10 Years
ifa Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”
20 Years
ifa Research Award on Foreign Cultural Policy
Does this sound familiar? Sometimes you only become aware of something when it is missing. On average, humans breathe 20,000 times a day. But only when we run out of breath, do we really become aware that we cannot live without breathing.

And what applies to the air we breathe, equally applies to freedom. Nowadays, most of us take freedom for granted, and we no longer actively perceive it. But freedom cannot be taken for granted. This is what history has shown us. And a look at the world shows us that too. We are currently experiencing a worldwide phase of isolationism and a rising wave of nationalism. Free spaces are shrinking, liberties are being curtailed. Where society is cut off from the air of free speech, social exchange and creativity are also suffocated.

Foreign cultural and educational policy preserves free spaces and creates places of liberty. It opens doors and promotes the exchange of ideas and concepts. A supply of oxygen for democracy and human rights.

The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (ifa) has accompanied Germany’s international cultural policy for ten years with its Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”. It brings experts and practitioners from politics, science and culture together. For 20 years, the ifa Research Award has honoured outstanding dissertations at the interface between culture and foreign policy.

The Research Programme offers the freedom to think outside the box and to leave the beaten track. The Research Award gives junior researchers an important voice in topical discourse on foreign cultural and educational policy, thus making an important contribution to the further development of our international cultural work. The world simply is not the same as it was 20 years ago, and foreign cultural and educational policy should not be either.

It is clear what is at stake today: the global challenges of the 21st century demand exchange, the sharing of knowledge, a cosmopolitan mindset. Only dialogue, constructive disagreement and the contemplation of different perspectives can prevent our world from running out of breath.

The Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen and Research Programmes such as “Culture and Foreign Policy” supply the air we need to breathe. At the moment, it needs it more than ever. So: Congratulations on the 10th anniversary of the Research Programme and the 20th of the Research Award, and the very best wishes for the next decade.
“Social integration of the divided society”
by Sigrid Weigel

As paradoxically as it may sound, foreign cultural policy must start in one’s own country.”
[Henning von Harwath, 1965]

“...and it is our intention to proceed from a foreign policy of nations to a foreign policy of societies.”
[Ralf Dahrendorf, 1969]

After the end of the Cold War, the global victory of democracy was assumed in international politics. Since then, there have been fundamental changes caused by the growing gap between the winners and losers of globalisation (internationally, within Europe as well as domestically), by global waves of migration, crises and conflicts, climate change, new autocracies, the steady supremacy of transnational concerns and politics’ ‘loss of control’ over the financial markets.

Against this backdrop, national policy concepts tailored to departments reach their limits. New strategies of global governance in transnational networks, the interlinking with domestic politics and a greater involvement of the civil society are needed.

That applies particularly in regard to foreign cultural policy. If in the past the aim was primarily to communicate a suitable image of Germany to other countries, then for decades there has been an ongoing broadening in progress: by way of commitment to global environmental protection, for example, today there is a lasting and new commitment to transnational cultural cooperation.

In the course of incorporating national policy in the EU, UN or other supranational bodies and under the impression that the European nation state has come under pressure in the international political discussion, the current reorientation of the FCEP is primarily debated, amongst other things, under the question of a ‘post nation state cultural policy’. Consequently, it is centrally about the questions onerusting the future of the nation state and concerning possible transformations of the national culture on Germany’s journey to a culturally diverse immigration society.

The nation state is one of the key concepts of European history that are subjected to radical criticism by postcolonial theory. Whereas the criticism of the Eurocentric view of the Western historiography and the cultural hegemony of the West over the Orient remains to a broad extent very abstract, the criticism of nation is primarily based on the idea of a homogenous nation, which leads to the exclusion of (religious, ethnic or cultural) others, moreover postcolonialism rejects the transferability of the European ways to other regions in the new world order. In contrast, the function of nationalism is contentiously judged, on the one hand as an instance of exclusion and on the other hand as an instance of integration for countries with great cultural diversity. In this regard, in cooperation with the partner countries which are in the process of nation building, the FCEP firstly has the task of developing plural forms and ways of existing postcolonial, post-imperial and post-soviet conditions.

Instead of communicating the ‘values for which we stand’, an exchange according to the stated principles of mutuality ‘among equals’ requires a dialogue without prejudging the outcomes as it is called for by voices from outside of Europe. Not least, in the interests of FCEP’s credibility it is also necessary to incorporate the involvement of German history within the history of colonialism and its after-effects that are still visible today in the image of European and German culture and in the policy of the cultural heritage as well, i.e., to reinforce the perspectives of postcolonial countries in the policy of restitution. A partner-like exchange also requires the admission that even for a major part of the German/European population the realisation falls short of the declared global objectives and ‘values’ that the FCEP wants to pursue. However, cooperative work on shared problems which are still to be dealt with domestically (such as social injustice or environmental issues) can reduce the asymmetry in the development cooperation to some extent and respond to the scepticism regarding a new western hegemony dressed up as culture. Development cooperation literally means to not only work together on developing countries but to also work together when it comes to realising public policy objectives in one’s own country as well as in partner countries.

For the European nation states, the question of a post nation state cultural policy encounters different requirements. This is not just because of the historical asymmetry, in particular between Western Europe and these post-soviet countries that have only recently gained their sovereignty and trust cultural politics as a question of national identity but is also due to the current weakening of state sovereignty due to multinational corporations and the loss in acceptance of parliamentary democracy. Transferring nation state competencies to supranational bodies is problematic as long as it is linked with a loss of democratic processes (as in the case of the EU). Cultural politics do not stay untouched by the current pointed controversies on questions of national sovereignty. These directly impact democratic culture (shown in such cases as Brexit and Catalan independence movements). In addition, the history of human rights teaches that they will always remain ideal and abstract when they are not secured by civil rights and a democratic political culture. Recent developments also show that ‘the people’ answer with nationalist tendencies and often with calls for strong leadership when the state shows weakness or when the rule of law fails.

Foreign cultural policy that wants to overcome national borders is dependent on a domestic culture, which actualises the basic principles formulated with the German constitution through a lived democratic culture but is free from nationalistic ideologies and resentments.

