language as a source of cultural creativity (artists must not be stifled by being forced to write/sing in English in order to sell records). French-language music has flourished and been exported, especially rap, as has non-lyrical electronic music known as the 'French Touch', 'world music', especially African and *raï*; and French music sung in English. By virtue of the law, in addition, French (speaking) citizens have the right not to be forced to struggle with other languages just to go about their business. By way of example, all adverts featuring foreign-language slogans used the world over (McDonald's *I'm Lovin It*, by way of example) must carry a French-language translation (*C'est tout ce que j'aime* – It's got everything I like/love). Such legislation can be seen as a means of promoting citizens' right to expect their native language to be sufficient to carry them through their daily lives.

But the agenda of language policy is complex: it promotes uniformity (all must speak French) at the same time as acknowledging the value of diversity (there is more than one language – English – in the world. There is French). Thus, plurilingualism has, for several years, been part of language policy in France; namely, the obligation in the school curriculum for children to learn at least one foreign language from a relatively early age. At the international level, the corollary of the policy of plurilingualism is a sustained campaign of support for cultural and linguistic diversity on a global level.

International Cultural Diplomacy

French language policy is a top priority of France's cultural diplomacy, where it serves the same twin objectives as domestically; namely, to *protect* the French language (as a means of preserving a key aspect of French national identity), and to *promote* its use – in this case, in other countries worldwide, as well as in key international organizations such as the EU, the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the United Nations (UN). Politically, these objectives are designed to bolster French global influence, but they are limited in their effects. Indeed, in the case of the EU's institutions, French efforts to force greater use of French as a working language are typically read by observers as evidence of declining *influence*: France's EU partners, especially those newest to the EU, and predominantly English-speaking, are less and less inclined to make an exception for the French language. Rhetorically-speaking, the purpose of spreading French on a global scale is to preserve the cultural diversity of the world, which is a condition of our humanity and civilization; here, French governments have a better record of agenda-setting and policy influence.

La Francophonie *and the Promotion of 'Cultural Diversity' Worldwide*

When French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner declared that France must 'reconquer the world narrative' (2007), he was couching a political objective (to restructure France's overseas broadcasting apparatus) in familiar rhetorical terms: 'If we can't make ourselves heard', he argued, 'we will become invisible and inaudible, run the risk of losing our language, our culture, our creativity, our capacity to offer the world an original message. In short, if we can't be heard, we will count for less, and we cannot resign ourselves to this second class destiny.' The challenge, as outlined by Kouchner, was to improve the reach and ratings of French-content broadcast news across the world. The difficulty of this challenge for France is to strike a balance between its *voice* being heard – its ideas and perspectives – and the use of its *language* in order to do so.

Broadcasting in English is, inevitably, part of the answer, and in 2007, former President Chirac launched a heavily state-sponsored CNN à la française, *France 24*, which broadcasts in English and Arabic, as well as French. This was to complement the all-French language television channel *TV5 Monde*, created in 1984, which is supposed to be the voice of the entire French-speaking world, but which is heavily financed by France. The Franco-German television station *Arte*, created in 1992, broadcasts Franco-German content, mainly arts and documentaries, in French and German; and *RFI* (*Radio France Internationale*) is France's flagship radio broadcaster, in French, throughout the world. President Sarkozy has made clear his support for an 'offensive' approach to these matters and, in particular, his preference for an umbrella broadcasting organization, *France Monde*, to air exclusively French-language content. The battle to be heard, in French, is far from won.

Making France heard is a goal that drives French cultural diplomacy overall, which itself is an important dimension of contemporary French foreign policy alongside the country's military strategy and resources. This marriage of cultural diplomacy and foreign policy is nothing new, but has gained in significance since the second half of the twentieth century saw France lose its military and colonial

influence in the world. This pursuit of this influence by cultural means revolves around a combination of instruments that include a strong French state presence across the world in the form of an extensive network of embassies, consulates and cultural institutes; a broader system of 'outreach', where cultural activities are part of a range of means by which France assists other countries and populations; and the support and promotion of prized aspects of French culture, such as its gastronomy, its international sporting presence, and its cinema. By way of example, the French Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs in 2006 created a body called *CulturesFrance* with the mission to 'make known, abroad, French heritage, creativity and creative industries' (cited in Vaïsse, 2009: 551.

