advised to learn about the multiplicity of cultural languages. Difference may then become a stimulus for relations and widen horizons. But this also requires a (self) critical and civilizational examination<sup>8</sup> of the inhumane relational traditions inherent in any culture for historical reasons.<sup>9</sup> Dialogue can then become a place of learning from and in difference and simultaneously promote an awareness of a universal, shared identity. Differences precisely need not be suppressed, hidden, or eliminated, but enhance mutual understanding and thus enable cooperation on a more truthful level.

Not least, relations are also shaped by *structures of economics and politics*. Thus, relations of social inequality influence the quality of establishing

7 One memorable example is René Spitz's research on hospitalized children.

8 Cf. Todorov, Tzvetan: *Conquest of America. The Problem of the Other*. Translated by Richard Howard. Norman, Oklahoma 1999.

9 In Europe for instance the fascist and totalitarian notions of homogeneous societies continue to burden the cultural memory when dealing with difference, which is then perceived as a danger.

contact and hinder or damage the possibility of relations between people from different milieus and social classes.<sup>10</sup> Unequal participation, on the other hand, excludes people. In these contexts, dialogue acquires a political dimension because it can expose injustice and bring together unreconciled social groups by initiating inclusive processes.

## Conclusion

These considerations show that a dialogue that is based on an understanding of relations as presented here can be a powerful means of social communication and its improvement serving the aims of humanisation and civilization, because it allows the mutual connection of people to become publicly visible and benefits from the practical power of this given-ness. In the dialogic model of Austrian cultural policy, it is cast in methodical form and can thus even serve to solve political conflicts and improve cooperation in the long term, also or even precisely in situations of crisis.

**Dialogue based on an understanding of relations as presented here can be a powerful means of social communication and its improvement serving the aims of humanisation and civilization.**

The salient feature of this model is, I think, that it is ideologically neutral. The conscious shaping of dialogue also requires a self-critical confrontation with the influencing factors cited above – and these are always inextricably woven into the participating partners' philosophical, ethical, secular or religious perspectives on the issues to be negotiated. A model of dialogue that starts from the fundamental question of being human, and that regards diversity as a starting point and a resource, allows, even encourages partners with heterogeneous ideological origins to bring their own perspectives to the table with confidence, to reflect and possibly to transform them. This not only allows all those participating to learn from each other and to expand their limits of humanity and thought, but also promotes trust in the experience of »permitted« difference and simultaneously allows the fundamental mutual connectedness of human beings to become visible. This promotes creativity, multiplies ideas, and thus – in particular in times of crisis – intensifies the search for peaceful and equitable solutions for all participants.

10 Wilkinson, Richard/Pickett, Kate: *The Spirit Level. Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better*. London 2009.



## EVENING PRAYER

This golden evening's cup  
softly fills with the remains of light  
my hopes I will rest  
on the walls of this night  
so the paths of thought  
that we will walk even tomorrow  
may not end  
not in ice  
not in rock  
not in the sea  
but triumph over the cold  
over cruelty and loss.



# International Religious Dialogue and Human Rights

Stefan Hammer

1. The increased importance of religion in politics and societies since the turn of the millennium has also had an impact on international relations. Diplomacy has begun to take processes of interreligious dialogue under its auspices, in addition to scientific and cultural exchange, and considers them to be low-threshold tools of »soft diplomacy«. On the one hand, they afford a chance to foster a sustainable basis of communication, also in times of possible tensions on the level of high international politics. On the other hand, they allow for a deeper mutual understanding of the conditions of political patterns of behaviour and positions and thus also serve primarily etatist interests: the point is to better understand religion as a factor that has gained increased importance in international relations.

2. Under a constitutionalist view of state governments being bound by fundamental rights, addressing the issue of religion necessarily also means raising the issue of freedom of religion. For those participating in religious dialogue facilitated by diplomacy, this is true also in a performative sense, as far as they not (only) have a role as representatives of states, but also as adherents of a religion. In particular an explicit inclusion of representatives of civil society, including religious representatives, will at least potentially turn a dialogue about religion into a dialogue between religions, too. From a human rights perspective, the participants in the dialogue thus also act in their capacity as holders of fundamental rights; they thereby exercise their freedom of religion – just as they might participate in the dialogue in exercising their freedom of opinion, their academic or artistic freedom, or any other fundamental freedom.

**From a human rights perspective, the participants in the dialogue also act in their capacity as holders of fundamental rights; they thereby exercise their freedom of religion – just as they might participate in the dialogue in exercising their freedom of opinion, their academic or artistic freedom, or any other fundamental freedom.**

mic or artistic freedom, or any other fundamental freedom, depending on the civil society context they identify with.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, the distinction between state and civil society roles that the participants in religious dialogue may assume is the expression of a secular perspective that presupposes an individual and societal sphere of ethico-religious autonomy liberated from the state. This perspective is owed to the rejection by modern statehood of any attempt to legally define and enforce moral and religious precepts, and to the recognition of universal freedom of conscience, religion and belief. Dialogue partners from an origin informed by these presuppositions have a corresponding preconception that we all know is not necessarily shared by other dialogue partners. They may also consider religion to be an immediate public function or even the legitimate basis

of state power, and in religious dialogue, this often emerges in a self-understanding that does not distinguish between their roles of a government representative and as a religious representative (i.e. representative of

civil society). A candid and serious religious dialogue cannot but address the underlying pre-understandings regarding the legitimate conception of the relations between religion, society, and the state. For a dialogue on these issues to be possible at all, what is needed first is a common basis of mutual recognition that goes beyond the concrete, diverging positions on those issues. It seems as though to begin with, we once more revert to the etatist perspective of simply exchanging views on the ethico-cultural factors informing state (religious) politics within the diplomatic framework on the international level, without being readily able to enter into an exchange of arguments on those issues.

**A candid and serious religious dialogue cannot but address the underlying pre-understandings regarding the legitimate conception of the relations between religion, society, and the state.**

3. The postulate of a shared horizon of understanding in mutual inter-governmental recognition has found its legal expression on the global level, which no longer exhausts itself in the principle of sovereign equality of states, but which has complemented and grounded this principle with the right of nations to self-determination after World War II. In identical wording, the right to self-determination appears in the opening of the two major universal human rights covenants:

<sup>1</sup> Especially with respect to freedom of religion, see the *Interim report* of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief, Heiner Bielefeldt, 18 July 2011, A/66/156, para. 24 and 47.



»All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.«<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the multiple controversies regarding its meaning and implementation, this principle implies at all events that the authentic self-determination of its citizens is actually expressed in the basic structure of the body politic. In this way, the right to self-determination ties the legitimacy of state sovereignty back to the legal-political subject quality of all citizens who make up the »people« of the state commonwealth. The collective right to self-determination is thus not only nominally inscribed in the list of universal human rights, but also into their substantive logic. It cannot be actualized without guaranteeing other, individual human rights, even though these are amenable to a contextually differing concretization.

The inner logic of the right to self-determination also asserts itself in the less law-oriented context of international religious dialogue. Fundamental positions on religious politics are often defended with the implicit claim to being the expression of an authentic political-cultural self-determination of the people belonging to the respective commonwealth. Insofar, the dialogue partners also lay claim to their participation in the collective right to self-determination of the political community they belong to. And by having become involved in an international religious dialogue facilitated by diplomacy, the other partners always contribute to legitimizing such an implicit claim to collective representation to some degree, too. This is justifiable as far as the caveat in favour of the human rights-based autonomy is reflected, failing which the claim of collective self-determination cannot be sustained. In this respect, an element of civil society, and in particular also religious, autonomy vis-à-vis state power proves to be essential for mutual recognition of collective claims of self-determination in international religious dialogue, too, irrespective of cultural traditions informing the backgrounds of the dialogue partners.

2 Art. 1 para.1 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) and Art. 1 para.1 of the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966).

4. This has implications for organizational-procedural arrangements as well as for the content orientation of a diplomacy-based international religious dialogue. Already the framework should not abet the possibility of rashly interpreting government positions as expressing uniform orientations of the respective population and of equating them with the latter. In most cases, the composition of the delegation on the side of the counterpart cannot be directly influenced, and neither religious diversity nor academic interdisciplinarity by themselves can guarantee that a possible polyphony in civil society is reflected. It is all the more important therefore to avoid where possible that the respective counterparts are labelled with blanket (bi)polar markers like Christianity vs. Islam. Indeed, even the metaphor of bridging, which we often encounter in the context of religious dialogue, is problematic because it suggests compact bridgeheads and fails to take into account the possible diversity on either side, which would put the unambiguousness of two opposing sides of a river into perspective.<sup>3</sup> The fact that individual participants always also represent their own fundamental rights positions implies the structural possibility of a plurality of positions. This possibility should be reflected as such in the setting of the dialogue, precisely because and insofar as not all substance-related positions can be represented in a tangible manner. To this purpose, UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of belief and religion Heiner Bielefeldt suggested symbolic signs like empty seats.<sup>4</sup>

A situation where opposing positions are not uniformly supported within the participating delegations, and sometimes even cut across them, always indicates successful dialogue.

»Internal« differences, for instance, repeatedly emerge with respect to the question of the appropriate relation between state power and religion, or the latter's appropriate role in the political arena. This subverts the suggestive impression of compact, culture-specific identities and allows us to connect collective self-determination,

**As products of open-ended processes of collective self-understanding, such claims also articulate validity claims within an open-ended universal human rights discourse. In this light, international religious dialogue is a small but important contribution to mediating between cultural identity and universal human rights.**

as a process of continuous internal deliberation, to the discourse of universal human rights. For in this case, the point is no longer a self-affirmation of one's respective own, supposedly uniform religious-political tradition, but the justification of an understanding of religion and its relation to state power and its status in the public political arena that, while framed by the specific circumstances, pays tribute to a human rights per-

3 Cf. *Interim report of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief*, Heiner Bielefeldt, 18 July 2011, A/66/156, para. 54.

4 *Ibid.*, para. 57.

spective. As a discourse of justification, religious dialogue therefore necessarily is a normative discourse on positions, the justification of which needs to have recourse to precepts that can be universalized. In this framework of reference, it becomes obvious that all claims to cultural self-determination are referred back to universal human rights conditions that are able to give them legitimacy. As products of open-ended processes of collective self-understanding, such claims also articulate validity claims within an open-ended universal human rights discourse. In this light, international religious dialogue is a small but important contribution to mediating between cultural identity and universal human rights.



**Josef Fink: »In the Desert«**  
Watercolour, 100 x 70 cm, 1991

The cultural project »Creation on Mt. Sodom 91« by the Austrian Embassy in Tel Aviv, in cooperation with Israeli authorities, brought together ten Israeli and Austrian artists in Sodom in 1991 in order to engage with a place and its political and symbolical charge. The result was a space of dialogue that enabled them to link associations connected to the place with its geographic realities and explore their resonances.

## Is there a Paradigm Shift towards Dialogue in Diplomacy?

The many uses and few limits of applying the principles of dialogue in international relations and beyond

Patrice Brodeur

In this article, I shall make a case for why dialogue is so important for the future of diplomacy in our information age, while also pointing out some limitations. It presents the main categories of actors of this dialogue as well as the results it can produce. This article continues with a clarification of the preconditions necessary to ensure maximum impact. Finally, it seeks to demonstrate how good interreligious dialogue practices can be relevant to diplomacy, as it continues to address in older and newer ways the challenges of cross-cultural and international understanding to prevent, reduce, resolve, and transform tensions and conflicts worldwide.

To different degrees in various parts of the world, humanity is now witnessing a rapid increase in social tensions too often leading to conflicts. Among the countless examples over the past five decades one can think about, this article focuses on better understanding a recent triple challenge in order to improve our current response efficacy: (1) rising intolerance and violence done falsely in the name of religion; (2) increasing restrictions of religious freedom; and (3) (re)surfacing of religiophobia of one sort or another, whether on the part of individuals or institutions, even governments at times, all of which represent cases of human rights abuses. These three challenges themselves intersect with the three levels of both practices and receptions of racism and xenophobia (individual, collective, systemic) that perpetuate inequalities and exclusions, much of which then fuels various discourses of discontent that sustain a vicious cycle of violence<sup>1</sup>, such as the politics of intolerance found worldwide, albeit to very different degrees.

Career and volunteer diplomats in both state diplomacy and public diplomacy are essential players in addressing all of these challenges, at their own levels and with their respective means. They constantly need

1 Asseily, Alexandra: *Breaking the Cycles of Violence in Lebanon – and beyond*. Brighton, UK: Guerrand-Hermès Foundation for Peace Publishing, 2007.

to address perceptions that are at the heart of identities in the broadest sense, which come to play a key role in all ideological, cultural, and religious manifestations of power dynamics. At the very heart of their nature, diplomats are bridges of communication across ideologies, cultures, and religions. They are the servants of better communication for improved mutual understanding, even if they often do so within a set of national interests that frame their respective subjectivities and may at times limit their actions. Nevertheless, it stands to reason that diplomats are particularly well-suited to be expert dialogue practitioners in their own right, whatever their particular niche might be within a broad spectrum of diplomatic specialties, both professionally and representationally. In addition, diplomats traditionally address long term needs, at the root of which is the principle of keeping open various channels of communication between different actors, both at state and non-state levels. One of the most effective approaches to sustain such long-term open communication remains dialogue.

**Diplomats are particularly well-suited to be expert dialogue practitioners in their own right, whatever their particular niche might be within a broad spectrum of diplomatic specialties, both professionally and representationally.**

## Stakeholders

Career and volunteer diplomats have their specific role to play as dialogue participants and facilitators. In *interreligious dialogue*, whether bi- or multi-lateral, diplomats, if religious themselves, may wish to self-identify religiously and then choose either the role of a regular religious participant, or that of a participant-observer. If he or she is not a religious person (that is, does not carry a religious identity component as part of how he or she self-identifies), or chooses not to identify as such publicly, he or she may remain a neutral organizer, ensuring that the principles of dialogue are followed in any setting defined as dialogic so as to guarantee better outcomes, both in the short and the long term.

In an *intercultural dialogue*, the above options only exist if the notion of ›religion‹ is openly included in that of culture. When it is not, or when it is dismissed, or even worse, ridiculed due to a zealous anti-religious secularist standpoint, for example, it is clear that this kind of intercultural dialogue will have limited impact, especially for those individuals who consider religion an important part of who they are, which seems to be probably more than 80 % of the world's population.<sup>2</sup>

2 See the results of the Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project. Cf. <http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org> (14 January 2019).

In the case of an *interworldview dialogue*, in which all identity components in a person's self-understanding are not only welcomed but their respective hierarchies for each participant are respected by all sides (that being one of its main aims), a diplomat can easily match his or her own unique set of identity components to the purpose of any particular dialogical context, and to the degree he or she wishes. This approach has the advantage of creating a secure environment for all participants as well as making sure that no one is reduced to his or her dominant religious or cultural or for that matter civilizational or professional identity. The dangers of essentializing another person's religious and/or cultural identity or reducing a person to a group stereotype are thereby greatly reduced.