Introduction
The dynamic of the current conflicts can be illustrated by a historical-structural analysis of the emergence of the various European nation states (formed out of the elements of sovereignty, territoriality and nation). It shows that a fundamental tension in the relationship between the sovereignty and constitutional aspect on the one hand and the nation on the other is inherent in the nation state. The problematic nature of the nation state is therefore found less so in the nation state form of political community but rather in the tension-filled dynamic of its components.

This problem concerns the modern secular state in particular in regard to those prelegal prerequisites that have taken the place of religion as the relative common ground of the convictions that underpin the fundamental rights. In this regard, freedom of religion and expression (within the limits of existing laws), even for such minorities in whose own convictions these values are not enshrined, take centre place. This problem, which is posed through the transformation into an open society of pluralistic ways of life and cultural diversity, is currently being discussed under the heading non-negotiable: the solutions are being sought in various concepts of culture. In this regard, it comes to light that value-oriented discourses are by their nature basically intolerant. They elevate their own approach to life to be the standard and legitimise that with “cultural national roots”. The prerequisites of the national state are therefore found less so in the nation state nature of the nation state is therefore found less so in the nation state form of political community but rather in the tension-filled dynamic of its components.

An alternative to the normative orientations is found in collaborative work on memory. The lessons from German history, which have given the German constitution its particular character, cannot be the object of a confession for the younger generations of Germans nor for the migrants. Both of these groups have no direct reference experience with this history. Against the backdrop that the German “culture of memory” is increasingly becoming content-empty rituals and gestures of pathos, historians are demanding collaborative work on the awareness of history. For that reason, one can and must include the experiences of the migrants, e.g., by having a focus on historical constellations and topics in which German history is linked with the history of the countries of origin.

By following global regulative goals FCEP answers to the transformation processes caused, or rather accelerated by globalisation. This leads to increasingly strong interdependences between domestic and international socio-cultural processes, e.g., in the connection between foreign policy, trade policy, development policy and migration movements, in regard to the erosion of national and global democratic processes domestically and in partner countries, and in the relationship of the prerequisites for a successful integration policy with the development of parallel societies and the upturn in nationalistic ideologies. Thus, in pursuing its objectives, the FCEP is increasingly more reliant on the policies of other departments. And due to the fact that only those aspects of FCEP can be sustainable which are carried by domestic culture and society, it is reliant on cooperation partners that advocate a lived democratic society, integration and participation by local stakeholders and transnational civil society networks. The dynamic of the current conflicts can be illustrated by a historical-structural analysis of the emergence of the various European nation states (formed out of the elements of sovereignty, territoriality and nation). It shows that a fundamental tension in the relationship between the sovereignty and constitutional aspect on the one hand and the nation on the other is inherent in the nation state. The problematic nature of the nation state is therefore found less so in the nation state form of political community but rather in the tension-filled dynamic of its components.

Even though this is a department-overlapping mammoth-operation it is now high time to fundamentally examine Germany’s Africa policy. All the more so because it is currently running the risk of becoming subordinate to short-term strategic interests, which would contradict the principle of the sustainability of foreign cultural policy. "Multiculturalism”, which was developed as a counter pole to the accelerated assimilation pressure, suffered a similar fate to the concept of “transnationalism”. However, it becomes apparent that both concepts, that of multiculturalism and that of assimilation, are based on the idea of a quasi "collective identity". In the political arena this idea leads to mutual isolation and has contributed to the development of parallel societies. A policy of integration in the form of a socially and spatially differentiated cultural practice and a societal culture of recognition must be developed as a counter measure. Germany still lacks the comprehensive awareness of an immigration society where there is room for cultural multilinguism. In order to get there, the lessons learned from the existing detailed research on the predominantly failed integration of the German Turks must be dealt with in a way of efforts to overcome the "media ghettoisation", an overhaul of the German policy on Islam, which ultimately led to a strengthening of conservative Islam and to Turkish national policies having influence in Germany, a reform of the naturalisation policy and much more. On the other hand, there are innumerable local initiatives and projects that carry out very successful integration work. Decentralising the refugee and integration policy would not only avoid many problems that are currently being created but would also have greater sustainability.

That requires above all a lived democracy and a relative social peace. Currently, there are numerous factors that are obstacles: the growing division between rich and poor in Germany, politics’ loss of control and acceptance, the radical structural change in the public and the eroding tension between East and West. Lacking the feeling of belonging and the impression of being a second class citizen, i.e., indicators of insufficient integration are shared by the majority of the inhabitants of the East German Länder as well as many migrants and those at risk of poverty.

But how can you expect empathy with refugees from those who perceive themselves as victims of a, as they see it, cold-hearted society? "The quality of dialogue is an indicator of the state of health of our democracies," says the Manifesto of the European Year of Citizens 2013. In the sense of this benchmark, above all different formats to increase citizen participation are needed, for instance, the Folkehøring as tried and tested in Scandinavia for negotiating the most divisive topics. And it is high time to take seriously the problems which form the serious core of the demands of populist tendencies, for instance by means of the reappraisal of the German unification process by a peace commission.

What Germany needs is a comprehensive programme for the social integration of the divided society within Germany as a prerequisite for the acceptance, credibility and coherence of a successful and forward looking foreign cultural policy. And consequently, just like foreign policy must start domestically (cf. Herwarth 1963), so should the detailed, experience-led knowledge that FCEP has of other cultures, migration, integration, participation and cooperation between public offices and civil society stakeholders be deployed in the domestic migration debate and policy.

This text is an excerpt from the study “Transnational foreign cultural policy – Beyond national culture. Prerequisites and perspectives for the intersection of domestic and foreign policy”, which was produced within the framework of Ifa’s Research Programme.

Prof. Dr. Sigrid Weigel is an expert in literary studies and cultural science, she has taught in Hamburg, Zurich, Berlin and Princeton among others and from 1999 to 2015, she was the director of the Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung (ZfL – Centre for Literary and Cultural Research). She established a programme of intercultural literary studies at the University of Hamburg in the 1970s/1980s, she has worked for many years on the topic of cultural memory, cultural heritage and national culture/culture nation, and at the 2fl, among other things, she headed up projects on the plural culture of Europe, on dialectic of secularisation and the survival of religious cultures.
Culture is universal and at the same time local and related to the identity of each people. We also live in a pluralistic world and each country is a different melting pot of several nationalities. 21st Century connections allow us to be in touch with other countries and for this reason creating a network of international cultural relations is a priority and must be cheered. The research in this field is relatively new and we are glad to be able to be part of it.

