

Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogheri

Today we celebrate the international day of cultural diversity. Since the very start, cultural diversity has been at the core of the European project. Unity in diversity is the motto of our Union, because Europe has never been just one but many. It is thanks to our cultural diversity and our commitment to dialogue that for the last 60 years we have been able successfully to face new challenges and obstacles, to change and progress. The European Union has an enormous amount to offer to the world in terms of diversity of cultural expressions, thriving artistic creation and creative industry precisely because our cultures and languages have made of Europe a permanent laboratory of change and innovation.

Today more than ever the European Union is committed to protecting and supporting cultural diversity, at home and throughout the world. The integration of a once war-torn continent cannot mean the unification of culture – on the contrary. This is why the European Union has developed strategies and programmes to ensure that unique cultures thrive and evolve in a globalised world. We have the Creative Europe Programme and its many strands, the MEDIA programme, the European Heritage Label, the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage and the Culture Programme also giving support to literary translation.

The EU also supports linguistic diversity with its multilingualism policy for all European citizens. The simple fact that Europe speaks many different languages is a powerful asset, it helps us to look at the world in multiple ways. There are 54 cultural minorities in the EU, representing 105 million people, all protected by legislation, together with their languages.

The protection of cultural diversity is part of the European way to build a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding and respect for fundamental rights. Promoting diversity through international cultural relations is an important part of the EU's role as a global actor. Diversity must not be feared, but embraced. That's why today we celebrate cultural diversity.