### Results dialogue can produce

When dialogue is practiced frequently and sustainably, that is, with the same group of persons and on a relatively narrow set of themes, and this can be done as infrequently as annually, but over several years, the quality of the dialogue deepens and participants start to realize that the mutual learning that results from dialogue is so rich that any initial thought of wanting to change someone else's mind on any topic of disagreement fades away. One realizes that dialogue's core aim is never about changing someone else's perception of myself and/or of a problem we share, but rather about deepening our mutual understanding of each other's perceptions and interpretations about each other and/or that shared problem. Partners in true dialogue seek to broaden their understanding of reality on any given topic together. The greatest incentive for dialogue is actually to enhance learning in an interdependent and complementary way. I can only seek to increase my understanding of reality around me by developing those dialogical links between myself and an even wider variety of others. Indeed, in the words of Ephraim Meir, who builds on the rich legacy of Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Abraham Heschel, Franz Fischer and Emmanuel Levinas, and in a way that overlaps with Paul Ricœur's notion of complementarity between *idem* and *ipse* identity in the construction of selfhood, »the self is called to develop a dialogical identity and a dialogical hermeneutics, in which the attention to the other is central«<sup>3</sup>.

In addition, if compassionate listening skills are added to those of active listening, over time, the level of connection between the dialogue participants grows to a point where the common human identity emerg-

3 Meir, Ephraim: *Dialogical Thought and Identity: Trans-different religiosity in present day societies*. Berlin: De Gruyter in collaboration with Magnes Press, 2013, p. 13.

es above all other identity components, not because the set of identity components that are different disappears, but simply because it moves from a high level of importance to a lower one, whatever the initial hierarchy might have been for each person.

It is this change in the initial predominance of identities of difference to that of identities of commonality that allows trust to develop between initially antagonistic, or simply uninterested, people. Through the practice of dialogue, the emotional connection beyond initial differences sets in; »different« people, even »enemies«, can become dialogue partners in a common search for mutual understanding and call to serve each other's communities and beyond.

Finally, at a deeper level still, intuitive perceptions of the self and others surface to one's consciousness which, when shared with a dialogue partner, even across »enemy lines«, dissolve differences altogether, at least in these moments of intuitive connectedness. These moments may be rare in number, but when experienced, their impact greatly outweighs their low frequency, opening up new avenues of creative imagination to find collaboratively inclusive common solutions to shared problems, from small tensions to large conflicts. The difference lies in the scale of how many people need to have experienced deeper forms of dialogue before their impact can be more visible.

**Dialogue's core aim is never about changing someone else's perception of myself and/or of a problem we share, but rather about deepening our mutual understanding of each other's perceptions and interpretations about each other and/or that shared problem.**

Even if a small group of top level policy makers reach that higher level of awareness through dialogue (or in other ways, for instance through deep religious and/or spiritual practices of one kind or another), the subsequent impact may be potentially enormous, as was the case for many Nobel Peace Prize laureates, among others. Yet, if their »followers« do not share that same level of consciousness, or even lose trust in them as their political leaders, potential backfires can happen, as in the case of high-profile political murders in the name of avenging perceived treason.

This fact demonstrates the importance of the practice of dialogue for all human beings, at all levels of a society, simply because of our complete interdependency. It is also necessary at almost all times, from the moment difference becomes the source of tension potentially leading to conflict. Dialogue can help reduce tensions or resolve conflicts, depending on their nature – even in situations where difference becomes the source not only of respectful disagreement, but even of celebration and ultimately »holy envy«, to adopt a formula of Stockholm's former



bishop Krister Stendahl. Dialogue can then help move from peace-making to post-conflict resolution and beyond, especially in the transformation from political reconciliation to human healing which is the only guarantee to prevent a relapse into an earlier cycle of violence.

Yet dialogue has its limitations too. For example, dialogue may not be, at least initially, the best option for most people actively engaged, on any side, in serious conflict or war. Mediation, as one form of negotiation, may be better suited to contribute directly to peace-making, especially to reach important preliminary or step-by-step agreements in the case of intense conflict situations with high-stake consequences and cease-fires in the case of war.

Nevertheless, whatever form dialogue takes – and there is a rapidly growing diversity of formats in which dialogue is now practiced – and whatever its context or magnitude might be, it adds a brick to the common human endeavour to build a more equitable human future. Whether dialogue is superficially used as »just a technique« or practiced at deeper levels to foster a »new way of life«, at their core, all forms of dialogue help reduce misunderstandings that so often fuel the feelings of fear and exclusion at the root of discontent, anger and rage behind which lurks extremism of one sort or another.

**At a deeper level still, intuitive perceptions of the self and others surface to one's consciousness which, when shared with a dialogue partner, even across »enemy lines«, dissolve differences altogether.**

### Preconditions to maximize the effect of dialogue

The attitude of openness in mutual learning has two dimensions: first, openness towards learning something about the other and, occasionally, to adopt something; second, the openness to self-disclose what one truly believes, fears, and questions about the other in particular and about life in general. Only when this openness is shared, which is the result of a slow process of partial and mutual disclosures growing wider and deeper over time, does trust slowly settle in between the dialogue partners. Over time, as dialogue deepens, relationship-building supersedes mutual learning, resulting in trust that is essential for moving on to the next phase: caring about each other. There is simply no way to sustain a viable long-term collaboration on any topic of mutual concern today if there is no feeling of care present between the dialogue partners.

To move from mutual learning to relationship-building, and from there to trust-building and mutual caring, the on-going practice of dialogue requires that the partners constantly seek to move from a zone of personal comfort to that of discomfort, while being mindful to avoid

crossing into the danger or panic zone.<sup>4</sup> That is to say, the benefits of dialogue grow exponentially to the extent that one ventures out into uncharted territory in all aspects of our humanity. Over time, we begin to trust in our own inner capacity to know how to deal with being in a state of discomfort, of doubt, of uncertainty or fragility, because we have gained confidence over time that, on the basis of past discoveries, the end of this period of discomfort will result in greater knowledge, self-awareness, capacity and well-being.

## Relevancy of dialogue for diplomats

In the years that followed the tragic events of September 11, 2001, numerous conferences took place to try to make sense of what happened and especially to promote a variety of actions that would hopefully reduce, if not eliminate, terrorism. More than seventeen years later, the results are limited. Much criticism of both Countering Violent Extremism as well as Preventing Violence programmes has seen the light of day, as carefully reflected in a recent Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series.<sup>5</sup>

So, as diplomats continue to address the challenges of cross-cultural and international understanding to prevent, reduce, resolve, and transform tensions and conflicts worldwide in older and newer ways, I would suggest that more attention be given not only to acquiring the various techniques associated with dialogue but also to allow oneself to explore its potentially deeply transformative power as a way of life. It may well be that we are in the middle of a paradigm shift away from an attitude of »solving conflicts through negotiation by elites and third-party mediators«, when all are often embedded in greater systemic inequalities, towards an attitude of »transforming conflict through dialogues involving all those affected and seeking long term and inclusive benefits for all concerned«.

**The attitude of openness in mutual learning has two dimensions: first, openness towards learning something about the other and, occasionally, to adopt something.**

- 4 Alabbadi, Anas: »Creating a Safe Space – Stepping Out of the Comfort Zones«, in: co-authored Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Anas Alabbadi, and Cynthia Marquez, *Building Bridges: Guide for Dialogue Ambassadors*, an online publication (Kuala Lumpur & Vienna: WOSM and KAICIID, 2018), pp. 78–9.
- 5 Abu-Nimer, Mohammed: »Alternative Approaches to Transforming Violent Extremism. The Case of Islamic Peace and Interreligious Peacebuilding«, in Beatrix Austin and Hans J. Giessmann (eds), *Transformative Approaches to Violent Extremism*. 2018. Berghof Handbook Dialogue Series No. 13. Cf. [https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Dialogues/dialogue13\\_violent\\_extremism\\_complete.pdf](https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Dialogues/dialogue13_violent_extremism_complete.pdf) (14 January 2019).

## Conclusion

A new Realpolitik is slowly settling in: there is no quick fix to the complexity and magnitude of our human challenges today, only on-going efforts to address at the same time, dialogically and creatively, both the latest crises and their underlying symptoms.

On the one hand, we have underestimated how dialogue can help us learn to acquire a new form of effective leadership to work on both fronts at once, one that knows when to lead through decisive decision-making in times of emergency and situations requiring quick response, and when to lead dialogical-

ly at all other times in order to promote empowerment for both oneself and others in an interdependent way. This new form of leadership therefore moves beyond both

leadership for advocacy of only oneself (personal or collective self, as in the case of »national interest«), or leadership for advocacy of both self and some others (i.e. exclusive alliances). Dialogical leadership is essential if dialogue is not only useful to provide a better mutual understanding by improving interpersonal communication (when dialogue is used as a technique) between people diverging on one or more central issues in their lives, but also a better inter-group reconciliation and even healing within any divided society or across inter-state areas of conflict. In the latter case, dialogue can become a way of life for individuals from two or more »opposing« parties in any conflict. Not only political leaders are called to this dialogical way of life; by the very nature of their function, diplomats have a leading role to play in this regard.

On the other hand, we have underestimated how complex and difficult the practice of all the principles and aims of dialogue remains, whether as a technique to improve communication or as a way of life, even at the local level, and even more so internationally and globally.

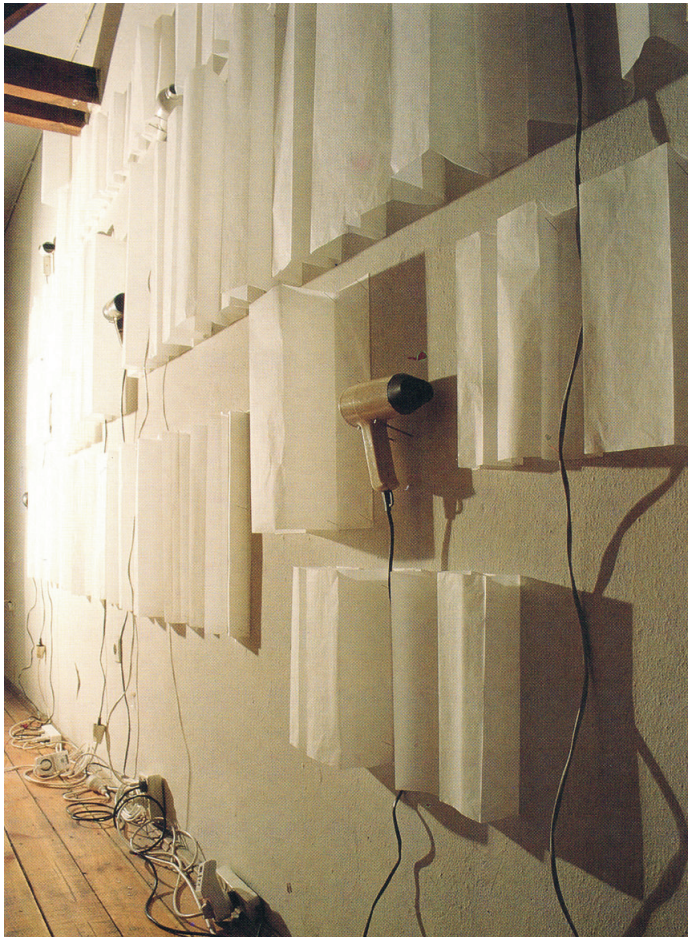
Yet there is no way out of the vicious circle of all forms of violence (always leading to lose-lose situations) unless there is a conscious choice to prioritize communication through dialogue with a variety of others. This choice helps humanize each other through respect, empathy, and even compassion, in order to find increasingly inclusive and sustainable win-win transformations towards positive peace.

**The benefits of dialogue grow exponentially to the extent that one ventures out into uncharted territory in all aspects of our humanity.**



ART

That long way  
from you  
to you.



Sabine Marte: 1993

In the project »5 young female artists: Degenhardt, Gerlitz, Shen, Marte, Schweizer« in Poznań in 1993, which was funded by the former Austrian Cultural Institute in Warsaw, Marek Gozdziowski explored the continuity of aesthetic self-conception in the context of the continuity of the conception of one's own existence. Interculturality can uncover discontinuities, which may manifest in the question »Who am I?«. In the context of the aesthetic experience, Gozdziowski emphasizes the importance of the dialogic principle: the sender and the recipient of a message have an inherent responsibility, and the more seriously they take this responsibility, the better the chance of successful dialogue.

# Austrian International Cultural Activities and Cultural Diplomacy. A Practical Example of Dialogue at Work

Simon Mraz, Christian Autengruber

»Art is a mediator of the inexpressible.«  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The slightly ironical, possibly even derogatory metaphor of cultural diplomacy as »song and dance exchange«, and thus as an effort primarily aiming to present a country's cultural achievements in other countries, never applied to Austrian international cultural activities. In fact, they understand the impetus of artistic creation, the exchange, the external impulse that can initiate its incorporation into one's own skills according to one's own disposition as a constitutive moment. The Austrian representations' cultural activities facilitate targeted artistic interactions in order to identify relationships of one's own identity and culture beyond national and cultural borders, and to foster the willingness to take up and process creative impulses from such encounters.

This approach of art diplomacy also meets a prevailing demand in the creative sector: modern means of communication also transform the economy of the arts and culture. Politics communicate via Twitter, music clips on Youtube today reach more than a billion people, and these platforms determine (self) promotion or rather visibility. Even historic institutions of cultural education like the *Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien* increasingly focus on electronically available content, even virtual exhibition tours. This produces a lot of freely accessible shared content that can be consumed by many people, but also numerous sources of friction in perception.

Social and natural/physical transformations require us to develop new potentials of perception. A creative and dialogue-based adaptation of key concepts like Nature, Matter, Space, or Existence in international cultural activities allows a common interaction with changing realities to emerge, which is subsequently open to further use in society, research, but also in the technology sector. The artistic process thus be-

comes the *avant-garde* of agreement on the fact that people perceive, experience, and, on the basis of their frame of reference, evaluate and judge differently.

Hence there is an urgent and vital need to understand the culture of the Other, to exchange views, to learn about and from each other in order to find a mode of coexistence. Maybe need is the wrong word, it is rather a huge opportunity that a sustainable shaping of relations between cultures can offer, generating trust and understanding and interest in each other. It is this fundamental confrontation with other people and their cultures that creates the groundwork for diplomacy and for solutions for a variety of challenges that affect us in our societies as well as trans-nationally.

Art encourages natural curiosity and soothes the fear of the unknown or the inexplicable because it translates sensory perceptions and interpretations into a new system and thus allows us to experience the *metabolism* of processes of change. In doing so, it provides bridges across the gulf of a frequently lacking common language or understanding, or a shared ability to articulate the unknown. Art enables us to experience and thus to tolerate diversity: If culture is what the human being lives, then it is a simple truth that the human being lives differently everywhere. In the Academy of Applied Arts' project »5 Young Female Artists« (Poznań 1993), which was supported by the former Cultural Institute in Warsaw, the female artists already spoke openly about the challenge of the continuity of understanding one's own existence in the face of the intercultural confrontation of aesthetic experience, and of synchronizing and synthesizing this experience.

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The Cultural Forum Moscow facilitates such experiences in all its focus projects. A special example is its participation in the museum biennial in Krasnoyarsk, titled »Mir – the Village and the World – an Artistic Exploration of the Russian Village«. The guiding question was the meaning of the »Russian village« in the cultural context. Here, we are confronted with a multiplicity of realities and stories that we are unfamiliar with in our (Western) culture, and which is rooted in cultural diversity.

The Austro-Russian Year of Music in 2018, which one might assume to focus on mutual musical presentations, also emphasized the creation of new cooperations, for instance by currently preparing a publication that explains and links the music scenes of both countries. The confer-



ence on the »Mutual Influence of Austrian-Russian Music from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to Present Days« also brought together musicians in order to encourage new cooperations.