Silvia Finguerut, architect and coordinator of culture and urbanism projects at the Brazilian think-tank FGV (Fundação Getulio Vargas)

At a time when nationalism, populism, cultural backlash, open hostilities and hatred are rising, maintaining international cooperation, understanding, and people-to-people contacts is crucial to keep cultures, groups, and individuals together. Research lies at the heart of international cultural relations as it provides evidence for what works and what doesn’t in international cooperation. Research can contribute to global debate and practice and make the world a better place. ifa’s work stimulates the exchange amongst cultural actors and researchers by providing a network and platform for connecting knowledge, experiences, and ideas.

Eva Polonska-Kimunguyi, Research Fellow, LSE Media and Communications Department and Teaching Fellow, LSE Government Department

We are culture bearing animals living in an increasingly connected world, so research into cultural relations not only adds to the store of human knowledge, it also helps us understand ourselves better, it can help us to understand how to better build the conditions for trust and cooperation between peoples, and what works to connect and build mutual understanding across both difference and distance. Collaborating in research can also be cultural relations in its own right, as ifa and global partners are demonstrating in starting to convene an international cultural relations research alliance inviting in academics, practitioners, and decision makers.

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“Research can contribute to global debate”
In ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”, experts research on current issues of foreign cultural and educational policy. The Research Programme sets topics and develops recommendations for the strengthening and further development of international cultural relations. The research results are reflected in expert discussions, at international conferences and in public discussions and published in the series ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy as well as the impulse papers ifa-Inputs.

**Facts and Figures**

- **10 Years Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”**
- **76 Projects**
- **90 Experts**
- **102 Events**
- **83 Publications**

90 experts have conducted research on foreign cultural and educational policy subjects for the Research Programme over the last ten years. They are scientists or practitioners. In any case, they are experts in their field and thus support a research-based foreign cultural and educational policy.
Many research projects have addressed the subject of the “culture of remembrance” at events and in publications, illustrating and discussing different international perspectives on historic events.

The connection between domestic and foreign policy with regard to culture and cultural policy was another cross-sectional subject. To which extent should these two issues be interconnected?

The role that religion plays in foreign cultural policy is becoming more and more significant. Therefore, previous projects have taken a closer look at different religious movements, their cultural-political aims and their backgrounds.

Since the Research Programme’s inception, digitisation has been an important aspect in the world of employment, as well as in international cultural relations: How can better use be made of digitisation for international exchange? What are the risks?

European networking and Europe’s cultural policy form an important part of the research on foreign cultural and educational policy. Repeatedly, the Research Programme has examined individual countries or the role of culture in EU foreign relations.

Furthermore, the issue of human rights regularly comes back into focus: How do culture and human rights belong together? What can the cultural sector do to better protect human rights?
2010: The Research Programme is founded as a scholarship programme for young researchers in the field of foreign cultural and educational policy.

2011: The first joint conference with ifa and the EU National Institutes for Culture, EUNIC, takes place in Brussels. First publication of the Culture Report “Progress Europe” as a EUNIC yearbook.

2011: A first cooperation project with Deutsche Welle on the subject of Digital Diplomacy is launched, subsequently developing into the series MedienKulturen published by Steidl-Verlag. For the first time, a publication is the subject of a panel discussion at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

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2011: Anticipating the signs of the time, the research project on Cultural Relations in the Mediterranean Region starts, while the first upheavals in the Arab world become palpable. This leads to the anthology “An der Zeitenwende – Europa, das Mittelmeer und die arabische Welt”, which is produced in cooperation with the foundation Stiftung Wissenraum Europa – Mittelmeer (WEM).

2013: A research project on the subject “First World War Remembrance: Culture Worldwide” starts. This is followed by a major international conference at the German Federal Foreign Office on the subject and the publication of an anthology to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War.

2014: A research project is implemented in preparation for the Germany Year in Mexico. Germany Years or theme years are repeatedly taken up by the Research Programme, including the Humboldt theme season in 2018.

2015: In the context of the increasingly acute refugee situation, a research project on foreign cultural and educational policy in refugee camps starts.

2016: The first research project on international creative industries starts, followed by another one on the creative industries in sub-Saharan Africa in 2018.

The Development of the Research Programme
2017: The increasing polarisation of global politics gives rise to additional urgent projects. One project addresses the US election, another one Brexit and a third nationalism and its effects on foreign policy.

2017: “ifa Input” is established, a short paper format which addresses topical subjects succinctly and concisely.

2017: A panel discussion on Intangible Cultural Heritage takes place as part of the European Culture Forum in Milan. In the same year, there is also a cooperation with the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) on the subject of cultural heritage, which results in another study.

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2018: The Martin Roth Initiative (MRI) for the protection of art and cultural creators is jointly founded by the Goethe Institute and ifa. Soon, the research programmes of ifa and MRI collaborate, and both publish in the ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy. The subject matter is civil society’s scope for action.

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2018: The first country study on Indonesia is in the making. Cuba, Brazil and Ukraine are other countries that have been examined in such studies.

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2019: Previous research projects on religion and foreign policy are supplemented with a research project on the peace potential of evangelical churches in the USA and Latin America.

2019: On ifa’s initiative, a network on international cultural relations (International Cultural Relations Research Alliance – ICRI.RA) is founded in London in cooperation with the British Council.

2020: Ifa’s Research Programme celebrates its 10th anniversary. In accompaniment to Germany’s Council presidency, a project on the EU’s approach to culture and the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals is launched. The results are presented and discussed at a public event with EUNIC and a pan-European Senior Officials Meeting.

2021: Looking to the future
Launch of the ECP Monitor together with the Hertie School of Governance. The Monitor is an online tool for foreign cultural and educational policy, which makes the foreign cultural and educational policy of various countries visible and comparable.
Why do people decide to leave their home countries? We Europeans also leave our countries and move to Canada, the USA or Australia, for example. Why do we do that? The reasons are complex.

For your study "Migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe" you investigated, among other things, the sources that people planning to migrate use to gain information on routes, transport means and the living conditions at their target destinations. What conclusions have you arrived at?

