

STUDY

Requested by the CULT Committee



# EU culture and creative sectors policy

Overview and future perspectives



**Culture and Education**



Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies  
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RESEARCH FOR CULT COMMITTEE

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# EU culture and creative sectors policy

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Overview and future perspectives

## **Abstract**

This study provides a comprehensive overview and understanding of the main current and future issues to be expected in the area of EU culture and creative sectors policy in the 2024-2029 term of the European Parliament.

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>AFET</b>  | European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs                       |
| <b>AI</b>    | Artificial intelligence  |
| <b>AVMSD</b> | Audiovisual Media Services Directive                                   |
| <b>BUDG</b>  | European Parliament Committee on Budgets                               |
| <b>CAC</b>   | Cultural Affairs Committee   |
| <b>CCIE</b>  | Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem                             |
| <b>CCS</b>   | Cultural and creative sectors  |
| <b>CCSI</b>  | Cultural and creative sectors and industries                           |
| <b>CDSM</b>  | Directive on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market |
| <b>CoR</b>   | Committee of the Regions   |
| <b>CULT</b>  | European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education                 |
| <b>DG</b>    | Directorate-General of the European Commission                         |
| <b>DMA</b>   | Digital Markets Act  |
| <b>DSA</b>   | Digital Services Act   |
| <b>DSC</b>   | Digital Services Coordinator   |
| <b>DSM</b>   | Digital Single Market  |
| <b>EAC</b>   | Education and Culture  |
| <b>EACEA</b> | European Education and Culture Executive Agency                        |
| <b>EC</b>    | European Commission  |
| <b>ECHN</b>  | European Creative Hubs Network   |
| <b>ECJ</b>   | European Court of Justice  |
| <b>ECoC</b>  | European Capitals of Culture   |
| <b>EDAP</b>  | European Democracy Action Plan   |

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| <b>EDIH</b>  | European Digital Innovation Hub  |
| <b>EEAS</b>  | European External Action Service   |
| <b>EECC</b>  | European Electronic Communications Code                                      |
| <b>EEN</b>   | Enterprise Europe Network  |
| <b>EESC</b>  | European Economic and Social Committee                                       |
| <b>EIF</b>   | European Investment Fund   |
| <b>EIT</b>   | European Institute of Innovation and Technology                              |
| <b>EMFA</b>  | European Media Freedom Act   |
| <b>ENCC</b>  | European Network of Cultural Centres   |
| <b>EMPL</b>  | European Parliament Committee on Employment and Social Affairs               |
| <b>EP</b>    | European Parliament  |
| <b>ERDF</b>  | European Regional Development Fund   |
| <b>ESF</b>   | European Social Fund   |
| <b>ESIF</b>  | European Structural and Investment Funds                                     |
| <b>ESPON</b> | European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion        |
| <b>EU</b>    | European Union   |
| <b>EUI</b>   | European Urban Initiative  |
| <b>EUIPO</b> | European Union Intellectual Property Office                                  |
| <b>EYCS</b>  | Education, Youth, Culture, and Sport   |
| <b>ICMs</b>  | Interparliamentary committee meetings and delegations                        |
| <b>IMCO</b>  | European Parliament Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection |
| <b>ITRE</b>  | European Parliament Committee on Industry, Research and Energy               |
| <b>JRC</b>   | Joint Research Centre  |
| <b>JURI</b>  | European Parliament Committee on Legal Affairs                               |



|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>KIC</b>     | Knowledge and Innovation Community   |
| <b>LGBTIQ</b>  | Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer              |
| <b>LIBE</b>    | European Parliament Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs |
| <b>MAAP</b>    | European Media and Audiovisual Action Plan                                 |
| <b>MEP</b>     | Member of the European Parliament  |
| <b>MFF</b>     | Multiannual Financial Framework  |
| <b>NEB</b>     | New European Bauhaus   |
| <b>OCSSP</b>   | Online content-sharing service provider                                    |
| <b>OECD</b>    | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development                     |
| <b>OLP</b>     | Ordinary Legislative Procedure   |
| <b>OMC</b>     | Open Method of Coordination  |
| <b>PA</b>      | Preparatory Action   |
| <b>PP</b>      | Pilot Project  |
| <b>QoL</b>     | Quality of Life  |
| <b>R&amp;I</b> | Research and innovation  |
| <b>SANT</b>    | European Parliament Subcommittee on Public Health                          |
| <b>SDGs</b>    | Sustainable Development Goals  |
| <b>SLAPPs</b>  | Strategic lawsuits against public participation                            |
| <b>SME</b>     | Small and Medium Enterprise  |
| <b>STEAM</b>   | Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics                        |
| <b>SWD</b>     | Staff working document   |
| <b>TEU</b>     | Treaty on European Union   |
| <b>TFEU</b>    | Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union                            |
| <b>UNESCO</b>  | United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization           |

|              |                                 |
|--------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>VLOP</b>  | Very large online platform      |
| <b>VLOSE</b> | Very large online search engine |
| <b>VoD</b>   | Video on Demand                 |
| <b>WHO</b>   | World Health Organisation       |

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### EU policy framework in the fields of culture, audiovisual, and media

While legislative competences for cultural and creative sectors (CCS) policies lie primarily with Member States, the EU plays an important supportive and complementary role. The EU promotes cooperation among Member States and supports actions in artistic and literary creation, including the audiovisual sector, under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

The EU's cultural policy framework is implemented through several strategic documents, including the New European Agenda for Culture, Work Plans for Culture, and the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage. In the field of audiovisual and media, the EU ensures the smooth functioning of the internal market, promotes cultural diversity, and supports the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry. The audiovisual and media sectors are notably covered by the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP) and the European Media and Audiovisual Action Plan (MAAP).

The European Parliament, together with the Council of the EU and the European Commission, are core actors in shaping CCS-related policies and initiatives within the EU. They do this in close connection with various other relevant institutions, (international) organisations, and EU bodies involved in CCS policy development in Europe.

### 2019-2024: major emergencies and structural challenges

During the European Parliament's 2019 to 2024 legislative term, **significant systemic transformations and crises within European societies profoundly impacted both the CCS and responsible policymakers**. Key challenges included the COVID-19 crisis and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine which required urgent support for Ukraine's CCS amidst warfare. Simultaneously, long-term structural issues like precarious working conditions within the CCS, the digital environment regulation, and the green transition required significant policy attention. EU responses were guided by (CCS) policy priorities emphasising sustainability, climate neutrality, inclusiveness, and affordability as crucial elements for the digital and green transition.

Key policy instruments such as the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD), the Digital Services Act (DSA), and the Digital Markets Act (DMA) have been crucial in **creating a fairer digital market and protecting media pluralism**. The European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) and the anti-SLAPP Directive were adopted to safeguard media independence and protect journalists from legal harassment.

The CCS have been increasingly recognised for their **role in promoting well-being, innovation and sustainable development**. The New European Agenda for Culture and other strategic frameworks have highlighted the importance of **culture in driving positive societal change**. Multiple initiatives have been taken to support the CCS in exploring and experimenting with new practices and (cross-sectoral) collaborations in this transformative era.

Substantial changes in geopolitical contexts led policymakers to initiate **debates on updating the approaches to cultural diplomacy and international cultural relations** as well as related multilevel governance.

### Weights of the past hold back the CCS from being transversally embedded in the European project

Despite evidence of the CCS's significant role in societal transformation, **current EU policy frameworks fail to fully integrate and support these sectors**. Beyond emphasising the importance

of free and pluralistic media, the EU strategic agenda for 2024-2029 largely overlooks the role that the CCS can play in realising its priorities. From the analysis in this study, this can be considered as a serious shortcoming and a missed opportunity to strategically embed the CCS within the European project.

Several **obstacles (weights of the past) hold back the CCS from becoming mainstream partners in the European project**. These obstacles include the dominance of short-term project funding, precarious economic conditions for many CCS actors, innovation systems that are often non-inclusive to the CCS, the lack of spaces that facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration, and technological developments that critically affect the way artistic creation and cultural interactions are organised. These vulnerabilities **hinder CCS actors from engaging in cross-sectoral collaborations and arts-driven transformation processes**. Additionally, these structural deficits impede the full realisation of the CCS's potential to create cultural spaces of interaction for inclusive societies (pushes of the present).

Looking forward, it is important to **continue addressing these structural challenges** with EU CCS policies while **also seizing new opportunities for the CCS** to contribute to the vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable European future that the EU has been working towards (pulls of the future). This requires maintaining current support mechanisms, enhancing cross-sectoral cooperation, fostering innovation, and adequately preparing the CCS for future crises and systemic transformation.

## 2024-2029: EU CCS policy options for the 10th parliamentary term

While the EU's policy framework includes some crucial legal frameworks to regulate the digital sphere and other areas, it lacks a comprehensive and holistic approach to fully support the CCS. The study highlights four main policy areas that need strategic attention in the coming years to further unlock the CCS' potential:

- **Support for the CCS is an investment in creating better futures:** Integrating the CCS into transformation policies that contribute to building better futures is needed. This involves recognising the power of storytelling and artistic expression in driving societal change and embedding these elements into broader transformation agendas. Improving cross-sectoral cooperation capacities within the CCS and other sectors is essential to harness their full potential.
- **Updated CCS ecosystems build sustainable ground:** Updating the CCS ecosystems to be more sustainable and resilient is critical. Addressing structural deficits and ensuring that CCS professionals can work under fair conditions with access to sustainable funding and proper recognition is paramount.
- **Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion:** Providing safe spaces (physical, digital and hybrid) for artistic creation and cultures of dialogue is necessary to foster a healthy cultural environment. With the rise of digital and hybrid spaces, there is an urgent need to address access barriers and prevent aggression and harm. Such safe spaces are also critical nodes when further leveraging the role of culture for health and well-being.
- **Cooperative governance options for the CULT committee:** Making better use of cooperative governance opportunities is essential to improve the effectiveness of EU CCS policymaking. This involves enhancing horizontal governance between EU institutions and fostering multilevel governance with strategic partners. Better coordination and cooperation can overcome policy silos, optimise the use of financial resources, and increase the visibility and impact of EU CCS policies.

# 1. MAPPING THE CURRENT INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR EU CCS POLICY

## KEY FINDINGS

- The European Parliament plays a significant role in shaping policies and initiatives related to the cultural, audiovisual and media sectors within the EU, together with the Council of the EU and the European Commission.
- The Committee of the European Parliament that focuses specifically on cultural, audiovisual and media matters within the EU is the one on Culture and Education (CULT), but several Committees can be involved depending on the specific topic.
- The strategic framework for the EU's cultural policy outlines the EC's priorities in the field of culture and is implemented through (1) the New European Agenda for Culture; (2) the Work Plans for Culture; (3) the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage; and (4) the EU strategy for international cultural relations.
- The audiovisual and media sectors are notably covered by the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP) that aims at strengthening democratic resilience, promoting fair electoral processes, and combating disinformation and the European Media and Audiovisual Action Plan (MAAP) that aims at supporting the recovery, transformation, and competitiveness of the media and audiovisual sectors.

## 1.1. Institutional context

### 1.1.1. Role and competence of the EU in the field of cultural, audiovisual and media policy

Legislative competences for cultural policies lay with Member States, not the European Union. Yet, the introduction to the **Treaty on European Union (TEU)** refers to “drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe”.<sup>1</sup> The TEU specifies as well that one of the aims of the EU is to “**respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and [...] ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced**” (Article 3 TEU).

Under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the EU's role in the context of **cultural policy** is indeed supportive and complementary, while direct responsibility in the area is largely a matter for the Member States (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2019). Article 6 of the TFEU recognises that the EU's competences in the field of culture are to “carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States”.<sup>2</sup> According to Article 167 of the TFEU, the EU promotes cooperation among Member States and, when necessary, supports and supplements their actions in the realms of artistic and literary creation, including the audiovisual sector. The EU, however, does have a legal obligation to mainstream culture through all policy areas (Article 167(4)) of the TFEU). The provision also allows the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of the European Union (Council) to

<sup>1</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union (Current consolidated version: 01/03/2020). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12016M/TXT>

<sup>2</sup> Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Current consolidated version: 01/03/2020). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12016E/TXT>

take measures to support individual countries' actions aimed at adjusting their industry to structural changes, encouraging initiatives, particularly by SMEs, as well as cooperation, and promoting better exploitation of industrial potential in innovation and research (Pasikowska-Schnass, 2019).

Notably, the **cultural and creative sectors (CCS)** have been recognised as one of the 14 key industrial ecosystems in the Annual Single Market report of 2021.<sup>3</sup> The EC defines the CCS<sup>4</sup> as those sectors whose activities are based on cultural values, or other artistic individual or collective creative expressions. The Annual Single Market report of 2021<sup>5</sup> additionally outlines what sub-sectors are included in the CCS: architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts, (including theatre and dance), books and publishing, radio, and visual arts. The fundamental role of the CCS in the EU is moreover expressly confirmed by the 2022 Council Conclusions on Building a European Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem.<sup>6</sup>

In the field of **audiovisual and media**, the European Union has a significant role, primarily aimed at ensuring the smooth functioning of the internal market, promoting cultural diversity, and supporting the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry. The EU aims to establish a single market for audiovisual services and must consider cultural aspects in all its policies. Jurisdiction over media policy is derived from various articles of the TFEU to develop policies for different media and communication technology sectors. This approach is necessary due to the complex nature of media goods and services, which cannot be classified solely as cultural nor solely as economic goods. The legal basis is found in the TFEU, including Articles 28, 30, 34, and 35 (free movement of goods); 45-62 (free movement of persons, services, and capital); 101-109 (competition policy); 114 (technological harmonization and approximation); 165 (education); 166 (vocational training); 167 (culture); 173 (industry); and 207 (common commercial policy).<sup>7</sup>

### 1.1.2. European Parliament

The EP plays a significant role in shaping policies and initiatives related to the CCS including the cultural, audiovisual and media sectors within the EU. Together with the EC and the Council, it participates in the **legislative process** by debating, amending and adopting legislative proposals concerning the CCS<sup>8</sup>, among others. Decisions are made through the ordinary legislative procedure (OLP).

<sup>3</sup> European Commission (2021). Annual Single Market Report 2021 Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe's recovery. SWD/2021/351 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021SC0351>

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2021). Cultural and creative sectors. <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-sectors/cultural-and-creative-sectors>

<sup>5</sup> European Commission (2021). Annual Single Market Report 2021 Accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe's recovery. SWD/2021/351 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021SC0351>

<sup>6</sup> Council Conclusions on building a European Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem (2022/C 160/06). [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022XG0413\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52022XG0413(01))

<sup>7</sup> See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/138/audiovisual-and-media-policy>

<sup>8</sup> Besides, the EP has authority over the EU budget, monitors the implementation of EU policies and programmes, ensuring they align with EU values and objectives. In this context, with a view to assessing the effectiveness and impact of (cultural) policies and initiatives, the EP organises hearings, inquiries and debates. It also represents the interests of European citizens and stakeholders. It engages with these stakeholders to understand their needs and concerns, thereby contributing to evidence-based law-making. It promotes exchange and dialogue among EU Member States, as well as with external partners.



**Several committees<sup>9</sup> of the EP** are relevant for cultural, audiovisual and media policy. These committees play essential roles in shaping and scrutinizing policies and legislation affecting the CCS. The key committees include:

- the **Committee on Culture and Education (CULT)** which focuses specifically on cultural and educational matters within the EU. It deals with legislative proposals, initiatives, and policies related to the cultural aspects of the Union (such as the dissemination of culture, cultural heritage, cultural and linguistic diversity), as well as for education, audiovisual policy, information and media policy, the cultural and educational aspects of the information society, youth and sports;
- the **Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)** which, while not solely dedicated to CCS, plays a role in shaping policies related to innovation, research, and technology, which are crucial for the development of the CCS. It may address issues such as intellectual property rights, support for creative entrepreneurship, technological developments affecting the CCS, as well as innovation and research in media technologies;
- the **Committee on Legal Affairs (JURI)** which deals with legal matters, including copyright and related rights, which are essential for the protection and promotion of creativity and innovation in the CCS. It is responsible for legal aspects of the digital single market and media convergence;
- the **Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)** which is responsible for employment and all aspects of social policy, notably CCS workers' working conditions;
- the **Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection (IMCO)** which is responsible for the legislative oversight and scrutiny of EU rules on the single market, including the digital single market, customs and consumer protection. Its key responsibilities include regulation of e-commerce and digital services, consumer rights in the context of audiovisual services, and cross-border access to online content;
- the **Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET)** which contributes to the definition of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. Together with CULT, they are central stakeholders for international cultural relations<sup>10</sup>;
- the **Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE)** which focuses on civil liberties, human rights, and home affairs. It is responsible for ensuring that citizens are fully able to exercise their civil rights and liberties within the media space. LIBE therefore also oversees issues of data protection and privacy in the context of digital media, and measures against online disinformation and hate speech;
- the **Committee on Budgets (BUDG)** which manages the EU budget, including allocations for cultural and media programmes. It notably deals with budgetary allocations for programmes like Creative Europe and funding for research and innovation in the CCS.

In their work for the parliamentary committees, Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) can propose new policy initiatives to be tested through so-called **Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PP/PAs)**<sup>11</sup>. Such PP/PAs give MEPs the possibility to initiate innovative policies and for the Commission to then implement them through a dedicated EU fund in advance of a legal basis being set. Both new

<sup>9</sup> The responsibilities of each committee are described in detail in the EP Rules of Procedure, Annex VI, available via [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/rules/rules20240716/Rules20240716\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/rules/rules20240716/Rules20240716_EN.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> The EU's common foreign and security policy is characterised by specific institutional features, such as the limited participation of the EC and the EP in the decision-making procedure and the exclusion of any legislation activity.

<sup>11</sup> See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/640130/EPRS\\_ATA\(2019\)640130\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/640130/EPRS_ATA(2019)640130_EN.pdf)

PP/PAs and those continued from previous years must be included in the EU budget through the annual budgetary procedure. If a PA is successful, a legal basis for that action could be prepared with the aim that the new policy henceforth functions under its own legal basis. Moreover, the lessons learnt from the implementation of a PP or a PA might result in the modification of an existing legal basis. Several PP/PAs have been funded in the period 2019-2024 in the area of cultural and media policies, such as the PA Creative FLIP<sup>12</sup> or the PP European Heritage Hub<sup>13</sup>.

The EP also hosts informal groups of MEPs interested in specific policy areas. In 2020, the **Cultural Creators Friendship Group** (CCFG) was set up for MEPs interested in cultural policy. Their aim is to improve the whole European cultural ecosystem with a focus on the CCS, and especially on the situation and conditions of creators of cultural works, e.g. authors, performers and artists<sup>14</sup>.

Finally, the EP engages in dialogue and cooperation with national parliaments and international partners through **interparliamentary committee meetings and delegations (ICMs)**. These bodies may address cultural and creative issues in the context of broader discussions on EU policies, cooperation agreements, and diplomatic relations.

### 1.1.3. Council of the European Union

In relation to CCS policies, the Council plays a **role in the legislative process and budgetary approval** together with the EP. Other responsibilities in the CCS include the development and adoption of relevant strategic frameworks, guidelines and policy initiatives, the facilitation of coordination and cooperation among EU Member States in cultural and creative matters, and the representation of the interests of the EU Member States.

The Council **helps to create a cohesive and forward-looking framework** that promotes cultural diversity, media freedom, and innovation in the EU's audiovisual sector through its configuration as the **Education, Youth, Culture, and Sport (EYCS) Council**. The EYCS Council consists of ministers from all EU member states who are responsible for education, culture, youth, media, communication, and sport. The EYCS Council is the platform where cooperation on cultural policy between the EC and the Member States takes place. The EYCS Council also helps set strategic priorities for EU policy in the audiovisual and media sector. The responsibilities and influence in shaping audiovisual and media policy also include legislative and coordination aspects.

There are two preparatory bodies related to CCS in the Council. The first body is the **Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC)**, which is responsible for discussing and preparing decisions on cultural policy issues within the EU. It serves as a forum to collaborate on cultural initiatives, share best practices, and develop common strategies to promote culture across the EU and to cooperate between the EU and non-EU countries.<sup>15</sup>

The second body is the **Audiovisual and Media Working Party**, which addresses matters related to audiovisual content in both traditional media, such as television and cinema, and digital media platforms like video-on-demand (VoD) and catch-up TV.<sup>16</sup> It prepares the groundwork for the meetings of EU ministers responsible for audiovisual affairs. This working party handles legislation, including the

<sup>12</sup> See <https://creativeflip.creativehubs.net/>

<sup>13</sup> See <https://www.europeanheritagehub.eu/>

<sup>14</sup> It replaces the previously existing intergroup "Cultural and Creative Industries". <http://www.culturalcreators.eu/>

<sup>15</sup> The Cultural Affairs Committee prepares the work of EU ministers for culture in areas related to EU cultural cooperation and to cultural cooperation between the EU and non-EU countries. It also discusses relevant legislative proposals. See: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/cultural-affairs-committee/>

<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/audiovisual-working-party/>

Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (see section 1.2.1). Additionally, the working party tackles current issues such as the Digital Agenda for Europe (content and media part)<sup>17</sup>; media freedom and pluralism<sup>18</sup>; the accessibility, preservation, and re-use of digital creative and cultural content; Europeana, the single access point to Europe's digital culture<sup>19</sup>; and film heritage, media literacy and film education.

#### 1.1.4. European Commission

The main role of the EC is to **help Member States address common challenges**. In the case of the CCS, these include among others the impact of digital technologies, changing models of cultural governance and the need to support innovation in the CCS.<sup>20</sup> The EC carries out its actions in accordance with strategic documents on cultural cooperation and its own priorities set for each Commission term (see section 1.2.2 for more details). Finally, the EC makes sure that the CCS' complex nature is reflected in relevant EU legislation. To do so, the EC develops and presents legislative proposals. Its Directorate-Generals (DGs) develop policy and manage funding programmes. Several DGs are relevant in the context of EU CCS policy. They handle various aspects of policy development, regulation, funding, and implementation related to the cultural, audiovisual and media sectors. The key DGs include:

- **DG for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC)**<sup>21</sup> which promotes EU level activities around CCS, including cultural heritage, and develops EU policies in the field of culture. It oversees policies and funding related to culture, education, and youth, which intersect with audiovisual and media policies;
- **DG for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT)**<sup>22</sup> which develops and carries out the EC's policies on digital economy and society. It is primarily responsible for the EU's digital agenda, which includes audiovisual and media policy;
- **DG for Research and Innovation (DG RTD)**<sup>23</sup> which leads policies and initiatives that aim at innovation and research, including in the CCS;
- **DG for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO)**<sup>24</sup> which focuses on supporting economic and social development in the EU, including the role of CCS in local and regional development;
- **DG for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL)**<sup>25</sup> which is notably responsible for the European Pillar of Social Rights and its right to training and lifelong learning<sup>26</sup>;

<sup>17</sup> See <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/64/digital-agenda-for-europe>

<sup>18</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/media-freedom>

<sup>19</sup> See <https://www.europeana.eu/en>

<sup>20</sup> See <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/eu-competences-in-the-field-of-culture>

<sup>21</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/education-youth-sport-and-culture\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/education-youth-sport-and-culture_en)

<sup>22</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/communications-networks-content-and-technology\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/communications-networks-content-and-technology_en)

<sup>23</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/research-and-innovation\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/research-and-innovation_en)

<sup>24</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/regional-and-urban-policy\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/regional-and-urban-policy_en)

<sup>25</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/employment-social-affairs-and-inclusion\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/employment-social-affairs-and-inclusion_en)

<sup>26</sup> See <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1226&langId=en>

- **DG for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW)**<sup>27</sup> which is working to uphold and manage the Single Market for goods and services and to strengthen its governance, including for the CCS;
- **DG for International Partnerships (DG INTPA)**<sup>28</sup> which notably contributes to international relations and culture together with DG EAC and the European External Action Service (EEAS) (see section 1.1.5);
- **DG for Competition (DG COMP)**<sup>29</sup> which ensures fair competition within the EU, including in the CCS;
- **DG for Justice and Consumers (DG JUST)**<sup>30</sup> which focuses on consumer rights, data protection, and justice, which are pertinent to the digital and media sectors. One of its key focus areas is implementing the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which impacts the CCS;
- **DG for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME)**<sup>31</sup> which deals with issues related to security, including the fight against online disinformation and illegal content.

The EC's political leadership is provided by the 27 Commissioners (including the EC President) who each are responsible for a specific portfolio designated at the beginning of their mandate. The mandates of the current EU Commissioners<sup>32</sup> run until 2024, when the Commissioners for the 2024-2029 mandate will be appointed and elected.

#### 1.1.5. Other EU and international institutions, organisations and bodies

Next to the EP, the Council and EC, there are various other relevant institutions, organisations, agencies and EU bodies involved in CCS policies in Europe.

Numerous **EU institutions or EU bodies** play a specialised role in helping the EU to fulfil its tasks through advising the institutions or ensuring that the institutions comply with EU rules and procedures. The most relevant regarding CCS policies include:

- The **European Court of Justice (ECJ)** is in charge of interpreting EU law, to ensure its uniform application across all EU Member States.
- The **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)** represents local and regional authorities across the EU and advises on new laws that have an impact on regions and cities. They advocate for a stronger role for local authorities in European cultural development<sup>33</sup> (CoR, 2019) and the integration of CCS into economic recovery programmes<sup>34</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/internal-market-industry-entrepreneurship-and-smes\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/internal-market-industry-entrepreneurship-and-smes_en)

<sup>28</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/international-partnerships\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/international-partnerships_en)

<sup>29</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/competition\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/competition_en)

<sup>30</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/justice-and-consumers\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/justice-and-consumers_en)

<sup>31</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/migration-and-home-affairs\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/about-european-commission/departments-and-executive-agencies/migration-and-home-affairs_en)

<sup>32</sup> The EU Commissioners relevant for culture, audiovisual, and media policies from 2019 to 2024 included the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth; Commissioner for 'Promoting our European Way of Life'; Commissioner for Internal Market; and the Commissioner for Values and Transparency

<sup>33</sup> See <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opld=CDR-3890-2018>

<sup>34</sup> See <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opld=CDR-4616-2020>

- The **European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)** is the voice of organised civil society in Europe<sup>35</sup>. Its members are employers, trade unionists and representatives of social, occupational, economic and cultural organisations.
- The **European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS)** monitors and ensures the protection of personal data and privacy.<sup>36</sup> The EDPS influences media policy by enforcing data protection regulations, which are critical for digital media services and online content distribution.

Furthermore, **EU decentralised agencies** contribute to the implementation of EU policies. They also support cooperation between the EU and national governments by pooling technical and specialist expertise and knowledge from both the EU institutions and national authorities. The most relevant decentralised agencies involved in CCS policy include:

- The **Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications (BEREC)** supports the implementation of EU electronic communications regulations and promotes consistency across Member States.<sup>37</sup> It addresses issues related to digital infrastructure and services, which are vital for the distribution and accessibility of audiovisual content.
- The **European Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)** plays a role in the enforcement of intellectual property rights within the EU.