French cultural diplomacy also relies heavily on the weight of France in the institutions of *la Francophonie* – the organization of countries 'having French in common', and whose mission is to promote cultural diversity, democratization, human rights, sustainable development and conflict resolution across the world. *La Francophonie*, established in 1970, was not originally initiated by France but, rather, by certain of its former colonies seeking mutually beneficial relations with France. *La Francophonie* has institutions (it is properly known as the OIF – *l'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie* (the International Francophone Organization), headquartered in Paris, and very heavily subsidized by France); it has a Charter; it organizes summits; and it has around 70 members and associate observers. It puts the number of people speaking French worldwide at around 200 million. In contrast, Vaïsse (2009: 545) gives a figure of 175 million French-speakers worldwide, making French the 10th most spoken language in the world. Compagnon (in Morrison and Compagnon, 2010: 99) breaks this down into 80 million mother-tongue speakers of French, and around 128 million second- or third-language speakers of *le français*. Vaïsse (2009) also points to the decline in number of French language learners across the world; and there has been a steady drop in use of French in international organizations, including the EU and the UN. Significantly for France, the OIF's mission also embraces the worldwide promotion of linguistic and cultural diversity, and France relies on its Francophone allies in other international bodies, such as the UN, for support in this quest. The 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, and its October 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, are typically presented in Paris as success stories of French cultural diplomacy.

Box 6.3 *La Francophonie* and UNESCO: spreading 'humanism' and 'cultural diversity' throughout the world

- **La Francophonie:**

  'The International Organisation of La Francophonie represents one of the biggest linguistic zones in the world. Its members share more than just a common language. They also share the humanist values promoted by the French language. The French language and its humanist values represent the two cornerstones on which the International Organisation of La Francophonie is based.' (Francophonie, 2010)

- **The 2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (UNESCO, 2010):**

  Article 4:

  '"Cultural diversity" refers to the manifold ways in which the cultures of groups and societies find expression. These expressions are passed on within and among groups and societies. Cultural diversity is made manifest not only through the varied ways in which the cultural heritage of humanity is expressed, augmented and transmitted through the variety of cultural expressions, but also through diverse modes of artistic creation, production, dissemination, distribution and enjoyment, whatever the means and technologies used.'

  Article 6:

  The Convention invites its signatory states to 'adopt measures aimed at protecting and promoting the diversity of cultural expressions within its territory'.

Trading in the 'Cultural Exception': French Cinema

French support for international cultural diversity, however, is best understood in the context of the so-called 'exceptionalism' of culture, French and otherwise, when it comes to international trade. An important aspect of French cultural diplomacy is the French pressure brought to bear within key international organizations, especially the European Union (and through the EU, the World Trade Organization – WTO) and the United Nations, to exempt from market liberalization what have become known as 'cultural products' in the audio-visual

field; namely, film and cinema. (Foodstuffs specific to given *terroirs* – such as Camembert cheese, quality French wines or Champagne – benefit from a similarly regulated trade regime by virtue of the labels of and designations of quality; these restrictions are not limited to French produce.) The rationale behind such rules is that, without them, such 'products' – which in France are deemed to have intrinsic cultural or artistic value – would be crushed by mass-produced competitors. They are, therefore, exceptions to the rules of international trade, different to commodities of other kinds.

In an environment marked by English-speaking global forces and 'Anglo-American' norms of entertainment, the right to protect and promote cultural 'industries' and 'products' (such as film) with subsidies and quotas is strongly supported across the political spectrum in France, with notable success. This situation has become loosely known as the French 'cultural exception', although the specific term 'cultural exception' has, for some years, been dropped from official French discourse for its undiplomatic and insensitive connotations (implying that French culture is superior to all other). Instead, French cultural diplomacy is couched in terms of a quest for 'cultural *diversity*' – linguistic, artistic, and so on – across the globe. In support of this goal, France has successfully turned to international organizations such as the EU, the WTO and UNESCO for support – as seen in Box 6.3. The case of French cinema demonstrates French support for the regulation of culture both as a traded commodity, and as a vector of the diversity that should, ideally, characterize global humanity.

During the Fourth French Republic in the 1940s, French politicians made themselves unpopular at home by agreeing to restrict the number of French films shown *in France*, let alone the numbers exported to the USA. This was in order to free up screening time and space for Hollywood imports that had been halted during the War years; these were the Blum-Brynes agreements of 1944, and they remind us that the regulation of cinematic trade does not necessarily operate exclusively in France's favour, as common mythology might suggest. We also recall how closely culture and commerce are intertwined in the Franco-American relationship, historically and to this day, and how much they shape the fortunes and health of the relationship, precisely because they relate to French national identity. The USA was in the ascendant in Europe following World War II, and was physically present in France in the shape of military personnel and cultural programmes (in the context of the Marshall Plan or the European Recovery programme) and also via the import of material comforts designed for the mass market – and to which French baby-boom teenagers were receptive. American cinema and Coca-Cola not only became symbols of real commercial threats to the nascent post-agricultural markets of Fourth Republic France, but also represented a potentially more insidious reminder of the power of the market to win hearts and minds, and of the ease with which the USA was dominating both these market and cultural forces. A form of cultural rivalry continues to characterize the Franco-US relationship, and this mingling of trade, culture and identity is its context.