The media often paints the picture of "uncontrolled rising migration streams" in Europe. Does that correspond with reality?

The media enjoy using the metaphor of the "full boat". However, current studies show, for example, that migration in Africa is more intra- than intercontinental, and far less migrants come to Europe than suggested to the public. The dimension of internal migration which significantly exceeds that of migration to Europe is hardly mentioned in the media.

To which extent does media reporting pay tribute to the diverse reasons for refugee migration?

For example, current research in communication sciences by Kai Hafitz, Carola Richter or Christine Hors shows that migrants are usually portrayed negatively in the media. The reasons motivating the people are rarely covered, which results in migration being portrayed less as a complex social phenomenon but rather as a threat.

What can politicians do to promote a more differentiated approach to the topic?

Politics should seriously strive for a change of discourse, which starts with the language that is used. Currently, threatening scenarios are being evoked which generate a sense of insecurity among the population and make a differentiated way of dealing with the topic difficult. That puts wind in the sails of populists and does not do justice to the actual circumstances.

An interview by Sophia Schmid and Isabell Scheidt

"Migration is presented as a threat" War refugees, irregular migrants, benefits tourists – in media coverage on refugees and migration, completely different concepts are conflated. Where does reporting fail? How could it be improved? An interview with the communication scientist Anke Fiedler.

Ms Fiedler, why do people decide to leave their home countries?

There are many reasons. Armed conflicts, persecution, war. But also the desire for a better life, the lack of perspective at home, the search for a job or thrust for adventure. But why do we always think of refugees and migrants from Africa and the Middle East when we speak of "people who leave their home country"? We Europeans also leave our countries and move to Canada, the USA or Australia, for example. Why do we do that? The reasons are complex.

For your study "Migration from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe" you investigated, among other things, the sources that people planning to migrate use to gain information on routes, transport means and the living conditions at their target destinations. What conclusions have you arrived at?

The study shows that personal contacts are the primary source of information, i.e. relatives and acquaintances already living abroad. Previous studies have also confirmed this. Additionally, social media is a very widespread communication channel. Most migrants know of the risks, and they now have far more realistic notions of the living conditions in the destination country than is often assumed. Nevertheless, not all of them succeed in settling there. Many people get stuck in a transit country and must eventually return.

Which experiences do they make when they return to their countries of origin? Those who were successful abroad are admired. Migration is a very widespread communication channel. Most migrants know of the risks, and they now have far more realistic notions of the living conditions in the destination country than is often assumed. Nevertheless, not all of them succeed in settling there. Many people get stuck in a transit country and must eventually return.

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For decades, sanctions have been a much-used instrument in foreign policy, for example, in cases of human rights violations, breaches of international law, or the development of weapons of mass destruction. The aim is to isolate the respective country economically and thus to persuade its government to change course. However, such measures also impact on local civil society and cultural relations. Christian von Soest, an expert of ifa’s Research Programme “Culture and Foreign Policy”, researches the influence of sanctions on cultural relations.

Mr von Soest, neither sanctions nor the research on this subject are new. However, little attention is paid to their effects on cultural relations. Why is that?

Cultural relations are generally not the aim of sanctions. On the contrary: sanctions such as the European Union often try to maintain cultural relations. However, it is important to bear in mind that most sanctioned states, approximately four out of five, are not liberal democracies. In countries such as Belarus or Zimbabwe, those in power disadvantage the political opposition, violate human rights, influence the media and manipulate elections. No opposition whatsoever is permitted in one-party states such as North Korea or China. Cultural politics is often a means of power. In such an environment, the playing field for critical-cultural culture is limited from the beginning, and contacts to the outside world are subject to strict control. The pressure caused by sanctions then additionally increases the mistrust against cultural professionals and external contacts.

How can it be explained that sanctions that are actually aimed at economic and political elites have a significant effect on cultural relations?

There are sanctions that specifically target certain decision-makers, for example by blocking their accounts or banning their entry into the West. But such an approach contributes to a confrontational climate. The elites try to justify their own actions through the ‘illegal’ sanctions. Thus, the us-against-them mentality is reinforced, which has external effects. This makes it easier to prohibit undesired civil-society and cultural activities and contacts to the outside world. Cooperation with foreign cultural professionals, institutions and scientists becomes less opportune.

By increasingly using targeted sanctions, the U.S., the EU and also the United Nations are trying to avoid undesirable consequences for the people in the respective country and to support oppositional forces. How “smart” are these “smart sanctions” really?

The disastrous humanitarian consequences of the full United Nations embargo against Iraq in the 1990s were the basis for this change of direction. While Iraqis suffered under the economic crisis and the collapse of the health care system, Iraq’s ruler, Saddam Hussein, continued to consolidate his power and even increased the oppression of the population. However, targeted sanctions can have unintended effects; for example, on cultural exchange. Therefore, instead of calling them “smart” I would explicitly call them targeted sanctions. One criticism of sanctions is that they impede on cultural relations. This is regrettable in view of human rights violations or breaches of international law, but is it nevertheless acceptable? For western states this is indeed a dilemma. They cannot leave unaddressed serious human rights violations and threats to their security, such as nuclear weapons programs. Sanctions impede the economy and thus also indirectly the cultural sector of a country, as in Iran, for example. However, the mental impact of sanctions on artists and communicators is even more important. Voices critical of the government may perceive the measures as external support. However, at the same time, these measures can create a siege mentality and make sure that the citizens feel a sense of solidarity with the government. This tension cannot be fully resolved. One can only try to soften its impact through support in the respective areas.

Are there ways or possibilities to prevent or at least limit these unintended consequences? Which measures are unsavory?

Cultural exchange, with its often small, uncontrolled ramifications, is the lifeline of conversation between societies. Given the conflicts at the political level, we should thus do all we can to keep this conversation going on or even increase it if possible.

At the beginning of each sanction, the decision makers should carefully deliberate on the measures and review the actual effects on a regular basis.