Art paraphrases societal processes by making visible, audible, or intuitively accessible the dynamics of the already-seen, of the expected, and the still-to-be-seen, the unexpected field of living. In this interplay, the orientation of dialogue in international cultural activities has also changed: In the past, the interaction between the seen and the experience of seeing something new was one aspect of intercultural exchange, for instance in the project »Creation on Mt. Sodom 9I«, where the Israeli Ministry of Tourism and the Austrian Embassy in Tel Aviv offered artists the opportunity to embark on a shared confrontation with the Judaean Desert on Mount Sodom. Today, Austria's international cultural activity also creates new structures of dialogue in which Austrian and international artists share the appropriation of things neither has seen before. Artistic dialogue is transformed from an exchange between one's own and the foreign into a joint development of understanding in the face of new phenomena.

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A remarkable example in the sense of the joint development of the listener and of understanding as an aspect of intercultural exchange is a music project titled »On the Other Side« from Belgrade, which applied for the BMEIA's Intercultural Achievement Award (IAA). It brings together female musicians from Serbia, Austria, and the Netherlands, who trace the specifically female by studying works by female composers from Austria, Serbia, and Hungary. In addition, the musicians actively involve the listeners, the »other side«. The audience is challenged to think about the orchestra, which is not visible on stage during the performance. Only at the end of the night there is an opportunity for the audience to discuss all aspects of what they have heard and what was presented with the musicians.

Austrian cultural fora are intercultural centres of competence that engage in continuous exchange with local institutions and partners in the cultural sector. They are a point of contact for Austrian creative artists and establish links with local partners. They support projects proposed by artists, but also use their presence on the ground to continue to identify new partners, places, or historical or more recent connections that open up exiting new fields of a joint artistic confrontation for both the host country and for Austrian creative artists. A number of cultural fora open their own premises as a space of open dialogue. Three Austri-

an cultural fora (Brussels, Budapest, and Cairo) have made intercultural dialogue the focus of their work. All representations are invited to implement at least one project of intercultural dialogue per year within the framework of the »Dialogue Vademecum«, the internal guidelines regarding cultural dialogue.

Experience has shown that there is hardly a format that is as suitable a platform for constructive confrontation with relevant issues as precisely these cultural fora. Artistic creation reveals what is relevant, creates room for discussion. What is important is to create an ambience which is as close as possible to the audience of the host country, to address issues that speak to the emotions of the people at home in their country, and to involve them in the process of discussion. Cultural fora are places where it is not only artists and audiences that meet, but also important spheres that shape our reality: politics, economy, the media, academia – the broader the involvement, the better for our work.

There is no other field that will enable such a continuous and constructive development as cultural exchange between countries and different cultures: certainly not politics, which is subject to so much greater vicissitude, nor economics, which is shaped by continually changing interests; it has to be culture, with its universal language of the senses.

**Maybe need is the wrong word, it is rather a huge opportunity that a sustainable shaping of relations between cultures can offer, generating trust and understanding and interest in each other.**

THE EVENING knows  
*what the morning did not suspect*

Karl Lubomirski



**Beate Winkler: SpaceWorlds. Project »Strong in Hope«**  
Mixed media on hand-made paper, 2016

In 2017, at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Berlin, Carl Aigner, the Director of the Lower Austria Museum, spoke about Beate Winkler's exhibition »Strong in Hope« and the role of »art as a compass«. In processes of dialogue that attempt to penetrate into the unsayable, the elusive, art can create the symbolic space in which the unknown and the as yet possible may be reimagined.

# A Plea for a Dialogue-Driven Implementation of EU International Cultural Relations

Stephan Vavrik

»Europe is a cultural superpower. We need to use its force«<sup>1</sup>, Federica Mogherini, EU Commissioner for European Foreign Affairs observed when she introduced the long-expected Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the future EU strategy for international cultural relations<sup>2</sup>. This statement ruffled some feathers amongst international cultural players, as the wording doesn't quite conform to the current canon of cultural policy dialogue »at eye level«, and the use of expressions like »superpower« or »force« in conjunction with »culture« seems to bolster the accusers of an arrogant Europe riding rough-shod over post-colonial sensibilities in large parts of the world.

However, in defence of this choice of words at the time, we should forget neither the foreign policy context in which the EU cultural strategy was presented, nor the historical roots of cultural diplomacy as »soft power« tool of foreign policy. In order to assert a stronger role of culture in foreign relations on the European level, and, especially, to secure its funding, Mogherini needed to convince not those Europeans who are culture-oriented and internationally connected, but those who had called the shots in European foreign policy so far, particularly the architects of economic or development cooperation policies, or those advocating for a more deliberate and efficient security and defence policy in the future. In this context, it therefore made a lot of sense to resort to a tried and tested concept of »soft power« tools, including cultural diplomacy, that is also recognised by players inured to »hard power«. But if we

- 1 Interview with the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, after the presentation of the »Cultural Diplomacy« project, <http://www.eunews.it/2016/06/10/mogherini-europe-cultural-superpower-need-use-force/61145> (14 January 2019).
- 2 European Commission: Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations, JOIN(2016) 29 final, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN:2016:29:FIN> (14 January 2019).

disregard these short statements in the context of the presentation with its public relations thrust, and address the concrete content of the EU cultural strategy, we can find sufficient evidence to interpret the strategy as one that is indeed based on a modern dialogue-oriented approach and therefore lends itself as an important contribution to building long-term relationships as well as mutual understanding and trust. In some areas, we can even find that the EU cultural strategy has learnt from weaknesses and mistakes of past national international cultural policies, and has skipped two decades of tortuously shedding »public diplomacy«, »nation branding«, or initial approaches to »cultural diplomacy«, and takes its cue from hopefully more successful concepts of »cultural relations« instead. Although the strategy also addresses other issues, such as »culture and development« or the protection of our cultural heritage, we will focus primarily on the objective that culture, and the dialogue between cultures in particular, may significantly contribute to overcoming important global challenges – e.g. conflict prevention and resolution, integration of refugees, combating violent extremism.

**The dialogue between cultures may significantly contribute to overcoming important global challenges – e.g. conflict prevention and resolution, integration of refugees, combating violent extremism.**

Probably the most important statement on the political and content-related design of the strategy is provided in the so-called guidelines, including the following commitments:

- The EU is firmly committed to fostering cultural diversity, which can be protected and promoted only if human rights and fundamental freedoms are guaranteed. These fundamental rights constitute essential foundations for democracy, rule of law, peace, stability, sustainable inclusive development and participation in public affairs.
- In order to fully realise the potential bridging role of culture in international relations, it is necessary to go beyond projecting the diversity of European cultures, and aim at generating a new spirit of dialogue, mutual listening and learning, joint capacity-building and global solidarity.

(Intercultural) dialogue therefore is a value in itself, strengthening which benefits any society, and, in a globalized world, indirectly the EU, but also a means of building long-term relations between equal partners.

The new European approach is already being implemented. At the ASEM meeting in Sofia in March 2018, EU and Asian Culture Ministers emphasized the comprehensive impact of intercultural dialogue, in particular

in situations of conflict and for reconciliation within and between nations. These »principles of dialogue« seem self-evident to outsiders, but in the context of EU foreign relations and the past self-conception of EU delegations, they represent a paradigm shift: in the field of trade relations as well as in development cooperation, the EU – with a few exceptions, for instance economic issues in the case of the United States or China – acts from a position of strength, as both policy areas are usually more about imposing one’s own or at least shared interests as far as possible, whether in trade facilitation or democracy, in rule of law or economic growth. What is more, economic policy and development policy negotiations confront state actors on both sides, while »cultural relations« are best when involving civil society in a leading role in all stages of a project, from drafting to implementation. As Austrians, we are tempted to suggest the motto of the Secession here, too: »To art its freedom«. While the »state« in the shape of government institutions on the EU and third state level should provide the logistic and financial framework, it should leave the organization of »cultural relations« to cultural actors themselves. In direct (intercultural) dialogue, a successful design and implementation of sustainable cultural relations will most likely be achieved, with the aimed-for target of strengthening mutual trust and understanding for each other.

At the EU Culture Ministers Council on 23 May 2017<sup>3</sup>, in a first response to the EU cultural strategy, the EU member states fortunately recommended further principles for implementing the strategy in this sense: »More specifically, such an approach should entail a bottom-up perspective, while respecting the independence of the cultural sector, reinforcing freedom of expression and artists’ integrity, encouraging direct contacts between artists, cultural operators and civil society, and allowing for sufficient flexibility to take into consideration the rapidly changing global scenario.«

At the same time, it was suggested that pilot projects be launched in third countries, for instance by involving EUNIC<sup>4</sup>, the network of national cultural institutes of the European Union that was founded with the aim of »building trust and understanding between the peoples of Europe and the rest of the world through culture«. Cooperation between EU delegations and local EUNIC clusters would also guarantee a dialogic approach, as the national cultural institutes can rely on years of experience with cultural projects that take into account the local framework conditions, and – departing from representation – are increasingly

3 Council of the European Union: Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations (2017/C 189/08), para. 6 a: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C\\_.2017.189.01.0038.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2017:189:TOC](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_.2017.189.01.0038.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2017:189:TOC) (14 January 2019).

4 <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/> (14 January 2019).

elaborated in cooperation with local stakeholders. This is all the more true as EUNIC so far is the only institution the EU has come to an administrative arrangement<sup>5</sup> with a few days before the Culture Ministers Council, affirming the importance of »enhanced cooperation and complementarity with relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, public authorities, international organizations where appropriate, and between European Union Delegations and EUNIC clusters«.

An initial analysis of the cooperation between EU delegations and EUNIC clusters so far in 14 selected countries was completed between September 2017 and April 2018, with the aim to include the results into the future joint design of the EU cultural strategy. Apart from technical and administrative issues, we should emphasize one conclusion and one recommendation of strategic nature that will be instrumental for future success: The study concludes that »there is a lack of awareness of the policy shift the new strategic approach represents and its implications for enhancing cooperation between EU delegations and EUNIC clusters«; also: »the most successful partnerships are those based upon a shared strategic vision, on the principles and priorities of the Joint Communication«. The most important recommendation is the following: »The EU delegation and local stakeholders should be consulted in the definition and development of the cluster strategy in line with the principle of co-creation according to the administrative arrangement«.

A new spirit of dialogue, of mutual listening and learning, of the »bottom up« principle and co-production instead of traditional »showcasing« therefore not only represents a paradigm shift with regard to local stakeholders, but also amongst the partners on the European side. It is too early in the day yet to be able to discern this paradigm shift in the framework of the EU international cultural policy in third countries. However, the institutional preconditions for a modern, dialogue-based approach and first insights in support of a successful policy are promising.

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5 [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2017-05-16\\_admin\\_arrangement\\_eunic.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2017-05-16_admin_arrangement_eunic.pdf) (14 January 2019).



LOVE

*Vast country  
beyond comprehension.*

Karl Lubomirski



## On the Need for Dialogue in Difficult Times. The Example of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Florian Raunig, Christian Strohal

During the Cold War, the continued meetings of the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe contributed to overcoming entrenched divisions where no-one would have thought this possible before. With the institutionalization of the Conference with the establishment of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the dialogic principles of voluntariness, reciprocity, and inclusivity acquired a precise framework under international law that was adapted to the particular situation: The OSCE does not enforce binding membership and only recognizes participating states bound by the principle of consensus, but accords them a right to present counter-arguments. The civil society also enjoys far-reaching rights of access to meetings, in particular regarding the human dimension of OSCE.

From its inception, the CSCE/OSCE engaged in developing communicative and structural methods of peacefully settling disputes. Equally, culture also was a door opener in the CSCE process. The 1985 Cultural Forum in Budapest was the first CSCE meeting in a Warsaw Pact country, and substantive discussions clearly demonstrated that art and culture are instruments of freedom. At the same time, this conference still highlights the strength of this organization in addressing controversial issues that are deeply rooted in the human condition.

The dialogic design of discussions and the willingness of participants to take a step towards each other, to respond to each other, to allow space for this to happen, are an essential part of the success or failure of multilateral diplomacy. After all, an essential characteristic of OSCE's work is the fundamental willingness to engage in dialogue, which has to take shape in concrete dialogue. In the organization, this is for instance achieved by involving experts, who also praise it as a regional platform for dialogue and as a bridge between local, national, and global stakeholders.

The OSCE has included one basic principle of dialogue, voluntariness, in its organizational structure. This is a distinctive feature of the organi-

zation distinguishing it from other international organizations. Confidence building measures are also preconditions to establishing a secure space in which dialogue is possible. Dialogue produces transparency, an experience that OSCE can only emphasize. The OSCE is a school of dialogue and an important resource for capacity building in this field.

The CSCE's experiences with the dialogic approach were so successful that dialogic principles were transposed into the institutionalized structure of OSCE. Regional security in Europe thus also became a fixture in dialogue-oriented multilateral institutions that facilitate the development of durable dialogue and continued encounters. In our own experience with and in multilateral organizations, dialogue in its different shapes and forms again and again proves to be a key element in strengthening international cooperation. And yet – the geopolitical developments of recent years have increasingly made our work more difficult, especially within OSCE, the world's largest regional security organization, which emerged from the Helsinki Final Acts of 1975.

In contemporary contexts, dialogue appears to be of more concern to civil society than to the community of states. This is not the case in OSCE. Even in the Permanent Council of the organization in Vienna, the key and permanent body of communication and negotiation at the Hofburg palace in Vienna, and all its committees and subsidiary bodies, the desire for *meaningful dialogue* is often and repeatedly stressed. The Austrian OSCE chairmanship of 2017 had already begun to respond to this request by consulting in informal conversations on how to create communicative spaces within the work programme and in the Rules of Procedure in order to encourage systematic-functional dialogue in the framework of OSCE.

Within the field of representation, on the level of terminology and directives, however, the concern of dialogic communication encounters challenges that also lead to frustration in the day-to-day workings of OSCE. While some doubt whether there really is dialogue between the participating states of OSCE, many express their personal desire for a more profound conversation. Prospects, at any rate, would be good: OSCE diplomats dispose of the methodological instruments and the individual commitment to be able to create secure spaces for dialogue, and to shape these according to pending OSCE issues. It is the instructions from the capitals that seem to hinder their efforts to make use of their dialogic abilities. In fact, the current climate at the OSCE is deeply influenced by this lack of dialogue: simple statements of one's respective points of view, and mutual accusations, are replacing shared communication and dialogue, most of all in formal sessions.

The formal space of OSCE, however, is only part of the communicative space we use. Numerous informal contacts and conversations complement the official organs in Vienna, and concrete joint activities on

the operative side of OSCE, with its institutions, field missions, and special negotiation formats for concrete situations of conflict has to be understood as successful and visibly effective communication. This work prevents armed conflict.

If therefore some are content with an OSCE as a platform of communication that exists to prevent worse, we have to agree. However, taking a closer look at the mandate and the possibilities of the organization, one becomes aware that the current and real achievement of OSCE exhausts neither its significance nor its potential. The organization has more to offer than what it proves on a day-to-day basis and in a very concrete way. This raises the question whether, considering the OSCE's clear mission of dialogue, it is enough that every once in a while, small, isolated dialogic spaces emerge within the organization in which successful cooperation is possible and confidence is created. How could these spaces be combined into a greater whole? How can we make sure comprehensive dialogue is achieved once more, and how could we organize the atmosphere fundamental to it?

