

In 1950, a Department of Foreign Affairs was established within the Federal Chancellery. In 1951, an independent Ministry of Foreign Affairs was created entitled the Auswärtiges Amt and a Cultural Directorate was set up within this Ministry. By 1966, it controlled some 40% of the total budget of the Ministry, thereby confirming the high priority Germany assigned to recovering its prestige throughout the world.

From the start, the Cultural Directorate has been forced to assume a coordinating role, standing as it does in the centre of a vast network of public and private agencies, some of them departments of the Federal Government, some of them departments of the Lander or provincial governments, and many of them private, non-governmental agencies. Most prominent among the latter are the Goethe Institute, charged with disseminating the German language and culture abroad; the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst, charged with the promotion of academic relations abroad; the Inter Nationes, charged with enhancing international understanding of the Federal Republic of Germany both inside and outside Germany; and the German Arts Council and German Music Council, charged with promoting domestic and international appreciation of the arts and music respectively.

If coordination of the activities of these private, non-governmental agencies presents a challenge for the Cultural Directorate, a far greater challenge is presented by the various governmental departments and agencies involved in Germany's international cultural relations. In its constitutional composition, the Federal Republic of Germany shares much in common with Canada, since political power is delicately balanced between the Federal Government and the Lander or provincial governments. Though foreign policy is a federal matter, as in Canada, education is a provincial matter. This means that the Cultural Directorate of the Auswärtiges Amt must cooperate with the Ministries of Education of the eleven Lander governments. This clearly complicates both the formulation and implementation of policies, since the federal authorities must await the approval of the eleven Lander governments before they can conclude agreements and put them into practice. Coordination is made somewhat easier by the fact that there is a Standing Conference of Ministers of Education of the Lander. This system almost exactly duplicates the Canadian situation, where the Department of External Affairs must work through "mixed commissions" with the various Ministries of Education and Ministries of Colleges and Universities as well as with the Council of Ministers of Education in order to negotiate agreements with other countries.

Coordination of the activities of the Cultural Directorate of the Auswärtiges Amt with those of other federal departments is also onerous, but somewhat easier to handle. The Federal Ministry of the Interior is responsible for German archaeological and historical institutes abroad, and has interests also in university affairs, sports and cinema. The Federal Ministry of Scientific Research has an interest in establishing and maintaining relations between German Scholars and their foreign counterparts. The Federal Ministry of Pan-German Affairs is concerned with the presentation of the Federal Republic abroad. The Economics Ministry has an interest in the export of films, books and exhibitions abroad. The Press and Information Office provides the press and information needed, since the Cultural Directorate has no press and information service of its own. The Ministry of Family and Youth is concerned with youth exchanges. Finally, while the Ministry of Economic Cooperation is responsible for aid to developing countries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs retains responsibility for the cultural aspects of this aid.