

## Cultural relations

The European Union and South Africa share the motto “united in diversity” which not only celebrates and embraces diversity, but also emphasises the need for mutual respect and understanding of each other’s cultures and differences. The partners share an interest in cultural exchange, in the protection of cultural heritage and in socio-economic development. There are a number of notable interventions:

Annually, the EU Delegation collaborates with [EUNIC](#) (European Union National Institutes for Culture) to organise a [European Film Festival](#) that seeks to showcase the best of European cinema in South Africa, and more recently, in Lesotho and Eswatini. The festival’s outreach programme for schools and communities helps foster discussion and mutual understanding on issues of interest and concern.



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The 2017-2022 EU-South Africa dialogue on culture was created through an initial partnership with the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture and subsequently with the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, the South Africa Local Government Association and the South African Cities Network, [Shukuma Mzansi!](#) fostered dialogue between South African arts practitioners, community arts centres and local government as well as with EU Member States including Ireland, Sweden, Flanders, France and Italy. The objective of the five years of activity has been to increase institutional capacity and foster international cooperation.

In its final 2022 iteration two dialogues were held on democracy in the context of culture, in support of the development of cultural policies for urban and community development as well as in support of a national cultural charter and policy. The priorities outlined at the 2022 conferences also underlined a joint interest in matters of social cohesion, human empowerment, participatory governance, social and cultural infrastructure and socio-economic development.



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In 2021/2022 the EU Delegation supported a two-part project implemented by the [Arts & Culture Trust](#) for young artists struggling due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the first phase, a mentorship initiative for five female photographers resulted in a photographic exhibition honouring five South African cultural icons: Miriam Makeba, Don Mattera, David Koloane, Dr John Kani and Sylvia Glasser. In the second phase, their work was drawn upon by street artists to paint a giant mural in one of Johannesburg's cultural hubs.



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Equally hard hit by the Covid-19 pandemic were most of South Africa's young performers, and the country's vibrant music and cultural festival scene was, and remains, affected. In 2021, the EU Delegation responded through [Music-X-Words](#), a two-year initiative in partnership with the [Music in Africa Foundation](#) and with support of the EU-funded [Cultural Relations Platform](#). Ten young musicians and spoken word artists/acts from South Africa were invited to perform at a Johannesburg studio for a live audience that included judges and talent scouts. In 2022, five of the artists were selected to attend the Globaltica festival in Poland as well as WOMAD (World of Music, Arts and Dance) in South Africa. They also participated in workshops with European artists.

