Culture Action Europe's Indicative Cultural Policy Priorities for the EU's 2024-2029 Policy Cycle

Culture Action Europe (CAE), a pan-European network bringing together 240 cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics, and policymakers from 35 countries, representing different cultural sectors and industries, is preparing for the new EU's 2024-2029 policy cycle.

This document outlines four crucial EU-level policy priorities for culture and creative sectors taking into account the current geopolitical, security, social, and economic situation.

The document is subject to reviews and further consultations.

cultureactioneurope.org

The priorities of Culture Action Europe span across diverse cultural and creative sectors and industries, addressing the EU-level cross-sectoral and overarching goals such as:

1.   Strategic framework for culture:

- Develop a new strategic framework for the EU's cultural policy;
- Develop a robust EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations.

2.   EU funding:

- Increase EU funding for culture to 2% of Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034;
- Secure Creative Europe as a standalone programme for culture and update its rules and conditions;
- Recognise the value of artistic research in Horizon Europe.

3.   Working conditions:

- Adopt the EU legal framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors (CCS);
- Strengthen the cultural sector's collective bargaining power.

4.   AI and digital shift:

- Ensure the implementation of the AI Act that favours the rights of creators;
- Support the initiatives aimed at strengthening the agency and self-sufficiency of CCS in the digital domain;
- Enhance big data analysis for policy-making in CCS.

1. Strategic framework for culture

Policy issue: Most of the EU's current guiding documents in the cultural sector (New European Agenda for Culture, EU strategy for international cultural relations) were adopted before the pandemic, the energy crisis and the war in Europe, and do not take into account existing challenges, such as limitations to artistic freedom (reported by 34% of artists), lack of competitiveness of European CCS on a global arena, social polarisation, weaponisation of culture and neglected potential of culture for democracy and innovation.

EU-level action:

Develop a new strategic framework for EU's cultural policy, which is backed by sufficient funding, involves civil society through structured dialogue, and unleashes the transformative potential of culture for society. It is suggested that the strategic framework focus on:

1) **cultural democracy:**
   - supporting cultural participation, cultural rights, cultural exchange and democratic models of culture to enhance social resilience, in line with the principles of the Rome Charter and the Porto Santo Charter;
   - highlighting the role of culture as a common good and a common space to imagine the visions of the future;
   - safeguarding artistic freedom;

2) **culture and sustainability:** promote the role of culture in the EU's green transition and call for a dedicated goal for culture in the UN Sustainable Development Goals;

3) **culture and competitiveness: provide access to finance and remove Single Market barriers:**
   - research the EU single market barriers specific to CCS, their effects on EU competitiveness, and potential solutions (issues include cross-border activity and philanthropy, labour mobility, VAT rates, the prevalence of buyout clauses and the issues with copyright law implementation, discoverability of European works and the impact of digital algorithms, etc.);
   - research the barriers in CCS related to the incomplete EU Capital Markets Union, as well as potential solutions (issues include cross-border investment, state aid, financial intermediaries' funding criteria, CCS Guarantee Facility assessment, etc.);

4) improving **working conditions** in the cultural sector;

5) addressing **digital challenges**, including generative AI, blockchain, AR/VR, etc.;

6) leveraging the potential of culture for **cross-sectoral innovation** (such as in health and well-being) and knowledge production, including artistic research;

7) promoting the role of culture in **peace-building and security**.

The new strategic framework's priorities should also be reflected in the next EU Work Plan for Culture.

Develop a robust EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations with sufficient funding, which would address the following considerations:

- the role of culture and cultural policies in EU's comprehensive security;
- decolonisation processes in culture and heritage;
- growing weaponisation of culture and heritage by authoritarian regimes;
- support for artists and CCS professionals at risk in situations of armed conflict;
- the EU's competitiveness in international economic trade in CCS;
- the illicit trafficking of cultural goods;
- global discoverability of EU creative works.

Culture Action Europe is committed to contributing to the EU's strategic planning through structured stakeholder dialogue and active participation in upcoming consultations and other dialogue initiatives.

2. EU funding

Problem: insufficient EU funding for culture and creative sectors ignores their strong economic spillover effects and deprives the EU of potential economic and social benefits. Each euro invested in the common EU action supporting or complementing existing funding for the cultural and creative sector could potentially generate a return of up to €11 of GDP.

