



## **POLICY POSITION**

# The Unifying Role of Culture and Cultural Heritage in European Integration

## KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Culture and cultural heritage must be supported as key assets for the future of the European project and especially as a vector for fostering a sense of belonging and a sense of togetherness in Europe, as well as for advancing Europe's shared values and identity;
- The EU needs to further increase its remit in the promotion and enhancement of culture and cultural heritage, including protection, promoting excellence and best practices, sustainability, mobility and exchange in cooperation with Member States;
- The EU needs to renew and enhance its efforts to support networks and platforms for organised civil society and heritage and cultural organisations active at all levels, from local to European, to raise awareness of and contribute to the most important policy issues of relevance to the EU institutions and Member States;
- A sustained effort must be made to support and further enhance cultural heritage as well as creative and cultural sectors with proactive and ambitious policies as well as with adequate financial investment and support;
- The EU should give higher priority to culture and cultural heritage within its enlargement and neighbourhood strategy, as well as with other continents through a development of global partnerships in the field of culture and cultural heritage;
- Culture, cultural heritage, and creative thinking should be promoted through formal and non-formal education, as well as through training at all levels and lifelong learning;
- The EU should cooperate more closely with the cultural heritage and cultural world and, drawing from their knowledge and creativity, further implement mitigation and adaptation policies which can help achieve the objectives of the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement;
- The EU needs to further recognise and build upon the socio-economic power behind the cultural and creative industries, as culture and cultural heritage can play a crucial role in strengthening EU's economy while achieving a triple transformation of our society: green, social and digital;
- Efforts to protect and restore cultural and heritage buildings and sites in Ukraine should be made by providing adequate financial, human and material support to cultural and heritage professionals in the country to help them protect, restore and regenerate heritage buildings and sites which were destroyed, damaged and/or endangered by Russia's brutal war of aggression;
- The EU should recognise and enhance the vital role played by regions and cities for supporting culture and cultural heritage in Europe and it should empower local authorities to develop activities related to culture and cultural heritage with the participation and for the benefit of citizens and their communities.

## INTRODUCTION

At times of geopolitical uncertainty, it is essential to shape a vision for the future of the European Union (EU). If the EU wants to continue to play a role in the future and continue to be a reference for people in the world, it will need the support of its people. Building this support must focus on what links people together, on what people share. That is exactly the role of culture and cultural heritage. Over the centuries, culture and heritage have played a key role in shaping a common consciousness amongst Europeans and today they are vital for fostering a sense of togetherness and of belonging to a wider European community. They are also paramount in defending and promoting democracy, the rule of law, and human rights, which form some of Europe's shared values, and thus for combating democratic backsliding combined with the rising anti-European sentiment fuelled by populist and extremist groups.

## CULTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE STRENGTHEN EU'S IDENTITY AND VALUES

Culture and cultural heritage are the cement that shape and foster our common European sense of belonging. They contribute to the EU's social cohesion and its democratic values as well as its economy's sustainability, attractiveness and vitality. They also reflect both our cultural diversity and our common history and resilience. Therefore, culture and cultural heritage must be supported as key assets for the European project. This role has been duly recognised by the Treaty of Lisbon: Article 3 (3) of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) stipulates that the EU "shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced" and Article 167 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) emphasises the aim for the EU to promote the flowering of cultures and cooperation among Member States.

The EU needs to further enlarge its remit in the promotion and enhancement of culture and cultural heritage, including protection,

promoting excellence and best practices, sustainability, mobility and exchange in cooperation with Member States. These themes are transversal and can be applicable to culture and heritage across borders. Also, the EU needs to democratise access to cultural heritage to support diversity, inclusivity, creativity and critical engagement in education and knowledge sharing.

Culture and cultural heritage contribute to shaping our multifaceted identity. For this reason, its protection must be prioritised through due recognition of local and regional cultural heritage and cultural initiatives as well as new initiatives to safeguard and celebrate it. Furthermore, existing programmes and initiatives should be further promoted and strengthened, such as Creative Europe, the New European Bauhaus (NEB), Sister City Programmes, European Capitals of Culture, the European Heritage Label and the various EU prizes.

## **ENHANCING CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

The EU needs to renew its efforts to provide platforms for organised civil society and heritage and cultural organisations to raise awareness of the

most important issues to Member States and the EU itself, such as through the current European Commission Expert Group on Cultural Heritage and the European Heritage Hub pilot project, but also through public surveys and the Open Method of Cooperation (OMC) focused on cross-sectoral areas of culture.