There are also various **EU advisory agencies and boards** that have been set up by or are part of EU institutions that have significant impact on CCS policies in Europe. These include for example:

- The **Joint Research Centre (JRC)** provides research and expertise, for instance, through the Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor and the annual Strategic Foresight Reports (see section 2).
- The **European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA)**<sup>38</sup> brings together heads or high-level representatives of national independent regulatory bodies in the field of audiovisual services, who advise the Commission on the implementation of the AVMSD. In 2025, ERGA will be replaced by the **European Board for Media Services (EBMS)**, in line with the European Media Freedom Act (EMFA) (see section 1.2.1).
- The **European Board for Digital Services (EBDS)**<sup>39</sup> is an independent advisory group that is composed of the Member States' Digital Services Coordinators (DSCs) and chaired by the EC. They cooperate taking a European approach to the enforcement of the Digital Services Act (DSA) (see section 1.2.1).
- The **European Audiovisual Observatory** is part of the Council. It is a public service organization, created to collect and distribute information about the audiovisual industries in Europe and their financing. It also analyses and reports on the legal issues affecting the different sectors of the audiovisual industry. The activities of the European Audiovisual Observatory are funded by direct contributions from its Member States and the EU, represented by the EC, and partly through revenues from the sale of its products and services.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See <https://www.eesc.europa.eu/en/about>

<sup>36</sup> See <https://www.edps.europa.eu/en>

<sup>37</sup> See <https://www.berec.europa.eu/en>

<sup>38</sup> See <https://erga-online.eu/>

<sup>39</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/dsa-board>

<sup>40</sup> See <https://www.obs.coe.int/en/web/observatoire/about>

Lastly, it is worth highlighting the most relevant **private and international institutions and organizations** that have an impact on CCS policies in Europe:

- The **European Broadcasting Union (EBU)** is an alliance of public service media organisations whose countries are within the European Broadcasting Area or who are members of the Council of Europe.<sup>41</sup> It is made up of 113 member organisations from 56 countries, and 31 associate members from a further 20 countries. EBU advocates for public service broadcasting, supports the production and distribution of high-quality content, and influences EU media policy through lobbying and research.<sup>42</sup>
- The **OECD** regularly publishes reports, conducts research, and provides policy recommendations on the topics related to CCS based on its analysis of global trends and best practices.<sup>43</sup>
- **UNESCO's** mission is to bring people and nations together through education, culture and science, in particular by protecting heritage and fostering creativity.<sup>44</sup>
- The EC has a partnership with the **EEAS** related to Culture<sup>45</sup> and to Cooperation with International Organisations<sup>46</sup>, and with **EUNIC**<sup>47</sup> - the network of the EU Member States' national institutes for culture (see section 2.2.7).

## 1.2. Key policy instruments and working methods

### 1.2.1. Regulatory framework

The **Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)**<sup>48</sup> establishes a harmonized legal framework for audiovisual media services across the EU (see section 2.2.3 for more details). The latest review of the AVMSD was carried out in 2018. The implementation of the AVMSD is supported by **ERGA**, which will be replaced by **EBMS** in 2025 (see above in section 1.1.5).

The **Directive on Copyright and Related Rights in the Digital Single Market (DSM Directive)** was adopted in 2019.<sup>49</sup> The DSM Directive amended two prior directives on copyright-related issues (the

<sup>41</sup> See <https://www.ebu.ch/about>

<sup>42</sup> See for example: EBU Digital Services Act (DSA) Handbook for Public Service Media, 10 Feb 2023, <https://www.ebu.ch/guides/open/digital-services-act-handbook-public-version>; or: EBU AI regulation and public service media: a look ahead, 31 Jan 2024, <https://www.ebu.ch/guides/loginonly/report/ai-regulation-and-its-importance-for-public-service-media-a-look-ahead>; or: EBU Finding your way: European digital laws and public service media, 16 Apr 2024, <https://www.ebu.ch/contents/publications/guides/membersonly/report/finding-your-way-european-digital-laws-and-public-service-media.html>.

<sup>43</sup> See <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/culture-and-creative-sectors.htm>

<sup>44</sup> See <https://www.unesco.org/en/culture>

<sup>45</sup> See [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/culture-%E2%80%93-implementing-eu-international-cultural-relations\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/culture-%E2%80%93-implementing-eu-international-cultural-relations_en)

<sup>46</sup> See [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/paris-oecd-unesco/relation-oecd-and-unesco\\_en?s=64](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/paris-oecd-unesco/relation-oecd-and-unesco_en?s=64)

<sup>47</sup> EUNIC is active in more than 100 countries worldwide with a network of 140 clusters. The "EUNIC Strategic Framework 2020-2024" covers three objectives (1) Strengthening cultural relations worldwide together with partners; (2) Advocating for culture in international relations as a strategic partner of the EU; and (3) Enhancing EUNIC's capacity as a network. For more information see <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/>

<sup>48</sup> Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) (codified version); and Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities.

<sup>49</sup> Directive (EU) 2019/790 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on copyright and related rights in the Digital Single Market and amending Directives 96/9/EC and 2001/29/EC [2019] OJ L130/92 (DSM Directive).

1996 **Database Directive**<sup>50</sup> and the 2001 **InfoSoc Directive**<sup>51</sup>). The Directive aimed to modernize copyright rules within the digital single market (see section 2.2.3 for more details).

The **Digital Services Act (DSA)** is a regulation adopted in 2022<sup>52</sup> that aims to modernize and harmonize the regulatory framework for digital services across the EU<sup>53</sup> (see section 2.2.3 for more details). The DSA also aims to promote fair competition, and foster cooperation among national and EU authorities by establishing the above-mentioned DSCs in each Member State and the EBDS (see above in section 1.1.5).

The **Digital Markets Act (DMA)** is a regulation that parallels the DSA<sup>54</sup>. The DMA aims to create a fairer and more competitive digital market by preventing gatekeepers from abusing their dominant positions, fostering innovation, enhancing consumer choice, ensuring market contestability, and providing a transparent and predictable regulatory environment (see section 2.2.3 for more details).

The **European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)** is the most recent regulation in the area of media.<sup>55</sup> It establishes a new set of rules to safeguard media pluralism and editorial independence within the EU and applies to a broad range of media services (i.e. TV, VoD, radio, press and podcasts). These rules ensure that both public and private media can operate more freely across borders in the EU internal market, without undue pressure, while considering the digital transformation of the media landscape. The effective and consistent application of the EMFA will be supported by the EBMS, which will replace ERGA from 2025 (see above in section 1.1.5). Built on the above-mentioned AVMSD, the EMFA complements the DSA and the DMA, which set harmonized rules for online services. It tackles sector-specific issues that are not fully covered by the DSA and DMA. EMFA entered into force on 7 May 2024 and will fully apply as of 8 August 2025.

The **anti-SLAPP Directive**<sup>56</sup> was adopted in April 2024. It aims to protect journalists, activists, and other public interest defenders from Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs), i.e. abusive legal actions initiated to intimidate, censor, or silence critics by burdening them with the cost and effort of a legal defence (see section 2.2.1 for more details).

The **Code of Conduct on Countering Illegal Hate Speech Online** is a voluntary agreement established between the EC and major IT companies to combat the spread of illegal hate speech on the internet.<sup>57</sup> The Code was introduced in 2016, in agreement between the EC, Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube. Since then, Instagram, Snapchat, Dailymotion, Jeuxvideo.com, TikTok, and, LinkedIn joined the Code, and, in spring 2022, Rakuten Viber and Twitch. The main commitments of the Code foresee the introduction of clear community guidelines and terms of service that prohibit the promotion of illegal hate speech and revision of valid notifications of illegal hate speech within 24

<sup>50</sup> Directive 96/9/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 1996 on the legal protection of databases [1996] OJ L77/20 (Database Directive).

<sup>51</sup> Directive 2001/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society [2001] OJ L167/10 (InfoSoc Directive). The Directive focuses on certain aspects of the regulatory framework surrounding copyright and related rights within the European Union in the context of the rise of the information society, thereby addressing challenges posed by the digital environment.

<sup>52</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act).

<sup>53</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-services-act\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/digital-services-act_en)

<sup>54</sup> Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2022 on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector and amending Directives (EU) 2019/1937 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Digital Markets Act).

<sup>55</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act).

<sup>56</sup> Directive (EU) 2024/1069 on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ('Strategic lawsuits against public participation'), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1069/oj>

<sup>57</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/eu-code-conduct-countering-illegal-hate-speech-online_en)

hours. The signatory companies publish reports on their actions related to countering illegal hate speech, providing transparency on the measures taken and their effectiveness.<sup>58</sup> The Code of Conduct builds on close cooperation between the EC, the above-mentioned IT companies, civil society organisations and national authorities. The stakeholders meet regularly under the umbrella of the **High Level Group** on combatting hate speech and hate crime, to discuss challenges and progress.<sup>59</sup>

In 2022, a broad range of actors, such as online platforms, players from the advertising ecosystem, fact-checkers, civil society, research, and other organisations signed the **Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation**.<sup>60</sup> The Strengthened Code is an updated version of a code from 2018. The new Code aims to fulfil the objectives outlined in the Commission's Guidance presented in May 2021 by establishing a wider array of commitments and measures to combat online disinformation<sup>61</sup> (see section 2.2.1 for more details).

Next to these main Directives and Acts, there are various others that impact the CCS. They will be further highlighted in relation to specific policy developments discussed in Chapter 2.

### 1.2.2. Main EU programmes and initiatives providing (financial) support to the CCS

**Creative Europe** is the flagship programme of the EU to support cultural and audiovisual sectors.<sup>62</sup> Through Creative Europe, the EU promotes the European CCS, with a budget of 2.44 billion EUR that covers the period 2021 to 2027 (European Commission, 2022). The programme comprises three sub-programmes: (1) the **Culture Strand**, which encourages cooperation and exchanges among cultural organisations and artists within Europe and beyond, in areas such as cultural heritage, literature and publishing, music, or performing arts; (2) the **MEDIA Strand**, which promotes competitiveness, innovation, and sustainability in the European film and audiovisual industries; and (3) the **Cross-sectoral Strand**, which encourages collaborative actions, including media literacy and diverse news media environments. The programme is open to CCS organisations from EU Member States, as well as non-EU countries under certain conditions.<sup>63</sup> The EC is responsible for the overall administration and management of the Creative Europe programme. In this context, it develops policies, sets priorities, evaluates grant applications, monitors project implementation, and provides guidance and support to beneficiaries.

**Horizon Europe**<sup>64</sup> is the EU's flagship research and innovation programme (95.5 billion EUR, 2021-2027), and successor of Horizon 2020 (2014-2020). It integrates cultural dimensions into various clusters. For instance, Cluster 2 (Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society) supports green and digital European cultural heritage, and fosters innovation and creativity in the sector of arts, the cultural and creative industries; Cluster 4 (Digital, Industry and Space) includes projects focused on the digital

<sup>58</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_7109](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7109)

<sup>59</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-hate-speech-and-hate-crime\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-hate-speech-and-hate-crime_en)

<sup>60</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/signatories-2022-strengthened-code-practice-disinformation>

<sup>61</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_21\\_2585](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_2585)

<sup>62</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 (Text with EEA relevance). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0818>. See also <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe>

<sup>63</sup> For the list of eligible non-EU countries see: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/crea/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation\\_crea\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/crea/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_crea_en.pdf)

<sup>64</sup> Established under: Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj>



preservation of cultural heritage; Cluster 5 (Climate, Energy and Mobility) addresses the intersection between cultural and sustainability goals.

The **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)**<sup>65</sup>, initiated in February 2021, aims to alleviate the economic and social repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. EU Member States have submitted their national recovery and resilience plans, delineating the reforms and investments they intend to execute by the conclusion of 2026. Notably, 16 Member States have opted to incorporate measures targeting the CCS within their plans, totalling in 10.1 billion EUR aimed at supporting the CCS.<sup>66</sup>

The **Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCS GF)** is an initiative managed by the European Investment Fund (EIF) on behalf of the EC<sup>67</sup>. Since 2016, it benefits micro-businesses and SMEs in the CCS since they often face difficulties in accessing affordable debt financing for their projects (see section 2.2.2 for more details).

The **Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL)**<sup>68</sup> is a new EU funding programme established for the period of 2021 to 2027 with a planned overall budget of 7.5 billion EUR. It focuses on bringing digital technologies to businesses, citizens and public administrations<sup>69</sup>. The programme mentions 9 key sectors, which includes the CCS. The programme offers opportunities for the CCS to improve and professionalise access to and the use of digital technologies.

**EU Cohesion Policy** is another major funding tool, accounting for about one third of the EU budget (in 2021-2027 this amounts to 392 billion EUR funding). It is delivered through different funds, of which several contribute to funding the CCS, including the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** (and European territorial cooperation) and the **European Social Fund (ESF)** (see section 2.2.2 for more details).

The **Single Market Programme (SMP)**<sup>70</sup> is the EU funding programme to help the single market reach its full potential and ensure Europe's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. With 4.2 billion EUR over the period of 2021 to 2027, it provides an integrated package to support and strengthen the governance of the single market. One of the main objectives of the SMP is to boost the competitiveness of businesses, especially of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It is therefore very relevant for the CCS, which mainly consist of SMEs and in particular micro-sized organisations<sup>71</sup>. Under the SMP, several tools can be accessed by and for the CCS. This includes, for example, the **Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)**, which provides an integrated package of advice to SMEs on how to innovate and grow internationally, **Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs**, and the **Joint cluster initiatives**, a new generation of actions involving industrial clusters.<sup>72</sup> CREATHRIV-EU<sup>73</sup> is an example of a joint cluster initiative that has received funding from the SMP.

<sup>65</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0241>

<sup>66</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic\\_analysis/scoreboard\\_thematic\\_analysis\\_culture.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic_analysis/scoreboard_thematic_analysis_culture.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> See [https://www.eif.org/what\\_we\\_do/guarantees/cultural\\_creative\\_sectors\\_guarantee\\_facility/index.htm](https://www.eif.org/what_we_do/guarantees/cultural_creative_sectors_guarantee_facility/index.htm)

<sup>68</sup> Established under Regulation (EU) 2021/694 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe Programme and repealing Decision (EU) 2015/2240 (Text with EEA relevance). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/694/oj>

<sup>69</sup> To do so, DIGITAL supports projects in five key capacity areas: in supercomputing, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, advanced digital skills, and ensuring a wide use of digital technologies across the economy and society, including through Digital Innovation Hubs.

<sup>70</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/single-market-programme/overview\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/single-market-programme/overview_en)

<sup>71</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Culture\\_statistics\\_-\\_cultural\\_enterprises#Cultural\\_business\\_in\\_the\\_EU:key\\_indicators](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Culture_statistics_-_cultural_enterprises#Cultural_business_in_the_EU:key_indicators)

<sup>72</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/single-market-programme/overview/support-businesses\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/single-market-programme/overview/support-businesses_en)

<sup>73</sup> See <https://clustercollaboration.eu/community-news/euroclusters-thriving-creative-and-cultural-industries-1st-call-financial>

Next to these main funding programmes and initiatives, there are various smaller and more targeted policy mechanisms established to support the CCS. This includes the **S+T+ARTS initiative**<sup>74</sup> which stimulates research and innovation (R&I) at the crossroad of arts and science, and the **WORTH Partnership Project**<sup>75</sup> which supports transnational collaborations between designers, creative people, manufacturing enterprises (SMEs), crafters/makers and technology firms looking to develop design-driven and innovative products.

The above-discussed and various other CCS support mechanisms, programmes and policy tools will be further deliberated in relation to the different policy areas, that are analysed in chapter 2 of this study.

### 1.2.3. Strategic frameworks for European cultural, audiovisual and media policy

The **strategic framework for the EU's cultural policy** outlines the EC's priorities in the field of culture for the period of 2019-2024. The strategic framework is **situated within the broader EU strategic agenda**<sup>76</sup>, and also aligns with the EC priorities set for the period of 2019-2024<sup>77</sup>. It is implemented through (1) the New European Agenda for Culture; (2) the Work Plans for Culture; (3) the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage; and (4) the EU strategy for international cultural relations. This implementation involves consultations, negotiations, and consensus-building among the EC, the EP, the Council, and relevant advisory bodies.

The **New European Agenda for Culture (New Agenda)**<sup>78</sup> was adopted in 2018, as a follow-up to the European Agenda for Culture of 2007<sup>79</sup>. Comparing the New Agenda with the 2007 Agenda, they differ significantly, reflecting a shifting perspective in the EU institutions on the role of culture in European society. Whereas the EU Agenda for Culture (2007) was developed under the framework of enhancing cultural cooperation among EU Member States – focusing on the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; culture as a catalyst for creativity and culture in external relations, particularly through the promotion of cultural diversity and European values globally – the New Agenda reflects new social and economic contexts. These include demographic changes, the digital revolution and evolving geopolitical landscapes. Culture is therefore promoted more as an active agent in social cohesion, economic innovation, and international diplomacy. Furthermore, the New Agenda places a stronger emphasis on ensuring that culture is inclusive and accessible to all, reflecting a more democratized view of culture's role in society.

The New Agenda consists of **three strategic areas**, with specific objectives corresponding to the social, economic and global dimensions:

- The **social dimension** relates to the role of culture in building shared values, supporting inclusion and social cohesion, and enhancing the ability to adapt to life changes;

<sup>74</sup> See <https://starts.eu/>

<sup>75</sup> See [https://worth-partnership.ec.europa.eu/about\\_en](https://worth-partnership.ec.europa.eu/about_en)

<sup>76</sup> The EU strategic agenda's 4 priorities for 2019-2024 are: (1) Protecting citizens and freedoms; (2) Developing a strong and vibrant economic base; (3) Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe; (4) Promoting European interests and values on the global stage. See [https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-priorities/european-union-priorities-2019-2024\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-priorities/european-union-priorities-2019-2024_en)

<sup>77</sup> The 6 EC priorities for 2019-2024 are: (1) A European Green Deal; (2) An economy that works for people; (3) A Europe fit for the digital age; (4) Protecting our European way of life; (5) A stronger Europe in the world and (6) A new push for European democracy. See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024_en)

<sup>78</sup> COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A New European Agenda for Culture. COM/2018/267 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1527241001038&uri=COM:2018:267:FIN>

<sup>79</sup> RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture. 2007/C 287/01. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32007G1129%2801%29>

- The **economic dimension** relates to the importance of the CCS as drivers of economic growth and job creation. More specifically, the New Agenda highlights the need to strengthen the competitiveness of CCS, particularly through innovation, support for SMEs and promoting access to finance.
- The **global dimension** concerns the role of culture in external relations, aligning it more closely with the EU's foreign policy goals and leveraging culture for broader geopolitical aims. This includes using culture as a tool for diplomacy and peace-building, as well as promoting cultural diversity and cultural rights globally.

The New Agenda is accompanied by a **Staff Working Document**, which makes the actions to be taken in the agenda more concrete.<sup>80</sup> Together, they provide the framework for cooperation on culture at the EU level.<sup>81</sup> The New Agenda also calls on enhanced working methods with Member States, focusing on strong cooperation with civil society organisations and international partners (see section 1.2.3 for more details).

The New Agenda is implemented via so-called Work Plans for Culture. Member States define the main topics and working methods for policy collaboration on culture through these Work Plans, which are then adopted by the Council. The current **EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026**<sup>82</sup> outlines four priorities for European cooperation in cultural policy-making: “(1) **artists and cultural professionals**: empowering the cultural and creative sectors; (2) **culture for the people**: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society; (3) **culture for the planet**: unleashing the power of culture; and (4) **culture for co-creative partnerships**: strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations”.<sup>83</sup> Each of these priorities lists actions for the EC, the Member States and for the presidencies of the Council with clearly defined working methods and target outputs.

In 2019, the EC presented the first-ever **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage**<sup>84</sup>. It was the result of a series of events and debates with the active contribution of many heritage stakeholders (among others the members of the European Heritage Alliance<sup>85</sup>) during the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage<sup>86</sup>. The framework ensures that cultural heritage remains at the top of the political agenda even after the European Year has ended.

Finally, the action of the EU in the field of external dimensions and international cultural relations is guided by the **EU strategy for international cultural relations (2016)**<sup>87</sup>. The strategy has three main

<sup>80</sup> Commission Staff Working Document, 'A New European Agenda for Culture – Background Information Accompanying the Document Communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A New European Agenda for Culture'. SWD(2018) 167 final. [https://culture.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-08/swd-2018-167-new-european-agenda-for-culture\\_en.pdf](https://culture.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2020-08/swd-2018-167-new-european-agenda-for-culture_en.pdf)

<sup>81</sup> Commission Staff Working Document - Accompanying document to the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world - Inventory of Community actions in the field of culture [COM(2007) 242 final]. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1598955769302&uri=CELEX:52007SC0570>

<sup>82</sup> The current EU Work Plan for Culture is the fourth Work Plan for Culture of the EU, building on the previous ones: (2019-2022), (2015-2018) and (2011-2014).

<sup>83</sup> Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026. 2022/C 466/01. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32022G1207%2801%29&qid=1671635488811>

<sup>84</sup> European Commission. (2019). Commission Staff Working Document. European framework for action on cultural heritage. <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5a9c3144-80f1-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1>

<sup>85</sup> See <https://europeanheritagealliance.eu/>

<sup>86</sup> Itself the result of Decision (EU) 2017/864 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on a European Year of Cultural Heritage (2018). The European Year aimed at celebrating cultural heritage as a shared resource, raising awareness of common history and values, and reinforcing a sense of belonging to a common European cultural and political space.

<sup>87</sup> JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations. JOIN/2016/029 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016JC0029&qid=1714145587410>

objectives: (1) unlocking the potential of culture and creativity for sustainable social and economic development recognizing culture as a source for inclusive growth, job creation and the global trade in creative products; (2) promoting peace and fighting radicalisation through intercultural dialogue which encompasses the demonstration of the value of cultural diversity and human rights; and (3) strengthening cooperation on cultural heritage as an important expression of cultural diversity that deserve protection.

Launched in December 2020, as part of the sixth Commission priority for 2019-24, a “New push for European Democracy”, the **European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP)** is an EC initiative aimed at strengthening democratic resilience, promoting fair electoral processes, and combating disinformation across the EU.<sup>88</sup> It outlines a series of measures and actions to protect and promote democracy in the digital age<sup>89</sup> (see section 2.2.1 for more details).

The EDAP was accompanied by the **European Media and Audiovisual Action Plan (MAAP)**, a strategic initiative by the EC to support the recovery, transformation, and competitiveness of the media and audiovisual sectors within the EU.<sup>90</sup> It is a comprehensive strategy designed to support the creation of a sustainable and vibrant media landscape that reflects Europe's cultural diversity.<sup>91</sup> The plan focuses on two main sectors: (1) the news media sector, which includes printed and online press, radio, and audiovisual services, and (2) the audiovisual entertainment sector, encompassing cinema, TV, video streaming, video games, and innovative formats such as virtual reality experiences. Both sectors are confronting significant challenges intensified by the COVID-19 crisis. In response, the MAAP offers various specific actions and initiatives, such as funding programmes, regulatory reforms, collaborative projects, and support measures for media companies and professionals.<sup>92</sup>

The **Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM)** is a scientific, diagnostic tool designed to identify potential risks to media pluralism.<sup>93</sup> It is a crucial information source for the media freedom aspect of the annual **rule of law reports**.<sup>94</sup> Since 2013, the development and implementation of the MPM is conducted by the **Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF)** at the European University Institute<sup>95</sup> (see section 2.2.1 for more details).

#### 1.2.4. Working methods for policy collaboration on CCS through structured dialogue

Member States make use of the **Open Method of Coordination (OMC)** to cooperate and align visions on the development of policies. The OMC were introduced in the cultural field in 2007 with the European Agenda for Culture (Cicerchia and Christensen-Redzepovic, 2022)<sup>96</sup>. Based on a flexible, non-binding and voluntary framework, the OMC constitutes a practical and structured way for Member States to exchange knowledge and experience on topics of mutual interest (Psychogioupoulou, 2018). The method promotes a common understanding of issues and facilitates building consensus on solutions and their implementation.<sup>97</sup> In the cultural OMC, experts from national ministries of culture

<sup>88</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0790>

<sup>89</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_2250](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2250)

<sup>90</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0784&from=EN>

<sup>91</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/media-and-audiovisual-action-plan>

<sup>92</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/democracy-and-media-digital-decade>

<sup>93</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/monitoring-media-pluralism>

<sup>94</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/rule-law/rule-law-mechanism\\_en#rule-of-law-report](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/upholding-rule-law/rule-law/rule-law-mechanism_en#rule-of-law-report)

<sup>95</sup> See <https://cmpf.eui.eu/>

<sup>96</sup> The recent and finished OMC groups have focused on high-quality architecture and living environment (2021), audio-visual co-productions (2022), Culture as a driver for sustainable development (2022), Multilingualism and translation (2022), Strengthening Cultural heritage resilience for climate change (2022), Status and working conditions of artists (2023). See References for the related OMC reports

<sup>97</sup> See <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/cultural-policy-cooperation-at-the-eu-level>

and cultural institutions (hence appointed by the Member States) meet 5 to 6 times over 18 months to share good practices and produce policy recommendations, manuals and other supporting tools (Cicerchia and Christensen-Redzepovic, 2022), to be shared throughout Europe. The EC organises the OMC, hosts the meetings, and supports the work of the OMC groups with policy updates, and by providing input, such as studies.

The EC has also established a structural dialogue with CCS organisations outside of the OMC. Since 2015, the dialogue with civil society in the cultural field is organised through **Voices of Culture** (Cicerchia and Christensen-Redzepovic, 2022). Implemented by the Goethe-Institut on behalf of the EC, it provides a framework for discussions between EU civil society stakeholders and the EC. Voices of Culture initiates periodic calls for applications on various topics that hold significance in the EC's policymaking process. Successful applicants are invited to a brainstorming session and prepare a Brainstorming report presented to and discussed with the EC. Hence, the Voices of Culture reports and background documents represent a repository of cultural operators' experiences and reflections (Cicerchia and Christensen-Redzepovic, 2022). Since 2015, there have been 16 topics for which Voices of Culture hosted dialogues.<sup>98</sup>

Another example of structural dialogue is the **European Film Forum (EFF)**. It serves as a platform between policymakers and stakeholders in the audiovisual sector. Its goal is to develop a strategic policy agenda and explore new perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of digital transformation.<sup>99</sup> The EFF fosters enhanced cooperation between public actions and facilitates the exchange of expertise and best practices through its dialogue with stakeholders and Member States. The EC advances this dialogue at various events, particularly during film festivals and TV markets. The aim is to propose adaptations in European funding systems and provide recommendations for the Member States and the audiovisual industries, to be reflected in the MEDIA sub-programme of Creative Europe (see section 1.2.4).<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> See <https://voicesofculture.eu/>. Recent topics for which Voices of Culture hosted dialogues are: (Re-)Engaging Digital Audiences – Improving Audience Data (2022); International Cultural Relations (2022); Youth, Mental Health and Culture (2023); Culture and Creative Sectors and Industries driving Green Transition and Facing the Energy Crisis (2023).

<sup>99</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52014DC0272>

<sup>100</sup> See <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/creative-europe-media-strand>

## 2. EU CCS POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN AN ERA OF PROFOUND TRANSFORMATIONS

### KEY FINDINGS

- The past legislative term, the period from 2019 to 2024, has been characterised by a context of profound systemic transformations combined with a polycrisis in European society and beyond. Both the CCS and EU CCS policymakers have been significantly impacted by these transformative societal challenges and related shifts in EU policy priorities.
- EU CCS policymakers had to address major emergencies in this period, such as the COVID-19 crisis that hit the CCS hard or mobilising support for Ukraine (and its CCS) at war. Furthermore, policy initiatives have been taken to address structural challenges, such as the precarious working conditions in the CCS, regulation of the digital working environment for CCS and the green transition of the CCS.
- Beyond the challenges, this transformative period also brings new perspectives and evidence on the role(s) and value of the CCS in European society, for well-being, innovation and sustainable development. It also brought to light the crucial importance of revaluing international cultural relations, safeguarding (media) pluralism and spaces for cultural and media expressions.