**Taking a closer look at the mandate and the possibilities of the organization, one becomes aware that the current and real achievement of OSCE exhausts neither its significance nor its potential.**

A concrete and in fact difficult dilemma in the quasi permanent and thus continued and diverse processes of communication, negotiation, and information within OSCE arose in 2014 from a serious violation of OSCE principles and policies, as well as international law, with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the destabilization of Eastern Ukraine. A number of states imposed bilateral but coordinated economic sanctions. Within OSCE, the word is that it was impossible to continue with the obligatory daily business as though nothing had happened. What remained unclear, however, was what that really meant – discontinuing talks does not seem possible, and neither does restricting communication to the violation of principles and its consequences. So thoughts turned to other ways of showing that violent events at the border between two participating states of OSCE have consequences for multilateral work. There is no simple solution to deciding on the form of such signals, in particular in an organization that is guided by the principle of consensus.

But the organization succeeded with surprising speed in mobilizing its operative side and to achieve consensus on sending a mission to (Eastern) Ukraine. This mission has already grown to include 1,200 people and provides daily reports on events on the ground while striving to defuse the situation on the local level. Moreover, a special format of negotiation was established, in which, presided by an Austrian OSCE diplomat and in four parallel work groups, representatives of Ukraine, Russia,

and the so-called »separatists« from the regions of Donetsk and Luhansk discuss and negotiate a broad range of issues. They, too, continuously report to Vienna.

The debates on these reports amongst the diplomats in Vienna, however, are not constructive. While in the field mission on the ground and in the Minsk Process agreement seems possible, the difficulties in initiating meaningful dialogue at the *Hofburg* level described above persist. Our concern would be to create scenarios for a situation-specific dialogic space on the level of the OSCE bodies in Vienna, which would meet the principle of »no business as usual« as well as the need for increased crisis management as long as the changed basic preconditions on the ground persist. We think this an urgent issue if we want to succeed in countering the unavoidable dramatic loss of confidence in such situations with confidence-building measures. Especially in times of increased international insecurity and instability, we cannot do without an OSCE committed to dialogue.

Excellent signals of the willingness to proceed in a dialogic manner are the decision by the OSCE Ministerial Council in Hamburg 2016, and the »Structured Dialogue on current and future challenges and risks to security« established under the Austrian Chairmanship. The latter refers to the current disruption of confidence among participating states of OSCE and attempts to recreate an atmosphere in which this lost confidence can begin to grow once more in small and deliberate steps. The »Structured Dialogue« applies formal as well as informal forms of dialogue, and combines the levels of diplomacy and expertise in a substantive exchange that aims to promote mutual understanding. In so-called »mapping exercises«, military experts reveal the position of armed contingents and weapons stockpiles, while in the political sessions, diplomats analyse these particular threatening scenarios but also talk about possible ways to recreate confidence.

The »Structured Dialogue« has established a new communicative track on security issues at the OSCE. The format of the new instrument itself was the subject of weeklong consultations, a sign of the concern to establish a safe dialogic space for this issue, and a clear impulse of countries interested in dialogue – Germany, Switzerland, Austria – to cooperate, also in the face of risking a possible failure of these efforts. In the further course of events towards the implementation of this decision, the two chairmanships of Germany and Austria continued to facilitate the process, provided careful preparations and supervision, also in their

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choice of keynote speakers and the involvement of specialized think tanks.

Ultimately, however, politics will decide whether the offer of international organizations such as the OSCE to reduce tensions and build confidence is sufficiently appreciated.

In the OSCE region, these politics are responsible for the security of roughly 1 billion people. For this is what dialogue has to achieve: to ensure comprehensive security through better mutual understanding and confidence building, which enables people between Vancouver and Vladivostok to lead a life of peace, integrity, and prosperity.

**The »Structured Dialogue« has established a new communicative track on security issues at the OSCE.**



Markus Riebe: Cells 1, 1992

As a part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Symposium on Electronic Art in Sydney, which focused on »Cultural Diversity in the Global Village«, Austrian artist Markus Riebe exhibited his computer-supported art, which addresses the problem of fragmented truth. Scanned fragments of reality are combined with computer-generated colours and simulations of light and shadow into an undissolvable entity. Distinguishing reality from projection becomes near impossible. Riebe provides a metaphor of dialogue work and its aim is to build a new synthesis from irresolvably different points of view.



## Intercultural Dialogue @ UNESCO

Ann-Belinda Preis

Our world today is transforming at an unprecedented rate: technology connects people in ways never before thought possible, whilst conflicts and violence are displacing populations at levels not experienced in the recent past. Concurrently, violent extremism and populism, predicated on the misunderstanding and misappropriation of cultural identities, are creating a new wave of prejudice, isolationism and exclusion, and frontier issues such as the proliferation of artificial intelligence, threaten – if not properly managed – to reinforce, rather than resolve, existing divisions.

Against this backdrop, we have no choice – encouraging and living by a culture of peace, underpinned by an inalienable respect for human rights, is fundamentally necessary to ensure inclusive and peaceful coexistence in the contemporary world. It is by dialogue and cooperation through education, culture, the sciences and media and information that we can understand our differences and reinforce the universal values that connect us all in diversity. This is UNESCO's vision – a vision that guides all of our work to build peace in the minds of men and women.

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Intercultural dialogue sits at the heart of our efforts to advance this vision. It serves as both the standard, and as an important instrument, through which we can build respect and mutual understanding across differences. It strengthens solidarity and equal dignity against the backdrop of our increasingly interconnected world, ensuring that diversity is a wellspring for creativity and innovation, rather than a source of discrimination, intolerance and exclusion.

Through UNESCO's leadership of the UN International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013–2022), efforts are being advanced to

promote and operationalize this vision with stakeholders at all levels. By producing and mobilizing new knowledge, augmenting the capacities and skills of individuals and communities, advocating on the value of intercultural dialogue, and coordinating action across the UN system and beyond, the Decade seeks to better mobilize intercultural dialogue in service of the UN 2030 Agenda, and as a core component of the UN Secretary General's prioritization of prevention with his reform of the UN's Peace Architecture.

The commitment of Member States in this process is invaluable, enabling an understanding of the needs and context on the ground, and providing the networks, capacities, and support to translate these global aspirations into effective action. In 2017, UNESCO conducted a survey among Member States on how intercultural dialogue is conceptualized and operationalized at the national level, an endeavour to which Austria provided a comprehensive and enlightening response. Among the many important insights gained was the difficulty in establishing a commonly understood definition of intercultural dialogue, making it unclear what outcomes intercultural dialogue can achieve, which leads to a lack of clarity as to which are the necessary conditions to ensure dialogue initiatives are effective.

It is against these insights that UNESCO has launched an ambitious new initiative to measure the impact and enabling environment of intercultural dialogue. Through the insights gained from this initiative in partnership with the Institute of Economics and Peace (a leading think-tank, best known for producing the Global Peace Index), UNESCO hopes to be able to better understand the needs of Member States, whilst working with them and their partners to shape more effective operational interventions to promote dialogue on the ground.

Further such interventions could be the wider mobilization of activities to build intercultural skills, something UNESCO is already working on, for instance through several innovative pilot projects. One good example has been the piloting of the UNESCO Manual on Intercultural Competences based on Human Rights, the latest pilot session of which took place in Vienna, Austria with the generous support of the Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs and the Austrian Integration Fund (September 2018). The Manual presents an accessible and adaptable methodology for the development of intercultural skills among diverse participant audiences, engaging them in an exercise of structured »story telling« and reflection to improve their capacities for empathy, cultural self-awareness, respect, and listening for understanding. By approaching skills development first and foremost as an exercise in improving one's ability to understand the frame through which partici-

pants approach and interact with cultural difference, the Manual's methodology opens opportunities for the development of intercultural skills to help manage a wide range of challenges. Thus it is our hope that this methodology can be disseminated widely once published by the well-known British publishing house Routledge this year.

As the International Decade has reached its halfway point, UNESCO considers the strengthening of Member State's participation and support as essential for reaching the full potential of initiatives such as those discussed above. Enhanced commitment and greater mobilization, such as has been generously afforded by Austria, is urgently needed to ensure the second half of the Decade effectively responds to the many global issues we currently face, positioning intercultural dialogue as the means to successfully address the challenges of our time.

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## II. Space, Methodology, and Impact: Dialogue in Austrian (Cultural) Diplomacy



Henry Steiner: Poster for the Hong Kong Vienna Opera Ball  
Poster, 2008

Austrian-born Henry Steiner is considered to be one of the leading designers in the intercultural field. He makes the case for two principles of design: only to fall back on the medium of design when the content to be expressed cannot be put into one sentence, and to create a clear contrast. He thus affirms the importance of contrast in communication, which is not something to be avoided, but, on the contrary, to be emphasized to maximize its effect.

## Dialogue Spot Vienna, Dialogue Space Austria

Shalini Randeria, Ivan Vejvoda

The Vienna Congress of 1814–15 was probably the first in history at which, within a continental framework, representatives of major European nations gathered to seek a solution to their then fraught mutual relations. This historic meeting of the highest order and importance was a harbinger of things to come. It already gave Vienna a unique position on the world map as a site for constructive consultations, where disagreements could be voiced, negotiations carried out, and perhaps even a consensus forged. Austria, and especially Vienna, emerged as a privileged space of productive international encounters over the twentieth century. The *genius loci* of Vienna, its congenial atmosphere, its central geographic location within Europe with its proximity to all parts of the continent in cultural, political and social terms, made it an attractive place for international dialogue.

The importance of the historical, cultural, and intellectual foundations on which Vienna and Austria today stand should not be underestimated. With respect to music and literature, philosophy and psychology, economics and sociology, it has been a pivotal cultural capital of modern Europe for more than two centuries, and as such a most fertile ground for research and debate. Vienna towered among major European capitals in the period leading up to World War I, and especially in its aftermath, as a city where openness, diversity and inclusion bred creativity and innovation, producing ground-breaking intellectual insights. Vienna with its cosmopolitan and hospitable academic and cultural environment made a significant contribution to the intellectual life of Europe and the world.

The path to progress or peaceful interaction was however by no means a straight one. The Nazi regime (1938–1945) was a devastating disaster for this distinctive multicultural Vienna and Austria. After the end of World War II, a process of learning and renewed opening began in the midst of the debris of the First Republic. A formidable testimony to these efforts and true enlightened leadership was the visionary initia-

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tive of anti-fascist intellectuals in 1945 to create the European Forum Alpbach in a small Alpine village. Otto Molden and Simon Moser founded it as an interdisciplinary Forum to discuss and promote ideas for a peacefully united Europe. To this day, the Forum gathers 3,000 participants every year for vibrant debates on a range of issues, which underline the vision that only the coming together of people across national, political and ideological borders and boundaries can foster mutual understanding and improve prospects of peace and prosperity. What better example of an Austria able to confront its own past and build bridges towards overcoming the divide between Eastern and Western Europe?

Thanks to the initiatives of politicians such as Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, Vienna became an ever more attractive location for international organizations, as well as for such encounters. The city exuded and still exudes a sense of security and neutrality, a welcoming culture that celebrates diversity, and an impressive quality of life that has led small institutions as well as global organizations to establish their headquarters here. The list is truly impressive: numerous United Nations institutions, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization of Petrol Exporting Countries (OPEC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to name but a few organizations that are based here. Similarly the city can boast of hosting several landmark international conferences like the UN Human Rights Conference in 1993, the first of its kind after the Cold War, which foregrounded women's rights together with the link between democracy, development and human rights.

The Institute for Human Sciences (Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen – IWM) was founded in Vienna in 1982. The choice of this location was based on Vienna's place in Europe and the world. Positioned in Austria »at the centre of Europe«, between East and West, North and South, it was seen as a privileged place of encounter. From its outset, IWM's mission was to promote international exchange and dialogue between academics and public intellectuals across disciplinary divides, societal fault lines, and political traditions – especially between Eastern and Western Europe. These academic and policy encounters increasingly included researchers from North America, South-Eastern Europe and the successor states of the Soviet Union. Today they involve scholars from all over the world. This exchange enables us to address socially relevant, and often controversial issues of our times in the field of the humanities writ large.

The IWM has succeeded in building strategic partnerships with comparable institutions in several European countries as well as in the United States and beyond in order to achieve some of these goals. The Institute is a protected space for productive reflection through individual and collective research as well as public deliberation and broad dissemi-



nation. Encounters between individual academics, journalists, translators and policy-makers and resulting publications as well as public presentations both profit from, and contribute to furthering international exchange in Vienna and beyond. The IWM brings together a variety of political, social, business, cultural, media and civil society actors both for interdisciplinary conferences and individual lectures as well as for public debates.

The IWM is firmly rooted in Vienna. It is an important part of Viennese intellectual and cultural life, cultivating partnerships with several universities, museums, theatres and research institutions. The Institute upholds and seeks to deepen the understanding that the culture of the Enlightenment, which is the foundation of tolerance and the rights of association and free speech in democratic rule of law, is in need of nurture and protection. Norms of an open society not only need to be generally accepted, but also have to be subject to critical scrutiny and further development. Discussions beyond political and ideological divides are a continuing necessity in order to achieve this. Over the past 35 years, the IWM has established itself as an independent research institute strengthening the basic values of a democratic culture and hosting academic exchange.

Multiple internal and external crises in the EU have led to a growing distrust of institutions, of mainstream political parties and elites, and to the rise of nationalist and populist political parties and movements. Confronted with a rapid dismantling of the welfare state and increasing inequality in the Member States, many citizens face an uncertain future, which breeds anxiety and anger at the real or perceived sense of insecurity, marginalization and powerlessness due to the effects of neoliberal economic globalization. The politicization of the refugee problem and the question of migration have also further exacerbated demographic fears.

With its project »Europe's Futures«, which is funded by the ERSTE Foundation, the IWM contributes to the peace project that is the European Union by creating a space of encounter between differing political and academic points of view. It also offers a space for policy dialogue to address the deep-seated challenges facing societies and the concerns of citizens at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Austria as member of the European Union helps fashion a worldview that includes the deeply rooted understanding that only together can nations and societies tackle today's global and local challenges. No country on its own can survive if it withdraws behind its borders, or without sharing its political, social, economic, cultural resources. Transactional and purely bilateral relations no longer suffice in a multi-polar world.

We live in a connected yet fragmented world, where divisions within societies but also between them are deepening. People meet and ideas

interact more often, but they also clash and produce misunderstandings and hostility. We need to practice the art of encounter that will allow us to listen to other positions and respect differences and take them seriously rather than simply wishing to dissolve them. In fact, productive encounters are valuable in themselves and not just as means to an end. The IWM is proud that its work contributes to this goal.

# Methodological Approaches to Dialogue in Austria's International Cultural Relations and the Effort to Ensure Impact

Aloisia Wörgetter

»Creativity is the ability to see (or to be aware) and to respond.«  
Erich Fromm

While diplomatic titles (e.g. ambassador, legate) still hark back to the original responsibilities of these officials, such as delivering and obtaining sensitive messages, diplomatic communication within the framework of the post-1945 multilateral system is focused on negotiation (in particular in processes defining rules and standards). The 1990s, with the large-scale UN conferences, the founding of the WTO and the OSCE, and the finalization of negotiations on the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, constituted the last phase of this development.

The armed conflicts raging in the Balkans at the time impressively underlined the importance of cultural identity in political processes. This experience was one of the factors that inspired Austria's concern to promote an understanding of dialogue and to specify dialogic methods in order to improve their visibility and applicability. It is no coincidence that this expertise arose from the context of international cultural relations within the BMEIA, as there are strong structural links between dialogic and artistic-creative processes: both allow and enable a broadening of perspectives and can trigger transformation.