Strong, forward-looking cultural policies and programmes are needed at the EU level building from the [European Heritage Hub](#), a pilot project led by Europa Nostra which aims to strengthen citizen participation in heritage with a focus on additional transformative themes, one of which is climate change. This project is demonstrative of the possible synergies that exist between cultural heritage and sustainability and how the European Green Deal could continue to foster such synergies.

The insufficient attention to cultural heritage in the report on the outcome of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) was a missed opportunity, and there has been no concrete follow-up to the already limited proposals. Building from the example of the CoFoE, the EU should organise and promote European conferences on culture and cultural heritage bringing together professionals (artists, writers, actors, managers,

producers etc.) as well as policy-makers, representatives from organised civil society, NGOs and citizens to create a comprehensive platform in which information and best practices are shared and discussed. Furthermore, the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union should organise initiatives and events highlighting the multiple value of culture and cultural heritage for the future of Europe.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) and NGOs play a key role in fostering cooperation, raising awareness and advancing the implementation of the European Green Deal and its importance to culture and cultural heritage. The EU's cultural heritage, including cultural landscapes, is seriously threatened by climate change, but cultural and heritage can also be part of the solution. The EU should cooperate with the cultural heritage and cultural world and, drawing from their knowledge and creativity, further implement mitigation and adaptation policies which can help achieve the ambitious objectives of the European Green Deal and the Paris Agreement. Moreover, the EU institutions should start working on a solid legal framework for heritage and climate change with due participation of organised civil society and expert groups.

## **INVESTING IN CULTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE AND MAINSTREAMING IT ACROSS EU POLICIES**

An effort must be made to support and further enhance cultural heritage as well as creative and cultural sectors with proactive and ambitious policies as well as with adequate financial support. As a key ecosystem, the sustainable development of the cultural and creative sector should be considered as a high priority for the European Commission. In this regard, protection and support for the creative sector through high standards on authors' rights and copyright must be ensured, especially in the digital market.

Support for the culture and heritage sector together with strong cultural policies at EU level are crucial. Although the budget allocated to the Creative Europe programme has increased, further financial resources are essential. Eligibility of culture in other EU funding programmes and support schemes should be taken into account to highlight the importance of culture and cultural heritage in all EU policies as enshrined in the EU Treaties.

In this respect, creators' organisations should be closely involved in the EU

decision-making process impacting their sector. The EU needs a strong political commitment to strengthen the sustainability of its cultural sector and of cultural diversity with a sound legal framework and by supporting collective structures for the representation of creators.

## **MAKING CULTURE AND CULTURAL HERITAGE MORE ACCESSIBLE**

Cultural heritage has the potential to foster a common European consciousness and through that Europeans have a chance to experience Europe in a more tangible way. The culture of each European country is our common heritage which shapes today's European identity. The Erasmus programme has been an undoubted success of the European experience. For cultural heritage, similar exchanges should be followed, including the development of cultural routes or the promotion of sustainable cultural tourism as opposed to mass tourism.

Culture, cultural heritage and creative thinking should be promoted through formal and non-formal education, as well as through training at all levels and lifelong learning. Education is of primary importance in understanding

the profound role that cultural heritage plays in European societies. For this reason, teaching about history and cultural heritage should be included in all national education systems of Member States, including school and university programmes. Furthermore, the study of national history in schools should be complemented by the study of the history of Europe and of the EU.

## **PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE CULTURAL, CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CREATIVE SECTORS**

Culture and cultural heritage are not only sectors but also vectors of change, resilience, and prosperity. The EU needs to further recognise the huge socio-economic value of the cultural and creative industries, as they can play a crucial role in rebuilding EU's economy with due respect of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and with creative and innovative contributions to the triple transformation of our society: green, social and digital. It must be acknowledged that the cultural heritage and creative sectors are areas with the most precarious employment and job security conditions in the EU. The EU should establish common and ambitious standards for quality working conditions for artists and cultural workers across

Europe. Building from the Cultural Deal for Europe initiative, the EU should establish common and ambitious standards for working conditions for artists, cultural and cultural heritage workers across the continent. Moreover, gender-equal cultural policy should aim to increase representation, eliminate the gender pay gap, address unpaid work, support women-led cultural and cultural heritage projects and promote gender equality in cultural and cultural heritage content.