### 2.1. 2019-2024: a period of shifting EU (CCS) policy priorities

The 9th parliamentary term of the CULT Committee in the EP (mid-2019 to mid-2024) was strongly affected by a context of persistent structural challenges (economic, ecological, social) that relate to profound **systemic transformations** (e.g. digital changes, climate crisis) combined with a **polycrisis** (COVID-19, energy crisis, inflation, armed conflict, forced migration, financial crises) in European society and beyond (Zeitlin and Nicoli, 2021). Policymakers in all policy areas, including CCS, had to cope with major emergencies in this period, while at the same time addressing structural challenges and future opportunities.

Having anticipated incoming unavoidable and/or necessary transformations in (European) societies the 2019-2024 Commission implemented the **annual Strategic Foresight Report** which would help guide policymakers. This instrument is prepared by the EC's Joint Research Centre (JRC). Since 2020, four foresight reports have brought new insights for EU policymakers, including for CCS policymakers, based on analyses of current developments and challenges in (European) society.<sup>101</sup> Over the years, from 2020 to 2023, the content and focus of the foresight reports have evolved significantly to **reflect the changing global landscape and the EU's policy priorities**:

- Whereas the first reports (European Commission JRC, 2020 and 2021) focused broadly on understanding the implications of global trends on Europe's future (demographic changes,

<sup>101</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategic-planning/strategic-foresight\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategic-planning/strategic-foresight_en) for an overview of the different foresight reports.

technological advancements, geopolitical shifts) and introduced **long-term resilience in the face of crises** as the new compass for EU policies, the more recent foresight reports (European Commission JRC, 2022 and 2023) particularly focus on **sustainability and climate neutrality** as central themes.

- The 2022 report already emphasizes that **inclusiveness and affordability (fairness)** are crucial for the digital and green transition. The 2023 report takes this interconnectedness a step further. Published in a time of continued war in Ukraine and growing geopolitical tensions, the 2023 report points out that the combination of multiple crises and the need for major transitions brings various challenges. These challenges affect social and economic sustainability, weaken social cohesion, and even threaten democracy. The report marks that these pressures fuel the debate about the **need for a new economic model and social contract, focused on the well-being of people and nature**, among others by **increasing citizen's civic participation**. The report further calls upon EU policymakers to develop and apply complementary metrics to GDP, to monitor 'progress' in the EU in a way that is more in line with the ambitions for an economically and socially just transition and strong global leadership. This would be accomplished by shifting indicators towards sustainable and inclusive well-being.

Insights from these reports have been echoed in EU policy making in the field of culture over the past years. Whereas the New European Agenda for Culture 2018 remains the main strategic document for EU CCS policy, the above outlined societal challenges and subsequent shifting priorities in EU policymaking have co-guided EU CCS policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024, among others through interactions with CCS stakeholders (see section 2.2 for more details).

In an assessment report on the Work Plan 2019-2022<sup>102</sup> published by the EC in June 2022, the EC concluded that future **priorities should keep the major focuses of the past years, though with new angles on the enduring priorities** (e.g. cultural recovery and resilience, working conditions of artists and cultural workers, climate change impacts).<sup>103</sup> Next to the revisited enduring priorities, the EC also identified **new priorities in reaction to new developments**, such as the post-COVID-19 recovery and resilience of the CCS and culture, democracy and cultural rights in relation to education.

Following the assessment report, several stakeholders representing the wider cultural ecosystem (e.g. Culture Action Europe<sup>104</sup>, European Cultural Foundation<sup>105</sup>) called upon the European institutions for an ambitious new Work Plan for Culture that corresponds to the current and future challenges and transformations in Europe, highlighted in the above-mentioned foresight reports. In an informal meeting of the Council Committee on Cultural Affairs in May 2022, Culture Action Europe called upon EU policymakers to continue the work towards a European Status of the Artist, to continue to highlight the role of culture as a driver of sustainable development, to uphold artistic freedom and cultural rights and to promote transdisciplinary approaches between culture and other disciplines.<sup>106</sup> The call builds further on the #CulturalDealEU campaign that Culture Action Europe, European Cultural Foundation, and Europa Nostra, acting also on behalf of the European Heritage Alliance, launched in November

<sup>102</sup> The six priority categories in the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 include: (1) sustainability in cultural heritage, (2) cohesion and well-being, (3) an ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals, and EU content, (4) gender equality, (5) international cultural relations and (6) culture as a driver for sustainable development.

<sup>103</sup> <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/commission-assesses-current-cultural-policy-cooperation-and-proposes-new-priorities>

<sup>104</sup> Culture Action Europe (CAE) is a European network connecting various stakeholders within the cultural sector, providing a unified voice advocating for its sector within the EU policy sphere. See here: <https://cultureactioneurope.org/>

<sup>105</sup> Created in 1954, and based in the Netherlands, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) is an independent foundation aimed at developing and supporting cultural initiatives to "strengthen a European sense of belonging". See more here: <https://culturalfoundation.eu/>

<sup>106</sup> <https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/https-eur-lex-europa-eu-legal-content-en-txt-uricom2022317fin/>

2020 to call upon the EU to place culture much more at the heart of its political vision and ambition for the years to come, by fully integrating culture and cultural heritage into its actions and policies.<sup>107</sup>

The Council resolution of 29 November 2022, approving the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026<sup>108</sup>, acknowledges the **role of culture as an integral element in sustainable development and positive societal transformation**. It also underlines the importance of mainstreaming the cultural dimension into all relevant policy areas, programmes and initiatives, and the need for increased synergies. The Council resolution therefore invites the EC to consider proposing an EU strategic framework for culture that aims to **strategically mainstream the cultural policy perspective and the assets of culture into all relevant EU policies, programmes and initiatives**, while the EU Work Plans for Culture (see section 1.2.2) continue to prioritise and identify specific actions for cultural cooperation at the European level.

Furthermore, the EP resolution of 14 December 2022 that assesses the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations (see section 1.2.2)<sup>109</sup> acknowledges the overall satisfactory implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture. However, shortcomings in the New Agenda were also highlighted, mainly with regards to its priorities. The EP Resolution invites the EC to update the New Agenda in light of the challenges and opportunities faced by the CCS in the post-COVID-19 era.

## 2.2. EU CCS policy support for a transforming CCS: state of play and signals of change

The above mentioned transformative societal challenges and related shifts in EU policy priorities have also impacted EU CCS policy making in the past years. Based on a preliminary analysis of (1) the main policy work done by the EU institutions in the CCS field (with a main focus on the period 2019-2024), (2) the themes that have been discussed in the structured dialogues (see section 1.2.3) and other relevant platforms, and (3) expert views on CCS policy trends, the following areas, which fall under the competence of the CULT Committee, have been identified as having been central to EU CCS policymaking from 2019 to 2024:

- **Safeguarding democracy and pluralism:** The EU sees democracy and media pluralism as essential for its Member States. A diverse media landscape allows for the free exchange of ideas and the informing of citizens, which is crucial to strengthen democracies. However, digital transitions as well as geopolitical changes present continuous challenges.
- **Strengthening the socio-economic resilience of CCS actors:** Although already on the EU CCS policy agenda before 2019, the COVID-19 crisis catalysed EU policy actions in this area in recent years. But until today, the CCS remain characterised by very fragile working conditions and career development opportunities (see e.g. Panteia and Culture Action Europe, 2024), making this one of the persistent structural challenges that need continued policy action.
- **Ensuring a fair online ecosystem for culture and media:** The rise of the internet promised to empower both CCS actors and citizens at large, by reducing large cultural content production and distribution (including media) conglomerates' control. However, a few powerful online platforms have come to dominate the market, taking gatekeeping positions, and thereby limiting diversity and competition, as well as threatening existing copyright-based revenue mechanisms for CCS

<sup>107</sup> <https://culturaldeal.eu/>

<sup>108</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/60399/st15381-en22.pdf>

<sup>109</sup> European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2022 on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations (2022/2047(INI)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0444\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0444_EN.html)



actors. The EU is a leader in regulating the digital space to ensure fair competition, consumer protection, and cultural diversity. However, many challenges remain.

- **Stimulating a green and just transition in and with the CCS:** The EU has set the green transition of the European economy as a core strategic priority in recent years (see e.g. European Commission JRC, 2022), including in the CCS. At the same time, there is growing (policy) attention for the role that the CCS can play in stimulating the green transition in society at large.
- **Supporting innovation in and with the CCS:** To strengthen the CCS as a key economic ecosystem and support the CCS in the digital and green transition, stimulating innovation in the CCS has become an important pillar in EU CCS policy. Furthermore, there is growing evidence and policy interest in the role that the CCS (can) play in innovation systems, fostering collaborations between the CCS and other industries, such as technology and science.
- **Putting the spotlight on the role of culture for well-being:** The COVID-19 pandemic as well as subsequent crises and conflicts have brought the importance of mental health and well-being for citizens and communities to the forefront, including the role that culture plays in fostering well-being (see e.g. IDEA Consult et al., 2021).
- **Responding with culture to changing geopolitical frameworks and conflicts:** In a time of growing geopolitical tensions and war (among others at the borders of the EU), promoting peace and fighting radicalisation through intercultural dialogue has gained attention in recent years. At the same time, there are intensifying discussions on redefining international cultural relations, decolonising (e.g. heritage institutions in Europe), and the role of cultural diplomacy in a changing geopolitical context.

In the following paragraphs, for each theme, the main EU policy initiatives taken in the period 2019-2024 are highlighted. Additionally, for each theme the key (future) opportunities and challenges resulting from the observed societal transformations, are analysed in more detail. Based on this, existing (policy) gaps are identified as well as points of attention for EU CCS policy development in the coming years. The analysis builds on extensive literature review, insights from a horizon scanning exercise and strategic conversations held with CCS (policy) experts in the context of this study (see Annex I to read more on the methodological background).

### 2.2.1. Safeguarding democracy and pluralism

#### a. Context

The EU recognises the importance of safeguarding democracy and pluralism as basic democratic values on which the Union is founded<sup>110</sup>. Democracy serves as the bedrock of the EU and its Member States, providing the political and ethical framework upon which they operate. The importance of its upholding directly derives from the first priority of the EU Strategic Agenda for 2019-2024, i.e., Protecting citizens and freedoms<sup>111</sup>.

**Media pluralism** is widely recognized as a **precondition of contemporary democracies**<sup>112</sup>. It entails the wide accessibility, discoverability, and representation of information and perspectives, whilst also entailing the validation of those different perspectives. Media pluralism underlines the need for

<sup>110</sup> European University Institute, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universiteit van Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Brussel, "Study on media plurality and diversity online", VIGIE 2020-825.

<sup>111</sup> [https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-priorities/european-union-priorities-2019-2024\\_en](https://european-union.europa.eu/priorities-and-actions/eu-priorities/european-union-priorities-2019-2024_en)

<sup>112</sup> European University Institute, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universiteit van Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Brussel, "Study on media plurality and diversity online", VIGIE 2020-825.

transparency, freedom of expression, and diversity in the media landscape. This multi-faceted notion thereby combines the plurality of media ownership and sources (Valcke, 2011) with the diversity of content produced, distributed and eventually consumed by citizens (Napoli, 2011; Helberger et al., 2018). Media pluralism plays an effective role in fostering political agreements, mitigating social conflicts, and eradicating arbitrary legal practices, ultimately ensuring peace and the prosperity of European communities. In the borderless digital world, the principles of democracy and pluralism face new challenges and opportunities. Therefore, ensuring a **diverse and independent media landscape is crucial** for the functioning of democratic societies, allowing for the free exchange of ideas and fostering informed citizenry.

Although the EU lacks explicit authority to regulate media pluralism (Article 6 of the TFEU), pertinent competencies exist in the Treaties concerning fundamental rights, state aid, and the internal market. More specifically, media freedom and pluralism are enshrined in **Article 11 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**, which reflects **Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms**. Likewise, the Copenhagen criteria for membership in the EU include guarantees for democracy and human rights. Furthermore, the **European Commission Rule of Law** report<sup>113</sup>, which examines rule of law developments in Member States under four key pillars, includes media freedom and pluralism as one of them. Its analysis is based on the **Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM)**<sup>114</sup>, implemented by the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom (CMPF) for the first time in 2013/2014. The MPM gives a comprehensive overview of risks considering four areas: (1) basic protection of media freedom, (2) market plurality, (3) political independence, and (4) social inclusiveness.<sup>115</sup> Carried out annually since 2020, the latest results (2023) generally show little to no changes in indicators such as fundamental protection (35% average risk), protection of freedom of expression (34%), protection of the right to information (42%) and journalistic profession, standards and protection (43%). The universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet revealed some improvement (from 32% to 26%)<sup>116</sup>.

## b. EU policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024

In the 2019-2024 period, policy initiatives aimed at safeguarding democracy and pluralism derive from, or are a part of, the **European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP)**<sup>117</sup>. The Plan was adopted by the EC in 2020, as part of the Priority “a new push for European democracy”<sup>118</sup>, and following Council Conclusions on safeguarding a free and pluralistic media system<sup>119</sup> and on strengthening the promotion of the European audiovisual industry<sup>120</sup> (see also above in section 1.2.2). The EDAP aims to strengthen democracies across the EU by focusing on (1) protecting election integrity and promoting democratic

<sup>113</sup> European Commission. (2023). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 2023 Rule of Law Report: The rule of law situation in the European Union (COM/2023/800 final).

<sup>114</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/monitoring-media-pluralism>

<sup>115</sup> See <https://cmpf.eu.europa.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/questionnaire-MPM-2023.pdf>

<sup>116</sup> European University Institute, Bleyer-Simon, K., Brogi, E., Carlini, R. et al. (2023). Monitoring media pluralism in the digital era – Application of the Media Pluralism Monitor in the European Union, Albania, Montenegro, the Republic of North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey in the year 2022 – Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom, European University Institute. [https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/75753/MPM2023\\_General\\_report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/75753/MPM2023_General_report.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y)

<sup>117</sup> European Commission (2020). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the European democracy action plan. COM/2020/790 final

<sup>118</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy_en)

<sup>119</sup> European Council (2020). Council conclusions on safeguarding a free and pluralistic media system (2020/C 422/08). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020XG1207%2801%29>

<sup>120</sup> European Council (2018). Council conclusions on the strengthening of European content in the digital economy (2018/C 457/02). [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1219\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1219(01)&from=EN)

participation, (2) strengthening media freedom and media pluralism, and (3) countering disinformation.

More precisely, the EDAP aims at **fostering an open digital ecosystem** that promotes democratic debate and shapes public opinion while upholding European values. It seeks to protect democratic processes, through free and fair elections, and foster informed citizen participation. Its objectives include supporting free and independent media, enhancing media resilience, ensuring **transparency in media ownership** across the EU, and creating **safer working conditions** for all media professionals. The EDAP can contribute to a **sustainable, pluralistic, and trustworthy media system**, particularly during times of crisis.

Other relevant objectives of the EDAP and related policy initiatives include:

- Specific objectives related to **media literacy and quality journalism**, such as promoting safer internet use, addressing challenges faced by quality journalism in maintaining financial sustainability amidst digital transformation and providing guidelines for fair and balanced electoral communication and media coverage during election campaigns.
- Efforts to strengthen democracy, media freedom, and pluralism by combating threats to **journalistic independence and freedom of expression**, as well as ensuring that AI technologies are trained in a way that prevents bias and protects diversity, while providing practical guidance for Member States and stakeholders, as addressed in the EP resolution on artificial intelligence in education, culture and the audiovisual sector<sup>121</sup>.
- Dedicating additional resources to advocating for increased **trust in data sharing** through harmonized governance frameworks, promoting critical thinking and media literacy, and boosting long-term economic recovery and growth by building a sustainable and inclusive digital future. This was covered in the Data Governance Act (DGA), agreed with the Council in 2021<sup>122</sup>.

The European Democracy Action Plan has been implemented through various policies, in particular:

- The **Strengthened Code of Practice on Disinformation**<sup>123</sup>, which was signed in June 2022. The initiative was initially launched in 2018 to prevent the spread of disinformation, enhance transparency, avoid foreign interference in democratic processes, empower users, support research, and foster collaboration among stakeholders. Its signatories include Google, Meta, Microsoft and TikTok. According to the Strengthened Code, the signatories commit to take action in several domains, including (1) demonetising the dissemination of disinformation; (2) ensuring the transparency of political advertising; (3) empowering users; (4) enhancing the cooperation with fact-checkers; and (5) providing researchers with better access to data.<sup>124</sup> To ensure ongoing collaboration, the signatories agreed to set up a **permanent Task Force**. The Code also introduces a reinforced monitoring framework that includes qualitative reporting elements and service-level indicators to measure its implementation's effectiveness. Additionally, the signatories have established a **Transparency Centre**, offering the public a clear overview of the policies they

<sup>121</sup> European Parliament. (2021, May 19). Resolution on artificial intelligence in education, culture and the audiovisual sector (2020/2017(INI)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0238\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0238_EN.html)

<sup>122</sup> European Parliament. (2021). Data governance: Deal on new rules to boost data sharing across the EU: News: European parliament. *Data governance: deal on new rules to boost data sharing across the EU* | News | European Parliament. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20211129IPR18316/data-governance-deal-on-new-rules-to-boost-data-sharing-across-the-eu>

<sup>123</sup> European Commission (2022). Strengthened code of practice on disinformation. <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/2022-strengthened-code-practice-disinformation>

<sup>124</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/code-practice-disinformation>

implement to meet their commitments. They regularly update it with relevant data.<sup>125</sup> The EC plans to initiate the process for recognizing the Code of Practice as a Code of Conduct under the **Digital Services Act**.

- **The anti-SLAPP Directive**<sup>126</sup>: In November 2023, a consensus was achieved between the European Parliament and the Council on the Directive which is intended to safeguard journalists and human rights advocates from abusive legal actions initiated to intimidate, censor, or silence critics by burdening them with the cost and effort of a legal defence, commonly referred to as strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPPs). Adopted in April 2024, the Directive is designed to empower judges to recognize SLAPPs and facilitate their prompt dismissal, thereby relieving journalists or activists subjected to such actions from the obligation to refute baseless claims brought against them with malicious intent aimed at harassment. Member States will have two years (i.e., until May 2026) to transpose the rules into their national systems (see Table 2 in Chapter 4) for an overview of the expected dates of transposition of relevant regulations).
- **The European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)**<sup>127</sup>, adopted in April 2024, aims at protecting media pluralism and independence, notably by amending and complementing the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (see section 1.2.1). The EMFA aims to fortify the internal market's integrity, consequently ensuring the preservation of media pluralism and independence across the Union. It defines (1) rights and duties of media service providers and recipients of media services; and provides a (2) framework for regulatory cooperation and a well-functioning internal market for media services. The main goals of the EMFA are those intending to (1) protect editorial independence; (2) protect journalistic sources, including against the use of spyware; (3) ensure the independent functioning of public service media; (4) enhance transparency of media ownership; (5) safeguard media against unjustified online content removal by very large online platforms; (6) introduce a right of customisation of the media offer on devices and interfaces.<sup>128</sup>

### c. Key (future) opportunities and reflections for future EU CCS policy development

The main opportunity for future EU CCS policy development regarding safeguarding democracy and pluralism lies in the broadly shared interest in these goals. **Several stakeholders and civil society organisations** collaborate to protect media pluralism, uphold democratic values, and ensure that citizens have access to diverse and reliable information. Co-financed by the EU, the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF)<sup>129</sup> is a research and training centre which received grants from the EU for the implementation of Mapping Media Freedom<sup>130</sup>. Likewise, the European Digital Media Observatory (EDMO)<sup>131</sup> is an interdisciplinary network of stakeholders tackling online disinformation.

<sup>125</sup> See <https://disinfocode.eu/>

<sup>126</sup> European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2024). Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings (Strategic lawsuits against public participation) 2022/0117 (COD). <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/PE-88-2023-INIT/EN/pdf>

<sup>127</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1083 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a common framework for media services in the internal market and amending Directive 2010/13/EU (European Media Freedom Act). Text with EEA relevance. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1083/oj>

<sup>128</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/protecting-democracy/european-media-freedom-act\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/protecting-democracy/european-media-freedom-act_en)

<sup>129</sup> See Centre for Press and Media Freedom: <https://cmpf.eui.eu/>

<sup>130</sup> See Mapping media freedom: <https://www.mappingmediafreedom.org/>. The project documents press and media freedom violations across Europe, in a publicly accessible and interactive database. This project is run by the Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR), a Europe-wide mechanism, which tracks, monitors, and reacts to violations of press and media freedom in EU Member States and candidate countries. This project provides legal support, public advocacy, and information to protect journalists and media workers.

<sup>131</sup> See European Digital Media Observatory: <https://edmo.eu/>

Some other relevant organisations are Reporters Without Borders (RSF)<sup>132</sup>, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)<sup>133</sup>, and European Digital Rights (EDRI)<sup>134</sup>, a coalition of civil society organisations working on digital rights and privacy.

At the **international level**, there are also international fora where discussion takes place regarding safeguarding democracy and pluralism. The **OECD** regularly publishes reports, conducts research, and provides policy recommendations on these topics based on its analysis of global trends and best practices. It has issued several relevant declarations on topics such as “a trusted, sustainable and inclusive digital future” and “building trust and reinforcing democracy”<sup>135</sup>. These aim to support the strengthening of democracies and support a human-centric and rights-oriented digital transformation. Through the Communication and Information Sector and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, **UNESCO** promotes freedom of expression, safety of journalists, and media literacy, among others.<sup>136</sup>

In spite of the broad support for the values promoted by the EDAP, **the EDAP has also faced some criticism**. For instance, while welcoming the European Commission's efforts to protect media freedom, the **European Economic and Social Committee** warns that mere recommendations and soft-law approaches may not suffice. In addition, the EMFA may fall short of effectively protecting against spyware<sup>137</sup>, i.e., software that aims to gather information about a person or organisation – without them knowing – and send such information to another entity. More generally, while transparency is one of the objectives of the EU initiatives, some stakeholders argue that more efforts are needed from the EC to be more transparent to the public by improving access to information and demonstrating transparency more broadly<sup>138</sup>.

For the **European Committee of the Regions (CoR)**, local regions and cities within the EU hold significant influence in regulating the media and cultural sectors. The CoR highlights that EU intervention should not duplicate existing media supervision systems or lead to excessive regulation. Actually, national/regional governments and media regulatory bodies play a crucial role in monitoring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, investigating complaints or violations, and promoting transparency and accountability in democratic processes. **The EMFA's** impact is relatively ambiguous when it comes to giving more power to national or regional governments. It **could reinforce national regulatory authorities' power**, by increasing regulatory cooperation in media merger assessments and by improving international cooperation among them beyond what is now taking place within the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA) (Ranaivoson et al., 2022). **However, the EMFA also gives a bigger role to the EC**, which is notably part of the new European Board for Media Services. This could lead to some fightback from Member States (Ranaivoson et al., 2022). At the time when the EMFA was under discussion, some Member States disagreed both on the contents of the then proposed regulation and on the more general question of subsidiarity (Lünemann, 2023).

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<sup>132</sup> See Reporters Without Borders: <https://rsf.org/en>

<sup>133</sup> European Federation of Journalists: <https://europeanjournalists.org/>

<sup>134</sup> European Digital Rights: <https://edri.org/>

<sup>135</sup> See the OECD's Declaration on a Trusted, Sustainable and Inclusive Digital Future

<https://legalinstruments.oecd.org/en/instruments/OECD-LEGAL-0488> & the report on Building Trust and Reinforcing Democracy [https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2022/11/building-trust-and-reinforcing-democracy\\_675763bc.html](https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2022/11/building-trust-and-reinforcing-democracy_675763bc.html)

<sup>136</sup> UNESCO (n.d). CI Sector and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. <https://www.unesco.org/en/communication-information/about?hub=370>

<sup>137</sup> See <https://www.socialeurope.eu/media-freedom-europes-media-cannot-be-half-free>

<sup>138</sup> See <https://www.euractiv.com/section/digital/opinion/the-next-european-commission-needs-to-address-information-power/>

There are other key challenges for EU policymakers beyond the EDAP and its criticisms. A first challenge concerns the **lack of EU competences and mechanisms for regulating media pluralism**. The EU lacks explicit competences to regulate media pluralism but possesses implicit powers dispersed across its legal framework. While the EU can enforce consequences for violations of its fundamental values, such as freedom, democracy, and human rights, it has refrained from utilizing mechanisms such as Article 7 TEU or Article 258 TFEU<sup>139</sup> due to their high thresholds and political constraints. Existing enforcement mechanisms are primarily crisis-driven as national policies that restrict media pluralism pose challenges to European integration, including the free movement of media services and individuals (Brogi et al., 2023; Irion and Valcke, 2014).

Another challenge for EU policymakers relates to balancing innovation with safeguards against potential risks posed by **rapidly evolving technology** (Diakopoulos, 2019), including AI, to protect democratic values and citizens' rights. Moreover, the regulatory pace often lags behind the rapid evolution of technology, presenting challenges in effectively addressing emerging ethical concerns and ensuring that regulatory frameworks remain relevant to technological advancements. Furthermore, **balancing commercial interests with democratic values** and public interest objectives requires dedicated efforts and strategic decision-making (Dahlgren, 2018).

**Media literacy** ensures independent and critical thinking wary and conscious of mis- and disinformation allowing for well-informed decisions as citizens, consumers, and other<sup>140</sup>. While the question of media literacy is not new and EU initiatives promote media literacy to empower citizens with critical thinking skills necessary to navigate the digital media landscape and combat disinformation effectively (Hameleers, 2022), there are **still a series of challenges such as underinvestment, reaching the wider population and exacerbating inequalities**. The need for more investments by Member States to help promote citizens' media literacy was also highlighted in proposal #27 on "Media, Fake news, Disinformation, Fact-checking, Cybersecurity" of the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe (2022)<sup>141</sup>. The proposal includes the promotion of media literacy as a measure to combat disinformation and the spread of fake news.

Regarding **foreign interference**, there have been several examples of external influences attempting to manipulate public debates, notably in Europe (Givi et al., 2024), and foreign interference in democratic processes has become a growing concern in recent years<sup>142</sup>. EU policymaking seeks to strengthen cooperation and cybersecurity measures and further efforts need to be made to efficiently detect and counter external interference, safeguarding media pluralism and democratic processes. Here too, proposal #27 of the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe (2022) expresses the need for EU measures to combat the threat of foreign interference.

Finally, many **challenges remain in the digital age** concerning democracy and media pluralism<sup>143</sup>, including sustainability of independent media outlets, the promotion of transparency and diversity in media ownership (Ranaivoson and Rozgonyi, 2023), the role of platforms in disinformation (Van

<sup>139</sup> Article 7 TEU allows for the possibility of suspending certain EU membership rights if a country seriously and persistently breaches the EU's principles. Under Article 258 TFEU, if a MS fails to "fulfil an obligation under the Treaties", the EC may address the matter to the CJEU.