In France, cinema is referred to as the 'seventh art', and there is little disagreement at political level that cinema is, indeed, an art form in its own right. Former President Jacques Chirac called it a 'national treasure' that underpinned the French nation's 'vitality'; and the term *la cinéphélie* – cinephilia – is commonplace in discussion of French cinema and cinema-going. The French *nouvelle vague* or new wave that characterized French cinema of the 1950s, and the equally familiar notion of *cinéma d'auteur* – authors' or directors' (as opposed to producers') movies – are just as symbolic of the emphasis in France on the artist as a creator, with the freedom (from market pressures) to create. At the same time, cinema in France, as elsewhere, is a 'cultural industry' embedded in market structures that, left to their own devices, would ignore this intrinsic – exceptional, we have said – aspect of the value of cinema.

On the basis of international agreements and conventions permitting state intervention in the market for film, the French state has therefore, over the years, developed a complex system of support for home grown and European cinematic production. Significant mechanisms regulating the market in France today were created in the Vichy period; in particular, the state-run CNC (the National Centre for Cinema and the Animated Image – *le Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée*). This agency still oversees the mechanisms for collecting and redistributing revenue, and it plays a role in selecting candidates for support. A similarly entrenched device to support French cinema is the 'ticket tax': revenue levied on cinema box office takings that are channelled back into film production. Some of this aid is automatic, meaning that it is calculated 'irrespective of any judgement of quality' and made 'available to all *French* producers planning to reinvest' (Looseley, 1995: 197, my emphasis). Some is selective, rewarding aesthetic quality and innovation rather than previous commercial success (Looseley, 197–8). Further sources of

Box 6.4 Making an exception for French cinema?

The 'cultural exception'

In the early 1990s, France was successful at the GATT Uruguay Round trade talks in rallying EU support around the principle that an *exception* should be made for international trade in audio-visual services because of their 'cultural specificity'. This was in the face of US opposition and calls for open access to the EU's national audio-visual markets (for films and television, principally). The final text did not make an exception for these products; neither did the USA gain free access to EU markets. EU countries were left free to impose their own measures to protect their cultural treasures and industries.

The European Union

Since then, the EU has kept such national measures under strict observation as part of its market liberalization agenda, with a review of state aid provisions due by the end of 2012. At the same time, Article 3 of the EU's 2009 Lisbon Treaty states that: 'It [the EU] shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced.'

revenue have been constructed over the years, including the co-funding of film and television productions by the subscription, cable TV channel *Canal Plus*, created in 1984; and the EU's own MEDIA programme of support to cinema. In addition, the EU's 1989 '*TV sans frontières*' directive permits the imposition of quotas by national governments.

French cinema has undoubtedly benefited from these mechanisms: around 30–40% of all European films are produced in France. This equates to around two hundred films per year, most of which are entirely French-produced. Cinema-going is still popular in France, which is home to over five thousand screens, the most in Europe; and there is room in the French market for cinema both as art and as entertainment, both of which are popular. French government support has been extended to foreign producers seeking to make their films in France. Notoriously, the rules on what constitutes a 'French' film are tortuous and controversial. Tax-breaks are given for private investors in film; and Unifrance, a state body, plays the role of promoter and distributor of French cinema abroad. Cinema in France remains an important cultural and commercial asset for national identity and the national economy, but the regulation of trade in this

'commodity' continues to divide France not only from its US trading partner, but also from EU partners and the EU's market liberalization regimes (see Box 6.4). French people, today, show themselves to be as open to US-style influences in cinema and other aspects of popular culture as was the case over half a century ago. French cinema and French culture at large are certainly not dead (Morrison, 2007; Morrison and Compagnon, 2010), but it is open to challenge from the world at large, and from the evolutions of French society itself.

Contemporary Culture and Cultural Identities

The spread of leisure was a defining feature of twentieth-century France, and the twenty-first century is not set to change this, despite the 'value of work' ethic championed by President Sarkozy. As far back as 1936, the Popular Front government famously introduced a limited working week (40 hours) and the principle of paid holidays (known as *les congés payés*: then limited to 12 days; now a matter of five weeks). Subsequently, the practices of sport for pleasure and holidays away from the home took root. In the late 1990s, just as famously, the Socialist government of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin introduced legislation to bring about the 'reduction of working time' (known as *la réduction du temps de travail* – RTT) by capping the working week at 35 hours. Since President Sarkozy came to power in 2007, these provisions have been eroded (see Chapter 7), but they have meant that a new generation of workers, especially in white-collar and professional occupations, have developed new leisure habits (such as taking a mini-break, already growing in popularity thanks to the dramatic growth of cheap air travel from the 1990s). The young retired (aged between 55 and 64 years) in contemporary France are particularly hungry for art and culture, from the television to visiting museums. The spread of the television into people's homes in the second half of the twentieth century for its part further 'sensitized' people (Looseley 1995: 35) to the notion of leisure and pleasure, and the social uprising of May 1968 (see Chapter 1) raised expectations regarding an individual's right to self-expression and pleasure, irrespective of the state and its strictures. As schooling and literacy spread, moreover, so did the taste for and consumption of culture; and we saw earlier (Box 6.1) that the 1946 Constitution referred to culture as a right for all.