Sanctions are an expression of deteriorating relations. But they also drive this deterioration. Thus, the “shrinking space” for the area of cultural cooperation and the hardening of positions must always be considered. Of course, sanctions can also be the starting point for increased social and cultural engagement. This is exemplified by city partnerships such as the one between Freiburg and Isfahan, or the numerous civil society and cultural activities between Germany and

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There are sanctions that specifically target certain decision-makers, for example by blocking their accounts or banning their entry into the West. But such an approach contributes to a confrontational climate. The elites try to justify their own actions through the ‘illegal’ sanctions. Thus, the us-against-them mentality is reinforced, which has external effects. This makes it easier to prohibit undesired civil-society and cultural activities and contacts to the outside world. Cooperation with foreign cultural professionals, institutions and scientists becomes less opportune.

By increasingly using targeted sanctions, the U.S., the EU and also the United Nations are trying to avoid undesirable consequences for the people in the respective country and to support oppositional forces. How “smart” are these “smart sanctions” really?

The disastrous humanitarian consequences of the full United Nations embargo against Iraq in the 1990s were the basis for this change of direction. While Iraqis suffered under the economic crisis and the collapse of the health care system, Iraq’s ruler, Saddam Hussein, continued to consolidate his power and even increased the oppression of the population. However, targeted sanctions can have unintended effects; for example, on cultural exchange. Therefore, instead of calling them “smart” I would explicitly call them targeted sanctions. One criticism of sanctions is that they impede on cultural relations. This is regrettable in view of human rights violations or breaches of international law, but is it nevertheless acceptable? For western states this is indeed a dilemma. They cannot leave unaddressed serious human rights violations and threats to their security, such as nuclear weapons programs. Sanctions impede the economy and thus also indirectly the cultural sector of a country, as in Iran, for example. However, the mental impact of sanctions on artists and communicators is even more important. Voices critical of the government may perceive the measures as external support. However, at the same time, these measures can create a siege mentality and make sure that the citizens feel a sense of solidarity with the government. This tension cannot be fully resolved. One can only try to soften its impact through support in the respective areas.

Are there ways or possibilities to prevent or at least limit these unintended consequences? Which measures are unsavory?

Cultural exchange, with its often small, uncontrolled ramifications, is the lifeline of conversation between societies. Given the conflicts at the political level, we should thus do all we can to keep this conversation going on or even increase it if possible.

At the beginning of each sanction, the decision makers should carefully deliberate on the measures and review the actual effects on a regular basis.

Sanctions are an expression of deteriorating relations. But they also drive this deterioration. Thus, the “shrinking space” for the area of cultural cooperation and the hardening of positions must always be considered. Of course, sanctions can also be the starting point for increased social and cultural engagement. This is exemplified by city partnerships such as the one between Freiburg and Isfahan, or the numerous civil society and cultural activities between Germany on...
the one hand and Cuba, Belarus and Russia on the other. They need to be strengthened.

How do you wish sanctions to be deployed in the future? Which developments do you fear in the face of multitudinous centres of conflict?

The discussion must not cease. Sanctioners must make the following clear: “It is not about who you are, what you are, but about what you do.” Increased support for cultural and educational relations should also be an element of any sanctions package. That would help to reduce mistrust. Russia is an example that shows that a lively exchange in culture, education and science is indeed possible, even if the general attitude is anti-West. But the means are limited. I fear that the numerous international conflicts, in which sanctions are often applied, will harm cultural and scientific relations even more in the future, which makes it even more important to support cultural exchange.

Interview by Isabell Scheidt

Dr. Christian von Sost is the author of the study "Nebenwirkungen von Sanktionen. Kulturelle Beziehungen mit Iran, Kuba, Russland und Belarus", about the side effects that sanctions can have, produced in ifa’s Research Programme.

> de Vries, Gijs (2020): La culture dans les Objectifs de développement durable. Le rôle de l’Union européenne. ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy, Stuttgart
> de Vries, Gijs (2020): Culture in the Sustainable Development Goals. The Role of the European Union. ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy, Stuttgart
> Weigl, Sigrid (2019): Transnational foreign cultural policy – Beyond national culture. Prerequisites and perspectives for the intersection of domestic and foreign policy. ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy, Stuttgart
> de Vries, Gijs (2019): Cultural Freedom in European Foreign Policy. ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy, Stuttgart

Publications in the ifa Edition Culture and Foreign Policy
With the Research Award, ifa honours outstanding dissertations that deal with topics at the interface between culture and foreign policy and are relevant to the practice of foreign cultural policy. With this award, ifa intends to stimulate scientific discussion in the field of culture and foreign policy and to make it more visible to a broader specialised public.

In 2001, the award was given for the first time as a Rave-Forschungspreis. In 2013, it was renamed to ifa Research Award on Foreign Cultural Policy.

Advancement Awards for outstanding Master/Diploma theses were given in 2001, 2006, 2008, 2009 and 2018. In 2017, a commendation was issued. In 2004 and 2011, no prize was awarded. From 2015 to 2018, the ifa Research Award was shared because the jury deemed the two studies particularly worthy of the award.
Mr. Maaß, you introduced the Research Award 20 years ago. What was the occasion?

I will have to go back even further. I joined ifa in 1998 and was called to Stuttgart University in 2000 as a lecturer for foreign cultural policy. I taught in Stuttgart for three years and afterwards for ten years at the university of Tübingen. Preparing seminars and theses, I saw for the first time in practice the treasures stored at the ifa library. I also noticed that many theses written by young people at universities were included and named in bibliographies. So, then we said: let’s take a closer look. In a relatively short time Ms Czekalla had compiled a list of over 1,000 theses written by young persons in the last ten years. This gave rise to the idea of supporting this with an award so that more aspiring academics decide to address subjects from the field of foreign cultural policy in their master and dissertation theses.

What objectives and hopes did you associate with the award?

The approach we took when we started was broader. We already had our sights on founding the Academic Council on Culture and Foreign Policy (WIKA) in 2004. We wanted to strengthen the connections to universities and make sure that the practical work in foreign cultural policy and the scientific reflection on this subject come together more closely. At the time, the German Federal Foreign Office was hesitant. They were a bit scared of academics. I taught in Stuttgart for three years and afterwards for ten years at the university of Tübingen. Preparing seminars and theses, I saw for the first time in practice the treasures stored at the ifa library. I also noticed that many theses written by young people at universities were included and named in bibliographies. So, then we said: let’s take a closer look. In a relatively short time Ms Czekalla had compiled a list of over 1,000 theses written by young persons in the last ten years. This gave rise to the idea of supporting this with an award so that more aspiring academics decide to address subjects from the field of foreign cultural policy in their master and dissertation theses.