Dialogic situations are omnipresent in diplomacy. In informal contexts, dialogue will develop spontaneously, and it is often part of diplomatic etiquette. Successful innovative measures will often be preceded by dialogic processes; and the same is true for great diplomatic successes. States that develop and maintain friendly relations with each other resort to dialogic methods; and confidence-building measures, which are always invoked as a necessity in (post) conflict situations, are just that.

New tools of communication and the resulting exponential acceleration and global participation in communication have also impacted

diplomatic working methods. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there has been increasing demand not only for a definition of international rules and standards, but also for strengthening the shared understanding of the content of such norms beyond culturally intrinsic rules and experiences. That meant that in formal diplomatic work, dialogic methods became still more significant. Cultural diplomacy is increasingly becoming the vector of this approach, which also is evident in current developments within the European Union. Even in the early stages of diplomacy, a legation in the sense of conveying a dispatch was distinct from the postal service in that its task was not only to make sure that the message was properly received, but also that it was understood and deemed worthy of a response. This shift of diplomatic work from explaining to understanding involves an increased importance of dialogic methods, a trend that is reflected in the establishment of institutional structures in the UN, the OSCE, but also in the European External Action Service, which all train their staff in mediation and dialogic communication. At the BMEIA, the Task Force »Dialogue of Cultures« was established in 2007, which designs, organizes and evaluates dialogic projects and acquaints in-house structures with dialogic principles.

The appreciation of the applicability of dialogic methods must now be strengthened in concrete situations to create the conditions for dialogue, to ensure the voluntary entry of all partners into dialogue, and to guarantee a secure dialogic space. It is precisely diplomatic players who, often in concert or cooperation with civil society, have the professional tools, for instance linguistic and intercultural skills as well as historical, political, and socio-economic knowledge, to support preliminary dialogue or create the preconditions for it.

And this is all the more true because diplomacy is once more confronted with an increasing number of problems in which the focus is initially not on consensus, but on an exchange of information, and which demand innovation; for instance because of a proliferation or diversification of stakeholders, or the lack of government structures, or new technological possibilities. Thus the UN applies dialogic methods in Libya in order to ensure the development of a reconciliation of interests, which has to precede a durable state structure. Within the framework of OSCE, too, comparable current challenges are addressed. Insofar, the dialogue of culture is evolving into a new tool of diplomacy as it involves civil society stakeholders in the search for solutions to a conflict. Moreover, dialogue is the tool of choice in situations where changed social conditions prevent a return to familiar structures.

Below, we will present methodological experiences with dialogue as implemented by Austrian diplomats in international cultural relations and beyond. The abundance of structured deductions on dialogue draws on Austria's long diplomatic and intercultural tradition, on its experi-

ence as a place of dialogue in the service of the community of nations, on day-to-day work in the dialogic organization that is OSCE in Vienna, on more than ten years of practical experience in the Task Force »Dialogue of Cultures« at the BMEIA, and on the dialogic focus of Austrian cultural fora abroad.

## Methods and processes of dialogue

The question of what precisely constitutes dialogue continues to be a matter of controversy. It seems reasonable to highlight the specific elements of dialogue in its narrow sense in order to recognize their communicative value in (cultural) diplomatic activities. In this context, dialogue has to be understood first and foremost as a method that helps us to assimilate insights of psychology, communication research and translation studies, and to incorporate them into our everyday diplomatic practices. In situations where we struggle for understanding, dialogic methods can help prevent or resolve misunderstandings, move things forward out of a stalemate of seemingly irreconcilable positions, or initiate and maintain innovative processes transcending one's own experience. Dialogic behaviour may consist of a short, spontaneous interaction in which we consciously abstain from judging our interlocutor's statement and present our own position instead, or of long-term, institutionalized dialogue fora utilizing a range of different forms of communication.

From an outsider's position, dialogues are often difficult to identify as such because they are not necessarily characterized by a particular form of communication, but by a cognitive interest preceding communication and an ensuing transformative effect. In this sense, openness to dialogue is called a »learning attitude«. As distinct from a situation of negotiation, a dialogue does not necessarily result in a visible result (for instance jointly adopted conclusions, a declaration etc.). The effect of a dialogue reveals itself in a transformed practice on the basis of changed perceptions.

Contrary to the instructions of many dialogue standards, an analysis of the Task Force »Dialogue of Cultures'« dialogic experience does not regard empathy as a precondition, but as a result of successful dialogue. After all, the starting point of dialogue in our work is the inability or the refusal to empathize with the others' beliefs. Dialogue is not initiated by empathy for the other's position, but by an insight into one's own vested

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interest in gaining more information on the backgrounds and motivations of the opposite side. As long as there is no such insight, the preconditions for dialogue are not met. Dialogue, after all, does not succeed because partners are sympathetic to the beliefs of the opposite side, but because the rigorously observed structure of communication (speech and co-speech, also described as listening and self-expression, or validation without generalizing judgment) leads to an increased insight that results in broadening and re-evaluating one's own framework of reference. In this process, empathy may develop, though not as an implementation of a moral imperative, but as a result of a cognitive process.

Not all social situations in which there is a desire for agreement are suited for dialogic methods. However, a dialogue may communicatively evolve from a conversation where there is a willingness to listen, where the possibility of self-expression is thought to exist, and where there is (vested) interest in the issue at hand. In this sense, physical persons as well as legal bodies are capable of dialogue. A successful dialogue finally requires transmission of information regarding one's own positions, which leads to both partners gaining insights. In addition, antagonistic positions can be emotionally defused by validation within dialogic situations, by conscious awareness for a different attitude while suspending judgement – without however endorsing this attitude. Just having been heard, even when there has been no agreement, helps calm a situation. Colleagues in the context of OSCE have observed this and call validation an »attitude of generosity«. The person who listens in this manner may expect to be granted validating attention, too.

Dialogues will not develop while participants doubt or even deny the others' openness to dialogue. In such situations, our initial focus has to be on examining the quality of the dialogic space, as the refusal of initiating dialogue will definitely be upheld while there is no physically, emotionally and ideationally safe space for all participating dialogue partners. Recognizing the causal connection between the openness to dialogue and the inner security of dialogue participants, Austria developed the offer of emotionally and ideationally secure spaces for successful dialogue. In fact, while the parameters for guaranteeing external security are internationally known, in most cases the personal, inner security of dialogue participants cannot be achieved without context. Here, the global recognition of Austria as a nation of culture enables us to provide the necessary depth as a place of dialogue. Without its centuries of multicultural tradition, without its basic, understanding of matters of the soul intrinsic to its culture, or without the development of a pronounced epistemological current in its academic history, Austria probably would not have become a hub of dialogue. Thanks to this dense intellectual and cultural history, participants of dialogue in Austria can expect sufficient openness and good conditions for being understood.

## Dialogue in situations characterized by traumatization

Results of psychological trauma research show that the need for validation increases with traumatizing experiences, as does the need for security. Research insights in the past decades document that in addition to individual traumatization, collective, even intergenerational traumatization is possible and real. First responders in humanitarian missions already apply such research insights and take measures that contribute to avoiding traumatization. Where traumatization happens notwithstanding, or where there is pre-existing traumatization that has become part of a political, social, or intercultural conflict, dialogic methods can help overcome a loss for words. In particular methodologically strictly standardized dialogues can offer the necessary security in such contexts, facilitating the decision of whether to engage in an exchange. One example we might cite is a dialogue designed by the Task Force »Dialogue of Cultures« between European and African women, which, thanks to rigorously administered rules, assured that all participants of the dialogue would be heard and no-one would be left with things unsaid. In the secure shared intercultural space that was created in this manner, there quickly arose the need to address highly taboo and emotional issues like female genital mutilation, with participants sharing their own experience and openly talking about the cultural causes and effects of these practices.

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When we feel validated by others, we experience the fulfilment of a social need. The inner pressure not to be ignored, overlooked, is lifted, and the ensuing communication can turn to other issues. On the other hand, when we get specific feedback on the position of another with regard to our own statement, we can better situate ourselves and others. Our own framework of reference and imagination expands, and with it the field of potential positionings. A creative margin develops. Successful dialogue thus brings about two results: it fulfils social needs, which can then be shelved, and there is transformation. And it opens up thinking spaces that can be filled with our own creativity. This expands potentials and allows innovation to emerge. Dialogue can show the third way.

## The evaluation of events

The interest of diplomats to work with dialogic methods is – understandably – indirectly proportional to the frustration of their (non?) effectiveness. In the framework of OSCE, this frustration becomes palpable and is verbalized as a lack of »meaningful dialogue«. When communication fails to deliver results, we need to analyse whether the preconditions for dialogue had been met, in the inner structure of the conversation as well as in its framework. While methodical errors in the implementation of a dialogue may hamper the effectiveness of this interaction, another difficulty lies in identifying the results of a successful dialogue. This is part of the nature of dialogic processes, which, in analogy with artistic-creative processes, are open with respect to their outcomes; but also because the perception of a transformation of inner convictions is subject to awareness-raising processes. They do not necessarily coincide with the timeframe of dialogue. Equally, it is hardly possible in a social context to trace the cause of a change or innovation unequivocally to a specific event. So while there may be an intuitive understanding of the effectiveness of dialogue, we hardly have any hard facts.

If results are not manifest, therefore, measuring the effectiveness of a dialogue has to be based on qualitative methods, as the quantification of ideal values is still in its infancy. The Statistical Office of the European Union is already working on a definition of cultural indicators, some of which will be applicable to dialogic methods. The aim to enable us to qualify or maybe in the future even quantify the results of dialogue has to be preceded by a further clarification of the methodological application of dialogic methods. In order to allow dialogic methods to be learned, applied, and evaluated in the diplomatic field, too, it would be helpful to have a generally accepted definition of dialogue and the possibility to distinguish it from other conversational situations, as well as a standardization of concepts of dialogue.

In addition, we also need to improve our understanding of the graduality of dialogic processes in order to utilize them for concrete concerns. In conflicts and in matters of conviction, strongly standardized dialogues should be used, rigorously preserving the principle of voluntariness, while for processes of innovation, we would need to make sure that participation in dialogue is broad and inclusive. In situations of insecurity due to foreignness or lack of words, creative artistic methods have proved to be effective, while model dialogues with key stakeholders can help communicate the experience and insight of dialogue to a larger audience.

And finally, we would have to strengthen the inner and outward confidence in dialogic as opposed to confrontational communicative pro-



cesses in order to allow for their better applicability in the diplomatic context. The breadth and depth of a diplomatic concern, whether the negotiation of an event-driven political declaration, the implementation of a ceasefire, or the elaboration of a binding instrument of international law, will influence the choice of tools amongst participants. Dialogic methods will hardly be applied in situations of immediate threat, whereas such methods are particularly suited as confidence-building measures and as instruments to gain insight in the area of intercultural and interreligious communication. Dialogic methods may prepare the ground for negotiations, and lay important groundwork for an understanding of different aspects that need to be regulated in negotiation in order to obtain a durable result. Cultural diplomacy has the space and the means to deliver such preliminary work for subsequent diplomatic processes, provided an understanding of the permeability of the results of cultural dialogues is strengthened.



If you never walk  
through miracles  
you'll tire soon.

Karl Lubomirski



### III. Definitions of Dialogue from the Point of View of the Directorate-General for International Cultural Relations at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs



Johanna Kandler: Speaking in Public, 2003

Effective dialogue results in irreversible transformation. The gain in information forms new points of reference, expanding perspectives and uncovering new problem-solving options.

## Definitions of Dialogue from the Point of View of the Directorate-General for International Cultural Relations at the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs

Intercultural dialogue is based in a commitment to relationships. Sustainable relations will develop from a continued openness to exchange, including exchange about cultural foundations and consistency. Questions arising from it are for instance: What do we need to know about each other? What do we have in common? What are the next steps to process the answers we have obtained?

Austrian representations and cultural fora have ample experience in creating safe spaces for dialogue and are available as such. While diplomats continuously work on creating spaces of dialogue and routinely enter into dialogic situations, the dialogue programme of Austrian international cultural relations involves artists, experts and members of civil society in specially designed dialogue projects in a structured manner in order to offer the diverse partners an opportunity to become aware of images they have developed regarding their own and the foreign culture, and to process their potency. Dialogue in the intercultural and diplomatic context may happen on the personal level as well as the level of groups or states. Austrian cultural fora in particular provide a space for interpersonal dialogue.

In the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, the Council of Europe developed a definition of intercultural dialogue that has since become the working definition in the EU context, too: »Intercultural dialogue is an open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups belonging to different cultures that leads to a deeper understanding of the other's global perception.«<sup>1</sup> Austria harnesses its network of cultural fora and embassies for such dialogic practices,

1 Council of Europe's White paper on Intercultural Dialogue »Living Together as Equals in Dignity«, launched by the Council of Europe Ministers of Foreign Affairs at their 118<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Session (Strasbourg, 7 May 2008), <https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/>

understanding them as an offer to solve conflict, stereotypes and arguments where they emerge.<sup>2</sup>

Art in its diverse expressions can serve as a point of entry into a more in-depth dialogue, e.g. for dialogues on values and worldviews. Cultural projects allow us to bring complex situations that seemingly do not offer a path to a solution to a level where interaction is possible again. They can have empowering and self-reflective effects. In its Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, passed in 2005, UNESCO links dialogue and interculturality by defining interculturality as »the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect«.<sup>3</sup> Where opposing positions emerge, dialogue is offered as a structured possibility to expand the conversation, to circulate information, and to examine one's own convictions.

A shorter definition of dialogue inductively emerged from the research and groundwork of several members of the staff of the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) in Vienna over the course of five years (2012–2017): while the word »dialogue« often simply refers to conversations between different people, KAICIID understands »dialogue« – whether inter- or intra-religious, intercultural, or between civilizations – as a form of interaction between two or more individuals with different identities, with a particular focus on personal growth and non-judgmental mutual listening in an intellectual and accepting spirit of openness to mutual learning with a deeply transformative potential. Interreligious dialogue concerns people with different religious identities who aim to reach mutual understanding and respect, which will enable them to coexist and cooperate in spite of their differences.

Most dialogue experts are aware of the different, even opposed approaches to dialogue; Patrice Brodeur for example acknowledges the different kinds of dialogue and works with many different definitions of dialogue. He perceives them as a sign of the linguistic dynamics of the term that enables him to use it meaningfully in many different social contexts. The more abstract the term, the better the chance of unearthing a plethora of definitions. This results in the necessity to have a »dialogue on dialogue«, i.e. to talk about the nature of dialogue.

source/white%20paper\_final\_revised\_en.pdf (14 January 2019).

2 Cf. also the conversation on the principles of dialogue with Mohammed Abu-Nimer and Patrice Brodeur, 24 April 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Fm2VqwJ9Rc> (14 January 2019).

3 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, Article 4 (8), [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=31038&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=31038&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html) (14 January 2019).



At the BMEIA, the following working definition of dialogic communication has become accepted: While the word »dialogue« can often refer simply to a conversation between different people, the term is also used to describe a form of interaction between two or more persons/entities (who might hold opposing, differing or irreconcilable views) that emphasizes self-expression and reciprocal listening in a spirit of openness without judgment, and has a transformative potential. Validation of the other has an empowering effect. Dialogue therefore functions as a »smart power tool« of diplomacy.



## IV. Working Areas of Dialogue in Austrian Foreign Policy



Fanni Raghman Anni, 2018

The Fanni Raghman Anni association's «Espw'ART» project was distinguished with the 2018 Intercultural Achievement Award in the category of «current affairs». Young people affected by radicalization, including jihad returnees, reconnect to their traditional cultural system of values through theatre work. The pieces, which they write and stage themselves, deal with gender equality and a society that is able to address differences of opinion in dialogue and to respect cultural diversity. The young people play their pieces for a local audience and carry a message of resilience against extremist narratives amongst peers into the Tunisian public.