<sup>140</sup> See <https://rm.coe.int/iris-2024-2-media-literacy/1680b06196>

<sup>141</sup> See the final report of the Conference on the Future of Europe (2022)

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/resources/library/media/20220509RES29121/20220509RES29121.pdf>

<sup>142</sup> Association for International Affairs (2023). Foreign Electoral Interference Affecting EU Democratic Processes. Study requested by the Authority for European Political Parties and European Political Foundations.

<https://www.appf.europa.eu/cmsdata/277388/Foreign%20electoral%20interference%20affecting%20EU%20democratic%20processes.pdf>

<sup>143</sup> See <https://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/>

Raemdonck and Meyer, 2024), ethical and legal risks raised by AI-driven media applications (Dutkiewicz et al, 2024) and addressing disparities in information access.

## 2.2.2. Strengthening the socio-economic resilience of CCS actors

### a. Context

The CCS are widely acknowledged as an important driver for economic growth and societal well-being in Europe. The New European Agenda for Culture<sup>144</sup> confirmed the conclusions of the November 2017 Gothenburg Leaders' Summit<sup>145</sup> where EU leaders highlighted the economic and social importance of culture and cultural heritage and its role for European identity.

The unprecedented global crisis that was triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic served as a stark revealer of the **entrenched vulnerabilities within Europe's CCS**. Research for the CULT Committee in 2021<sup>146</sup> highlighted that the CCS have been among the most negatively affected sectors due to the lockdown measures that were put in place throughout the EU. The arts, entertainment and recreations sector was the sector that recorded the largest decrease in both gross value added and hours worked (-6%) in Q1 2020 in the EU. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the CCS has long contended with structural challenges such as precarious labour models, limited access to financial resources, and a fragmented digital infrastructure. These pre-existing inadequacies significantly hampered the sector's capacity to adapt and mitigate the pandemic's disruptive effects.

Especially, the precarious conditions of the CCS had been acknowledged. Most CCS organisations are micro- and small businesses, with a significant proportion of self-employed workers. According to Eurostat, the percentage of self-employed cultural workers is considerably higher (32 %) than in employment for the total economy (14 %), and this difference has remained relatively stable over many years.<sup>147</sup> The CCS are therefore characterised by atypical working patterns, complicated employment statuses (e.g., short contracts, self-employed, often changing from one status to another, etc.) and a fragile economic situation (public-good character, insecure and fluctuating income, unpredictability of success). These often lead to **precarious working conditions**. Many artists and cultural professionals have a second job in either an arts- or non-arts-related field in order to sustain themselves.

The CCS, like many other sectors, are also increasingly affected by **skills and labour shortages**. Since a larger than average part of the working population is self-employed, access to skills development is not straightforward. In a sector dependent on creative, artistic, and technical skills, this is especially impactful. An added layer is the **digital transformation** which has a considerable impact on the required skills for the CCS (Hausemer et al., 2021).

Finally, **access to finance and developing a longer-term sustainable business** strategy that goes beyond short-term project funding logic remains challenging for many CCS actors. Their financing mix varies from completely public funding to mixed public, private and commercial funding to 100% commercial funding. Banks and private investors are usually not keen on financing the CCS. They either do not understand the characteristics of the sector or do not see the level of scaling possibilities that

<sup>144</sup> European Commission (2018). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions - A New European Agenda for Culture. COM/2018/267 final. Accessible via <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0267>

<sup>145</sup> European Commission (2017). The European Commission's contribution to the Leaders' meeting in Gothenburg, 17 November 2017. [https://commission.europa.eu/publications/european-commissions-contribution-leaders-meeting-gothenburg-17-november-2017\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/publications/european-commissions-contribution-leaders-meeting-gothenburg-17-november-2017_en)

<sup>146</sup> See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652242/IPOL\\_STU\(2021\)652242\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2021/652242/IPOL_STU(2021)652242_EN.pdf)

<sup>147</sup> Source: Eurostat, Cultural employment by sex and selected labour market characteristics (cult\_emp\_wsta).

they see in digital companies. As a result, many in the CCS lack the capacity to develop funding proposals that attract banks and/or private investors.<sup>148</sup>

To improve lending opportunities in the CCS, in 2016, the EIF launched the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCS GF) that provides guarantees to lending intermediaries which finance the CCS (see above in section 1.2.4). Financial intermediaries can receive a customised training, as part of a capacity building programme, to better understand the specific needs of CCS projects. More generally, the CCS GF encourages these financial intermediaries to adopt a specific credit assessment approach with SMEs and organisations, to increase their engagement in this area. The CCS GF is widely regarded as highly successful. By the end of 2023, the CCS GF is expected to provide over 2,459.4 million EUR of financing to SMEs, thereby enabling the support of 6,833 SMEs and 53,710 jobs in Europe's CCS.<sup>149</sup> Capacity building in financial literacy remains a challenge though, especially in the digital era where traditional business models are challenged.

Given the success of the CCS GF over the years, financing in support of the CCS has expanded. It is now also covered through the Cultural and Creative Portfolio Guarantee Product of the InvestEU programme. In May 2024, the EIF announced the mobilisation of around 141 million EUR for the CCS through the InvestEU Cultural and Creative Portfolio Guarantee Product.<sup>150</sup>

## b. EU policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024

An important and continuing area of policy work relates to the working conditions in the CCS. Already in June 2007, the European Parliament **adopted a resolution<sup>151</sup> on the social status of artists**, drawing attention to artists' social security and revenue problems. The EU Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 proposed a study on working conditions<sup>152</sup>, a dialogue with the sector through Voices of Culture (Voices of Culture, 2021) as well as an OMC group on working conditions (OMC, 2023). Fuelled by the (even more) precarious situation of many CCS actors post-COVID-19, an EP resolution on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU was adopted in October 2021<sup>153</sup>, calling on the Commission to propose a European Status of the Artist, setting out a common framework for working conditions and minimum standards common to all EU countries. The EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 of the EC includes working conditions as an important priority and proposed the development of an **online platform to enable continuous exchange of information** between stakeholders. A first edition of this platform – called *This is How we Work*<sup>154</sup> – was presented in November 2023, providing an analysis of the different statuses of Member States. The analysis highlights the current widespread diversity in national statuses.

The EP also developed a **legislative initiative<sup>155</sup> focusing on working conditions** in the CCS, as a joint activity by the CULT and the EMPL committees which was adopted in November 2023. It asks for a

<sup>148</sup> See the following study on more information on obstacles and opportunities in financing the CCS: [https://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/access-to-finance-study\\_final-report\\_kea-june2010.pdf](https://www.keanet.eu/wp-content/uploads/access-to-finance-study_final-report_kea-june2010.pdf)

<sup>149</sup> See [https://www.eif.org/what\\_we\\_do/guarantees/cultural\\_creative\\_sectors\\_guarantee\\_facility/ccs\\_implementation\\_status.pdf](https://www.eif.org/what_we_do/guarantees/cultural_creative_sectors_guarantee_facility/ccs_implementation_status.pdf)

<sup>150</sup> See the EIF's press release on 21 May 2024 <https://www.eif.org/InvestEU/news/2024/investeu-eif-extends-support-to-europes-cultural-creative-businesses-and-audiovisual-sector.htm>

<sup>151</sup> European Parliament resolution of 7 June 2007 on the social status of artists (2006/2249(INI)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-6-2007-0236\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-6-2007-0236_EN.html)

<sup>152</sup> See <https://cultureactioneurope.org/knowledge/study-on-artists-working-conditions-published/>

<sup>153</sup> European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU (2020/2261(INI)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0430\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0430_EN.html)

<sup>154</sup> See <https://www.creativesunite.eu/work-condition/>

<sup>155</sup> European Parliament resolution of 21 November 2023 with recommendations to the Commission on an EU framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors (2023/2051(INL)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0405\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2023-0405_EN.html)



Directive on decent working conditions, for Council Decisions towards EU standards, and to adapt EU programmes to ensure that artists are paid in compliance with international labour and social standards<sup>156</sup>. In its answer<sup>157</sup> the European Commission does not mention the development of a Directive, but stresses the application of existing frameworks and legislation, the topic of working conditions in the review of the European Agenda for Culture and the assessment of existing gaps, for example in social security coverage. The combination of the incoherence among national statuses and the lack of a European Framework on working conditions poses a grand challenge for the next parliamentary period to conceive the next steps for improving the working conditions of artists and cultural and creative workers.

To (financially) support the post-pandemic recovery of the CCS, the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)**<sup>158</sup> has been mobilised by 16 Member States to incorporate measures targeting the CCS within their plans (see above in section 1.2.4). The proposed initiatives include infrastructure development, the promotion of digitization, and cultural tourism projects that utilize cultural activities to foster social cohesion (EC DG CONNECT, 2023). Four plans were directly targeted at improving the working conditions in the CCS.<sup>159</sup> Also, the CoR advocated for stronger cultural support in EU funding programmes post-COVID-19. Their 2021 Opinion<sup>160</sup> urges for more EU projects and programmes (such as REACT-EU and SURE) to integrate cultural initiatives into economic recovery programmes to ease the financial burden on local governments.

The cohesion policy objectives set out in the 2021 **Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)**<sup>161</sup> acknowledge the importance of culture, tourism, and heritage for the (economic) development of urban and non-urban areas in Europe. Different funds that make up the EU cohesion policy in the 2021-2027 period were mobilised to invest in the CCS. This includes for example the **European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)** (and European territorial cooperation), which provides crucial financial resources to support creative clusters, cultural infrastructure projects, and heritage preservation initiatives within cities and regions. Another example is the **European Social Fund (ESF)**, which complements these efforts by investing in skills development for creative professionals. A recent study<sup>162</sup> showed that, in the 2014–2020 programming period, 6.7 billion EUR in ERDF funds (equivalent to 3.1 % of the total) were invested in the cultural sector, with cultural heritage projects dominating the funding. A 2018 study for the CULT Committee<sup>163</sup>, however, also found limitations to the **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**, such as the limited acknowledgement of the importance of culture for innovation and the economy. The study suggested that the Committee should propose a broad theme 'Strengthening human skills and capabilities as Key Enablers of economic and social

<sup>156</sup> See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS\\_STU\(2023\)747426](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_STU(2023)747426)

<sup>157</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/CULT/DV/2024/03-11/COM\\_response\\_INL\\_socialandprofessionalsituationofartists\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/plmrep/COMMITTEES/CULT/DV/2024/03-11/COM_response_INL_socialandprofessionalsituationofartists_EN.pdf)

<sup>158</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R0241>

<sup>159</sup> See [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic\\_analysis/scoreboard\\_thematic\\_analysis\\_culture.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic_analysis/scoreboard_thematic_analysis_culture.pdf)

<sup>160</sup> European Committee of the Regions (CoR) (2021). Opinion: Restart of Cultural and Creative Sectors. <https://cor.europa.eu/en/our-work/Pages/OpinionTimeline.aspx?opId=CDR-4616-2020>

<sup>161</sup> Established under: Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32021R1060>

<sup>162</sup> See more information via: <https://www.espon.eu/HERIWELL>

<sup>163</sup> Research for CULT Committee – ESIF and Culture, Education, Youth and Sport (2018). See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/617475/IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)617475\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/617475/IPOL_STU(2018)617475_EN.pdf)

development', with specific reference to the roles of, for example, culture as a central theme for the ESIF Common Provisions Regulation.

Beyond the initiatives to boost the post-pandemic recovery of the CCS, the EU also continued to **support the CCS in adopting the necessary skills** to become increasingly innovative, competitive, and able to address demands from the triple transition (social, digital, and green). The EU has offered support, for example, through projects funded under Creative Europe and Erasmus+<sup>164</sup>. The EU also aimed to strengthen the opportunities and capacities for cultural entrepreneurs and CCS organisations by **promoting access to finance**, with initiatives such as CulturEU<sup>165</sup>, Creative FLIP<sup>166</sup> or Culture Moves Europe, which are funded under the Creative Europe programme<sup>167</sup>.

At a systemic level, the 2022 **Council Conclusions on Building a European Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem**<sup>168</sup> aim to develop a comprehensive strategy to support the growth, resilience, and innovation of the cultural and creative industries ecosystem (CCIE) in Europe, addressing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the digital transformation. The strategy consists of improving European CCIE enterprises' access to funding; spurring skills development and enhancement, education and training; maintaining and reaffirming cultural wealth and diversity in the digital era; strengthening exports by CCIE enterprises; and promoting responsible policies in CCIE enterprises.

### c. Key (future) opportunities and reflections for future EU CCS policy development

Although the COVID-19 crisis created momentum for several initiatives to tackle the fragile CCS and support their resilience, the **systemic transformation of the CCS is far from over**. Continued policy efforts will be needed in the coming years in multiple areas to further improve the socio-economic resilience of the sector, through improving working conditions, skills development, access to financing and funding and supporting the digital transformation, etc.

The CCS faces disruption from advancements in AI and other new technologies. These changes further disrupt traditional creative value chains, forcing innovation and leading to the emergence of new business models and market opportunities (see e.g. IDEA Consult et al., 2017; Ranaivoson, 2019). **Further investments are crucial to accelerate the green and digital transformation** of the CCS (IDEA Consult and Technopolis Group, 2023). At the same time, new market developments and evolving roles for CCS actors in society (e.g., innovation and well-being) present opportunities to engage with new financiers such as impact investors. Ideally, funding structures should **move away from project-based funding models (focused solely on content creation) towards supporting longer-term processes**. While new career paths are emerging in the CCS (such as the growing demand in digital arts for marketing and communications, user-centred design for problem solving, and

<sup>164</sup> For example, the Erasmus+ project Cyanotypes (<https://cyanotypes.website/>) is a large-scale Alliance for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills project, applied to the whole of the CCS. Cyanotypes is a 4-year project, which started in 2022 and looks into scenario-based learning for the CCS in order to anticipate future skills needs and to look at innovating in the way we learn.

<sup>165</sup> CulturEU is an interactive funding guide from DG EAC, aimed at easing access to EU funding opportunities. See <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/funding/cultureu-funding-guide>

<sup>166</sup> Creative FLIP is a preparatory action co-funded by DG EAC since 2019. It organizes activities supporting the CCS' actors by improving access to finance, issuing recommendations for CCS skills classification, piloting innovative learning concepts & enhancing creative skills development; and boosting knowledge management in the field of IPR for the cultural and creative sectors. The project developed three interactive tools supporting the socio-economic resilience of CCS actors: (i) for better access to finance (<https://creativesunite.eu/synm/>), (ii) for information on IPR (<https://creativesunite.eu/myip/>) and (iii) for information on working conditions (<https://creativesunite.eu/work-condition/>)

<sup>167</sup> Culture Moves Europe provides financial support for individual mobility of CCS actors. See <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/creative-europe-culture-strand/culture-moves-europe>

<sup>168</sup> See [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ%3AC%3A2022%3A160%3AFULL&uri=uriserv%3A0J.C\\_.2022.160.01.0013.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ%3AC%3A2022%3A160%3AFULL&uri=uriserv%3A0J.C_.2022.160.01.0013.01.ENG)

heritage crafts in eco-construction), the short-term project funding logic remains a hurdle, hindering the development of a stable and skilled workforce.

In October 2022, CULT highlighted the **need for upscaling the funding of CCS-supporting policies and programmes** in the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) of the EU, to be able to (further) support the necessary post-COVID-19 transformations, as well as address on-going digital transformations and multiple other crises such as climate change and the war in Ukraine<sup>169</sup>. However, while numerous policies and projects in the CCS are underway, they are often funded in an ad hoc manner and lack long-term support. This scarcity of funding for structural transformation poses a significant challenge for future policy making.

Communications of EU bodies and research find that there are still several challenges that need to be addressed in order to make the CCS more socio-economically stable. For example, the Voices of Culture report from 2020<sup>170</sup>, which was based on dialogue sessions on 'The **role of culture in non-urban areas** of the European Union' stresses several shortcomings that policies need to address in the future. This includes a **lack of cultural institutions, creative makers and participants in cultural offers**, the under-utilisation of the potential for urban-suburban-rural **cooperation** in culture, **uneven availability and distribution of cultural funding** and **access to support structures** in areas outside the main urban centres, and a lack of understanding among policymakers of many aspects of culture.

### 2.2.3. Ensuring a fair online ecosystem for culture and media

#### a. Context

At the origin of the development of the Internet and of the World Wide Web, there was the belief that the online world would enable the greater empowerment and emancipation of citizens as it would reduce the control that media conglomerates had over the production and circulation of information (Doyle, 2015). In reality, the various outcomes of the effects of digital technologies are more ambiguous and nuanced. Online activity is growing exponentially (see, e.g., Ochai, 2022) and **new services have emerged at every step in the value chain**, including within CCS value chains, from creation to consumption, relying on innovative business models (see, e.g., IDEA Consult et al., 2017; Ranaivoson, 2019). This to the point that it has become “increasingly difficult to draw **clear lines between the digital economy, and cultural and creative industries**, as their value chains are becoming ever more intertwined” (Ochai, 2022, p. 93).

Digitalisation can democratize citizens' access to diverse perspectives and information due to the increased availability of content online. However, this potential is threatened by the fragmentation of the EU market alongside increasingly concentrated online global corporate platforms which leverage their market power and influence across markets (Weck, 2020). As underlined by Furman et al. (2019) and Coyle (2018), in established platform markets in which the incumbent platform is the main gateway between firms and customers, market contestability becomes a sceptical notion. Especially when, as highlighted by White and Jing (2022), these powerful platforms also strive to protect themselves from rivals through various (anti)competitive strategies. This has led to the rise of **hegemonic online platforms** which, combined with the digital divide, create further barriers (Ochai, 2022).

<sup>169</sup> See Newsletter CULT Committee meetings on 3 October and 24-25 October 2022. 'Upscaling the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework: a resilient EU budget fit for new challenges.'

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/260850/CULT%20Newsletter%20October%202022.pdf>

<sup>170</sup> O'Connell, et al. (2020). Voices of Culture: The role of culture in non-urban areas of the European Union. Goethe Institute Brussels.

<https://voicesofculture.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/VoC-Brainstorming-Report-Role-of-Culture-in-Non-Urban-Areas-of-the-EU.pdf>

To exemplify the impact of such platforms on competition, the chances of smaller and/or independent CCS creators to reach larger audiences increases with the use and support of gatekeeping platforms for uploading and disseminating their content or for advertising an event. The ability to reach the right people through the right channels is controlled and curated by the gatekeeping platform. Furthermore, video-sharing-platforms (such as YouTube) even employ demonetizing practices that reduce the creators' earning chances (Dunna et al, 2022). Before the DMA, gatekeeping platforms could prioritize their own commercial interests over artistic merit, risking marginalizing certain voices and reducing perspectives. With gatekeepers dictating what content and information reaches consumers, creators are prioritizing commercially viable projects, over experimenting and/or creating inherently driven works, to increase their chances of being picked up by the algorithm and pushed in recommendations (Ranaivoson et al., 2024). This can stifle creativity in the long run.

The digital economy and activities must, therefore, be rules-based. **The EU has already engaged in regulations for the digital space which make it a global frontrunner.** The EU's decision to act and regulate the digital sphere is living up to the EU's own core principles and missions as stipulated in the TFEU,<sup>171</sup> among which – relevant for this section – are the existence of fair competition and consumer protection. Important to highlight here is that the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights<sup>172</sup> recognises the rights, freedoms, and principles of the peoples of Europe and covers rights and freedoms concerning, among others, the protection of personal data, prohibition of discrimination, access to services of general economic interest, the right to respect for their private communications, and a high level of consumer protection as enshrined in Article 38 TFEU. Enforcing accountability of online platforms and pushing for increased transparency is therefore beneficial, for one, to ensure that the market is open, fair, and competitive (so that business users can trustfully conduct their business on these platforms), and secondly, to ensure consumers' rights and their welfare are protected not only offline but also online.

Finally, **copyright and related rights require adaptation and protection in fair online ecosystems.** They serve as a catalyst for economic growth in the CCS and foster a thriving cultural ecosystem by incentivising creators to produce subject matter, such as literary and artistic works and performances, which will be legally protected. They provide creators with a legal framework they can leverage to monetise their creations. Step-by-step European harmonisation has led to a substantial *acquis communautaire* on copyright and related rights law that highlights the importance of copyright for the CCS.<sup>173</sup> Indeed, driven by the objective of completing the internal market, a significant number of harmonising legal texts have been drafted in this field at the EU level, some of which are described in more detail in section b. below. At the time of writing, the *acquis communautaire* on copyright and related rights consists of **twelve directives, two regulations and a significant body of case law of the European Court of Justice (ECJ).**<sup>174</sup> Yet, **there is no fully harmonised European copyright law.** National laws still retain importance in this field, particularly as to initial ownership, moral rights, and copyright exploitation contracts. Moreover, although the present-day digitised context is inherently

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<sup>171</sup> See [http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu\\_2012/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/treaty/tfeu_2012/oj)

<sup>172</sup> CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (2000/C 364/01)  
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text\\_en.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/charter/pdf/text_en.pdf)

<sup>173</sup> See for a thorough deconstruction and subsequent reconstruction of EU copyright law: Bernd Justin Jütte (2017) *Reconstructing European Copyright Law for the Digital Single Market: Between Old Paradigms and Digital Challenges* (Luxemburger Juristische Studien – Luxembourg Legal Studies 10, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft 2017).

<sup>174</sup> See for a full overview of EU copyright legislation: <https://bit.ly/3oU8ITq>. See in detail eg the contributions of renowned authors in Michel M Walter and Silke von Lewinski (eds), *European Copyright Law. A Commentary* (Oxford University Press 2010); T Dreier and PB Hugenoltz (eds), *Concise European Copyright Law* (2nd edn, Kluwer Law International 2016); Irini Stamatoudi and Paul Torremans (eds), *EU Copyright Law. A Commentary* (Elgar Commentaries, 2nd edn, Edward Elgar 2021).

cross-border, copyright law is essentially territorial, which means that its application is limited to the confines of a certain country.

## b. EU policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024

A number of regulations and directives related to a fair online ecosystem have been adopted or enforced between 2019 and 2024. For some of them, the scope goes beyond that of the CULT Committee, but they are important to describe here as they have a direct impact on the CCS. The main objectives across these various instruments can be summarized as follows:

- **to protect fundamental rights, democracy and the rule of law**, notably from high-risk artificial intelligence (AI) - this includes establishing obligations for AI based on its potential risks and level of impact, primarily focusing on regulating AI technology itself. This includes ensuring the protection of minors, for example, by enhancing the accountability of platforms for the content they host and distribute as well as algorithmic transparency, and plurality of (information) sources;
- **to guarantee a competitive and fair digital sector**, allowing innovative digital businesses to grow whilst bolstering the rights of artists (see section 2.2.2). This includes recognizing the role of CCS in the digital sector and, through regulations, creating **a more level playing field** between linear and non-linear<sup>175</sup>, as well as domestic and foreign audiovisual media service providers. A safer online environment for companies, with fairer relationships between the online platforms and businesses using them, can boost innovation;
- **to provide a safer online environment for consumers**, and make European digital cultural content more easily accessible and usable for them;
- **to promote European audiovisual works** and ensure their availability, wide distribution, consumption, and discoverability;
- **to provide reliable information** to citizens and promote media and digital skills.

The main instrument aimed at ensuring a fair online ecosystem that is focused on the CCS is the aforementioned **Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)**<sup>176</sup> (see section 1.2.1). The AVMSD governs EU-wide coordination of national legislation on all audiovisual media — traditional TV broadcasts and on-demand<sup>175</sup> services.<sup>177</sup> It ensures consistency in how media services are delivered and consumed across Member States.

Due to rapid technological advances and market shifts over the past five decades, and following the various Directives established since the Television without Frontiers Directive in 1989 (89/552/EEC)<sup>178</sup>, a new revision of the AVMSD was proposed in 2016 to keep pace with developments between broadcasters and digital services. As policymakers pointed out at the time: “The audiovisual media landscape is changing at a rapid pace due to **ever-increasing convergence** between television and

<sup>175</sup> Linear media services refer to programmed broadcasting (television and radio in traditional terms), non-linear media services correspond to media that can be interacted, for example video on demand.

<sup>176</sup> Two other instruments or set of instruments focused on CCS (and in particular on media) are the European Democracy Action Plan (see 1.2.2) and the Copyright Directive (see 1.2.1).

<sup>177</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/audiovisual-and-media-services>

<sup>178</sup> During the 1980s, developments in broadcasting technologies led to an increase in the number of commercial TV stations in the EU and to their transnational distribution. This generated the need for common minimum standards, which were first laid out in the Television without Frontiers Directive in 1989 (89/552/EEC). In 1997, its first revision put in place the ‘country of origin’ principle, placing broadcasters under the jurisdiction of the Member State in which they were based. Provisions concerning new services, such as non-linear/on-demand providers, were added in the 2007 revision. The Directive<sup>178</sup> was codified in 2010 and renamed the AVMSD (Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services).

services distributed via the internet. [...] The Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy for Europe calls for a modernisation of the AVMSD to reflect these market, consumption and technological changes<sup>179</sup>. The revisions involved lengthy discussions and intense industry lobbying, as they were negotiated against the backdrop of increasing domination in the European media ecosystem by global media platforms such as YouTube, Netflix, and Facebook/Meta, whose subscriber numbers/audience reach and advertisement revenues had been steadily rising. Aside from market shifts generated by the expansion of digital services, the AVMSD revision was also contextualised by developing **geopolitical undercurrents**, such as the invasion of the Crimean Peninsula, a part of Ukraine, by Russia in 2014 and the Brexit referendum in 2016. The former led to debates about the country of origin principle in small Member States with large Russian-speaking minorities, under concerns about national security and public safety. The latter appears to have changed the power dynamics in the debates, limiting the UK's influence on the revision, including the strong support for free market approaches that it had on previous versions of the act.

The latest revision of the AVMSD<sup>180</sup> was adopted by the EP and the Council on 14 November 2018, and remains the **cornerstone of European audiovisual policy**. The Directive aims to update the legal framework "in order to reflect developments in the market and to achieve a balance between access to online content services, consumer protection and competitiveness"<sup>181</sup>. It establishes a framework for holding online platforms, particularly video-sharing platforms, accountable for the content they host and distribute. The revised AVMSD includes the following new elements:

- a strengthened **country of origin principle**, with more clarity on which Member State's rules apply, aligned derogation procedures for TV broadcasters and on-demand service providers and possibilities for derogations in the event of public security concerns and serious risks to public health;
- **increased obligations to promote European works for on-demand services**;
- an extension of certain audiovisual **rules to video-sharing platforms and social media services**<sup>182</sup>;
- **better protection of minors** against harmful content in the online world, including strengthening protections on VoD services. Video-sharing platforms also must respect certain obligations to protect children from inappropriate audiovisual commercial communications<sup>183</sup>;
- reinforced protection of TV and VoD against incitement to violence or hatred, and public provocation to commit terrorist offences;

<sup>179</sup> Proposal for a DIRECTIVE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services in view of changing market realities. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1464618463840&uri=COM%3A2016%3A287%3AFIN>

<sup>180</sup> Directive (EU) 2018/1808 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 amending Directive 2010/13/EU on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (Audiovisual Media Services Directive) in view of changing market realities

<sup>181</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32018L1808>

<sup>182</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/revision-avmsd>

<sup>183</sup> These rules are supplemented by the 1998 Council Recommendations. See [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJL\\_1998\\_270.01.0048.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A1998%3A270%3ATOC](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3AOJL_1998_270.01.0048.01.ENG&toc=OJ%3AL%3A1998%3A270%3ATOC) and 2006 (<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006H0952&qid=1651650987834>).