What exactly did the Federal Foreign Office fear?

Criticism. However, ifa felt that foreign cultural policy can only benefit from more contacts and policy advice from universities. We were fortunate that excellent papers were proposed for the award in the early years, including really exciting topics such as language policy and history. When Naïka Foroutan’s dissertation on cultural dialogue with the Islamic world was nominated, we were all electrified because we believed that it was a particularly outstanding thesis. At the latest with this award, the Federal Foreign Office, other intermediary organisations and the universities took notice.

Looking back at the 20 years of the Research Award, would you say that the initial hopes have been confirmed?

Yes, absolutely. Back then, we said: we promote a young view on foreign cultural policy. That was a very important aspect, because there are different perspectives and different impulses. And indeed that was the case.

The award-winning theses have a broad thematic range. What is the common denominator?

The common denominator is the interest in international cultural cooperation in all its facets, which is shared in universities and among the junior researchers coming from these universities. And, of course, the professional opportunities that follow and become available to young people. The students who I worked with always found it particularly exciting to see that they will be able to put their studies to use. To very specific use: e.g. the Goethe Institute, the Federal Foreign Office, foundations, NGOs, think tanks. I have heard from a great many who have gone on to work in these fields.

What distinguishes a thesis that merits an award?

Thorough and broad research and substantial work on a scientific basis. Precisely this connection between science and practice is indispensable for these theses. The success with which this balance is struck is sometimes more and sometimes less. There have also been theses that received awards because they were very solid, but the scientific approaches may not have been particularly gainful.

And there have also been years without awards.

Yes, which is something that we have always deemed important. If there is nothing there, then there will be no award either, which in turn also increases the prestige of the award. At some point the Federal Foreign Office realised: what ifa is doing in cooperation with the universities is good. We will support it. Then they first gave money for specific WIKA projects, then for the Research Programme.

What do you wish for the future of the award?

I hope that a young perspective on foreign cultural policy issues will be maintained in the universities and that young people will continue to look at everything very critically. And I hope that, when they see that it is worthwhile and interesting, they also feel free to show their enthusiasm. Because the enthusiasm that these theses radiate obviously motivates the Federal Foreign Office and the professionals working domestically and abroad. Sometimes it is like a bouquet of flowers.
Cultural policy for conflict prevention, America Houses (Amerikahäuser) as an interface between the United States and the Federal Republic, or cultural work as a diplomatic bone of contention – over the years, the award-winning theses have covered an exciting range of topics.

**RESEARCH AWARD 2020**

**Tobias Reichard** studied historical musicology, Italian literary history and law at the University of Hamburg. Between 2013 and 2015, he was a scholarship holder of the DAAD, the German Historical Institute in Rome and the German Study Centre Venice. He was a research associate at the University of Hamburg from 2014 to 2016. From 2017 to 2019, he was a research associate at the Research Institute for Music Theatre at the University of Bayreuth. Since March 2020, he has been a research associate at the Ben-Haim Research Centre of the Munich University of Music and Performing Arts.

**Tobias Reichard | Dissertation**


In his study, Tobias Reichard examines the phases in which Mussolini’s and Hitler’s musical policies influenced each other, how they differed, and how they competed with each other. He explores which continuities existed in German-Italian music discourse, the extent to which mutually-held stereotypes were relevant to decisions on music policy, and the extent to which these stereotypes were perpetuated, modified, and instrumentalised in individual phases. It is designed as a case study on international music relations and examines institutions, actors, goals, and effects of early 20th-century foreign music policy. The dissertation traces the historical periods and describes the following: the emergence of foreign music policy in Italy and Germany between 1922 and 1932, institutional structures and instrumentalisation of music for propaganda purposes in 1933 and 1934, the further consolidation of power and the emergence of the Berlin-Rome axis from 1935 to 1937, anti-Semitism and persecution, the emergence of the German-Italian cultural agreement in 1938, and foreign music policy between collaboration and competition from 1939 until the occupation of Italy in 1943. Music played a special role in the cultural exchange between Germany and Italy. Precisely because it let ideological content recede into the background, music was particularly suitable for promoting the Berlin-Rome axis. Thus, musical exchange was activated in German-Italian cultural relations when it served a political agenda and the scope for foreign-policy action was limited.

**RESEARCH AWARD 2016**

**Jens Adam** studied European Ethnology and History at the Humboldt University in Berlin. Subsequently, he worked as an ifa cultural manager in Opole and as a Robert Bosch cultural manager in Wrocław. He completed his dissertation on foreign cultural policy in conflict regions at Humboldt University in 2015. Between February 2014 and April 2019, he was a research associate at the Institute for European Ethnology at Humboldt University. After substitute professorships in Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology at the Georg-August University of Göttingen and in Maritime Anthropology at the University of Bremen, Jens Adam has been part of the “U Bremen Excellence Chair Research Group ‘Soft Authoritarianisms’” since March 2020, focusing his research on Poland.

**Jens Adam | Dissertation**


How does German cultural policy formulate itself if it wants to present itself in a self-reflexive and collaborative way? How closely is cultural policy practice bound to political instructions? How do cultural self-expression and collaboration with local partners and actors work? How do institutions manage cultural policy in a crisis region? What knowledge is conveyed and collected? Jens Adam explores these questions in his dissertation. He shows how conflict prevention as a new goal of foreign cultural and educational policy has been implemented in practical project work since the turn of the millennium. Using the example of the Goethe Institutes in Sarajevo and Ramallah, he examines how the new political goal was broken down from official documents and implemented into project formats, methods of speech and work, and how established structures shifted. Jens Adam describes how the concept of Germany’s image (Deutschlandbildung) and dialogue can be flexibly integrated into changed argumentations and discourses while still fitting the “stable core of national representation”. It shows the difficulties that project-funded cultural policy has to contend with, how the organisational structure of the Goethe Institute affects it, how attempts are made to establish references in Germany, and what translation practices are used. Foreign cultural and educational policy has the potential to take effect in the transformation of the national. It should dissolve national orders and established infrastructures to be able to draw more strongly on experiences made domestically and abroad. Dialogue should take place among equals to enable solution strategies and open up scope for action.
Reinhild Kreis, born in Fulda in 1978, studied modern and contemporary history, Bavarian regional history and contemporary German literature at Ludwig Maximilian University in Munich between 1998 and 2004 and at the National University College of Ireland in Galway. From 2009 to 2014, Reinhild Kreis was a research associate at the University of Augsburg for the chair of history of the European-Transatlantic cultural area. Subsequently, she was an academic councillor at the University of Mannheim, where she habilitated in 2018. Since October 2019, she has been the substitute professor for the Chair of Social and Economic History at the University of Duisburg-Essen.