## Intercultural and Interreligious Dialogue for the Implementation of Universal Values

Ulla Krauss-Nussbaumer

Austria, as the place where the Vienna Declaration of the World Conference on Human Rights and the Programme of Action were passed in 1993, is very conscious of the fact that fundamental principles like justice, equality, freedom and harmony need constant revalidation, even though they have been part of the universal and indivisible canon of values for some time. The need to reassure each other of our shared understanding of these principles, not only on the level of states, but also in and with civil society, has increased the demand for dialogue. While multilateral bodies, in particular the UN Human Rights Council, monitor the observance of human rights, a dialogue between cultures and religions enables us to form an understanding of the internal, local, individual or institutional foundations that are the preconditions for developing these rights.

The issue of human rights, therefore, is also a key issue in Austria's international cultural relations. It ranges from promoting the global utilization of the Graz-based European Training and Research Centre for Human Rights and Democracy's manual »Understanding Human Rights«, which is already available in 17 languages, to dialogic human rights work between Vienna, Graz

and Lisbon in the context of the Human Rights Cities movement. In cooperation with the International Law Office of the BMEIA, experts in

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culture develop project proposals for Austrian cultural fora and embassies, with the goal of also using culture and research to introduce the issue of human rights into bilateral relations. The Austrian EU Presidency, the Memorial Year 2018, and the numerous human rights anniversaries (60 years Austrian accession to the European Convention on Human Rights, 70 years Universal Declaration of Human Rights) provided opportunities to highlight this focus in international cultural relations. In the Memorial Year of 2018 alone, more than 60 Austrian cultural and research initiatives with a connection to human rights were launched in

about 40 countries, from conferences to projects involving anything from cinema to music to literature. In the area of women's rights, the projects relied on contents and principles already developed in the 2015 women's focus »Calliope Austria«<sup>1</sup>. Recommendations for cultural projects emerging from the programme not only included an invitation to improve the visibility of female artists in the cultural sector, but also to dialogically address women's history and competences as well as issues regarding the situation of women in the host country's society.

Some cultural fora and representations situated their projects directly in the context of concrete universal human rights standards, for instance the Cultural Forum in Washington, which organised a concert by the Karklina Trio (chamber music by composers in exile), a reading of literature of exile in the context of the article 2 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and a symposium on Social Housing to illustrate the right to housing. It also evoked article 2 and article 18 UDHR by taking part in the Washington Jewish Film Festival.

Using art and dialogue to strengthen human rights is a particular focus and a strong point of Austrian cultural diplomacy. This arises from the understanding that the universal and indivisible quality of human rights can only emerge from a cross-cultural, shared responsibility for these primary human needs.

Cultural diplomacy can help both to overcome barriers in accessing human rights and to initiate processes of empowerment for human rights advocates.

Understanding the necessity to protect human rights will notably be furthered by direct or mediated contemplation, confirming the fundamental quality of human rights. Film has become an important art form in this regard. By participating in film festivals that either explicitly address the issue of human rights, or indirectly focus on affected communities like LGBTIQ persons, migrants, or women across the world, Austrian cultural fora and representations promote the development of awareness for basic rights concerns in an intercultural context. Children's rights, human trafficking, and violence against women are also addressed by Austrian representations in many projects.

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1 Federal Ministry for Europe, Integrations and Foreign Affairs – cultural policy division (ed.), CALLIOPE Austria. Women in Society, Culture and the Sciences. Vienna 2016.

The cross-cultural philosophical roots of universal values were the focus of a dialogue format developed between the Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Chinese State Administration for Religious Affairs in 2016. It had an interdisciplinary panel of Austrian and Chinese experts explore the question whether one could identify aspects of Laozi's great oeuvre *Daodejing* as starting points for common ground regarding the concept of human rights. Dialogue allowed for an in-depth exchange on the basic values of Chinese philosophy and their bearing on today's universal basic rights system, as well as an intercultural comparison of values in the determination of state objectives.<sup>2</sup>

2 Cf. Beiträge zum Österreichisch-Chinesischen Dialog über das *Daodejing*, Beijing 2017.





WE

We have taken the sounds from the air  
robbed the Earth of its ore  
from the night we stole the darkness  
from the forests the animals  
from the waters the fish  
from the animals their freedom  
from freedom its meaning  
from stones the form  
from plants colours and scent  
from rivers their power  
from oceans their life  
from mountains their silence  
from the moon its purity  
from space its majesty  
and all this we did  
without remorse.



# Art and Intercultural Dialogue in Austrian Development Cooperation

Désirée Schweitzer

The fundamental goals of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) are to contribute to the reduction of global poverty, to promote a sustainable economic development that takes into account the conservation of the environment, and to foster peacebuilding and safeguard human security. In order to reach these goals, ADC uses different strategies, including the promotion of dialogue as an instrument of exchange and reconciliation.

These platforms of dialogue are mostly designed and implemented by civil society partners of ADC in cooperation with local partners, often from the sector of creative arts. The respect generated for the other's artistic-creative work within a project becomes the basis of dialogue which is carried forward into the work to achieve mutual understanding and a communicative practice in which social problems are no longer perceived in an isolated and isolating manner, but as shared challenges that are more likely to find solutions the better the participating parties succeed in seeing and listening to each other.

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For instance the project »Caucasus Cultural Initiatives Network« (CauCult), funded by the Cultural Programme of the Eastern Partnership, focused on the shared creative experience in a regional development initiative with intercultural challenges. Creative professionals from Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia came into contact with the cultural variety and diversity of their region and were encouraged to perceive cultural issues, in particular regarding disadvantaged ethnic, cultural, and religious communities, on the political level and to acknowledge them as a contribution to peacebuilding in the region. Confidence-building measures between ethnically, culturally, and religiously

diverse communities were implemented on the local level in the context of Community Art projects, participatory art projects in the public sphere aiming to involve nonverbal and implicit aspects of coexistence in a dialogue through this creative activity.

The familiarity that develops in a traditional dance group and the playful creativity of local dance groups in Uganda were the starting point of the ADC-funded »Uganda Development Theatre Association« (UDTA), which aims to present taboo social issues to a broad and young audience. With support from the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC), UDTA created a network of 2,000 local lay theatre groups. In their performances, they provide health education, in particular on HIV/AIDS and hygiene, advocate for human rights and rule of law, and call for gender equality. The theatre stage becomes a dialogic space introducing choices of social existence and their consequences, which can afterwards be discussed with the actors. The Tunisian project »Espw'ART« by the civil society organization »Fanni Raghman Annik«, which was awarded the 2018 Intercultural Achievement Award in the category of »Recent Events«, also works with creative art. In the context of art, jihad returnees are given the opportunity to illustrate their shocking and traumatizing experience and broach urgent questions like guilt and atonement with the audience. By returning to questions that draw deeply from Tunisian cultural heritage, the returnees themselves are able to reconnect with the system of values of a society that is able to have a dialogue and to respect cultural diversity. The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) supports IAA and its concern to prevent radicalization and to strengthen society's resilience to extremist narratives, also by supporting an integrated approach, which is being developed on the EU level as a working principle of conflict prevention.

Reducing prejudice in order to rebuild trust between different communities also is the focus of the EU programme »Breaking the Cycle of Sectarian Violence in Iraq«, which is funded by Austria. Its goal is to foster reconciliation between all religious communities, minorities, and vulnerable groups within Iraqi society. To achieve this, it supports existing local and national radio broadcasters as well as national television in improving the flow of information in order to promote an independent media landscape, which is indispensable to the peace process. On the other hand, it opens spaces for dialogue and discussion between young people, women, neighbouring communities as well as religious leaders in order to instigate a debate on the role of religion with a view to social cohesion and conflict prevention. The aim is to provide opportunities for marginalized groups and minorities to increase their participation in social discussion and to break the currently dominant cycles of violence.

Encouraging local groups in the field of culture and dialogue as a whole is a contribution to an active civil society that participates in the development of its own country and in political processes. An engaged civil society is an important part of society. Supporting different partners and their approaches in development cooperation, including creative-artistic approaches, is therefore an important principle of ADC.

ADC supports the New European Consensus on Development, in which the link between security and development has an important place. The special attention to conflict it demands includes the focus on cultural and dialogic action.



ENDLESS are the fields  
that cherish more life in one spoonful of sand  
than there are men.  
The wound heals  
that festered so long.  
Do not shut the door  
the Earth does not want to die  
it is waiting and knows of the rescuer passing by  
who will stop  
to lend a hand





# The Role of Intercultural Dialogue in Integration

Susanne Raab

It is natural to want to know who we are dealing with in interpersonal encounters. The longed-for orientation in relation to the counterpart is a major factor in whether a trusting relationship can be established. Group affiliations like culture, nation, ethnicity, religion, profession, clubs, interests, friends, family and many more can provide a helpful framework of orientation and help in judging our fellow human beings, provided they are not held as an absolute and lose sight of the uniqueness of each and every human being.

In times of increased migration, the criterion of culture comes to the fore of public attention. The question whether different cultural ways of

**Initiating and organizing dialogue across cultural groups seems more than ever to be the order of the day.**

life are compatible and open to change has a long tradition in Austria, the erstwhile core region of a multicultural empire, and has gained in importance not least because of the influx of migrant workers in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the more recent refugee movements. Therefore, initiating and organizing dialogue across cultural groups seems more than ever to be the order of the day.

Against this background, it was only consistent that intercultural dialogue became a separate strategic focus within the Austrian integration strategy, the National Action Plan for Integration (NAP.I). Along the lines of the integration process itself, this focus is understood as a mutual process in which both parties, migrant as well as majority societies, come together to reduce fears and prejudices. The importance attributed to this focus is illustrated by one glance at the funding landscape: from 2014 to 2018, the BMEIA supported 120 projects to a tune of a total of 5 million Euros.

## The particular importance of interreligious dialogue

Given religions' often important role in the framing of integration policy, an important part of the activities in this focus concerns religious dialogue. In an initially alien environment, religion can be essential for the individual development of identity, and provide a fixture in the integration process. In particular with regard to identity formation, it must be possible for young people not to see a contradiction in identifying for instance as a devout Muslim as well as a proud Austrian.

As one of the consequences of a pluralizing society, many people increasingly call on the Austrian constitutional state to formulate a clear position in matters of religion. This is why NAP.I defined religious dialogue as a key issue. Our liberal-democratic constitutional state does not believe its task is to reaffirm religions in their respective self-image. It does, however, cooperate with them as partners, because, as a rule, religions have a humanizing, creative and motivating impact on civil society activities. To ensure this, the state ascertains that these activities are based in the constitution and comply with fundamental human rights.

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## Intercultural dialogue as a motor of integration

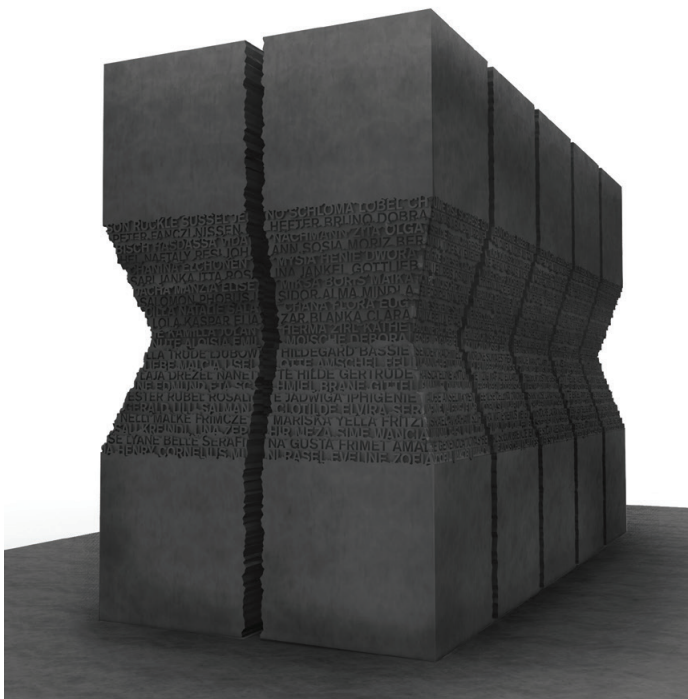
Integration means more than labour market integration and German classes. It is about an emotional connection to the country one lives in, and therefore about a shared image of Austria. In order to feel responsible for a society's functioning, one must have a sense of belonging. Integration therefore is about empowering immigrants, about transforming them from mere bystanders into responsible citizens. The precondition to a shared solidarity in a country is the existence of a strong, shared idea of the future. In times of increasing immigration such as we experienced in Austria, it is therefore essential to initiate a debate on identity, and to include this debate in all areas of integration. In particular, we need to look into the following questions: What constitutes Austria as a community? What do we think is key to living together? What contribution

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can each individual make to a mutually supportive community in his or her personal environment? What is the imagined future we want to work for together? By answering these questions, intercultural dialogue is an important tool of integration efforts in order to introduce our basic values confidently to all those who want to live in Austria in the longer term.

### Intercultural dialogue remains a challenge

One factor we may not underestimate in the field of intercultural dialogue is undoubtedly a necessary degree of intercultural curiosity and understanding. The often-heard motto »diversity is an asset« has a seductively reasonable and politically correct ring to it, but remains silent concerning the many challenging and difficult situations participants often find themselves in in practical cooperation. A clash of different cultural worlds is not only marked by language barriers, but also by conflicting socializations, ideas on morality, thresholds of shame and taboos etc. In the field of intercultural dialogue, we need to be clear about the fact that different cultural backgrounds may mean creativity, innovation, and thus an asset for a society on the one hand. People with and without migrant backgrounds should understand intercultural dialogue as an opportunity to take responsibility in a natural and informal manner, to be recognized, and to feel pleasure in meeting fellow citizens. On the other hand, there has to be an understanding of the premises that are perceived and lived as a common, irrevocable canon of values of a society – irrespective of cultural backgrounds and socializations. A common societal foundation, common European values enshrined in the constitution have to be lived and upheld irrespective of culture. We are confronted with a multi-faceted process of initiating and improving interaction.



Daniel Sanwald: »Maly Trostenets. Massif of Names«, 2018

In the vicinity of the extermination camp of Maly Trostenets near Minsk, approximately 10,000 Austrian Jews were murdered between May and October 1942. This makes Maly Trostenets the place with the largest number of Austrian Shoah victims next to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Austria participates in developing the memorial complex of Trostenets with a memorial stone created by Daniel Sanwald, which represents the ten transports to extinction from Vienna to Minsk, naming all the victims' first names.

# The Culture of Remembrance in Austria's International Cultural Relations

Michael Baier, Heidemarie Uhl

The inclusion of history is a guiding principle of Austria's international cultural relations. This means that for Austria, the Holocaust is the key historical reference of the transnational memory of humanity, as well as the basis of a global human rights policy. The study of this unique human disaster's reception by state and society from 1945 to the present is an obligation Austria is meeting in multiple ways in its bilateral relations, on the European level, and in multilateral bodies.

The work of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) that is based on the 2000 Stockholm Declaration<sup>1</sup>, which Austria has been a member of since 2001 and which currently has 31 member states, is constitutive for the universalization of Holocaust remembrance, which aims to ensure a living remembrance for future generations. Holocaust remembrance days are important fixtures for discussions and academic or artistic explorations at the Austrian cultural fora.