EU-level actions:

1) **Increase EU funding for culture to 2% of MFF 2028-2034.** If the EU were to increase its expenditure on culture from the current 0.2% to 2% (approximately €24 billion) of the MFF budget, the measure would generate €266 billion of additional GDP, or €38 billion annually (MFF 2021-2027 projections). The EU will benefit from enhanced support to the cultural and creative sectors, as culture shapes future visions, strengthens social cohesion, stimulates innovation, boosts well-being, and reinforces core values such as freedom, democracy, and solidarity.

2) **Secure Creative Europe as a standalone programme that is tailored to the peculiarities of cultural and creative sectors. Update the Creative Europe Programme's 2021-2027 rules and conditions** in accordance with the Implementation Report and Culture Action Europe's recommendations and take them into account in the MFF 2028-2034, with particular focus on:

   - further simplification of the application process, incl. considering a two-step application process (e.g., a concept note first and a full application form only for those proposals passing the first selection stage);
   - an additional increase in the percentage of EU co-financing;
   - in cooperation projects, allow each project partner to choose how they want to distribute funding among partners, as long as the project co-funding rate is maintained. This will facilitate the participation of smaller organisations and let bigger organisations co-fund more on behalf of smaller partners;
   - increasing the ceiling of indirect costs in view of high inflation rates and energy costs.

3) As part of the **Horizon Europe Programme (Cluster 2 and other clusters and destinations), recognise the epistemological value of artistic research** and encourage artistic research methods, thereby allowing for the participation of applicants that are not necessarily coming from universities or research centres but can contribute their expertise and knowledge generated through artistic work.

Culture Action Europe has successfully advocated for earmarking 2% of the national recovery and resilience funds for culture during the pandemic. We will continue to call for increased EU funding for culture, a standalone Creative Europe programme and facilitate feedback on EU funding programmes from the cultural sector.

3. Working conditions

Policy issue: 46% of all artists and CCS professionals face <u>poor working conditions</u>. Over two-thirds lack sufficient social protection. 68% need to work multiple jobs, which negatively impacts their performance.

EU-level actions:

1) Following the <u>resolution</u> of the European Parliament of 21 November 2023 (2023/2051(INL)):

   - develop a proposal on a Directive on decent working conditions to determine the employment status of artists and CCS professionals in a broad sense;
   - develop a proposal on the Decision(s) establishing a European platform on the social and professional situation of CCS professionals to encourage cooperation and the exchange of best practices and data between Member States;

2) Strengthen the cultural sector's collective bargaining power by mobilising cross-sectoral groups of stakeholders and organisations within different occupational groups, enhancing their capacity-building, and promoting social dialogue among them.

> **Culture Action Europe has been working on the topic of working conditions since 2019 and remains committed and eager to engage stakeholders in policy discussions, participate in social dialogue and contribute to research for evidence-based development of legal instruments.**

4. AI & digital shift

Policy issue: the rapid development of AI brings both challenges and opportunities. Big tech companies exploit data from the cultural sector and infringe copyrights without providing fair compensation. At the same time, legal frameworks and institutional structures need to be constantly further developed to give artists the opportunity to use new technologies in a way that brings art and society further ahead.

EU-level actions:

1) Following the adoption of the Artificial Intelligence Act,

   - ensure that AI providers put in place policies to identify and respect, including through state-of-the-art technologies, the **reservations of rights** to prevent text and data mining. Ensure that technical solutions for rightsholders to reserve their rights and prevent text and data mining are convenient, reliable, clear, machine-readable, and unambiguous for both rightsholders and AI providers;
   - ensure proper **labelling and detection of AI-generated** or manipulated content by developing EU-level codes of practice. These codes should support practical arrangements to make detection mechanisms accessible, facilitate cooperation with other actors in the value chain, and help verify the authenticity and provenance of content;

2) **Strengthen the agency and self-sufficiency of CCS** in a digital domain by supporting initiatives aimed at unlocking the economic potential of cultural data, monetising and expanding data spaces in CCS, reducing administrative burden in CCS and using other digital technologies, such as blockchain, in cultural and creative sector's business and operational models;

3) Enhance **big data analysis for policy-making in CCS**, including data to gain insights into CCS employment, cultural consumption and trends, results of the EU support, etc.

> **Culture Action Europe is ready to engage in dialogue with the AI Office, contribute to the development of codes of practice by leveraging its members' expertise, and advocate for strategies that enable the cultural sector to benefit from its own content and data in a digital domain.**