- more flexibility in television advertising, allowing broadcasters to choose more freely when to show ads throughout the day. The overall limit is set at 20% of broadcasting time between 6:00 to 18:00 with the same share allowed during prime time (18:00-00:00);
- independence of audiovisual regulators.

In 2020, the EC adopted two sets of guidelines meant to contribute to the harmonised implementation and enforcement of the AVMSD: **guidelines on video-sharing platforms**<sup>184</sup> and **guidelines on European works**<sup>185</sup>.

Next to the AVMSD, regarding the promotion of European works, in 2021, the Council published a set of guidelines on increasing the availability and competitiveness of European audiovisual and media content<sup>186</sup>, prioritising cultural diversity, the promotion and the prominence of European content. In 2022, the EC set up an OMC group of Member States' experts on co-productions, aimed at encouraging co-productions among EU-27 countries, based on experiences and best practices, to increase competitiveness and sustainability<sup>187</sup>.

Another instrument important to describe here are **Multimedia Actions**<sup>188</sup>. These Actions correspond to a yearly budget that the EU distributes among media to make sure that citizens have access to independent information about European topics, a condition for fair ecosystems. The **pan-EU audiovisual reporting action**<sup>189</sup> aims to enhance the quantity, quality and impact of independent audiovisual reporting on EU affairs by pan-European media outlets in as many languages and Member States as possible. Until now, the pan-EU audiovisual reporting has been covered through successive **Framework Partnerships Agreements (FPA)** signed directly with the TV channel **Euronews**. The current FPA with Euronews was signed in 2021 until the end of 2024. These partnerships cover the production and broadcast of European programmes, a network of correspondents, and several language services (Hungarian, Greek, Portuguese and Arabic). The **EU audio reporting action**<sup>190</sup> aims to stimulate innovative reporting on EU affairs using multiple audio formats, whether through traditional or digital stations and platforms. It encompasses the production and dissemination of audio programmes on EU affairs by European media, both on air and/or on digital platforms. Following the last call, a 2-year grant agreement (4.4 million EUR) for 2023-2024 was signed with the radio network **Euranet Plus**. A new call for proposals will be published in 2024.

As to copyright law, the 2019 **DSM Directive** (see above in section 1.2.1) aims at better addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital environment, hereby contributing to the establishment of the so-called Digital Single Market (DSM). First, this Directive provides measures to adapt exceptions and limitations to the digital and cross-border environment, seeking to enhance access to protected subject matter across borders within the EU. Second, the Directive seeks to contribute to a well-functioning marketplace for copyright, establishing a related right in press publications, an enhanced form of accountability for online content-sharing service providers (OCSSPs) and several harmonising provisions of copyright contract law that seek to ensure fair remuneration for

<sup>184</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020XC0707%2802%29>

<sup>185</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ%3AC%3A2020%3A223%3ATOC&uri=uriserv%3A0J.C\\_2020.223.01.0010.01.ENG](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ%3AC%3A2020%3A223%3ATOC&uri=uriserv%3A0J.C_2020.223.01.0010.01.ENG)

<sup>186</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/eycs/2021/11/29-30/>

<sup>187</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/bc19a442-a01f-11ec-83e1-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-253765463>

<sup>188</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/multimedia-actions>

<sup>189</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/funding/pan-european-audiovisual-reporting>

<sup>190</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/multimedia-actions>

creators and level the playing field between artists and their commercial counterparties. The monitoring of the implementation of the DSM Directive in the EU Member States forms part of the 2020 Intellectual Property Action Plan of the EC.<sup>191</sup>

Regarding the protection of minors, **Better Internet for Kids (BIK+)**<sup>192</sup> was adopted, based on the 2012 European strategy for a better internet for children. BIK+ aims to ensure that children are protected, respected and empowered online. It is supported under the Connecting Europe Facility<sup>193</sup> and through programmes such as Horizon Europe<sup>194</sup>.

The scope of most of the other regulations goes beyond that of the CULT Committee. However, they still have crucial impacts on the CCS. For one, they make an intensive use of social media and other online platforms for distribution and promotion. Secondly, online dematerialized consumption has become increasingly important. Thirdly, AI-based tools enter creation and production processes (Ochai, 2022). The following policy initiatives are important:

- **The Directive (EU 2018/1972) on establishing the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC)**<sup>195</sup>. The Directive focuses on regulating electronic communications services and networks, and not online platforms per se. However, it does contain some provisions related to certain aspects of online platforms and their activities, especially those providing communication services or using electronic communications networks.<sup>196</sup> EECC upholds access to high-speed internet which is essential to the distribution and consumption of digital content which includes works generated by the CCS.
- **The P2B (Platform to Business) Regulation**<sup>197</sup>. This Regulation aims to increase transparency and fairness in the relationship between online platforms and the businesses that use them, such as CCS entities. While the regulation primarily focuses on improving transparency, fairness, and predictability for businesses using online platforms, it indirectly addresses the accountability of online platforms by imposing certain obligations on them.
- **The EP resolution of 20 October 2021 on Europe's Media in the Digital Decade**<sup>198</sup>. In reaction to the MAAP (see section 1.2.2), this resolution dealt with post-COVID-19 recovery and support measures, ensuring the level playing field related to consolidation tendencies, and the transformation and promotion of the European media and audiovisual sectors. It touched upon the lack of legislation to ensure a fair online ecosystem. It mentioned access to and transparency of data, platforms and algorithmic accountability, and advertising rules. The EP proposed tailored

<sup>191</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Making the most of the EU's innovative potential: an intellectual property action plan to support the EU's recovery and resilience (2020) COM/2020/760 final, <https://bit.ly/49zsbq6>. The aim of the Action Plan was to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular on small to medium sized businesses, by creating awareness on the specific role of IPR in supporting the European industry to recover. See AEPO-ARTIS (2021) for an opinion on this action plan published by CULT.

<sup>192</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/strategy-better-internet-kids>

<sup>193</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/connecting-europe-facility\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/connecting-europe-facility_en)

<sup>194</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en)

<sup>195</sup> (EECC) Directive (EU) 2018/1972 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 establishing the European Electronic Communications Code (Recast) Text with EEA relevance.

<sup>196</sup> When it comes to cybersecurity threats, online platforms can be as affected as electronic communications networks and services, thus the EECC covers the security and integrity of networks that online platforms use to deliver their services. The EECC also covers consumer protection and thus indirectly, the accountability of online platforms that offer communication services or interact with consumers may be influenced by the EECC. Net neutrality principles are also upheld by the EECC, and they are important as the content reaches audiences without facing barriers or discrimination.

<sup>197</sup> Regulation (EU) 2019/1150 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on promoting fairness and transparency for business users of online intermediation services.

<sup>198</sup> European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 on Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: an Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation (2021/2017(INI)) non-legislative resolution.



support measures for the news media and audiovisual sectors, underlying options such as tax incentives, trade policy, and enhanced accountability and rules for online platforms to establish a regulatory level playing field allowing media to continue to invest in news and cultural content while protecting European consumers equally online and offline.

- The **Digital Markets Act (DMA)**<sup>199</sup> (see section 1.2.1). The DMA aims at putting **an end to unfair practices by companies that act as gatekeepers in the online platform economy**. The DMA sets out clear and objective criteria to identify "gatekeepers".<sup>200</sup> Gatekeepers are large online platforms that provide an important gateway between business users and consumers – whose position can grant them the power to act as a private rule maker, and thus creating a bottleneck in the digital economy. To address these issues, the DMA defines a series of obligations that gatekeepers will need to respect, including prohibiting them from engaging in certain behaviours. Some obligations include allowing the gatekeeping platform's business users to access the data that they generate in their use of the gatekeeper's platform or preventing gatekeepers from treating their own services and products more favourably in ranking than similar services or products offered by third parties on the gatekeeper's platform.
- The **Staff working document (SWD) accompanying the Commission's Report on Competition Policy 2023**<sup>201</sup>. The SWD addresses competition policy for ICT and media, discussing EU Merger Control in its Section 2. The purpose of EU merger control is to ensure that market structures remain competitive while enabling smooth restructuring of the industry. EU merger control ensures that changes in the market structure which lead to harmful effects on competition do not occur. The policy applies not only to EU-based companies, but also to any company active on the EU markets.
- **The Digital Services Act (DSA)**<sup>202</sup> (see section 1.2.1). The DSA aims to combat the dissemination of illegal content online and enhance user protection. It ensures the transparency and accountability of online platforms by requiring them to regularly report on their activities related to content moderation, safeguarding fundamental rights such as freedom of expression and privacy through transparent and fair content moderation practices. The DSA requires very large online platforms (**VLOPs**) and very large online search engines (**VLOSEs**) to regularly assess the systemic risks that their services may present to society (Broughton Micova and Calef, 2023) – including the risk of their services being misused as a tool for disinformation campaigns. The DSA applies to all digital services that connect consumers to goods, services, or content, including online marketplaces, social networking services, and content-sharing platforms. It creates comprehensive new obligations for online platforms to reduce harms and counter risks online, introduces strong protections for users' fundamental rights online, and places digital platforms under a unique new transparency and accountability framework, with new supervisory powers for the European Commission.
- The **Artificial Intelligence Act**<sup>203</sup>. AI has emerged as a matter of policy and legal intervention. Already in 2020, the CULT Committee organised a **hearing on "the use of Artificial Intelligence**

<sup>199</sup> (DMA) Regulation (EU) 2022/1925 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 September 2022 on contestable and fair markets in the digital sector and amending Directives (EU) 2019/1937 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Digital Markets Act) (Text with EEA relevance).

<sup>200</sup> See [https://digital-markets-act.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://digital-markets-act.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>201</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52024SC0053&qid=1711118255281>

<sup>202</sup> (DSA) Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market For Digital Services and amending Directive 2000/31/EC (Digital Services Act) (Text with EEA relevance).

<sup>203</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act)

**in education, culture and the audiovisual sector”**.<sup>204</sup> The purpose of the hearing was to enable CULT Members to know more about the development of AI in education, culture and the audiovisual sector, considering the increasing importance it has for these sectors. In 2024, the **AI Act** was adopted, which aims to protect fundamental rights, democracy, the rule of law and environmental sustainability from high-risk AI, while boosting innovation and establishing Europe as a leader in the field. The regulation establishes obligations for AI based on its potential risks and level of impact. The primary focus of the AI Act is on regulating AI technology itself, rather than directly addressing online platform accountability.<sup>205</sup> In doing so, it affects the copyright framework too, specifically in terms of transparency and disclosure.

### c. Key (future) opportunities and reflections for future EU CCS policy development

The various instruments developed over the period concern and involve large sets of stakeholders, including linear and non-linear media services providers (broadcasters, VoD services, video-sharing platforms, etc.), electronic communications networks and services under Member States jurisdiction, regulatory authorities within the EU both at national/local and EU levels, right holders, etc.

When it comes to the DSA, the rules specified primarily concern online intermediaries and platforms, thus technically all digital services. Online platforms falling under the categories of VLOPs and VLOSEs are covered by additional specific rules. This concerns mostly US-based online platforms, i.e. Google, Amazon, Meta, Apple, Microsoft, and more recently ByteDance (China-based), owner of TikTok. Regulating these VLOPs and VLOSEs has proven to be **particularly challenging** notably because the regulatory paradigm has been (or was until very recently) unable to tackle issues of competitive dominance (Jacobides and Lianos, 2021) in a context where online platforms are intermediating several markets or market sides (Ballon and Van Heesvelde, 2011) instead of dominating one market or sector. Under the DMA, this short list of designated gatekeepers are prohibited certain behaviours and are required to uphold others. In general, stakeholders such as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) argue that such regulations help addressing the overwhelming power of big tech by holding these platform providers accountable (EBU, 2024).

All the VLOPs and VLOSEs face **technical and legal challenges** that have a great impact on our societies regarding, for example, liability for User-Generated Content, the accuracy and reliability of automated filtering systems for copyrighted content, or the need to moderate greater and greater amounts of content.

Relatedly, the process of ensuring a fair online ecosystem is a **conflictual process**. Lobbying and conflicting interests could influence the effective implementation of regulations. Member States can have varying objectives. Some legal definitions (e.g., gatekeepers) can lead to legal disputes. Cooperation is perceived as a way forward, be it between platforms and regulators for better enforcement of regulations, or among national authorities for enforcement actions.

While AI brings opportunities, several stakeholders have pointed at challenges and threats. For instance, according to the European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers (GESAC), transparency and accountability standards are necessary as regards data sets used to train AI tools that generate new content based on pre-existing works of authors. These standards are particularly

<sup>204</sup> CULT (2020) The use of Artificial Intelligence in education, culture and the audiovisual sector.

<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/the-use-of-artificial-intelligence-in-ed/product-details/20200305CHE07241>

<sup>205</sup> For example, Article 52 deals with Transparency obligations for certain AI systems based on the risks they carry; Article 54 deals with processing of personal data for developing certain AI systems in the public interest in the AI regulatory sandbox which are required to keep the logs for one year for the purpose of fulfilling accountability and documentation obligations.

important as they enable monitoring to ensure fair remuneration<sup>206</sup>. The EBU (2024), while recognising that the AI Act is a start, pleads for the EU to develop a comprehensive approach that sustains and protects media content while also offering guarantees for audience trust.

**The acceleration of market trends and imbalances** generates several challenges, including the existence of uneven public support mechanisms, a widening gap between revenues from internet advertising and traditional advertising, and unbalanced access to creative and cultural content online. Shifts in market structures and the dominance of certain major players can jeopardise the prominence of public interest content/services, especially due to unequal negotiation power with device manufacturers and app stores.

**Barriers to trade and lack of harmonisation** are associated with the existing fragmentation in national regulatory frameworks. In this context, legal uncertainty can generate challenges related to transparency, monitoring and accountability, data management and end-to-end interoperability, for example with regards to metadata.

**Maintaining and improving infrastructure and access** remain of general concern across the different media-related sectors. Challenges point to (1) increasing requirements for performance parameters and the latency, availability and reliability of electronic communications networks; (2) insufficient cooperation between network operators and equipment manufacturers in order to facilitate access by end-users with disabilities to electronic communications services; (3) digital divide; (4) inconsistencies in the application of remedies concerning draft measures proposed by national regulatory authorities; and (5) large differences in negotiating power between undertakings (in some markets).

The **circulation of European works and the promotion of cultural diversity in the audiovisual sector** is a key concern for the audiovisual sector. This is primarily due to uneven visibility of European works, especially online; unequal production and distribution resources between large and small media markets; and the limited circulation of independent productions or European works from small language-markets. The rights for the transmission of content protected by copyright or related rights, such as audiovisual works, are often licensed on a territorial basis, or providers of online content services might choose to serve specific markets only. The same applies to content such as sports events, which is often also licensed by the organisers or offered by providers of online content services on a territorial basis.

A major challenge for EU policymakers is that **online platforms are complex to regulate and subject to various policies**. By (legal) definition, they are huge players, generally operating cross-border activities in most, if not all, Member States, with sometimes very different services provided. Besides, most regulations mentioned here address platforms that despite some common features are very diverse in terms of country of origin or core sector. **In contrast, while the harmonization of legislation and policy is an ongoing process**, the implementation of directives may lead to further fragmentation. Coordinating efforts across different jurisdictions within the EU can therefore be challenging. In some Member States, understaffing can hinder effective implementation of regulatory management tools.

At the same time, the legislative space has become increasingly crowded in past years: where the AVMSD used to be the defining piece of EU media policy, it is now one among others (Ranaivoson et al., 2023). There are, for example, concerns whether the DSA and AVMSD overlap (Broughton and

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<sup>206</sup> See <https://authorsocieties.eu/press-release-ai-act-gesac-welcomes-todays-vote-at-the-european-parliament-in-favour-of-including-generative-ai-systems-and-requiring-them-to-respect-copyright/>

Kukliš, 2023). Additionally, the EMFA brings crucial changes, notably regarding the replacement of the ERGA by the European Board for Media Services. With the development of more recent pieces of legislation, the question of the AVMSD's necessity itself may become relevant (Ranaivoson et al., 2023).

In the field of copyright law, EU policymakers have exerted significant efforts over the years to ensure **access to content** on the part of consumers and to bolster the **public domain**. There are several obstacles along the way. These first include legal restrictions. Second, the application of exceptions and limitations in practice remains difficult, including as to the identification of orphan works<sup>207</sup> and the limited availability of accessible format copies for the visually impaired. Moreover, the digitisation and preservation of works by cultural and educational institutions leads to high costs and administrative burdens. With a view of enhancing access to data, the ongoing initiatives surrounding “Common European Data Spaces” merit specific focus.<sup>208</sup> **Data spaces** seek to build a single market for data, boosting access to and the reuse of data. Specific reference is made to the envisaged data spaces with particular relevance for the CCS, namely those in the field of cultural heritage and media.<sup>209</sup>

Sustained attention at the EU level is rightly accorded to ensure the **fair remuneration of creators**. While the DSM Directive has offered some harmonising measures in this context, much work is still to be done, both as to the further development of the legal framework and its application in practice. Also, in the context of AI, the use of protected content for AI training could further threaten fair remuneration of creators and artists. The potential of a collectively managed remuneration right for streaming, as foreseen in certain EU Member States such as Belgium and Spain, could further pave the way in this regard. In addition, a fully harmonised copyright framework at the EU level, such as proposed in the past in the ‘European Copyright Code’ that was drafted by the ‘Wittem group’<sup>210</sup>, could impact the CCS in the future.

As to the **effective application of the legal framework**, important challenges include a persisting information asymmetry and difficulties in securing appropriate representation of the heterogeneous group of artists. Awareness-raising is key in this context. In terms of application of the legal framework in practice, beyond the EU level, the establishment of the **‘WIPO for Creators’<sup>211</sup> platform** is notable, as this promotes rights awareness among artists, thus indirectly enhancing fairness in the CCS. Collective bargaining has come to the fore as a potential way to counter such challenges, as it may contribute to better working conditions. Policy initiatives have been taken to bolster collective bargaining in the platform economy.<sup>212</sup> However, legal uncertainty remains as to the concrete possibilities for artists to bargain collectively without falling afoul of the cartel prohibition of Article 101 TFEU. In addition, competition concerns arise in relation to the market position of certain major players.

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<sup>207</sup> Orphan works are works (e.g. books, newspapers, magazine articles, films) that remain under copyright protection but whose copyright owners are unknown and therefore whose copyright permission cannot be requested.

<sup>208</sup> See <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-spaces>.

<sup>209</sup> See (1) as to cultural heritage: [Europeana pro](#), [Eureka3D](#), [5Dculture](#), [DE-BIAS](#), [AI4Europeana](#) and (2) as to media: [TEMS](#). As to music-related data, a notable project is [Open Music Europe](#). See also the website of the [Data Spaces Support Centre \(DSSC\)](#).

<sup>210</sup> See e.g. <https://www.ivir.nl/projects/copyrightcode>.

<sup>211</sup> See <https://www.wipo.int/web/wipo-for-creators>.

<sup>212</sup> Communication from the Commission, Guidelines on the application of Union competition law to collective agreements regarding the working conditions of solo self-employed persons, 2022/C 374/02, C/2022/6846 [2022] OJ C374/2.

## 2.2.4. Stimulating a green and just transition in and with the CCS

### a. Context

Since 2015, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) defined in the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**<sup>213</sup>, have become guiding principles across European policies including for the green transition. In 2019, with the **European Green Deal**<sup>214</sup>, the EU set its own ambitious goals for carbon emissions reduction, addressing 12 of the 17 SDGs and placing environmental sustainability at the forefront of EU policy. This priority was also mainstreamed into CCS policy over the 9<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term. To meet the EU policy priorities defined in the European Green Deal, the connections between the CCS and the environment, particularly the implications of the climate emergency for the CCS, have become central to EU CCS policy discussions and changes over the past years.

Although the environmental impact of the CCS is considered rather low compared to other industrial ecosystems in Europe, the **impact of the CCS on the environment** in absolute terms has increased over time, including during the COVID-19 pandemic (IDEA Consult and Technopolis Group, 2023)<sup>215</sup>. An important factor driving this increase is the shift to digitalisation and the increased use of energy-intensive digital technologies and online services such as streaming and cloud technologies. The CCS thus face important challenges to greening their operations.

Furthermore, **CCS are increasingly impacted by climate change**. Several reports have been published pointing at the damaging impacts of climate change on cultural events and cultural heritage due to rising sea levels, extreme drought or rainfalls (see e.g. IPCC, 2022; ICOMOS, 2019; Pasikowska-Schnass, 2024). For example, Marzeion and Levermann (2014) have estimated that 19% of UNESCO World Heritage Sites globally could be lost to inundation in a 3°C warming scenario.

At the same time, there has been a growing recognition of the **vital role that the CCS can play in promoting a green and sustainable future** for Europe. This can be exemplified by various official documents. The Council took an important step in May 2020, adding 'Culture as a driver of sustainable development' as a priority to its EU Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022.<sup>216</sup> The EP echoed this sentiment in its 2020 resolution, recognizing the crucial role of culture in "awareness-raising, learning, communication and the sharing of knowledge and good practices" for a successful green transition.<sup>217</sup> The Commission's report on "Natural and cultural heritage in Europe"<sup>218</sup> highlights the challenges and opportunities that lie at the intersection of nature and culture. At the global level, UNESCO underlined that cultural policies are essential to achieving at least 9 SDGs. Also the global coalition "United for Biodiversity", launched in 2020 and coordinated by the EC, highlights the potential of cultural actors to

<sup>213</sup> United Nations (2015). Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 25 September 2015 [without reference to a Main Committee (A/70/L.1)] 70/1. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

[https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_70\\_1\\_E.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf)

<sup>214</sup> European Commission (2019). Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: The European Green Deal (COM/2019/640 final).

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A52019DC0640>. the 2019 European Green Deal aimed at reducing net greenhouse gas emissions in the EU by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels.

<sup>215</sup> In the report, the CCS are estimated to be responsible for around 1-3% of the impact of all industries in total.

<sup>216</sup> Council of the EU (2019). Council conclusions amending the Work Plan for Culture (2019–2022) (2020/C 193/05). [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020XG0609\(03\)&rid=7](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020XG0609(03)&rid=7)

<sup>217</sup> European Parliament (2020). European Parliament resolution of 15 September 2020 on effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps (2019/2195(INI)) (2021/C 385/01). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=OJ:C:2021:385:FULL>

<sup>218</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Environment, Sundseth, K. (2019). *Natural and cultural heritage in Europe – Working together within the Natura 2000 network*, Publications Office. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2779/338551>

be powerful advocates for environmental protection.<sup>219</sup> Since its launch in 2020, numerous cultural institutions and networks have joined the coalition and committed to using their voices to inform and engage citizens around the world to safeguard biodiversity and finding solutions to ecological challenges.<sup>220</sup>

## b. EU policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024

In the period 2019-2024, several EU policy initiatives were taken, and EU funds were mobilised to **stimulate the green transition in and with the CCS:**

- **Creative Europe** is undergoing a significant transformation. Driven by the EP's call for a "greener" Creative Europe<sup>221</sup> and aligned with the ambitions of the European Green Deal, the programme is actively integrating environmental considerations into its funding mechanisms. The 2024 Creative Europe work programme reflects this commitment. It emphasizes "greening" the programme in line with the overall EU target of dedicating 30% of the budget to climate objectives. Building on the recommendations of the "Greening the Creative Europe Programme" report (Ecorys, 2023), this initiative outlines a gradual approach to achieving environmental sustainability within the CCS. The study also resulted in a **Creative Europe Programme Greening Strategy**, as well as a **Creative Europe Monitoring Guide for Programme Greening**<sup>222</sup>, that can be used to monitor the Creative Europe successor programmes' progress and contribution towards the European Green Deal objectives in the future.
- **Horizon Europe** also contributes to the greening of the CCS. While its primary focus areas are research excellence and tackling climate change, the programme fosters connections between cultural and sustainability goals. For instance, Cluster 5 on Climate, Energy and Mobility specifically addresses this intersection<sup>223</sup> by funding projects that combine research on cultural preservation with environmental responsibility. In this way, cultural projects also contribute to climate neutrality in other sectors, for example, by bringing forward traditional and innovative practices, techniques and materials resulting from cultural heritage research.<sup>224</sup>
- **EU Cohesion Policy's** funding scope also extends beyond traditional cultural activities, encompassing various initiatives that promote environmental sustainability within the CCS<sup>225</sup>. A 2022 report from the EC to the EP, Council, EESC and CoR<sup>226</sup> highlights how cohesion policy supports measures that reduce the environmental footprint of cultural institutions and sites. These measures include energy efficiency upgrades, renewable energy adoption, waste management

<sup>219</sup> Press release by the European Commission, announcing the launch of the global coalition for biodiversity:

[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_20\\_348](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_348)

<sup>220</sup> For example, the International Council of Museums (ICOM) joined the global coalition:<https://icom.museum/en/news/icom-global-coalition-united-for-biodiversity/>

<sup>221</sup> European Parliament (2020). European Parliament resolution of 15 September 2020 on effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps (2019/2195(INI)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0211\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0211_EN.html)

<sup>222</sup> See <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ab9d592c-f52e-11ed-a05c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

<sup>223</sup> Destination 4, dedicated to energy transition in buildings, funds research on energy efficiency renovation strategies for historical buildings. This not only promotes sustainability but also ensures the preservation of cultural heritage.

<sup>224</sup> See e.g. ARCHE – Alliance for Research on Cultural Heritage in Europe (2022-2025), funded under Horizon Europe. <https://www.heritageresearch-hub.eu/arche-home/>

<sup>225</sup> European Parliament (2020). European Parliament resolution of 15 September 2020 on effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and the European Solidarity Corps (2019/2195(INI)). [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0211\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0211_EN.html)

<sup>226</sup> Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the cultural dimension of sustainable development in EU actions (COM/2022/709 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:709:FIN>

solutions, and circular economy practices. Additionally, it promotes the development of green infrastructure, a factor crucial for sustainable cultural tourism, for example.

- In 7 out of the 22 approved recovery and resilience plans of EU Member States (of which a total of 16 addressed the CCS), financial investment from the **Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)** is foreseen to support the green transition in the CCS. Investments relate to renovations to increase energy efficiency of cultural buildings and sites (HR, IT, PT, SK), safeguarding heritage sites from climate change (EL) as well as incentives for green and climate-friendly projects by cultural actors (AT, FR).<sup>227</sup>

Beyond initiatives stimulating the green transition of the CCS itself, EU policy initiatives that **promote the CCS as a driver of a green and just transition** have also been introduced. In a 2022 report from the EC on the cultural dimension of sustainable development in EU actions<sup>228</sup>, various EU policies and programmes are highlighted that contribute to the SDGs. One initiative that explicitly aims to leverage the CCS as a catalyst for the green transition in Europe is the **New European Bauhaus (NEB) initiative**<sup>229</sup>, which emerged as a response to the growing urgency of the environmental crisis. Launched in September 2020 by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who called the NEB the very “soul of the European Green Deal”, the NEB aims to support a vision for a future where sustainability, aesthetics, and inclusivity are interwoven. The NEB thrives on a multi-level, participatory and transdisciplinary approach, engaging a wide range of actors beyond the traditional policy domain. Central to the NEB’s philosophy is the recognition of culture and the CCS as powerful catalysts for positive societal change. The initiative acknowledges the “systemic importance” of CCS in navigating the green and digital transitions, emphasizing their potential to shape new behaviours and values. The NEB directly targets the CCS through various mechanisms. One such example is the **“lighthouse demonstrators” call**<sup>230</sup>. Various projects were selected under this initiative, focusing on diverse themes such as building renovation, circularity in the arts, and the role of cultural heritage in urban regeneration.