What can or should we learn from the Holocaust? The shared obligation enshrined in the Stockholm Declaration, i. e. to encourage the study of the Holocaust in all its dimensions, not only consists in the task of taking into account the present-day relevance of the Holocaust, for which there is ample occasion, from the alarming rise of antisemitism, xenophobia, hate crimes and other forms of extremism in Europe to cases of genocide and other atrocity crimes registered all over the world since the end of World War II, or the suffering of refugees.

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1 Cf. Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, para. 5; <https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/stockholm-declaration> (14 January 2019).

We welcome the fact that in its foreign relations, Austria honours its obligations from the Stockholm Declaration in the field of a culture of remembrance and shares its experience in dealing with a tainted past precisely in those countries where coming to terms with history represents a challenge for government and society. One example is the collaboration of the Austrian Embassy in Skopje with the local Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia (MHMC) from 2012 to 2015. The Macedonian government charged this institution, which is unique in the Western Balkans, with a teaching mission for Holocaust education that is not subject to direct government control. This starting point is an auspicious situation to encourage a responsible approach to history and its communication.

One precondition for understanding the dimension of inter-state relations is knowledge about historical events and their significance in the present. A contemporary remembrance of eras and events of the past is one of culture's tasks. In collaboration with the Austrian Embassy in Skopje, the MHMC became a place of open dialogue on the interpretation of history. One remarkable aspect was the reaction of scholars and the public to Austria's tortuous path from a repression of its own part in Nazi crimes to an awareness of the historical and moral responsibility the catastrophe of National Socialism implies for Austria, which was presented in lectures and conferences; the lectures showed that state and society in post-war Austria initially only met their obligations with extreme hesitation while later delivering remarkable achievements in this field. These efforts weren't always seen with a sympathetic eye (»Why foul your own nest?«), but elicited considerable interest throughout, in particular in the fields of education and research. This became especially apparent on the occasion of a seminar for Macedonian history educators with eminent Austrian historians on the subject of »teaching contemporary history responsibly«, which was organized by the Ministry of Education in Vienna.

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Austrian international cultural relations has been cooperating with the Austrian-American NGO CENTROPA for many years, which has sustainably contributed to coming to terms with history with its development of the »living history« teaching method. Annual joint training seminars for teachers from South East Europe and numerous special events, for instance a symposium in memory of the November Pogroms of 1938, or several projects in memory of the outbreak of World War I and its effects on

the Balkan region, received Austrian funding. But the Austrian representations also use the field of creative arts for dialogue-based remembrance; one example is the Austrian Embassy in Skopje, which organized an exhibition of paintings and graphic works by the Austrian war correspondent Leopold Forstner in dialogue with depictions of Macedonian motifs in 2014.

One special form of a culture of remembrance customized for the most recent history of South West Europe proved to be a seminar on international humanitarian law in non-international armed conflicts<sup>2</sup>, jointly organized with the Macedonian Ministry of Defence, which also included participants from other West Balkan states as well as Russia.

One important aspect of the international cultural policy cooperation in the field of the culture of remembrance is the promotion of inter-ethnic understanding. The Austrian Embassy in Belgrade, for instance, provided a neutral venue for a debate between the Serb journalist Zoran Panović and the Albanian journalist and author Mustafa Nano in 2017. In Macedonia, Austria funds one German language teacher for each of the two large ethnic groups (ethnic Macedonians and ethnic Albanians) at the state universities Skopje and Tetovo. This meant that there were events<sup>3</sup> in which students from both ethnic groups participated; the use of German considerably facilitated intercultural dialogue.

Coming to terms with a tainted, traumatic past is an open-ended process, and every generation has to relate to it in its own way. Even today, new places of remembrance are opened, as exemplified in the Austrian memorial project in Maly Trosnetens. Precisely because the experience of violence, persecution, and crimes against humanity continues to affect societies, even down to the level of the histories of individual families, questions regarding the re-

**The Austrian contribution to a culture of remembrance with a European outlook is also based on a self-critical examination of our own, sometimes highly controversial views on dictatorship and Nazi terror, demonstrating that not only on the European scale, but also within societies, the concept of a »dialogic remembering« (Aleida Assmann) can pave the way for a shared culture of remembrance.**

- 2 In 2001, Macedonia suffered greatly under warlike civil unrest and fighting between ethnically Albanian groups and government troops. Even though this conflict was settled with international participation in the 2001 Ohrid framework agreement, the wounds have yet to heal. It was all the more remarkable that members of both previously warring parties contributed to the event, and that it received extraordinary interest, not least among international observers.
- 3 In addition to the above-mentioned symposium in memory of the November Pogroms of 1938, these include a project »City Walks« in which students of the Universities of Skopje (ethnic Macedonian) and Tetovo (ethnic Albanian) worked together in exploring and describing their university towns.

sponsibility for these events are debated again and again. A new dimension is also added to remembrance work in Austria and in Europe due to the increasing diversification of societies. The Austrian contribution to a culture of remembrance with a European outlook is also based on a self-critical examination of our own, sometimes highly controversial views on dictatorship and Nazi terror, demonstrating that not only on the European scale, but also within societies, the concept of a »dialogic remembering«<sup>4</sup> can pave the way for a shared culture of remembrance.

4 Cf. Assmann, Aleida: *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur. Eine Intervention*. München 2013, pp. 180–203.



# Language Acquisition and Language Teaching as a Basis of Dialogue

Katharina Körner

Dialogue mainly uses the medium of language. To consider language teaching and language learning as a basis of dialogue therefore seems only logical. However, the basis of successful dialogue is more than the spoken and understood word. Preconditions of dialogue also include respect, knowledge, and curiosity. They are reflected in the teaching of language, in language itself, and necessarily also in the attitudes of the concerned parties. With that in mind, the approach to language teaching at the Österreich Institut (Austrian Institute), with its ten locations abroad – from Rome to Budapest and from Warsaw to Moscow – is a cultural activity per se, and in many respects, its students will acquire the basics of dialogue far beyond linguistic skills.

Our interactions mean that we enter into dialogue. When I want to learn a language, my first impressions already constitute an insight into a new (organizational) culture: Am I, as a learner, received in a pleasant manner, and are my learning needs evaluated by suitable methods? The manner in which a language is taught provides the learner with a wealth of non-verbal information and an image of the culture behind the language. Not only on the linguistic level, but also through the social etiquettes on both sides, which we are hard put to categorize, we enter the intercultural space between teachers and learners. In a cultural institution like the Austrian Institute, the teacher is particularly important. A friendly, positive and flexible atmosphere in each of the Austrian Institutes makes a specific image of Austria authentically tangible. For course participants, each and every individual member of staff, Austrian or other, is the face of Austria.

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A respectful welcome leads to classes that teach socio-cultural knowledge as well as linguistic skills. As a quality provider of German language courses, the Austrian Institutes have been committed to the dissemina-

tion of pluricentrism and the DACH principle<sup>1</sup> since their inception 20 years ago, which at the time were still in their fledgling stages regarding their implementation and recognition. As part of Austria's international cultural policy, content from and about Austria is deliberately foregrounded. On the linguistic level, this mainly means that the equal value of different varieties of the German language is pointed out. Our aim is a receptive understanding of differences in grammar, phonetics and lexis. Taking into account the different but equally correct forms of German in textbooks and in the context of German language exams like the ÖSD diploma meant an enormous progress in the recognition of Austrian German. It allows students of German as a foreign language abroad to acquire linguistic mobility across the German-speaking world – and a knowledge of the German language – which are sadly often denied to native Austrians. Regarding content, the practical application of the DACH principle initially corresponds to traditional regional studies. Beyond this, the Austrian Institutes follow the concept of disseminating »cultural geography«<sup>2</sup>, which continues to address clichéd images of Austria, the Federal States, rivers, facts and figures, but shifts the focus towards the ability to participate in dialogue in the German-speaking countries. This aim manifests itself and is practiced in joint discussions and reflection: What do different newspapers write on the same issue? What do people discuss in their coffee breaks at the office? Where does the figure of speech »das Glück ist ein Vögel« (»happiness is a little bird«) come from, and what are its equivalents? Do people greet each other in the same way across the German-speaking regions?

**Discussing differences and nuances or decoding formulaic phrases in the language allows language acquisition to result in an intuitive understanding of cultural identity.**

Discussing differences and nuances or decoding formulaic phrases in the language allows language acquisition to result in an intuitive understanding of cultural identity. In their lessons, teachers facilitate and encourage the students' access to culture in and beyond language. In the context of the DACH concept, students are increasingly enabled not only to receptively distinguish the linguistic differences between German-speaking countries – while knowing that these do not stop at national borders – but also to develop an idea or an understanding of the

- 1 The DACH principle is the equal inclusion of the different linguistic and regional dimensions of the largest part of the German-speaking regions. D-A-CH is an acronym for Germany (D), Austria (A), and Switzerland (CH), where standard German is the common language (*Dachsprache*).
- 2 Altmayer, Claus: »Die DACH-Landeskunde im Spiegel aktueller kulturwissenschaftlicher Ansätze«. In: Silvia Demmig/ Sara Hagi/ Hannes Schweiger (eds). *DACH-Landeskunde. Theorie – Geschichte – Praxis*. Munich 2013, p. 15 et seq.

issues that are particularly close to people's hearts in German-speaking regions, whether in a positive or in a negative sense. This approach enables them to participate in discourses in the context of language acquisition.

This again illustrates what is self-evident: part of any dialogue is a counterpart. The learner's motivation for language acquisition is paramount. Interest and curiosity are decisive factors for an emotional bond and the readiness not only to learn the rules and words of a language but to make use of them as keys to a society. The cultural knowledge more or less inherent in any language teaching enables intrinsically motivated learners to participate in the linguistic world of their choice. In this sense, in 2017, the traditional German language exams third country immigrants had to pass according to the Integration Agreement were upgraded to exams on values and orientational knowledge, which are taught in the preceding German language classes.

When learners are equipped with the tools that enable them to enter into dialogue easily – by language teaching that is respectful and that discursively disseminates knowledge – in their profession or studies, in the field of art and culture, at their holiday destination, or in the family, not only linguistically but also by virtue of their cultural understanding, the Austrian Institutes have done their job. For language acquisition is more than just retrieving words and assembling them correctly. To speak German as a foreign language means to have experienced German in the true sense of the word: to listen to the emotions tied to language, to grasp the significance of sites of memory, to relate to differences between the German-speaking countries or internal distinctions. These should be the results of language teaching as a cultural activity.



A FLUTTER  
*at the edge of eternity*  
*is this time*

Karl Lubomirski



# Dialogue and Science Diplomacy

Denise Quistorp

Dialogue and science diplomacy as focal points of our international cultural relations can be related to each other in several ways: First, they have in common that they generate knowledge and insight and promote mutual understanding in international relations. Scientific exchange can be dialogic in itself, and/or initiate further dialogue. On the other hand, science diplomacy may use the communicative form of dialogue in order to connect scientific insights and politics. Not least, the space of dialogue also strengthens Austria as a centre of science.

## Science and politics in dialogue

At the intersection of science and foreign policy, the first and foremost goal is to promote scientific cooperations, i.e. the international networking of innovative Austrian academic achievements. Such encounters and partnerships, which are primarily encouraged by the Austrian representations, generate new impulses and thus also competence and innovation for Austria. Science diplomacy, on the other hand, »is the contribution of education and knowledge to international relations«<sup>1</sup> – by sharing expertise and an in-depth understanding of context. Researchers increasingly act as consultants in the development of an evidence-based foreign policy and in translating scientific results into global policies. Austria is a member of the network of Foreign Ministry Science and Technology Advisers (FMSTAN) that aims to strengthen this dialogue between science and politics.

1 Knight, Jane: *Internationale Bildung, globale Verständigung*, <https://www.deutschland.de/de/topic/wissen/netzwerke-kooperationen/internationale-bildungglobale-verstaendigung> (14 January 2019).

## Examples of Austrian science diplomacy

According to our experience, the main role of science is to create the foundations for partnerships between countries – »partnerships that can be sustained regardless of the political winds«.<sup>2</sup> Examples are the long-term Austrian participations in CERN and IIASA, where international scientists created a positive agenda of collaboration and open communication channels; or the bi-lateral (religious) dialogues with Iran, Indonesia, and China, and the work of the Austro-Russian historians' commission (ÖRHK). Our science diplomacy has proved to be a stabilizing and enabling element in politics by building bridges between science and society. This is based on the shared universal language of scientists as well as the accepted methods, standards and values of science (freedom of research, evidence-based opinions, transparency, etc.), which allow communication through science even across political divides. Learning experiences from these dialogues resulted in prejudices being overcome, in familiarity and mutual respect – as a foundation of dialogue and cooperation. Dialogue will effect a change in human beings, and science acts as an »agent of change«.

**Dialogue will effect a change in human beings, and science acts as an »agent of change«.**

### Science diplomacy depends on the dialogic form of communication

The fundamental goal of science is to understand the world and to explain it clearly, in particular in the face of widespread scepticism towards science. The real challenge, however, is the translation of its insights into policies and their implementation in the context of public demand, of economic interests etc.<sup>3</sup> The methods of dialogue that were elaborated in the context of international cultural relations are valuable tools, in particular with a view to interdisciplinary research and collaboration.

2 Finkel, Alain: *The value of science diplomacy*, <https://www.chiefscientist.gov.au/2012/05/the-value-of-science-diplomacy/> (14 January 2019).

3 Moomaw, William R.: *Science Diplomacy: Hard-won lessons*, <http://www.sciencediplomacy.org/hard-won-lessons> (14 January 2019).



## Creativity, interdisciplinarity, and dialogic international cultural policy

»All great challenges ... can only be resolved through interdisciplinary collaboration« – we need »bridges that connect art, science, the economy and society in a synergetic way.«<sup>4</sup>. Where people and ideas from different worlds meet, there is room for creativity and new knowledge. Understanding art, culture and science as initiators of innovation and dialogue is a basic concept of the dialogue focus of our international cultural policy. One example is the interdisciplinary »Melammu« project, which explores the continuities and transformations of ancient oriental cultures while also overcoming reservations and barriers between disciplines.

### Austria as a space of dialogue also strengthens its standing as a centre of science

Dialogue doesn't happen by itself, it requires initiative and preparation – in particular the preparation of a space. The Austrian representations create such creative spaces for scientific encounters and debates that also serve to showcase Austria as a centre of innovation.

Austria's and Vienna's importance as a space of dialogue has evolved over time, and is interlinked with science diplomacy: university partnerships and encounters of and with scientists (in our dialogues) generate and disseminate knowledge – including intercultural knowledge, which strengthens our international relations as well as Austria as a centre of science.

**Dialogue doesn't happen by itself, it requires initiative and preparation – in particular the preparation of a space. The Austrian representations create such creative spaces for scientific encounters and debates that also serve to showcase Austria as a centre of innovation.**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty) Science and Diplomacy Symposium in Vienna in May 2018 was another illustration of all the above-mentioned elements of the interplay between science and dialogue at the centre of dialogue and science that is Vienna. Scientists and diplomats participated in a simulation game<sup>5</sup>, like in a dialogue space, which allowed them to experience a CTBTO executive council session consulting on an inspection. The knowledge generated in this simulation, e.g. the role of science and technology in implementing the Treaty, served

4 Bast, Gerald: »On the culture of creativity – The time is now«, in: Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (ed.): *Creative Austrians*. Vienna 2018, p. 32–3.