Reinhild Kreis | Dissertation

As part of U.S. foreign culture and information policy, the America Houses and German-American Institutes were intended to help generate a liking for the United States and stabilize the Western alliance under American hegemony. While previous research has focused on the immediate post-war years and the function of the houses in the “re-education” policy, the dissertation addresses the dynamic decades of change since the 1960s, in which the political and social framework of the work of the America Houses changed fundamentally. The study shows the approximately 20 German-American Institutes and American Houses as an interface between the USA and the Federal Republic. As nodes of German-American relations at the local level, they were open to both countries and societies as “places for America”. American and German ideas and attitudes collided here, and interpretive struggles over political, social, economic, and cultural goals and processes manifested themselves in very concrete terms.

Peter Ulrich Weiss | Dissertation

The first cultural agreement between Romania and the German Democratic Republic was signed in 1950. But the early stages of cultural relations between these two states were fraught with difficulties. They became really frosty when diplomatic relations between Romania and the Federal Republic of Germany were established in 1967. By this time, Romanian cultural policy had liberalized and Romania was enjoying the role of the non-conformist in the Eastern bloc. This chronological study shows which domestic and foreign policy factors shaped the German-Romanian competitive relationship; it shows the form, the topics, activities and projects that determined this relationship, and the extent to which Romanian policy contributed to easing or intensifying competition. Peter Ulrich Weiss demonstrates that optimal knowledge transfer with the Federal Republic and good economic relations due to the positive portrayal in the West German press were the largest benefits that Romania obtained in this triangular relationship.
Isabel Schäfer studied pantomime at the École Internationale de Mimodrame Marcel Marceau and the École Mime Corporel Soum & W asson in Paris from 1987 to 1989. From 1991 to 1996, she studied political science at the Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris and at the Otto Suhr Institute of the Free University of Berlin. She obtained her doctoral degree in 2006. From 2009 to 2013, she was a research associate and co-project leader of the VW project “HEYMA T” at the Humboldt University in Berlin. From 2012 to 2015, Isabel Schäfer led the project Mediterranean Institute Berlin (MIB) at the Institute of Social Sciences, Humboldt University in Berlin. From 2015 to 2016, she was a senior researcher at the German Development Institute (DIE); from 2018-2019, she was a Special Representative/Project Director at the Franco-German Youth Office (DFJW). She also works as an author, consultant and lecturer.

Isabel Schäfer | Dissertation

The European Union does not officially have a common external cultural policy, but cultural activities within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership do constitute such a policy de facto. At least in the field of culture, 9-11 did not cause dialogue and cooperation between Europe and the Mediterranean countries to dwindle; rather, it led to an intensification. The studyaddresses ‘basket three’ of the Barcelona Process, which began in 1995 and aims to create an EMP in the form of a free trade area and a common security partnership, but has previously received little attention. The different constructions of the Mediterranean region are the starting point. They range from Samuel Huntington’s invention of the “Clash of Civilizations” to the myth of the “cradle of civilisations and the three world religions”. The unresolved conflict in the Middle East is the main obstacle to a successful EMP. Nevertheless, according to the author, efforts are increasing to organize exchange along the principle of a “two-way street”. Thus, the nucleus of a common external cultural policy of the EU can be identified in the Barcelona Process, which can also contribute as a catalyst to overdue economic and political reforms.

Naïka Foroutan was born in 1971 and studied political science, Romance studies and Islamic studies at the University of Cologne. She obtained her doctorate in 2004 as a doctorate student of Prof. Dr. Bassam Tibi at the Georg-August University of Göttingen. After her doctorate, she worked as a lecturer in political science in Göttingen and Berlin. Between 2006 and 2009, Foroutan taught at the Centre for Middle Eastern Politics at the Otto Suhr Institute of the Freie Universität Berlin. From 2008 to 2013, together with Isabel Schäfer, she led the research project Hybrid European-Muslim Identity Models (HEYMAT), which was completed in 2015. From April 2014 to May 2018, Naïka Foroutan was deputy director of the Berlin Institute for Empirical Research on Integration and Migration and headed the unit for Integration Research and Social Policy. In June 2015, she was called to Humboldt University of Berlin for a W2 professorship for Integration Research and Social Policy. In May 2018, she became Director of the Berlin Institute for Empirical Integration and Migration Research since May 2018 and Director of the German Centre for Integration and Migration Research (DeZIM) since 2017.

Naïka Foroutan | Dissertation

Are there ways to avoid a war between civilisations? What is the function of cultural dialogues in civilisational conflicts? Can cultural dialogues contribute to the democratisation of authoritarian Islamic regimes? In her study, Naïka Foroutan describes structures and conflicts of the post-bipolar world order, examining the phenomenon of cultural fragmentation in times of worldwide globalisation. It addresses the rise of cultural fundamentalism and discusses Huntington’s thesis of the clash of civilizations. She presents possibilities for conflict regulation and discusses how cultural dialogues can generally be institutionalised for conflict prevention. The author describes how transformation processes take place in Islamic states and how the West can influence them. Moreover, she examines the possible advantages of democratisation for Islamic states, asks whether democratisation is compatible with Islam, and which minimum requirements should be placed on democratisation in the Islamic world.
Ms Hampel, you received the ifa Research Award in 2015 for your dissertation on “Fair Cooperation”, which you wrote at the Institute for Cultural Policy at the Foundation University of Hildesheim from 2011 to 2014. In this dissertation, you examined how equal cooperation in foreign cultural policy can succeed. Why did you choose this subject?