The NEB connects with existing EU policies and funding mechanisms like Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, and cohesion policies, to ensure that its vision is integrated across various EU programmes, maximizing its impact and facilitating access to resources for cultural actors engaged in sustainability initiatives. For example, CrAft-Creating Actionable Futures<sup>231</sup> is a Horizon Europe project that is inspired by the NEB and brings cities, citizens, policymakers, arts, and academia together to co-shape the transition to climate neutrality by 2030. More than 30 European universities and schools of arts and design are engaged in supporting their local cities, with more than 100 students engaged in STEAM teams (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), internships and local capacity building.

<sup>227</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic\\_analysis/scoreboard\\_thematic\\_analysis\\_culture.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic_analysis/scoreboard_thematic_analysis_culture.pdf)

<sup>228</sup> European Commission (2022). Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the cultural dimension of sustainable development in EU actions (COM/2022/709 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:709:FIN>

<sup>229</sup> European Parliament (2022). European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2022 on the new European Bauhaus (2021/2255(INI). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022IP0319&qid=1712278946217>

<sup>230</sup> See for example European Commission (2022). Lighthouse demonstrators of the New European Bauhaus. <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/neb/items/745953/en>

<sup>231</sup> <https://craft-cities.eu/>

### c. Key (future) opportunities and reflections for future EU CCS policy development

Following the EU policy priorities set for the green transition, countless examples have been documented of the CCS effectively taking up different roles that support the green transition in Europe.<sup>232</sup> Central to these roles is the CCS' unique potential to engage and inspire people to reimagine viable and sustainable futures. Moreover, as the **focus in the EU policy discourse on the green transition shifts towards the just transition** (Matti et al., 2023), the CCS are also praised for their creative capacity to rediscover and revalue sustainable heritage crafts and techniques (e.g. inspiring more sustainable construction), make new economic models more attractive and to communicate the viability of new economic models, for example, by showing how they can represent growth in other capacities and forms of value, including new circular business models, reaching new markets, innovation, stability and added value for citizens (Voices of Culture, 2023b). Recent research by Ranczakowska et al. (2024) specifically provides evidence on the roles that socio-cultural centres throughout Europe play in fostering sustainability transitions that are also just in nature. By connecting stakeholders, fostering learning, pioneering new practices and creating spaces for engagement, socio-cultural centres appear well placed to **align the green and just transition with local communities and action**.

While the EU has taken clear initiatives to establish a framework for a green and just transition for and through the CCS and the body of evidence on the positive role of the CCS is growing, several reports have been published that conclude that **until now the role of the CCS in the green transition and sustainable development has been significantly underplayed** in Europe (see e.g. European Commission, DG EAC (2022); Voices of Culture (2023b)). Multiple challenges remain to fully include the CCS in the green and just transition in Europe. Those challenges relate to remaining incoherencies in existing policy frameworks, as well as to lacking adequate support structures for CCS to deliver on expectations:

- **The Green Deal and the EU's strategic framework for sustainable development lack a clear cultural dimension:** While the cultural dimension is mentioned, several stakeholders have criticised that the European Green Deal does not concretely reflect on the value and impact of the CCS.<sup>233</sup> Fully harnessing the power of culture as a driver of change requires its inclusion within the Green Deal's framework in the future. A recent analysis and follow-up policy lab in the context of the Horizon-funded project ekip<sup>234</sup>, highlights that also the New European Bauhaus currently lacks a valorisation of the multidimensional value of culture and the CCS. The NEB's close association with living spaces has led to engaging too narrowly on only those parts of the CCS that relate to designing sustainable and 'beautifully' built environments (architecture, physical heritage, design). The involvement of artists and some other parts of the CCS has been limited. In a position paper on NEB (2022)<sup>235</sup>, Culture Action Europe calls on EU policymakers to reconsider the role of CCS from a more inclusive and expansive viewpoint, positioning them as real drivers for change in a transdisciplinary green transition. Beyond the Green Deal and the green transition goals, also the EU's strategic framework for sustainable development lacks to fully integrate culture as a key driver of resilience, social inclusion, and sustainable economic growth in Europe. Fragmentation between

<sup>232</sup> See e.g. <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/projects/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal> for examples funded under Creative Europe

<sup>233</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2022). Stormy times – Nature and humans – Cultural courage for change – 11 messages for and from Europe, Publications Office of the European Union. <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/90729>

<sup>234</sup> <https://ekipengine.eu/>

<sup>235</sup> See <https://cultureactioneurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/CAE-NEB-Position-Paper.pdf>



cultural policies and broader sustainable development strategies currently hinders progress.<sup>236</sup> Amann (2023) provides ways forward for EU policymakers to come to more collaborative policy making benefitting a green, inclusive and just transition.

- **Stronger multilevel governance alignment needed:** The 2022 Commission report to the EP, Council, EESC and CoR<sup>237</sup> calls for increased effective collaborations among regional, national, EU and UN authorities and systems, to better integrate the CCS' contribution into both the global SDGs as well as the just transition in Europe (cf. European Commission JRC, 2023). The importance of culture for better connecting global and European sustainability goals with local communities and action, has been promoted for many years already by the Committee on Culture of the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), the global network representing the interests of local governments worldwide.<sup>238</sup> In addition, the 2023 UN Report on *Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Towards a Rescue Plan for People and Planet*, calls on Member States and the international community to better connect the global SDGs to local action (through culture), and empower local and subnational governments with a key approach to propel the world towards sustainable development.<sup>239</sup>
- **Skills-action gap in the CCS:** For the CCS to fully play their role in the green and just transition, capacity building and training is needed to build the knowledge and skills of cultural professionals in sustainable practices including sustainable digital practices, green ICT, carbon footprint measurement and mitigation, and energy management (Voices of Culture, 2023b; Ranczakowska et al., 2024; IDEA Consult and Technopolis Group, 2023). The 2022 OMC report on cultural heritage resilience for climate change (EC DG EAC, 2022) highlights that a critical challenge lies in the ability to translate environmental knowledge and policy messages into concrete actions within the CCS. This requires fostering a deeper understanding of sustainability issues among cultural actors and equipping them with the tools to implement green practices. The Erasmus+ funded project, CHARTER (the European Cultural Heritage Skills Alliance), is an example of a project aimed at tackling this challenge<sup>240</sup>.
- **Insufficient funding mechanisms leveraging the transformative role of CCS:** Engaging in processes that are truly transformational (e.g. sustainability processes with local communities) require longer-term support. However, current funding for CCS predominantly concentrates on short-term project funding, providing little room for longer-term engagements or innovation. This limits the full take-up of the CCS' role as agents of change in the green and just transition (Voices of Culture, 2023b; Ranczakowska et al., 2024).
- **Lacking data on the impact of the CCS in the green and just transition:** Assessing the effectiveness of green CCS initiatives and enhancing the visibility of the role of CCS in the green

<sup>236</sup> European Commission (2022). Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the cultural dimension of sustainable development in EU actions (COM/2022/709 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:709:FIN>

<sup>237</sup> European Commission (2022). Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the cultural dimension of sustainable development in EU actions (COM/2022/709 final). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:709:FIN>

<sup>238</sup> See more on the UCLG: <https://www.agenda21culture.net/documents/culture-21-actions#:~:text=%E2%80%9CCulture%2021%3A%20Actions%E2%80%9D%20supplements,the%20exchange%20of%20good%20practices.>

<sup>239</sup> See also the related Localizing the SDGs platform: <https://sdglocalization.org/about/overview#background>

<sup>240</sup> The Cultural Heritage Actions to Refine Training, Education and Roles (CHARTER) project "strives towards making apparent the value of cultural heritage and creating a resilient and responsive sector". The project which brings together a whole range of cultural heritage stakeholders works towards "creating a lasting comprehensive strategy that will guarantee the EU has the necessary cultural heritage skills to support sustainable societies and economies". <https://charter-alliance.eu/>

and just transition requires robust data collection methods. However, according to IDEA Consult and Technopolis Group (2023) and Ecorys (2023), few data are currently available to do so. Even current methods which are heavily reliant on short-term quantitative data, fail to capture the long-term, qualitative impact of cultural interventions on sustainability. The EP resolution of 16 January 2024 on the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme 2021-2027<sup>241</sup> notes that although the programme contributes to the objective of climate and environmental sustainability, greening priorities have been introduced differently in the three programme strands. MEPs therefore called on the Commission to closely monitor the implementation of greening priorities and their impact on the CCS, and to regularly report on its assessment.

- **Barriers to CCS-education collaboration:** The CCS are praised for making knowledge about the climate challenge and green transition more accessible, as well as for inspiring people to reimagine viable and sustainable futures and change behaviours for more sustainability. However, insufficient integration of CCS in (formal) education and learning networks currently limits their transformational role.

## 2.2.5. Supporting innovation in and with the CCS

### a. Context

Various EU policies and communications recognize the **important relationship between the CCS and research and innovation (R&I)**. Investing in R&I within the CCS is seen not only as crucial for the CCS' own **competitiveness and growth**, but also as a **breeding ground for accelerating and valorising innovation** in other sectors and across the European economy (see e.g. European Commission DG GROW, 2018). In the 2021 EU Industrial Strategy<sup>242</sup>, the CCS are included as one of the 14 key industrial ecosystems for an inclusive and sustainable recovery as well as for the green and digital transformation of the European economy post-COVID-19, thanks to their economic and innovation capacity. In addition, the New European Agenda for Culture (see section 1.2.2) highlights the role of the CCS in innovation: "Cultural and creative industries are drivers of innovation and job creation, and they play a key role in the development of new technologies, products and services".<sup>243</sup> Further official documents recognize specific sub-sectors of the CCS for their innovativeness, and call Member States and the EC to support R&I in these sub-sectors.<sup>244</sup>

### a. EU policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024

In the period of 2019 to 2024, several EU initiatives were taken and **Horizon Europe** funds mobilised to stimulate innovation in and with the CCS. They aim to achieve various objectives, including supporting the uptake of **new digital technologies** (such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, blockchain technology), fostering **business model innovation** (e.g. new ways of creating, producing

<sup>241</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0008\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2024-0008_EN.html)

<sup>242</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe's recovery. COM(2021) 350 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A52021DC0350>

<sup>243</sup> European Commission (2018). COM/2018/267 final. COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS A New European Agenda for Culture. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2018:267:FIN>

<sup>244</sup> E.g. the [Council Conclusion on Enhancing the Cultural and Creative Dimension of the European Video Games Sector](#) (2023) highlights "the great potential that the video games sector, with its cultural dimension, has for growth and cross-sectorial innovation within the framework of the digital transition"; the [Council Conclusions on Europe's Media in the Digital Decade](#) (2021) highlight the "urgent need to promote the digital transformation of the news media and audiovisual sectors in order to seize the opportunities presented by innovative and emerging technologies".

or monetizing cultural content, green business models) and **supporting research** on the preservation, digitization, and accessibility of cultural heritage, to name only a few.

The **Recovery and Resilience Facility** (RRF) (see section 1.2.4) provides financial support to multiple EU Member States to boost innovation in the CCS, by supporting the digital transformation of the CCS (BE, FI, LV, ES, LT, PT, SI, CZ) but also through the introduction of a scheme of creative vouchers to support innovation (CZ).<sup>245</sup>

The **Creative Europe** programme supports innovation within the CCS in various ways. For instance, by providing support to explore the opportunities of new digital technologies, innovative forms of audience engagement or innovation to strengthen social inclusion. Post-COVID-19, the EP and Council increased the EC's proposed 2021-2027 Creative Europe budget with an additional 600 million EUR (reaching 2.4 billion EUR) to further address the challenges that the COVID-19 pandemic created for the CCS. An important part of the increase was dedicated to (further) investing in innovation to strengthen the sector's resilience, in line with the overall EU priorities.<sup>246</sup>

The European Structural and Investment Funds (including ERDF and ESF) support regional development, employment, and social inclusion. In **ERDF**, around 100 European regions had cultural and creative industries and/or cultural heritage included in their R&I strategies for Smart Specialisation, both within regional and national S3 priorities from 2014 to 2020. The aim of the **European Urban Initiative** (EUI), one of the funding programmes under ERDF, is to foster innovation capacities and knowledge building for all EU urban areas and to mainstream innovative solutions in sustainable urban development. On the other hand, **LEADER**<sup>247</sup>, another European programme, provides opportunities specifically for fostering innovation with the CCS in rural areas (Torre and Filippi, 2024).

Beyond supporting innovation in the CCS, EU initiatives also aim to **foster spillover effects of innovation through the CCS** to extend innovation across different sectors.

An important milestone illustrating the EU's increased recognition of the important relationship between the CCS and R&I was the establishment of the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in the field of cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI) - **EIT Culture & Creativity**<sup>248</sup> - in 2023, funded under Horizon Europe. The initiative was considerably supported by the EP for many years. In 2021, the EP and the Council approved the launch of this KIC as part of the adoption of the EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027<sup>249</sup> to strengthen Europe's ability to innovate. EIT Culture & Creativity brings together companies, cultural organizations, higher education institutions, research centers, investors, policymakers, and thought leaders at the intersection of arts, science, technology, and culture, with the aim to transform CCS value networks and ecosystems, ensuring they are competitive,

<sup>245</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic\\_analysis/scoreboard\\_thematic\\_analysis\\_culture.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/recovery-and-resilience-scoreboard/assets/thematic_analysis/scoreboard_thematic_analysis_culture.pdf)

<sup>246</sup> See e.g. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_286](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_286)

<sup>247</sup> LEADER is a European programme, that aims to involve local actors in rural areas in the development of their own regions by forming Local Actions Groups (LAGs) and designing and implementing strategies. The programme is funded by the European Agricultural Fund. See <https://elard.eu/leader-clld/>

<sup>248</sup> EIT is a body of the European Union that since 2008 connects organisations across business, education, and research for driving innovation in Europe with a specific focus on fighting societal challenges. They do this by supporting the development of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), Europe-wide networks made up of higher education institutions, research centres, businesses and investors, public and non-profit organisations. There are currently 9 EIT KICs, EIT Culture & Creativity being most recently set up, see <https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/>. Apart from EIT Culture & Creativity, other KICs focus on climate change, digitisation, raw materials, future of food, health innovation, sustainable energy, added-value manufacturing and urban mobility.

<sup>249</sup> European Parliament and the Council (2021). Decision (EU) 2021/820 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 on the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) 2021-2027: Boosting the Innovation Talent and Capacity of Europe and repealing Decision No 1312/2013/EU. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021D0820>

innovative, financially sustainable, and aligned with ambitious climate neutrality and social responsibility goals.

With the **S+T+ARTS initiative**<sup>250</sup> the EU provides funding (through Horizon Europe) to specifically stimulate R&I at the crossroad of arts and science. It provides (financial) support to R&I cooperation between artists and scientists, among others through the provision of residencies and funding of research projects that seek radically novel technology solutions to challenges for industry and society in close collaboration with artists<sup>251</sup>. The underlying vision of S+T+ARTS is the conviction that science and technology combined with arts can lead to (radical) innovations benefitting business and society at large, through a holistic and human-centred approach. The **WORTH Partnership Project**<sup>252</sup> (funded by the COSME Programme) supports transnational collaborations between designers, creative people, manufacturing enterprises (SMEs), crafters/makers and technology firms looking to develop design-driven and innovative products.

### **b. Key (future) opportunities and reflections for future EU CCS policy development**

Although still fragmented, evidence is building and insights are being gathered on the **diverse roles that CCS actors (can) take as innovation agents**, through collaboration with multiple actors in the wider knowledge and innovation ecosystem (research institutes, industry, policymakers, civil society). IDEA Consult (2022) identified different collaboration settings in which arts and cultural organisations in Europe contribute to knowledge creation and valorisation: (1) joint research, where CCS actors instil new thinking and research questions, connecting researchers and society with future scenarios and complex societal issues (so-called 'speculative thinking'), (2) Intermediation, where CCS actors take up the role of facilitating the connection between various stakeholder groups in the knowledge processes: academia and research organisations, industry and/or citizens and communities, (3) engagement, where CCS actors also offer spaces for experimentation and citizens engagement in a participatory way (creative hubs, citizen labs, socio-cultural centres, museums & libraries), and (4) dissemination, where CCS actors are involved in the dissemination of research results (p. 6).

Central to these roles is the very **specific set of skills, competences and talents that CCS actors bring to knowledge creation and valorisation** processes. They have a unique ability to engage and inspire people to reimagine viable and sustainable futures through storytelling (e.g., in theatre productions, art installations, music performances). Thanks to their ability to communicate in an unconventional, creative, and engaging way, they can also translate complex content into comprehensible language and, as such, critically convey research results to society and its sub-target groups (young people, adults, students, elderly people, etc.). CCS actors can voice reflections, doubts, or other emotions to society in engaging and impactful ways, stirring new thoughts and innovations (see e.g. IDEA Consult, 2022; Ranczakowska et al., 2024). This unique CCS skills set is also highlighted in the recently launched 'Power of Design Agenda' by the Dutch organisations Top Sector Creative Industry and CLICKNL (March 2024).<sup>253</sup> They identified a set of key methods, strategies, tools and practices for professionals contributing to solving societal challenges and transformative (mission-driven) innovation – **KEMs (Key Enabling Methodologies)** – in which art-based methods and the role of CCS actors as transformation agents are highly valued.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> <https://starts.eu/>

<sup>251</sup> See <https://starts.eu/what-we-do/lighthouses/>

<sup>252</sup> See [https://worth-partnership.ec.europa.eu/about\\_en](https://worth-partnership.ec.europa.eu/about_en)

<sup>253</sup> See <https://www.clicknl.nl/en/news/launcing-the-power-of-design-agenda-en/>

<sup>254</sup> See <https://www.clicknl.nl/en/kems/>

Recognition for the value of creative and cognitive skills to foster R&I is also reflected in the **shifting focus in education from STEM to STEAM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics). In past years, the EC and EP have promoted STEAM, among others, with the aim of developing more fit-for-purpose STEM and ICT higher education programmes by connecting STEM and ICT education with the arts, humanities and social sciences.<sup>255</sup> The EP already advocated for STEAM in its 2018 resolution on education in the digital era.<sup>256</sup>

While the EU recognises the crucial importance of (access to) innovation in and with the CCS and has taken significant initiatives in the 2019-2024 period to strengthen the framework for supporting R&I, several persisting challenges remain that prevent the CCS from fully participating in innovation ecosystems in Europe:

- **Fragmented landscape and knowledge gaps:** The CCS are characterized by a highly fragmented landscape, encompassing a diverse range of sub-sectors with varying needs and innovation capacities. This fragmentation makes it difficult to develop a "one-size-fits-all" approach to R&I support. Additionally, a lack of awareness and understanding of R&I processes among some creative professionals can hinder their ability to participate in research projects or leverage funding opportunities. A recent Position Statement of Science Europe (2022)<sup>257</sup> highlights the need for policy to adapt to various contexts and the need for skills development.
- **Transdisciplinary research infrastructures and innovation networks:** The European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructures (ESFRI) recognizes the importance of research infrastructures (RI) for social and cultural innovation as well as the importance of RI fostering interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral collaboration in its latest strategy report Roadmap 2021<sup>258</sup>. However, there are still very limited infrastructures where CCS actors can network and collaborate with other stakeholders in cross-disciplinary settings for innovation (IDEA Consult, 2022). Furthermore, many CCS organisations, such as creative hubs, socio-cultural centres, libraries, theatres or heritage sites, can play a meaningful role as research infrastructures themselves (including in rural areas), but often lack the recognition and financial means to take up this role (see e.g. Ranczakowska et al., 2024; Torre and Filippi, 2024). Although there are various initiatives across Europe facilitating the interrelation of regional and local RI networks including in the CCS (e.g., S+T+ARTS programme network, European Digital Innovation Hubs network (EDIHs), European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC), European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN)), they often operate in silos and lack the resources to develop into more transdisciplinary nodes of innovation.
- **Balancing artistic freedom with commercial viability:** The core values of artistic freedom and experimentation sometimes clash with the need for commercially viable outcomes in R&I projects. This tension is widely acknowledged and has been discussed also in academic literature.<sup>259</sup> Striking a balance between creative risk-taking and market-oriented goals requires careful consideration and innovative funding models that support artistic expression while ensuring some degree of financial sustainability.

<sup>255</sup> See <https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/relevant-and-high-quality-higher-education>

<sup>256</sup> European Parliament resolution of 11 December 2018 on education in the digital era: challenges, opportunities and lessons for EU policy design (2018/2090(INI)). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52018IP0485>

<sup>257</sup> Science Europe (2022). Position Statement 'Towards strengthened research and innovation systems across Europe'. Accessible via <https://www.scienceeurope.org/media/pzzm0lxn/se-position-statement-on-strengthened-r-i-systems-across-europe.pdf>

<sup>258</sup> <https://roadmap2021.esfri.eu/>

<sup>259</sup> For example: Pisotska, V., & Gurses, K. (2023). How entrepreneurial practices balance art and business: Insights into creative entrepreneurship in the European film industry. *Creativity and Innovation Management*, 32(2), 215-232. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/caim.12550>

- **Limited access to resources and expertise/skills:** Creative businesses, particularly SMEs, often lack the financial resources and in-house expertise necessary to conduct R&I activities. Initiatives that simplify access to funding and provide mentorship or training opportunities for creative professionals can play a crucial role in overcoming this hurdle.
- **Measuring the impact of R&I in the CCS:** Developing effective methods to measure the impact of R&I in the CCS and the impact of CCS' R&I in other sectors remains a challenge. The 2-year Pilot Project titled "Measuring the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the EU" (2020-2022)<sup>260</sup> worked closely together with Eurostat to overcome such limitations but acknowledged the issues in this regard. The qualitative and often intangible nature of creative outputs can make it difficult to quantify the return on investment in R&I projects. Therefore, establishing clear metrics that capture both the economic and social benefits of innovation within the CCS is crucial for demonstrating the value of these initiatives.

Furthermore, although the CCS are regularly mentioned as creating valuable spillovers to wider innovation processes, a recent EC study (IDEA Consult, 2022) concluded that **innovation ecosystems in Europe are still far from being truly inclusive to CCS**. Persistent barriers exist at different levels, including in EU policy frameworks and instruments, for the CCS to fully participate in wider innovation ecosystems. There is still a lot of untapped innovation potential because of a lack of good understanding of how arts professionals can unlock their full innovative potential in interdisciplinary R&I teams. The lack of recognition of the CCS as equal innovation actors in wider innovation ecosystems has also been raised by several CCS and arts education networks in a position paper on the framing of STEAM in the Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2024.<sup>261</sup> The signatory organisations particularly highlight the fact that, in the programme, the EC reduces the value of the arts almost exclusively to bridging the gender gap within the STEM fields, thus undermining the original 'raison d'être' of STEAM — its inherent potential to promote creativity and innovation, a power which was already recognized in the 2017 EP resolution on a New Skills Agenda for Europe.<sup>262</sup> The necessity to take further steps in **fully recognising the value of the arts in STEAM** is also stressed, for example, in the Voices of Culture report on the green transition (2023b, p. 43): "[...] continuous exchange must be established between STEM and CCSI in order to allow CCSI to adopt new scientific methods, and for STEM to avail itself of the creative, culture-shaping content and communication capabilities of CCSI. A necessary step further would be the real integration of art in STEM and active promotion of STEAM."

Finally, current initiatives stimulating cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary collaboration with the CCS have a strong focus on supporting technological innovation. Both researchers and CCS stakeholders indicate that initiatives and frameworks (also) **supporting social innovation** (with the CCS) – an important element highlighted in the 2023 Strategic Foresight Report – are currently still **underdeveloped** in EU innovation policy.<sup>263</sup>

<sup>260</sup> See for more information: <https://www.measuring-ccs.eu/projects/>

<sup>261</sup> See <https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/on-the-value-of-steam-and-arts-education/>

<sup>262</sup> See [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0360\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0360_EN.html), Par. 101 "Recalls that the creative industries are among the most entrepreneurial and fast growing sectors, and creative education develops transferable skills such as creative thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, and resourcefulness; acknowledges that arts and media sectors are of particular appeal to young people"

<sup>263</sup> See e.g. <https://euclidnetwork.eu/2020/12/european-policy-for-social-innovation/>

## 2.2.6. Putting the spotlight on the role of culture for the well-being of citizens and communities

### a. Context

The EU has a long history of harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity to foster community well-being and sustainable development at local and regional level. Since 2008, the Commission has identified social cohesion as one of the priority areas of EU cultural policy.<sup>264</sup> Social cohesion was also on the agenda of the EU's structured dialogue which started in 2008 (see section 1.2.3). Over the years multiple discussions have been held in the OMC and Voices of Culture on themes related to **culture, social cohesion and inclusion**, such as on the integration of migrants and refugees in societies through the arts and culture (EC DG EAC, 2017), the promotion of intercultural dialogue and bringing communities together through culture in shared public spaces (Voices of Culture, 2016) or on the role of culture in non-urban areas of the EU (Voices of Culture, 2020). The European Heritage Label<sup>265</sup> (EHL) is an example of an EU initiative that, since 2011, also has aimed to promote social cohesion and solidarity (contributing to psychological well-being) through the narratives of a shared history and heritage (Čeginskas et al., 2021). The New European Agenda for Culture, further strengthened the social dimension of EU cultural policy, including the social and economic importance of culture and heritage (highlighted in the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage) with the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage (see section 1.2.2). Moreover, in the New European Agenda for Culture, the Commission recognised that cities and regions are at the forefront of culture-led development and constitute natural partners for experimentation, anticipating trends and exploring models of social and economic innovation.

The 2019-2022 Work Plan for Culture selected "**Cohesion and well-being**" among its five priorities, stating that "access to culture and participation in cultural life promote individual empowerment, democratic consciousness, and social cohesion through exchanges with other people and civic engagement. (...) A stronger orientation towards the interests and needs of specific groups, such as young people, older people, people with disabilities, people with a migrant background and people living in poverty or material deprivation, is necessary." Integrating culture into social cohesion strategies involves promoting cultural diversity, supporting community-based cultural initiatives, and investing in cultural infrastructure. Cultural activities such as festivals, arts programs, and intercultural dialogue events contribute to **building social connections and promoting mutual understanding** among diverse communities.

In 2020, the **COVID-19 crisis created further momentum to enlarge the scope of the role of culture with regards to well-being**. Whereas prior to the pandemic the role of culture for well-being was mainly seen through the lens of social cohesion in Europe, the pandemic has had a significant impact on arts and health policies worldwide, including how governments, organizations, and communities approached the intersection of culture, health and well-being. This shift came with a **growing body of research and evidence** about the role of culture in different aspects of well-being, both at the global and national level. The World Health Organisation (WHO) played a major role in this respect. The 2019 report, "What is the evidence on the role of the arts in improving health and well-being? A scoping review", of the WHO Regional Office for Europe (Fancourt et al., 2019) has been an important catalyst

<sup>264</sup> The European year for intercultural dialogue (2008) and the Platform for Intercultural Europe (2008-2013) can be highlighted in this respect.