5 <https://www.ctbto.org/specials/ctbt-educational-resources/2sds/> ([14 January 2019]).

as a basis for the following dialogic exchange of creative ideas to overcome future political, diplomatic, and legal challenges.

## Digitalization and Dialogue. On the Limits of the Global Culture of Innovation

Clara Blume, Martin Rauchbauer

San Francisco in early summer 2018: an interesting issue is debated in front of a handful of journalists. Should space exploration be subsidized by the public? There are valid arguments on both sides of the debate. Would the NASA moon landing have been possible without the massive subsidies of the US government? On the other hand, where would space research be today without privately-funded initiatives like Elon Musk's SpaceX or Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin?

After short introductory statements, the participants launch into their objections concluding with a plea for their respective points of view. Afterwards, the audience votes on who proffered the most convincing arguments. One speaker is a young Israeli debating champion, the other a machine. It is called IBM Project Debater and is based on Artificial Intelligence. With sentences like »for a superpower like the US, space research is essential«, the machine argues for government subsidies, and it finally manages to convince the audience. Artificial Intelligence beats man.

If anything, a debate is a special type of dialogue. While in a debate, the goal is to assert one's own point of view, dialogue is about reducing prejudice, bringing people closer together, creating understanding and strengthening trust. This begs the question whether Artificial Intelligence could be employed in dialogue. The IBM experiment demonstrates that today, Artificial Intelligence can already master complex processes of human interaction. It is already able to provide valid, fact-based decision-making criteria and even to take independent decisions. The quality of these decisions depends on the quality and selection of the data with which it was trained. Simply put, machine learning operates through the recognition of patterns within large data sets. When the tech giant Microsoft unleashed its chatbot Tay on the Twitter community a few years ago, it was appalled to see it starting to post racist comments after no more than 16 hours. Of course, this incident doesn't mirror the »soul« of the machine or possible prejudices of its programmers, but rather the unsettling depths in the data sets of social media.

More than half a century ago, C.P. Snow published his visionary essay »The Two Cultures«, in which he celebrates the replacement of our world of humanities and literature by a culture of science and technology. This paradigm shift allows for the birth of a »new man« who uses his new analytic skills to shatter hierarchical structures and outmoded worldviews. Has Snow foreseen the generation of nerds and techies who are currently busy conquering the world from their base in California?

Young men, and increasingly women from all corners of the world gather in Silicon Valley, the global mecca of innovation, in order to change the world as self-styled spearheads of progress. The Valley is wont to see itself as the radical variety of the American dream, the mythical projection screen of the American nation of immigrants: here, no one will be asked where they come from, but only what they are working on. Here, a meritocratic and flat corporate culture is celebrated. Here, gawking innovation tourists can meet relaxed tech billionaires dressed in sneakers and hoodies enjoying their burritos, soy lattes, and kale salads. For the elite of Silicon Valley, cultural diversity is no problem because Chinese, Pakistani, Polish, and Californian tech engineers speak the same language, the new universal language of code.

But for a few years now, this brave new world launching new toys, platforms and revolutionary unheard-of business models across the globe every few seconds has lost some of its lustre. While successful tech entrepreneurs used to solemnly declare that they had no goal but to transform the world into a better place, the global social media platforms today have to take responsibility for the global manipulation of news and their interference in democratic elections. Consumers become aware that their data are sold on in the millions. States threaten each other, often in secret, with using cyber weapons. Business models of the sharing economy like AirBnB and Uber are increasingly criticized. Cultural norms and life plans established in Silicon Valley are often roundly rejected in the rest of the world.

The tech industry itself is becoming aware of the fact that it has reached its limits with the strategies it has used so far. The effects of the technological revolution have outgrown those who triggered them. In their search for solutions, Google, Facebook & co increasingly resort to humanities and social science scholars, occasionally even to artists. Tech evangelists are no longer trusted to have a fundamental grasp of the complexity of human nature, and this at a time when the boundary between human being and machine threatens to dissolve. While so far, Silicon Valley has always insisted on the self-regulation of the industry, today there are hints of a gradual change of heart. Societies and their governments are increasingly

**For the elite of Silicon Valley, cultural diversity is no problem because Chinese, Pakistani, Polish, and Californian tech engineers speak the same language, the new universal language of code.**

regarded as partners, as technological progress has spawned problems that require global regulation by the international community of states.

For Austria, this is an opportunity. As a country with a unique historical heritage that also encompasses the memory of once having been a cradle of Modernity and progress as well as a laboratory of cultural diversity, Austria can put itself on the map as a mediator. As a world-renowned place of international encounters, Austria should contribute to tackling complex problems of digitalization in dialogue with other states, cultures, and the tech industry.

**The effects of the technological revolution have outgrown those who triggered them. In their search for solutions, Google, Facebook & co increasingly resort to humanities and social science scholars, occasionally even to artists. Tech evangelists are no longer trusted to have a fundamental grasp of the complexity of human nature, and this at a time when the boundary between human being and machine threatens to dissolve.**



Distance grows  
distance between people.  
On telephone lines, satellites we pass.  
On twitter rafts we run aground in groups.  
Selfie dugouts sway in the mangroves' shade,  
freedom under polarized stars.  
In bowls the omens of grand reckonings.





# A Dialogic Approach to Issues of Cultural Heritage

Florian Warum

We might summarize our feelings in the face of the images of the destruction of the statues of Bamiyan or the antique city of Palmyra as pain. This pain points to the basic insight of the World Heritage concept: there is something sublime to human creation that immediately affects us through time and space, irrespective of our cultural backgrounds or the social and economic conditions. The protection of World Heritage is an important concern of the community of nations under the aegis of UNESCO. Where this protection proved to be impossible, international funds are made available to reconstruct lost cultural assets.

On the level of the World Heritage Committee, art historical, museum and encyclopaedic concerns may be foremost, but we should also exploit the dialogic opportunity that artworks of this quality inspire. After all, these usually spontaneous feelings may provide sustainable impulses for intercultural communication and cooperation. A dialogic approach to issues of Cultural Heritage will also enable us to achieve a constructive assimilation of the loss of cultural assets in conflicts. The civil society initiative for the reconstruction of the Golden Lyre of Ur, which had been destroyed at the Bagdad Museum in 2003, is a telling example of such dynamics.

Faced with the destruction of cultural treasures of the Mosul Antiquities Museum in 2015, the Task Force »Dialogue of Cultures« at the BMEIA began to support an intercultural peace project that began with the individual initiative of instrument maker Norbert Maier: a joint civil society reconstruction of the Golden Lyre of Ur. Shocked at the continued violence in Iraq, Maier began to reconstruct one of the oldest musical instruments worldwide in cooperation with a woodcarver from Southern Tyrol, a Buddhist goldsmith, an architect from Iraq, and the Munich Minerals Society, aiming to recreate it in its old splendour.

The Tyrolean harp maker, whose musical sensibilities had long alerted him to the lyre, experiences this intimate confrontation with an instrument of cross-generational and cross-cultural importance as empowering. He describes the motivation, which now has numerous people from

diverse cultures working on a craftsmanship project thanks to his initiative, by pointing out that while he would be able to build an instrument with a worldly sound, this shared, free and dignified activity imparts a quality to the instrument that will surpass the craftsmanship alone. At the same time, participants in the project report that due to the dialogic and intercultural process in which the instrument is recreated, they regained lost knowledge and craftsmanship of their own culture. A dialogue with one's own cultural roots was initiated, as well as a dialogue of creation: One sees how others approach the task, which sources of experience they draw from. And one experiences how new relationships emerge from mutual observation, mutual awareness, with the object, too. It transcends its passive-defensive function of distanced preservation and thus becomes a practical object of discourse in spite of its objective value – after all, gold, silver, mother of pearl, and lapis are all worked into the instrument. Norbert Maier also reports that there were no arguments in any phase of the project. Communication was part of the piece; to these master craftsmen, the English language only served as a tool.

**A dialogue with one's own cultural roots was initiated, as well as a dialogue of creation: One sees how others approach the task, which sources of experience they draw from.**

In Austrian international cultural relations, we became aware of this international project because of its specific empathetic and nonverbal creative approach. Norbert Maier describes how he developed a feeling for the instrument he wanted to reconstruct, which someone else had built in Mesopotamia 5,000 years ago, and thus entered into dialogue with an era and a space that continues to echo within us – in whatever form. The respect for the craftsmanship and the cultural concerns of the space the Lyre of Ur belongs to guides his every step in the project. Today, the project leaders collaborate with the Iraqi authorities and a number of diplomatic representations in order to hasten the completion of the instrument. But also to bear witness to the deep understanding of a cultural heritage experienced as a shared one, which does not experience the temporal span the lyre refers to as a breach of identity but as an opportunity for a shared creative development. The instrument in construction was already presented at the Iraqi Embassy in Vienna on Monument Day in 2017, and inspired the audience at the Austrian International Cultural Policy Meeting in the same year.

The lyre project makes reference to the whole cosmos of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage: the aspect of participation, the importance of the undertaking for social cohesion, cultural exchange, and its identity-building function, the significance of the project for refugees from Iraq as well as the already-proven power of the half-finished instrument to create empathy. The evocative question that the imminent com-

pletion of the lyre raises is what effect the instrument will achieve beyond its sensory value once it is back in Bagdad.



*And if what remained of everything  
was nothing but the power to forgive  
it would be enough.*

Karl Lubomirski



# Index of Authors

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Christian Autengruber heads the Unit for Agreements on Culture and Scientific and Technical Cooperation, Service Abroad (Holocaust Remembrance Service, Peace and Social Service) at the BMEIA. Before that, the diplomat worked at the Austrian embassies in Prague and Warsaw. In his academic career, he worked at the Angel Kanchev University and the Bulgarian-Romanian Interuniversity Europe Center (BRIE) in Ruse, Bulgaria, as well as the German-language Andr ssy University in Budapest.

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Ambassador Emil Brix has been the director of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien – Vienna School of International Studies since August 2017. A diplomat and historian, he was appointed head of cabinet at the Ministry of Science and Research in 1986, 1990–95 Austrian consul general in Cracow, Poland, 1995–99 director of the Austrian Cultural Institute in London, followed by

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Professor Patrice Brodeur is an associate professor at the Institute of Religious Studies at the University of Montreal. Between 2013 and 2015, he organized the research department at the International Dialogue Centre (KAICIID) in Vienna. From 2016 to the present, he has served there as a senior advisor. He is a laureate of the Interfaith Visionary Award and has ample interdisciplinary experience in researching contemporary Islamic thought as well as on different forms of dialogue.

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Professor Stefan Hammer teaches at the Department of Philosophy of Law at the University of Vienna. Academic postings led him to Senegal, the United States, Ethiopia, France, the Slovak Republic and Bosnia-Herzegovina. He is one of the BMEIA's dialogue partners and coordinates the bilateral interreligious dialogue Austria-Iran. His research focus is on comparative and European constitutional law, political philosophy, human rights and constitutionalism from an intercultural perspective. He also serves as member of the Board of Advisory of the International Development Law Organization (IDLO).

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Ambassador Teresa Indjein has been head of the Directorate-General for International Cultural Relations at the BMEIA since 2016 after having served as deputy director since 2012. In her diplomatic career, she was consul general in Milan from 2009–11 after having served as director of the Austrian Cultural Fora in Berlin and Washington, D.C.

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Katharina Körner has been the head of the Österreich Institut (Austrian Institute) since 2015, which implements German language courses as part of Austria's cultural policy abroad. Holding a PhD in European Union Law, she has worked at the BMEIA and at the Federal Ministry of the Interior.



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Ulla Krauss-Nussbaumer is head of the Department for the Implementation of Cultural and Scientific Projects Abroad at the BMEIA. It was under her aegis that a separate track for the field of culture and human rights was established. Before, she was the head of the Cultural Forum in Warsaw, deputy head of the Department of European Law, and worked at the Austrian representations in Rome and London.

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Simon Mraz is the director of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Moscow. Before, he worked at the auction house Dorotheum. His main concern is to support Austrian creative artists and culture professionals in the Russian Federation. He was the programme director and coordinator of the Austrian Cultural Seasons in Russia and Belarus, as well as of a number of exhibition and biennial projects.

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Denise Quistorp is head of the Unit of Scientific Cooperation at the BMEIA and supervises selected projects of science diplomacy and interreligious and intercultural dialogue. She worked as a research assistant at the Department of Civil Law at the University of Graz. Her destinations in the Austrian diplomatic service were the International Law Office, political departments, and Tel Aviv and Washington, D.C.

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Susanne Raab (née Knasmüller) is head of the Directorate-General for Integration at the BMEIA. Working on the issue since 2011, she has been responsible for the content implementation of the Austrian Integration Strategy on the basis of the National Action Plan for Integration. Before taking on this task, she worked at the Federal Ministry of the Interior. She publishes in the field of foreign nationals law and asylum, and teaches at the Danube University Krems.

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Ambassador Florian Raunig directed the Task Force of the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship in 2017 and before that the OSCE presence in Albania. He also served as Austrian ambassador to Montenegro and Albania. His past areas of activity include working in societies in transition, in development cooperation, and in multi-lateral diplomacy.

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Ivan Vejevoda is permanent fellow and head of the »Europe's Futures« project at the Institute for Human Sciences. He was senior vice president at the German Marshall Fund of the United States in Washington, D.C., served as senior adviser to Serbia's Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić and was a key figure in the democratic opposition movement in Yugoslavia during the 1990s.

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Florian Warum is the networker for the »Golden Lyre of Ur« project. He maintains contact with media outlets, embassies and business partners. As an independent journalist from the Tyrol, he is interested in local news, sports, historical issues and culture. He is an active member of the cultural association Schwindel-FREI and supports local cultural life in the Zillertal.

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Aloisia Wörgetter is Austrian ambassador to Belarus and headed the Task Force »Dialogue of Cultures« at the BMEIA in Vienna between 2014 and 2018. Before, she served as Austrian ambassador to Algeria and Niger, as well as on a number of bilateral and multilateral postings in the Austrian Foreign Service. She held teaching engagements at the University of Innsbruck and Vienna.

## On the Visual Concept

Art and dialogue are both creative processes, and as such they share several parameters: both are initiated by a desire for self-expression, both are open-ended and their impact is not, or rather not initially, quantifiable.

Art promotes dialogue by creating a space for confrontations with oneself and others that go far beyond everyday communication. Dialogue, on the other hand, promotes art by broadening the creative artist's framework of reference.

This publication introduces an eclectic selection of art inspired by and inspiring dialogue that was created and/or presented in the context of cultural projects of Austrian International Cultural Relations.

Aloisia Wörgetter



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## Reference for Karl Lubomirski's Poems

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## Biographical Note

Karl Lubomirski, born 1939 in the Tyrol. He lived in Italy from 1962 for professional reasons. At age 18 first poetry readings in Innsbruck. He has published 13 poetry collections in German, travel books, aphorisms, short stories, stage plays, fairy tales, reviews and their full or partial translations into about twenty languages, which are available at the Brenner-Archiv in Innsbruck.

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What are the meanings of »dialogue« in the current understanding of Austrian diplomacy? How do you practice the art of dialogue, and what are the necessary conditions for successful dialogue? What results can be achieved with dialogue?

In a globalised world, intercultural competence is becoming increasingly important. Trust and balanced relationships can only be achieved when we are familiar with different cultural and psychological codes. Creativity and interpersonal ability therefore are part and parcel of the craft of diplomacy.

This book offers an insight into methods and current practices of dialogue in Austrian diplomacy. It aims to contribute to Austria's self-conception as a bridge builder, as a place of international encounter, and of dialogue.