This subject already interested me when I was a student. When I was an intern, for example at the Goethe Institutes in Bolivia and Ghana, I observed how cooperation between the Global South and the Global North works in real life. When I decided to start my doctoral studies in 2010, I revisited this subject. There was very little literature on it, and the following became clear after the first conversations with artists, cultural professionals and funders: By addressing equality and cooperation, I had raised an issue that had not yet been discussed openly, while there was a desire for exchange among the actors.

What would equal cooperation specifically look like in practice?

A German-Indian cooperation team described it as a “Guiding Light”; as an ideal to aspire to. Trust is a prerequisite if you want to cooperate as equals, and trustful cooperation takes time. This ideal could be reached if both sides invested equally in cooperation. This has hardly been possible yet because our partner countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia do not have sufficient financial resources; thus, responsibility must be distributed differently. The funding models must also be reconsidered. Early-stage funding, for example, would make sense as it enables to test a cooperation idea. Then more focus would be on the cooperation process than on partnership as the “final product”.

You have also dealt with cooperation in your most recent work at the ifa Research Programme entitled “International University Cooperation in the Future”. You specifically focus on transnational education offers, in particular binational universities, graduate schools and research centres abroad, which have been initiated by Germany. What is the core conclusion you have arrived at?

On the one hand, this form of university partnership is very risky because it includes very large investments. On the other hand, it is gainful for all project partners because it generates great visibility and has the potential to establish a stable, international university partnership in the long term – for a sustainable German foreign science policy. But of course there are also certain pitfalls.

For example?

So far, German transnational education offers have mainly been limited to BA programmes, which is why many students pursue their MAs or doctoral degrees in Germany, or in a different country of the Global North. If we want to be able to refer to international university cooperation as cooperation among equals, we must invest more in the development of postgraduate programs in Global South countries – including the local research infrastructure, such as libraries, laboratories and scientific publishers.

How do you apply your research findings to your own work? From 2018 to 2020, you were the scientific coordinator for the Maria Sibylla Merian Institute for Advanced Studies in Africa (MIASA), which is based in Ghana. At the same time, you also participated in establishing the Africa Centre for Transregional Research (ACT), of which you are now the managing director.

I have internalised the phrase of an Indian expert I interviewed for my dissertation: “Do your homework!” In comparison to our partners, we often know far too little about the following: the contexts in which we work, the main actors in the arts and science, the central networks in the respective region, and the history of the country or region. When I started working for MIASA, I immersed myself in the African continent and German-African colonial history. MIASA in as an international research college based in Accra, so it is a good example for the reduction of asymmetries in knowledge generation and dissemination. Nevertheless, German funding results in a mismatch, which we repeatedly address in dialogues with our partners and funders. It takes a big effort, but an ongoing debate on equality is important. There is a long way ahead of us before we can cooperate in equality, but we are taking little steps towards each other.

Interview by Juliane Pfordte
ifa’s competence centre “Culture and Foreign Policy” offers research-based knowledge at the interface of culture and foreign policy. It discusses and documents international cultural relations and cultural aspects of global structural change. Its aim is to provide scientific support for foreign cultural policy, to develop new concepts in a dialogue between science, culture, politics and the media, and to make potential visible to think tanks, political activists, scientists, libraries and interested parties. The focus is on practice-oriented research and consulting, documentation and information, international networking and the promotion of junior scientists.

In addition to the research programme and the research award, the centre of excellence comprises the ifa Library and network projects.

The ifa Library

The ifa Library is the world’s leading specialised library and the primary point of consultation on international cultural relations and Germany’s foreign cultural and educational policy. For over 100 years, this specialised library has provided information services to political decision-makers. It is open to the public, offering the free use of its holdings and services.

The Library’s holdings consist of approx. 440,000 volumes, 700 periodicals and approx. 120,000 international research papers. The available thematic spectrum ranges from cultural diplomacy and soft power to language policy and academic relations, intercultural communication, national stereotypes, and cultural geography.

The Academic Council on Culture and Foreign Policy (WIKA)

In 2004, ifa founded the Academic Council on Culture and Foreign Policy, which addresses theoretical and practical issues of international cultural exchange. Its aim is to scientifically support Germany’s Foreign Cultural and Educational Policy in its international relationship structure, to develop concepts and to anchor such issues more strongly in research and practice.

Membership is free and is open to all interested individuals and institutions addressing issues of foreign cultural and educational policy in theory and/or in practice. Since 2005, numerous WIKA workshops addressing foreign cultural and educational policy issues have been organised in cooperation with universities and research facilities. The promotion of young scientists is particularly important. In so doing, they are, for example, integrated into the interdisciplinary discourse in WIKA colloquia and networked with contacts in the field of international cultural exchange.

International Cultural Relations Research Alliance (ICRRA)

The ICRRA network was founded on the initiative of ifa in cooperation with the British Council. It brings together international institutions and academic institutions that see themselves as bridge builders between practical cultural work, academic reflection, policy advice and the media. Its objectives are the transfer of research-based knowledge to politics and society and the promotion of international knowledge exchange and cooperation in cultural relations.

The ifa Research Programme is celebrating its 10th anniversary. ifa’s Research Award is celebrating its 20th anniversary – these are strong signals for foreign cultural and educational policy.

ifa offers practice-oriented research and consulting in foreign cultural and educational policy, for a subject area that has become increasingly important as a field of balancing in the condensed and dynamised present of international relations.

The ifa Research Award motivates young academics to work in the field of international cultural relations, while ifa’s Research Programme enables experienced experts to contribute their research experience at the interface of culture and foreign policy.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of ifa’s Research Programme and the ifa Library, who after great commitment in the start-up phase, have been working consistently for many years to place the intersecting area of culture and foreign policy on the foundation of research-based knowledge.

In doing so, they are setting an example in terms of foreign cultural policy, which, as we know, is recognised in the international arena.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Councillors of the Research Programme and the members of the Research Award panel who contribute to our work with their great dedication and expertise.

Competence Centre “Culture and Foreign Policy”

Words of Thanks

Prof. Dr. Ulrich Raulff,
President of ifa
About ifa

ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen) is Germany’s oldest intermediary organisation for international cultural relations. It promotes a peaceful and enriching coexistence between people and cultures worldwide. ifa supports artistic and cultural exchange in exhibition, dialogue and conference programmes, and it acts as a centre of excellence for international cultural and educational policy. It is part of a global network and relies on sustainable, long-term partnerships.

www.ifa.de