<sup>265</sup> See <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/initiatives-and-success-stories/european-heritage-label>

for increased understanding and visibility of the body of work done in the field of arts and health.<sup>266</sup> The 2019 WHO research gained renewed attention from policymakers and public health officials in the wake of COVID-19, which had a deep impact on the mental health and well-being of people around the world. Also in Europe, the importance of the CCS for personal and community well-being during the pandemic and post-COVID-19 era gained attention (see e.g. IDEA Consult et al., 2021).

## b. EU policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024

In the period 2019-2024, several EU initiatives were taken and **EU funds were mobilised for programmes and projects that link culture, health and well-being**. In the brochure “Get Inspired! Culture: a driver for health and wellbeing in the EU” (EC DG EAC, 2022b), the EC gathers examples of good practices that have been carried out under EU funding programmes that cover culture and health, culture and subjective well-being, as well as community well-being.

The cultural strand of the Creative Europe programme has been the main source of funding for projects that focus on health and well-being in past years. Recent examples are, for example, Art & Wellbeing<sup>267</sup> or EDNext<sup>268</sup>.

Creative Europe has a long tradition of funding the **European Capitals of Culture (ECoCs)** which often include events and projects that **engage local communities and contribute to their well-being through cultural participation**. Turku (Finland) was the first ECoC to highlight links between art and health. In 2011, well-being was at the heart of Turku's year as a ECoC. Elderly people were encouraged to participate in cultural activities, accessibility improved, and shows focused on healthy living. In an innovative strategy, doctors were given the licence to hand out 'cultural prescriptions' as part of their treatment of patients.<sup>269</sup> A more recent ECoC focusing on well-being is Kaunas (ECoC 2022) with its “Designing Happiness” programme.<sup>270</sup>

Furthermore, Erasmus+ places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and promoting young people's participation in democratic life. Although the programme does not explicitly mention the role of culture in well-being, in practice, many funded projects **address the issues of health and well-being with cultural and educational means**, such as the “My Creativity Matters” project in 2018<sup>271</sup>.

Horizon Europe supports projects that explore the impact of the arts and creative sector on well-being, contributing to evidence-based policy making and development of effective interventions. For example, MESOC<sup>272</sup> is a Horizon 2020 project designed to propose, test and validate an innovative and

<sup>266</sup> The 2019 WHO report provides an overview of existing evidence on the potential value of the arts in the promotion of good health, the amelioration or prevention of a range of mental and physical health conditions, and the treatment or management of acute and chronic conditions arising across the lifespan of people.

<sup>267</sup> The goal of this project is to develop new processes, activities and networks to support cultural institutions in partnering with other stakeholders like municipalities, care centres, and urban planners across Europe to create new innovative projects, engage new audiences, and raise awareness on the challenges that urban dwelling and a fast paced contemporary life pose to the physical, emotional and mental health. See <https://art-wellbeing.eu/>

<sup>268</sup> EDNext is coordinated by the European Dance Development Network and receives funding from Creative Europe's Network Strand to organise in the period 2022-2024 capacity-building, networking, knowledge & skills exchange, research and advocacy on the interconnected topics of Sustainability, Equity and Well-Being in and with the contemporary dance sector. See <https://www.ednetwork.eu/news/ednext2022>

<sup>269</sup> See <https://www.cultureforhealth.eu/mapping/turku-culture-does-you-good/>

<sup>270</sup> See <https://kaunas2022.eu/en/designing-happiness/>

<sup>271</sup> The project explored creativity in young people with mental health issues by allowing them to learn how to design, develop and deliver programmes using arts, crafts and music, meanwhile creating a valuable volunteering experience motivating young people, teaching them skills and developing their sensitivity and understanding of the world around them. See <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/projects/search/details/2018-1-UK01-KA105-047586>

<sup>272</sup> See <https://www.mesoc-project.eu/>



original approach to measuring the societal value and impacts of culture and cultural policies and practices, related to three crossover themes of the New European Agenda for Culture: (1) health and wellbeing, (2) urban and territorial renovation and (3) people's engagement and participation.

The European Observation Network for Territorial Development and Cohesion (ESPON) is an EU-funded programme under Interreg<sup>273</sup> that bridges research with policies and supports public authorities responsible for designing territorial policies with quality expertise. The ESPON's project on "Cultural Heritage as a Source of Societal Well-being in European Regions" (2020-22) specifically focused on collecting and researching important evidence and data on the impact of cultural heritage on societal well-being.<sup>274</sup>

**The COVID-19 pandemic brought renewed attention to Europe's health strategy** towards a European Health Union, where mental health is a central theme taking a comprehensive, cross-cutting approach. The 2023 EU Mental Health Strategy highlights the importance of addressing mental health as a key component of overall well-being. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **EU4Health programme**<sup>275</sup> was set up to reinforce crisis preparedness in the EU. While the cross-sector approach is not explicit in the programme, it mentions the **role of the arts in the identification, piloting, and evaluation of innovative approaches to prevent and manage mental health** problems in various community settings.<sup>276</sup>

EIT Health<sup>277</sup>, funded under Horizon Europe, supports projects that explore the intersection of health, technology, and creativity. This includes projects that investigate how creative activities can contribute to health and well-being outcomes. In 2021, the EU-funded **Preparatory Action (PA) "Bottom-Up Policy Development for Culture & Well-being"** was launched to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience among decision-makers and practitioners at European, national, regional, and local levels. The project CultureForHealth<sup>278</sup> was selected to implement the action. Expanding on the WHO 2019 research, the project built further evidence on art and culture's contribution to health and well-being. The final project report by Zbranca et al. (2022) advocates for a policy change at all levels, to bridge existing (policy) silos between health, culture, education and social sectors.

In November 2022, the Commission and EP organised a **joint seminar on culture, health and well-being which gathered medical practitioners, cultural actors, architects, and municipalities, among others**. Taking place during the European Year of Youth, the impact of COVID-19 as well as the war in Ukraine on the mental health of youth was a key topic. Additionally, in the Voices of Culture platform, youth, mental health and culture was one of the key topics (Voices of Culture, 2023). While all these EU projects and initiatives contribute to a broader understanding of the value of creativity and cultural engagement in enhancing individual and societal well-being, **culture has not yet been strategically and transversally linked to well-being in EU policy**.

### c. Key (future) opportunities and reflections for future EU CCS policy development

The concept of well-being has clearly evolved over the past decades towards a more multidimensional understanding that extends beyond material conditions and physical health. The increased attention on social and environmental well-being comes with a recognition that well-being should be equitable

<sup>273</sup> Interreg is an EU instrument that strengthens cooperation between regions and countries within the EU. It is part of the EU's Cohesion Policy and supported by the ERDF (see section 1.2.4). See <https://interreg.eu/about-interreg/>

<sup>274</sup> See <https://archive.espon.eu/HERIWELL>

<sup>275</sup> See [https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union\\_en](https://health.ec.europa.eu/funding/eu4health-programme-2021-2027-vision-healthier-european-union_en)

<sup>276</sup> For example, the use of social prescribing (arts, sports etc.) for health

<sup>277</sup> See <https://eithealth.eu/who-we-are/>

<sup>278</sup> See <https://www.cultureforhealth.eu/>

and accessible to all in order to ensure a healthy and functioning society. The **multidimensional nature of well-being** is also central to the SDGs, which aim to promote sustainable development to enhance human well-being and quality of life for all.

**At the European level, well-being is mentioned and addressed in various European policy frameworks**, reflecting its importance as a cross-cutting theme in promoting quality of life, social cohesion and sustainable development. While well-being is only explicitly mentioned in relation to the rights for children, all dimensions of well-being are profoundly enshrined in the European Treaties and policy frameworks.<sup>279</sup> As part of being a stronger social Europe, the EP, the Council and the Commission decided on the European Pillar of Social Rights in 2017 that outlines a set of principles and rights to support fair and inclusive societies. It emphasizes access to quality education, healthcare, social protection, and decent working conditions — all of which contribute to individual and societal well-being. With the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the EC set out concrete initiatives to turn the European Pillar of Social Rights into reality.<sup>280</sup>

The 2023 Strategic Foresight Report, ‘Sustainability and people’s wellbeing at the heart of Europe’s Open Strategic Autonomy’, points out how well-being at the individual, community and society level is challenged by the permacrisis and polycrisis that is affecting Europe. It outlines the key areas in which action is highly needed to achieve the sustainability transition and strengthen links between the environmental, social, and economic aspects in Europe. However, the **positive role that the CCS can play in enhancing well-being is hardly mentioned** in these European strategies and frameworks, even though the EU supports the role of culture in achieving sustainability and well-being.

Several obstacles remain to transversally connect culture with well-being, and fully value and mobilise the CCS in contributing to sustainability and well-being in Europe:

- There is **limited awareness on the evidence-based benefits of cultural interventions** for health and well-being among policymakers, funders, the general public, the CCS and the health sector. The arts are currently not generally considered as an important area to improve, for example, life quality, overall well-being, and one’s ability to adapt and deal with crises (Voices of Culture, 2023).
- Cultural health initiatives often suggest that CCS organisations implement participatory methods in their work, for example, to build trust with communities, people and partners. Such processes take time and thus require longer-term funding for CCS organisation to be able to participate (Fancourt et al., 2019; Voices of Culture, 2015, 2023 e.a.). Given the precarious working situation that many CCS actors face (see section 2.2.2), such funding is vital. However, **sustained funding that enables CCS organisations to make health and well-being an integral and strategic part of their work is currently lacking**. Creative Europe is one of the few main funding sources at the moment.
- It is important for professionals who implement culture for well-being activities to be able to develop the rights skills (through education, training, peer learning). Zbranca et al. (2022) highlight

<sup>279</sup> E.g. Art. 2 of the TEU provides that “The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail”; The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union protects the fundamental rights that people enjoy in the EU: the right for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, justice and respect for citizen’s rights; The European Social Charter is a Council of Europe treaty that guarantees fundamental social and economic rights. It guarantees a broad range of everyday human rights related to employment, housing, health, education, social protection and welfare.

<sup>280</sup> The Action Plan proposes targets for the EU by 2030. These targets relate to employment, training and reducing poverty, i.e. at least 78% of the population aged 20 to 64 should be in employment by 2030, at least 60% of all adults should be participating in training every year by 2030 and there should be a reduction of at least 15 million in the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion. A review of the Action Plan is foreseen in 2025.

the importance of developing curricula and encouraging joint training, as well as life-long learning, in culture for health and well-being for (1) university students in the cultural, artistic, medical, and social areas, (2) established practitioners and professionals, and (3) on an institutional level (e.g., in museums, theatres, or health or care centres). However, **education and training programmes that incorporate the topic of well-being and culture are limited** at the moment.

- There is widespread acknowledgment that measuring subjective well-being is essential for assessing Quality of Life (QoL) alongside other social and economic dimensions. Different indexes, such as the OECD Better Life Index and the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS), cover similar indicators including health, social connections, civic engagement, and subjective well-being. Eurostat's QoL does include a leisure indicator measuring activities such as time spent on cultural pursuits. However, overall **culture and cultural participation seems not yet explicitly listed as a quality-of-life indicator** in many of these indexes, even though there is a call to go beyond GDP for QoL indexes.
- There are **still many knowledge gaps about the diverse impacts** of culture on well-being. Additional research remains needed to further address knowledge gaps, inform policy design and foster innovative strategies. This entails, for example, studies that examine the health and well-being effects of digital participation in cultural activities, how to scale up cultural interventions to larger populations, cross-country research initiatives, as well as research on the feasibility, acceptability, and suitability of new arts interventions (including their potential cost effectiveness) (Fancourt et al., 2019; Zbranca et al., 2022; Voice of Culture, 2023).

## 2.2.7. Responding with culture to changing geopolitical situations and conflicts

### a. Context

The **EC priority 2019-2024 “A stronger Europe in the world”**<sup>281</sup> targets the reinforcement of Europe’s responsible global leadership. In the field of culture, this priority builds on the **2016 Joint Communication of the EP and the Council - Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations**<sup>282</sup>. The Communication outlined three main objectives: (1) unlocking the potential of culture and creativity for sustainable social and economic development, (2) promoting peace and fighting radicalisation through intercultural dialogue and (3) strengthening cooperation on cultural heritage as an important expression of cultural diversity that deserves protection. The 2019 **Council Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action**<sup>283</sup> aimed to better integrate international cultural relations in EU foreign policy and to mutually reinforce the actions on the level of the EU and of the Member States. EU global action with culture pursues the following specific objectives:

- prioritising global relationships as one of the key pillars of EU policy making including culture;
- reinforcing Europe’s role as global leader by setting ambitious goals in a wide range of policy areas including culture;
- better understanding the changing geopolitical frameworks and related implications for the cultural sectors and international cultural relations;

<sup>281</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world_en)

<sup>282</sup> JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations. JOIN/2016/029 final. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN>

<sup>283</sup> Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action. 2019/C 192/04. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0607\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019XG0607(01))

- reinforcing the governance involving key EU stakeholders in the field of international cultural relations;
- defending the interests of the EU CCS by means of regulative actions addressing the international level;
- investing in the local development in Third Countries by the means of culture, creative industries and heritage cooperation; and
- promoting international partnerships in culture on equal footing and based on the principles of global justice, artistic freedom, and cultural rights.

The 'stronger Europe in the world'<sup>284</sup> policy priority includes **EU Solidarity with Ukraine**<sup>285</sup>. Ukraine received EU candidate status in June 2022. Accession negotiations for the country to be granted EU Membership<sup>286</sup> were opened in December 2023. The EU started giving support for Ukraine in the field of the CCS immediately after the Russian aggression in 2022. Since then, a range of targeted actions have been taken to support (and continue to support) Ukraine related to culture<sup>287</sup>. The actions focus on (1) assisting the CCS in Ukraine during the conflict, (2) supporting people working in the CCS who had to flee from Ukraine to Europe, (3) protecting the cultural heritage in Ukraine, (4) preparing the post-war context in Ukraine for the CCS and culture and (5) (better) understanding the interrelations between culture, heritage and conflict.

Following the related EU priorities, and due to the effects of the war in the Ukraine on cultural ecosystems in the EU and beyond, the global dimension in the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 was visibly enhanced compared to previous editions. The Work Plan refers to (1) the role of culture in the EU's external relations (strengthening cultural diplomacy, acting as a bridge for fostering mutual understanding and fostering international partnerships), (2) the culture and heritage dimensions of the Russian war against Ukraine and (3) cooperation with other international bodies, especially the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

## b. EU policy initiatives in the period 2019-2024

Cooperation with third countries in the areas of culture and education and relations with the relevant international organisations (UNESCO, Council of Europe and its European Audiovisual Observatory) is one of CULT's responsibilities. A range of related policy initiatives were taken, including by the EP during its mandate from 2019 to 2024.

Between 2019 and 2023, EUNIC - the network of the EU Member States' national institutes for culture (see section 1.1.5) - implemented the Preparatory Action (PA) "European Spaces of Culture"<sup>288</sup>. This PA **tested innovative collaboration models in cultural relations** between European and local partner organisations in countries outside the EU. The collaboration models were based on dialogue, equality, mutual listening, and learning. Partners, from both ends, were on equal footing and engaged in a joint capacity building process. This PA is considered as a game changer in how updated international partnerships by cultural institutes can be brought forward.

<sup>284</sup> See [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world_en)

<sup>285</sup> See [https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://eu-solidarity-ukraine.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>286</sup> See <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/enlargement/ukraine/>

<sup>287</sup> See <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-and-ukrainian-cultural-and-creative-sectors-working-together-for-a-better-future>

<sup>288</sup> See <https://europeanspacesofculture.eu/about>

In 2022, the EP adopted its **Implementation Report of the “New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations”**<sup>289</sup>. The report states that, even though the two documents have withstood the challenges posed by unforeseen crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, there is a **need for an update of both strategies**. In relation to the external dimension, the report called on the Commission and the EEAS to improve their coordination and to work towards a coherent, long-term strategy. The report also called for the development of an EU cultural diplomacy toolbox, to step up the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural goods and the related return of cultural works and artefacts to their places of origin, and to promote culture as a facilitator of sustainable development. Related to the **fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods**, the CULT Committee organised an exchange of views in 2023<sup>290</sup>. This topic gained further attention due to the multiple armed conflicts occurring around the globe, including in Ukraine.

In early 2024, an **exchange of views on cultural diplomacy** was organised by the CULT Committee<sup>291</sup>. This brought together stakeholders from the EEAS, DG EAC and academic experts. The exchange brought to the forefront a wide range of areas of action, such as better EU and MS governance related to international relations, strengthening the role of culture for democracy and related fundamental freedoms including for LGBTIQ cultures, the need to address global claims for justice, to improve international funding streams, and to mainstream international cultural cooperation in other policy areas.

Following Russia’s attack on Ukraine in February 2022, the EP adopted a resolution on “Cultural solidarity with Ukraine and a joint emergency response mechanism for cultural recovery in Europe”<sup>292</sup>. The resolution defines Russia’s war on Ukraine as an attempt to destroy the identity and culture of a sovereign nation with targeted acts of destruction of cultural heritage. It highlights the need for a reinforced **support and solidarity towards the Ukrainian cultural ecosystem**, including the Ukrainian authorities in charge of preservation. It also calls for supporting the resilience and post-crisis recovery of the EU’s cultural ecosystem as a whole by scaling up the innovation capacities of the CCS, among others. The CULT study on “Protecting cultural heritage from armed conflicts in Ukraine and beyond” (Campfens et al. 2023) highlights a range of recommendations. They relate to (1) addressing the emergencies in Ukraine (e. g. digitisation, cultural rights protection of refugees), (2) closing the accountability gap by the means of independent monitoring, (3) better coordination of measures and policies at EU level, (4) supporting the development of (emergency) preparedness policies and laws across the EU, (5) addressing illicit trafficking, and (6) focusing on community participation and memorialisation. Following the ensuing destruction of Ukrainian cultural heritage, the EC set up an expert sub-group on **safeguarding cultural heritage in Ukraine**, in line with the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026.<sup>293</sup> Since 2023, 26 experts have helped lay the foundations of the EU’s support to safeguard Ukrainian cultural heritage.

### c. Key (future) opportunities and reflections for future EU CCS policy development

The **international contexts have fundamentally changed** since 2019 (e.g., wars in Ukraine and Gaza, intensified geopolitical tensions in China, Taiwan, North- and South-Korea), which has had

<sup>289</sup> [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2022/2047\(INI\)&l=en](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2022/2047(INI)&l=en)

<sup>290</sup> See Newsletter CULT Committee meetings on 23 and 24 January 2023. ‘The fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods – exchange of views’. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/264119/CULT%20Newsletter%20January%202023.pdf>

<sup>291</sup> See Newsletter CULT Committee meeting on 13 February 2024. ‘Exchange of views on cultural diplomacy’. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/281045/CULT%20Newsletter%20February%202024.pdf>

<sup>292</sup> See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022IP0374>

<sup>293</sup> See <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/expert-groups-register/screen/expert-groups/consult?lang=en&fromMainGroup=true&groupID=103852>

considerable impact on cultural relations. Therefore, the EU foresight report 2023<sup>294</sup> calls for strengthening the interlinkages between the EU's internal and external policies, and for boosting the EU's offer and narrative on the global stage. Narratives have strong cultural dimensions which are not yet sufficiently addressed including in foresight reports.

Although the EC priority (2019-2024) "A stronger Europe in the world" has brought the global dimension more central to EU policy making, the related **cultural dimensions are still considerably underplayed in the EU's international relations.**

In a joint statement, EUNIC members<sup>295</sup> stressed the importance of international cultural relations to remain connected, foster peaceful global relations, enhance the economic potential related to the CCS, and call for investing in the power of culture. However, the statement also points out that **some Member States have considerably reduced budget for international cultural relations.** A study for the EP (Zillmer et al., 2023) highlights related missed opportunities with the Creative Europe programme. Zillmer et al. (2023, p. 43) state that "The programme has the potential to strengthen the positive transformation power of the cultural and creative sectors in partnership with a wide range of EU policy areas. However, the recognition of Creative Europe by other EU policies is so far widely underexploited." During the CULT Committee's exchange of views on cultural diplomacy<sup>296</sup>, experts highlighted that culture is still not fully involved in the EU Global Gateway and that the EU is dramatically under-investing because of **insufficient strategic steering, difficulties in decision-making and common governance.** An OMC group on better governance of international cultural relations in the EU started in 2023 and related results can be expected by end of 2024.

Furthermore, although the EU ambitions aim at reinforcing Europe's role as a global leader by setting ambitious goals in a wide range of policy areas including culture, the **global leadership of the EU is far from being achieved.** This is well illustrated, for example, in the field of culture and climate change, where the Group of Friends of Culture Based Climate Action was launched at COP28 by the United Arab Emirates and Brazil<sup>297</sup>. The United Arab Emirates and Brazil co-organised the inaugural ministerial meeting in Dubai, inviting more than 30 governments as well as intergovernmental organisations such as UNESCO and the EU (represented by the EC) to adopt the Emirates Declaration on Cultural-based Climate Action. The Declaration paves the way for the adoption of a Joint Work Decision on Culture-Based Climate Action at COP 29, and subsequently to a related action plan ahead of COP 30 in Brazil.<sup>298</sup>

For the EU to be a credible international partner, narratives require substantial backing by the means of concrete action including in the CCS. Major EU networks such as On-the-move<sup>299</sup>, UNESCO<sup>300</sup> and EUNIC<sup>301</sup> **call for better and fairer cultural relations** with fairer mobility and trade opportunities for all, including CCS actors from outside the EU.<sup>302</sup> This field of action also relates to the broader topic of

<sup>294</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/ca1c61b7-e413-4877-970b-8ef619fc6b6c\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/ca1c61b7-e413-4877-970b-8ef619fc6b6c_en)

<sup>295</sup> <https://www.goethe.de/ins/gb/en/kul/erp/mcc.html>

<sup>296</sup> See Newsletter CULT Committee meeting on 13 February 2024. 'Exchange of views on cultural diplomacy'. <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/281045/CULT%20Newsletter%20February%202024.pdf>

<sup>297</sup> This new coalition, comprising 33 countries and UN agencies, advocates for recognising the integral role of culture in climate change policies. It aims to generate political momentum for effective, cohesive, and coordinated global action, formally acknowledging the significance of culture and heritage in climate initiatives. See <https://gulftime.ae/uae-brazil-launch-group-of-friends-for-culture-based-climate-action-at-unfccc-during-cop28/>

<sup>298</sup> See <https://www.europanostra.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Press-release-%E2%80%9CGroup-of-Friends-of-Culture-Based-Climate-Action%E2%80%9D-launched-at-COP-28-9-Dec-2023.pdf>

<sup>299</sup> [https://on-the-move.org/sites/default/files/library/2023-12/OTM\\_transform-vision-mobility-african-perspective.pdf](https://on-the-move.org/sites/default/files/library/2023-12/OTM_transform-vision-mobility-african-perspective.pdf)

<sup>300</sup> <https://www.unesco.de/en/culture-and-nature/cultural-diversity/cultural-diversity-worldwide/fair-culture>

<sup>301</sup> <https://www.eunicglobal.eu/fair-collaboration>

<sup>302</sup> According to the UNESCO 2022 global report "Reshaping policies for creativity", trade from least developed countries makes up less than 0.5% of global exchanges of cultural goods, whereas the Global North dominates 95% of total exports of cultural services. See <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/unesco-strengthens-capacities-rebalance-international-cultural-exchanges>

artistic freedom in an international context<sup>303</sup>. The 2023 study of the EP JURI Committee<sup>304</sup> highlights the framework for **cross-border claims to looted art** – one central topic of decolonisation – and proposes a set of different models to **address blind spots in the legal and policy frameworks**.

The **diversity of actors related to international cultural relations has considerably evolved** in the past. From a policy field which was dominated by states and international organisations, a variety of actors at the supranational level (e. g. the EU) and at the sub-national level have joined the international stage. A related example is the international city-network UCLG<sup>305</sup> which has developed a strong cultural (policy) strand since 2015. The growing role of cities in international cultural relations can also be witnessed in the Global Power City Index<sup>306</sup> of the Mori Memorial Foundation, which includes a range of cultural relations indicators. The strategic EU Creative Europe project, “Deconfining” (2022-2026), experiments with the potential of artistic, cultural and policy cooperation between European Capitals of Culture and the African Capitals of Culture<sup>307</sup>. The project provides recommendations for better **intercontinental local-to-local relations through culture**<sup>308</sup>. The topic of **cultural relations between the EU and countries in the Global South** was also addressed by the experts at the aforementioned exchange of views on cultural diplomacy in the CULT Committee in 2024 (see section b. above).

The **continuation of the support of the CCS ecosystems in Ukraine**, including support for cultural heritage and refugees from arts and culture in the EU, are on the way of being implemented<sup>309</sup>. In May 2024, the EU launched a new communication campaign ‘Together We Act. Together We Are Europe’ to **showcase its support for and role of Ukrainian civil society and independent media**.<sup>310</sup> Running from May to July 2024 across Ukraine (excluding occupied territories and combat zones), the campaign features informational and educational events, interactive sessions, discussions, and workshops involving civil society organisations and the public. The campaign also promotes the importance of independent media as a cornerstone of democratic transformation and bulwark of fighting disinformation and debunking fakes spread by Russian propaganda. A study commissioned by the EU Cultural Relations Platforms<sup>311</sup> in 2022 highlights the need to focus further on a range of longer-term perspectives comprising investing in skills, keeping talent in Ukraine, supporting the creative industries and to develop promotion platforms for Ukrainian cultural products and services. The **EU membership process** with Ukraine is a related further strategic field of attention<sup>312</sup>.

<sup>303</sup> [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a0a2b95a803bb1549f47f5b/t/6449175baab10e34ffb0227c/1682511720096/programme-WS23\\_eng\\_web.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a0a2b95a803bb1549f47f5b/t/6449175baab10e34ffb0227c/1682511720096/programme-WS23_eng_web.pdf)

<sup>304</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/754126/IPOL\\_STU\(2023\)754126\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/754126/IPOL_STU(2023)754126_EN.pdf)

<sup>305</sup> <https://agenda21culture.net/summit/6th-uclg-culture-summit-2025>

<sup>306</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/11/the-growing-role-of-cities-in-international-diplomacy/>

<sup>307</sup> See <https://www.uclga.org/africans-capital-cities-of-culture/>

<sup>308</sup> [https://www.salzkammergut-2024.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Deconfining\\_WP2\\_inforelais\\_AMANN-Sylvia\\_CoC\\_International\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://www.salzkammergut-2024.at/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Deconfining_WP2_inforelais_AMANN-Sylvia_CoC_International_Report_Final.pdf)

<sup>309</sup> <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/european-commission-and-ukrainian-cultural-and-creative-sectors-working-together-for-a-better-future>

<sup>310</sup> See [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/eu-launches-new-communication-campaign-%E2%80%99together-we-act-together-we-are-europe%E2%80%99-showcase-its-support\\_en?s=232](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/ukraine/eu-launches-new-communication-campaign-%E2%80%99together-we-act-together-we-are-europe%E2%80%99-showcase-its-support_en?s=232)

<sup>311</sup> <https://www.cultureinexternalrelations.eu/2022/12/13/download-ukrainian-cultural-actors-mapping-and-needs-assessment/>

<sup>312</sup> <https://www.bruegel.org/policy-brief/ukraines-path-european-union-membership-and-its-long-term-implications>

### 3. NAVIGATING THE COMPLEXITIES OF TRANSITION: PATHWAYS FOR FUTURE CCS POLICY DEVELOPMENT

#### KEY FINDINGS

- Despite growing evidence of and advocacy for the transversal role that the CCS can play in transformative societies, recognition is still far from established. Current policy frameworks and instruments, including the EU strategic agenda 2024-2029 that was adopted in June 2024, fall short in fully embedding the CCS in the European project.
- Several obstacles hold back the CCS from outgrowing the experimentation and advocacy phase and becoming mainstream partners in the European project. These barriers relate to the short-term project logic that is dominantly present in funding structures for the CCS, non-inclusive innovation systems in Europe, fragmentation of the CCS, lack of spaces that facilitate cross-sectoral collaboration, dominant online platforms affecting cultural interactions in the digital space.
- The obstacles prevent the CCS from fully engaging in cross-sectoral collaborations and arts-driven transformation processes that can help build better futures. They also negatively affect the way that cultural spaces are shaped, making them less inclusive and safe for artistic creation and community interaction. It is important to address these obstacles with future EU CCS policy.