Favourable ecosystems for cultural and creative industries need to be promoted – for instance by protecting and supporting the creative sector through high standards of intellectual property rights – in order to facilitate access to finance, fair remuneration for authors, performers and creators and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Authors, composers and artists are at the very origin of the value chain around creation and culture, therefore their role in the development of the cultural sector needs to be enhanced. As individuals, authors are also amongst the most vulnerable groups in the job market and need protection. Collective management organisations (CMOs) played a crucial role in protecting the most vulnerable authors during the

pandemic. Their role should be further recognised and strengthened.

Serious attention must be given to cultural content in the digital market, including in the streaming market, which are growing and representing one of the main points of access to culture and creative works. Authors are becoming increasingly reliant on this burgeoning economy, but their contribution to its success is undervalued and underpaid, which threatens the overall viability of their ecosystem. It's also mandatory to address “buy-out” practices exercised by the biggest non-EU VOD platforms whereby they oblige European authors and composers to accept “take it or leave it” deals, depriving the latter of fair remuneration. They must be addressed without further delay with strong legislation at the EU level, especially considering that authors have to give up on their authors' rights and copyright in perpetuity against an upfront payment and lose any chance of benefiting from the success and usage of their works.

## **SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF CULTURE AND HERITAGE IN UKRAINE**

Supporting the reconstruction of Ukraine is of the utmost urgency. Efforts to protect and restore cultural and heritage buildings and sites should be made by providing financial, human and material support to cultural and heritage professionals in Ukraine to help them protect, restore and regenerate heritage buildings and sites which were destroyed, damaged and/or endangered by Russia's brutal war of aggression.

Financing the reconstruction of cultural and heritage properties should be duly included in the reconstruction plans for Ukraine, together with the support to the Ukrainian cultural scene. A dedicated large-scale programme with a significant budget should be dedicated to these vital goals.

The EU should also support actions taken by the Council of Europe to create a register of damage caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including the collection of data on destroyed or damaged heritage buildings or sites.

Outside Ukraine, adequate efforts should be made to raise awareness,

strengthen and valorise Ukrainian heritage by supporting events or exhibitions on all aspects of Ukrainian culture, whether it is art, archaeology, history, language or literature, essentially all aspects of culture in Ukraine, both tangible and intangible.

To facilitate these aims, the EU should take a role in coordinating responses at the European level. European CSOs with strong links to Ukraine should be involved in this response, since they often have the grassroots links that can facilitate the necessary exchanges and effective partnerships.

Russia's brutal invasion shook the Ukrainian people, changing their lives forever. Since its beginning, several million people have left their country to flee the war, among them creators and cultural actors, unable to exercise their professions. Enormous efforts have been made by various authors societies, especially CMOs, to support the Ukrainian cultural and cultural heritage sectors and its citizens, from raising funds for war victims or endangered heritage to promoting Ukrainian culture and heritage to hosting refugees. More structured and long-term policies and programmes must be put in place. For instance, the EU should help Ukrainian authorities to align their national



copyright legislation with the EU's to create a level playing field of protection of creation in Ukraine, as it is the case in the EU with the 2019 Copyright Directives.

## PUTTING CULTURE AND HERITAGE AT THE HEART OF EU'S EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Beyond Ukraine, the EU must act more forcefully to prevent heritage destruction in conflicts throughout the world and take a leading role in the restoration of damaged sites when destruction occurs.

As the world is becoming more uncertain and more dangerous, the EU should renew its efforts in the area of international cultural relations, based on the founding values of its common project, namely peace, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, including cultural rights. The EU should become a strong champion of the multiple values of culture and cultural heritage for the economy, society and environment, both within its bilateral relations with various countries across the Globe, and as part of its multilateral diplomacy, vis-à-vis the various United Nations' specialised agencies, including UNESCO and the UNFCCC with its annual COP.

Lastly, given the huge and multifaceted value of culture and cultural heritage for Europe's economy, society, environment and for its citizens' sense of togetherness and sense of belonging to a wider European community, the EU should give higher priority to culture and cultural heritage within its enlargement and neighbourhood strategy (especially in the context of its relations with Moldova, the Western Balkan countries and the Caucasus). Due priority should also be given to culture and cultural heritage within the agenda of the European Political Community.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

*Only by working together can we provide common solutions to the challenges Europe faces and ensure that Europeans' ambitions mirror the future work of the European Union. By bringing our member organisations together in our Political Committees, we continuously develop new policy positions and put existing ones to good use. Please visit our website [www.europeanmovement.eu](http://www.europeanmovement.eu) to take a look at our main policy positions that guide our current work and get in touch if you would like to join us or support our work.*



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