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conducted in a multilateral framework. The implementation of policy is entrusted wherever possible to persons and organisations «in the field», where a fund of expertise, knowledge and experience is to be found. Moreover, cooperation of this kind facilitates timely adaptation to changing circumstances. This is the form of cooperation outlined in c) above. The government is in favour of adopting the same approach to its cultural relations with the member states of the EC and the European Free Trade Association. Whether or not this will be possible depends on the attitude of the various partners to such a change. No changes are envisaged in the cooperation with countries outside the EC and EFTA.

In the approach to individual countries coordination is essential if a cohesive international cultural policy is to be ensured. To this end the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will regularly consult the relevant ministries on the maintenance of cultural relations with other countries. The nature of the consultations will depend on the way in which specific cultural agreements are implemented. Consultations with EC and EFTA member states will focus on evaluation of their cultural relations and the exchange of policy information with the Netherlands, which will include the texts of Memoranda of Understanding and other agreements, and details of action programmes. These texts will be appended as annexes to the protocols of the consultations. The ministries concerned will provide information on proposed contacts involving government support and on the financial commitments into which they have entered.

By and large, it may be stated that the principle of financial reciprocity as laid down in the protocols cannot always be observed as a point of departure. If a partner country is unable to meet its commitments on projects to which the Netherlands attaches high priority, a more flexible approach may be adopted.

As regards cultural agreements with countries in Central and Eastern Europe, developments in those regions will be closely monitored in order to ensure that rapid and timely action can be taken if necessary. A pragmatic approach will be followed in regard to states formerly comprising part of the Soviet Union. The mid-term consultations held with former Soviet republics in March 1991 represented the first step towards cooperation with each of them separately on the basis of the 1967 cultural agreement with the Soviet Union.

The results of consultations with separate countries will be discussed at regular intervals in the Coordinating Committee on International Cultural Relations.

The secretariats concerned with the implementation of cultural agreements are divided between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science. In the interests of efficiency, the possibility of bringing them all under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to be considered.

3.2.2 Diplomatic missions

The growth of international cultural cooperation makes ever heavier demands on the specific knowledge and capacities of the staff of the press and cultural sections of Netherlands embassies, which in turn has ramifications for the selection, training and supervision of foreign service officers.