#### 3.1. From advocacy to mainstreaming the CCS in the European project

From the analysis in the previous chapter, it is clear that both the **CCS and the roles they (can) take up in European society are in transition**. The profound transformations (technological, geopolitical, and societal) that take place in Europe and globally, bring many challenges. At the same time, they hold valuable opportunities to (re)connect the CCS with the European project.

The multidimensional value of culture and the CCS in today's societies was also repeated at Mondiacult 2022, the global conference dedicated to cultural policy and sustainable development, organised by the UNESCO. The Mondiacult closing declaration recognized culture as a driver of resilience, social inclusion, and economic growth, impacting areas ranging from education, employment (especially for women and youth), health, and emotional well-being to poverty reduction, gender equality, environmental sustainability, tourism, trade, and transport.<sup>313</sup> In the declaration, cultural ministers advocate for the **systemic anchoring of culture into public policies** across international, regional, national, and local levels.

Despite growing evidence of and advocacy for the transversal role that the CCS can play in transformative societies with their unique abilities and talents (see section 2.2), **recognition is still far**

<sup>313</sup> See

[https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2022/10/6.MONDIACULT\\_EN\\_DRAFT%20FINAL%20DECLARATION\\_FINAL\\_1.pdf](https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2022/10/6.MONDIACULT_EN_DRAFT%20FINAL%20DECLARATION_FINAL_1.pdf)



**from established** among EU policymakers as witnessed in the strategic agenda 2024-2029 (see section 3.1.1). Moreover, the CCS are also not fully equipped to take up this role, among others due to historical vulnerabilities in their working context.

### 3.1.1. Europe's strategic agenda 2024-2029 and the (missing) role of the CCS

During the European Council meeting on 27 June 2024, EU leaders adopted the **strategic agenda for 2024-2029**.<sup>314</sup> The agenda presents the EU's political priorities for the next five years. It is based on three pillars: (1) a free and democratic Europe, (2) a strong and secure Europe and (3) a prosperous and competitive Europe. Building on the insights from chapter 2, the CCS can significantly contribute to delivering the priorities in each of those three pillars:

#### **Pillar 1 - A Free and Democratic Europe**

As highlighted in section 2.2.1, media pluralism is widely recognized as a precondition of contemporary democracies. Ensuring a diverse and independent media landscape is crucial for the functioning of democratic societies, allowing for the free exchange of ideas and fostering informed citizenry. The importance of free and pluralistic media is also emphasized in the strategic agenda. Beyond media, the CCS can also significantly contribute to promoting and safeguarding European values by fostering cultural diversity and heritage, which are integral to European identity. Through initiatives like public art projects, cultural festivals, and heritage preservation programmes, the CCS can engage citizens in celebrating and preserving their shared history and values.

#### **Pillar 2 - A Strong and Secure Europe**

The CCS play a vital role in supporting a strong and secure Europe by promoting social cohesion and cultural understanding, which are essential for internal stability and peace. Cultural initiatives can bridge divides between communities, fostering mutual respect and reducing social tensions. Furthermore, cultural diplomacy and international cultural exchanges can enhance the EU's soft power, building strategic partnerships and fostering peaceful global relations (see section 2.2.7). Security and defence might feel far from the CCS, as an area of technology and military options. However, it is also an area of strong narratives, and fostering understanding and motivation to face dangers. Understanding the human dimension of conflict can help develop empathy and solidarity. Cultural and artistic movements from the present and from the past have the potential to foster connections and facilitate healing after intense conflicts. On the other hand, artists and journalists face considerable danger due to conflicting situations in their home countries and abroad, in- and outside the EU.<sup>315</sup> These professionals are often the only eye-witnesses reporting or providing artistic statements from the conflict zones and are in that sense also part of a security and defence architecture – if well-established.

Enlargement – another objective under this pillar - is at first sight a bureaucratic process based on the *acquis* and related negotiations between the EU and candidate countries including in cultural policy. Enlargement is at the same time a major cultural endeavour with the potential of generating feelings of belonging for the diverse strata of populations, to better (re-)connect with common history and heritage and to be (again) a member of, or to widen, the European family. Not considering these cultural factors would mean missing out on the human and emotional dimensions of these political processes. The related roles of the CCS are manifold. For example, common cultural heritage connects Europeans and can generate a sense of community with multi-country approaches such as those

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<sup>314</sup> <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/strategic-agenda-2024-2029/>

<sup>315</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/2023-alarming-increase-journalists-killed-conflict-zones>

promoted by the EU Creative Europe programme. In addition, related to migration, the CCS have proven to be helpful in the integration of people from abroad (EU, third countries), fostering understanding between diverse peoples (see section 2.2.6). Many initiatives, like the substantial support from the cultural sectors for the displaced people from Ukraine (including artists and cultural professionals), are exemplar<sup>316</sup> (see section 2.2.7).

### Pillar 3 - A Prosperous and Competitive Europe

The CCS are already well-established in the EU economic strategies, with the CCS being one of the 14 key industrial ecosystems in the EU Industrial Strategy as well as with the KIC EIT Culture & Creativity (see section 2.2.2). More than 8 million people in the EU work in the fields of art, culture, heritage and media, generating 4% of the EU's GDP<sup>317</sup>. In addition, many of the activities in the CCS are place-based with related income and job creation in Europe (e. g. European Capitals of Culture). By integrating cultural activities into the digital economy, the CCS can create new jobs, attract talent, and stimulate investment in creative enterprises (see sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.3). Additionally, the CCS can contribute to the green transition by promoting sustainable practices in the CCS as well as in society at large (see section 2.2.4). In this way, the CCS support the EU's goal of becoming the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

Internationally, the EU had a very strong position as a global cultural hotspot (e.g. by being the top exporter of cultural goods in 2022<sup>318</sup>). However, substantial new cultural regions have gained popularity around the globe (e. g. in China, the Arab Peninsula, and Southeast Asia). A strategic positioning of the EU in this regard is not yet in place, with potentially considerable negative collateral effects for these industries in Europe (e. g. further high-end industry competition from Asia, and/or the lack of control of cultural data use and valorisation). At the same time, it is important that the CCS in Europe have full access to emerging new markets, as they offer many opportunities for CCS products and services. Cross-border and international mobility are another important topics for the CCS, including for co-productions and media services for which open borders are especially crucial. This is even more valid for those CCS workers from smaller Member States with limited markets, for example, for larger performing arts productions. The open EU markets, including the four freedoms (goods, capital, services, and people), are fundamental pillars to tap into the full market and employment potential of the CCS. The EU's CCS would need full access to (new, emerging) markets around the globe<sup>319</sup> and related practical frameworks (e. g. interest in European culture, rights to provide creative services).

Except for emphasising the importance of free and pluralistic media in Pillar 1, the adopted strategic agenda **makes no further reference to the role that the CCS can play in realising the strategic agenda**. From the analysis in this study, this appears to be a serious shortcoming and a missed opportunity to strategically embed the CCS in the European project. Similar conclusions can be made

<sup>316</sup> On December 8, 2022, Matti Maasilta, EU Ambassador and Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, noted that since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the European Union has supported more than 1,000 Ukrainian artists, hundreds of museums and culture centres with a total amount of more than EUR 5 million. <https://eu4ukraine.eu/en/together-we-create-en#:~:text=At%20the%20same%20forum%2C%20Matti,than%20EUR%205%20million%2C%20and>

<sup>317</sup> <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/selected-themes/data-on-the-cultural-sector> As a reference figure: 2.8 million people in the EU work directly in car manufacturing, see [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/automotive-industry\\_en](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/automotive-industry_en)

<sup>318</sup> [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctsce2022d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctsce2022d1_en.pdf) (page 33)  
[https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648\\_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029\\_EN.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf)

<sup>319</sup> Top 10 importers of creative goods from the developing countries are: China, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Mexico, Taiwan, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Viet Nam [https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctsce2022d1\\_en.pdf](https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctsce2022d1_en.pdf), p. 56

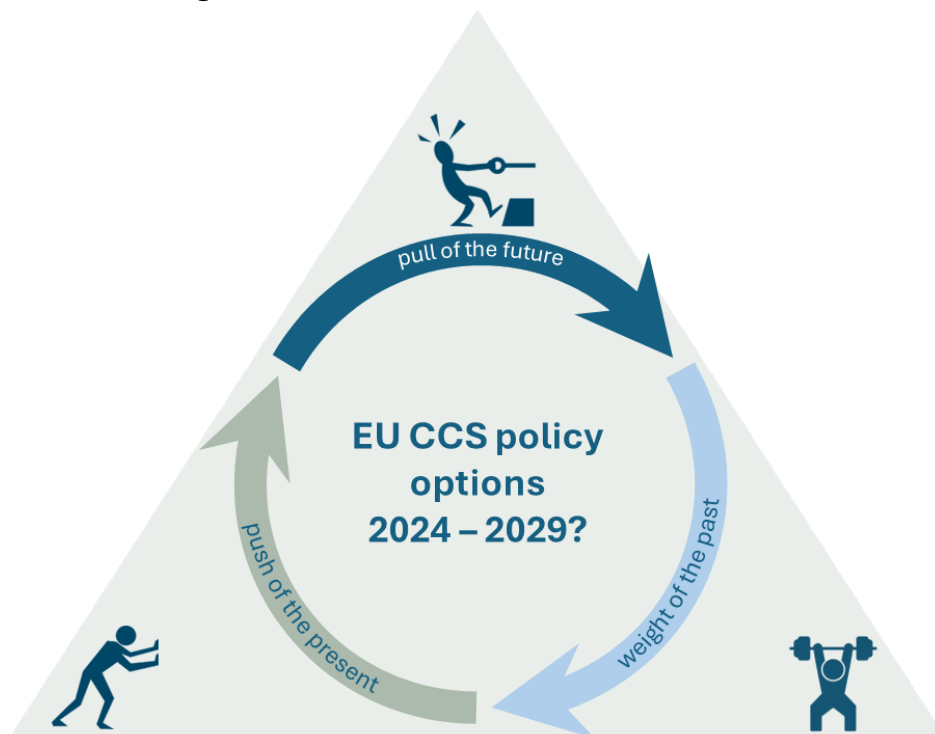
for the Political Guidelines of the 2024-2029 Commission<sup>320</sup>, which were published on the 18th of July 2024. The Guidelines refer to the role of media, media literacy, and media freedom in preserving European democracy but do not address the role of the broader CCS or the position of CCS professionals in the coming five years.

### 3.1.2. Leveraging signals of change, addressing weights of the past

To better understand **what barriers the CCS are facing to mainstream their multifaceted contributions to the European project**, this study made use of the futures triangle, a methodology rooted in Futures Studies. The futures triangle allows for the structured analysis of the interplay between current signals of change (**push of the present**) and perspectives on preferable futures for the CCS in the EU (**pull of the future**), alongside past developments that hinder the CCS from moving beyond the advocacy phase and becoming mainstream partners in the European project (**weights of the past**). The futures triangle analysis builds on the analysis in chapter 2, as well as further input from the horizon scanning and the strategic conversations with CCS (policy) experts. See Annex I for more information on the methodology.

By analysing the **triangle of interrelated forces from the past, present and future**, a number of priority areas emerge, that are characterised by significant tensions, and that would benefit from (continued) policy action (Figure 1).

**Figure 1: The futures triangle**



Source: IDEA Consult, based on Inayatullah (2008)

<sup>320</sup>[https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648\\_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029\\_EN.pdf](https://commission.europa.eu/document/download/e6cd4328-673c-4e7a-8683-f63ffb2cf648_en?filename=Political%20Guidelines%202024-2029_EN.pdf)

Based on the analysis, four areas of tension have been identified, where EU CCS policy action in 2024-2029 would be needed:

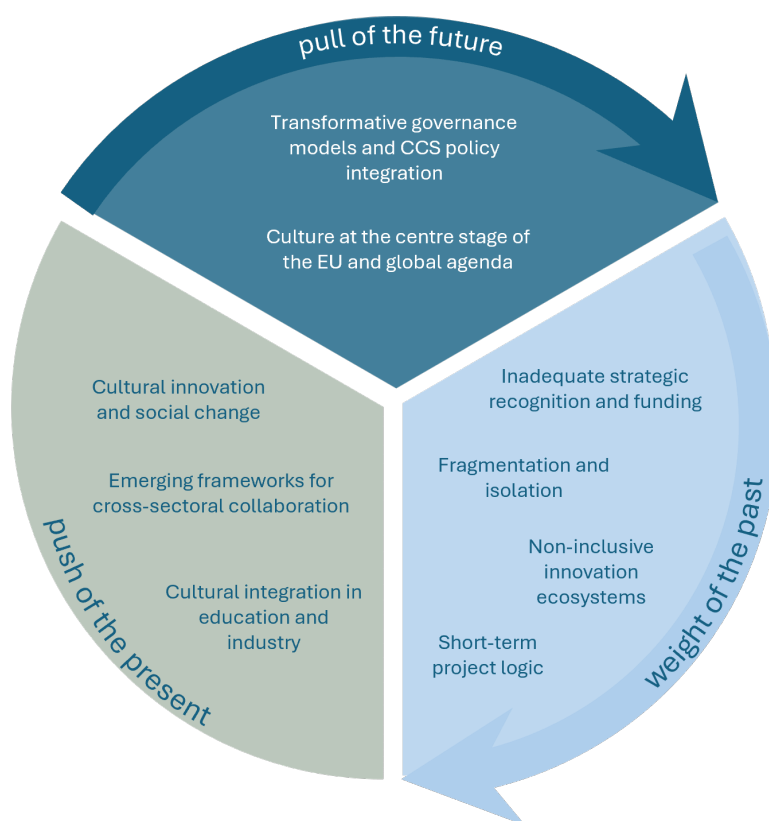
- Creating better futures built on cross-sectoral collaborations with the CCS;
- No arts-driven transformation without more sustainable working environments;
- Cultural spaces are critical nodes for artistic creation and community interaction;
- Mainstreaming implies breaking policy silos.

These areas of tension are discussed in the next sections.

### 3.2. Creating better futures built on cross-sectoral collaborations with the CCS

Dealing with societal issues, such as climate change, mental health, geopolitical crises, highlights the **increased role of culture in driving social change and innovation, alongside the need for more holistic approaches and partnerships across different sectors**. One of the main challenges in these transformation processes is overcoming the natural reluctance to change among decision-makers and citizens. Art, culture, media and heritage help support and strengthen change as they enable citizens and societies to understand processes and access new perspectives in engaging ways, such as through games or through narratives (e.g., movies describing possible futures) (see sections 2.2.1, 2.2.4 and 2.2.6).

**Figure 2: Underlying dynamics Priority Area 1**



**Cultural interventions require partnerships across different sectors, and require the structures and incentives necessary to facilitate these collaborative efforts.** This can include joint funding initiatives, interdisciplinary research projects, or integrated policy approaches. The New European Bauhaus is an interesting initiative in that respect (see section 2.2.4). Integrating cultural elements into education (for example in STEAM, see section 2.2.5) and industry promotes the value of culture within these fields. This can lead to more interdisciplinary programmes in educational and research institutions, and culturally informed practices in industries. However, based on the analysis in chapter 2, it is clear that frameworks for cross-sectoral and transdisciplinary collaboration are currently not fully

nor sufficiently in place, also international exchanges and research cooperation is too fragmented. The lack of strategic recognition and adequate funding formats (project-based, short-term) hinders the development and implementation of longer-term CCS involvement and initiatives, reducing their visibility and influence in society. The CCS often suffer from fragmentation and isolation (see for example section 2.2.5 on innovation ecosystems, or section 2.2.6 on culture for health). This fragmentation weakens the sector’s collective impact and hinders the development of cohesive strategies that could elevate the CCS’s role in society. Furthermore, current institutional frameworks in culture and beyond more often stand as obstacles to the necessary cross-sectoral cooperation. Innovation definitions are still much too limited to technological dimensions (see section 2.2.5).

Enhancing the understanding of the support for culture as an investment for sustainable transformation not only mitigates the weights of the past, but also aligns with the present push towards more holistic and inclusive policy agendas, setting the stage for a future where culture is a cornerstone of sustainable societal progress. At the same time, it creates a huge range of new opportunities for CCS careers, for example, from heritage farmers to futurists.

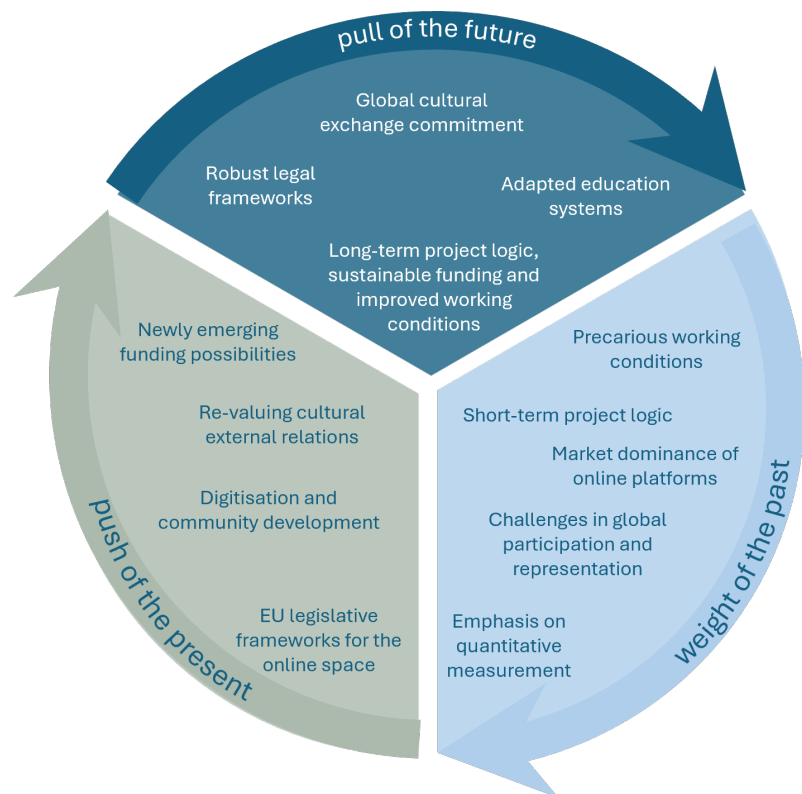
### 3.3. No arts-driven transformation without more sustainable working environments

The capacity of the CCS to drive transformation goes hand in hand with their ability to adapt and thrive amidst rapidly changing contexts. This demands **the creation of an ecosystem where CCS professionals can**, amongst others, **work under fair conditions, access sustainable funding, and receive proper recognition and compensation** for their contributions.

However, longstanding challenges such as the precarious working conditions, fragmented career paths, unequal access to funding, pressures on copyright, and international mobility constraints all represent historically grown barriers (see section 2.2.2). Many cultural

professionals face unstable employment with irregular incomes, lack of social security, and insufficient benefits. This insecurity makes it difficult for individuals to invest in their careers or take risks that could lead to innovative and impactful cultural work (see section 2.2.5). Funding and project planning often prioritize short-term results over long-term sustainability. This project-based approach leads to fragmented efforts, resulting in missed opportunities for significant cultural contributions and long-

Figure 3: Underlying dynamics Priority Area 2



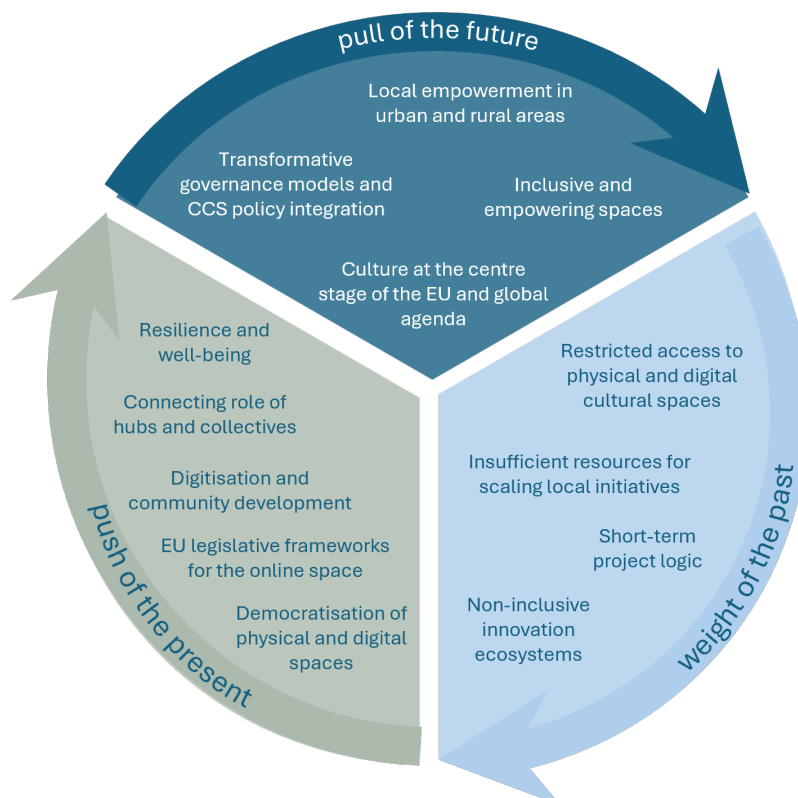
term societal impact (see, for example, sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.6). In the online market, a handful of large online platforms dominate the European cultural market, controlling distribution channels and influencing consumer access to cultural content. These platforms often prioritize commercially viable content over diverse and innovative cultural expressions (see sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.3). Finally, emphasis on quantitative measurement can lead to a misalignment between cultural initiatives and broader societal goals, such as social cohesion, mental health, and community development (see for example section 2.2.6). Projects with the CCS that could have a profound impact on these areas may be overlooked in favour of those with more easily quantifiable outcomes.

The push of the present and pull of the future elements outlined in Figure 3 highlight current initiatives and future aspirations that offer opportunities to **create more sustainable working conditions for the CCS**. Access to more diverse funding sources, including community finance, impact investing or funding from other policy domains, could enhance the financial resilience of CCS workers, enabling them to invest in long-term projects and career development. Recognizing and **investing in cultural diplomacy and international collaborations** can open up new markets and audiences for CCS professionals. Increased international exposure and collaboration can diversify income streams and provide more stable and enriching career opportunities. Digital technologies enable new forms of cultural production and distribution. Community-focused initiatives can support local cultural ecosystems, providing a supportive environment for CCS workers. (Further) implementing robust legislative frameworks enables fair competition, protects intellectual property rights, and enhances job security for CCS professionals by curbing the monopolistic practices of major platforms (see section 2.2.3).

### 3.4. Cultural spaces are critical nodes for artistic creation and community interaction

CCS' actions take place largely in public spaces. However, fundamental changes in the spatial dimensions are under way. The digital transformation created new (global) spaces for cultural interaction (e.g., the metaverse, digital arts markets), but only for those with digital access and skills. The public (indoor and outdoor) spaces of interaction have been transformed due to (new) issues related to societal changes (e. g. intimidation of women or LGBTIQ audiences in public spaces, inaccessible spaces due to conflict). Hybridisation will continue to create or alter new types of spaces where interaction takes place. New variations of interaction rooms emerge

Figure 4: Underlying dynamics Priority Area 3



rapidly, while related challenges are not yet (fully) addressed - what are the housekeeping rules and the legal frameworks? This leads to disruptions which reflect imbalances of power and representation in society and the economy (see, for example, sections 2.2.1 and 2.2.3). Geopolitical and other interest-driven policies interfere considerably in these new spaces (see section 2.2.7).

The historical inadequacies in recognising and funding CCS professionals, coupled with fragmented and isolated organisational structures and constraints on resources and accessibility, have limited the development of (innovative) physical and digital spaces for cultural interactions, as well as of hybrid constellations that blend both. At the same time, multiple signals of change aim to (re)value cultural creation and cultural interaction with citizens and communities (see Figure 4, push of the present and pull of the future elements). These elements emphasize the importance of fostering inclusive, accessible, and supportive environments for cultural activities. **Safe spaces for cultural creation and interaction provide an environment where individuals and communities can freely express themselves, collaborate, and engage without fear** of discrimination, harassment, or censorship. Sections 2.2.4 to 2.2.6 illustrate how socio-cultural centres, creative hubs and other cultural organisations serve as safe spaces for the CCS to interact with citizens and communities in the context of the green transition, well-being and societal innovation at large.

**Democratised access to cultural spaces** ensures that everyone, regardless of background, can participate in cultural activities. This inclusivity fosters a diverse and vibrant cultural ecosystem where different voices and perspectives are valued. Digital tools and platforms can further expand the reach of cultural activities and enable cultural creators to engage with communities in innovative ways, breaking down physical barriers. However, such digital interactions can only flourish when they are regulated to prevent harmful behaviour such as cyberbullying or hate speech. It is of major importance that these **spaces are designed to protect users' privacy, provide digital and media literacy support, and ensure respectful interactions** (see section 2.2.1). Looking ahead, there is a pull towards the creation of inclusive and empowering spaces both in the physical and digital realms as well as everything in between. This is supported by the acknowledgment of the sectors' crucial role in driving societal transitions, indicating a broader shift towards holistic approaches and transversal collaboration. The flourishing of local initiatives and the to-be-created tools for the scaling up of these successful testing grounds, both in rural and non-rural areas, contributes to the momentum for creating dynamic and sustainable spaces for cultural exchange and creativity in the future.

### 3.5. Mainstreaming implies breaking policy silos

EU and international agendas, such as the EU strategic agenda 2024-2029 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals 2030, demonstrate **the need for collaborative action to create better futures for societies**. The CCS are important enablers for better futures, if embedded in sustainable CCS and cross-sectoral policies and governance (see sections 2.2.4 and 2.2.6 on the CCS' role in the green transition and well-being of citizens and communities).

Frameworks for policy learning and policy exchange in the EU, such as in the OMC groups or with international partners, are partly in place, but the related full potential is far from being tapped into. This is due to, among others, persistent policy silos (see section 2.2.6 on culture and health). **The dominant short-term project funding logic in CCS policy creates an environment where strategic, cross-sectoral initiatives are underfunded**. As valuable local cultural initiatives often lack the resources needed to scale up and achieve wider impact, local initiatives now often remain isolated pockets of innovation rather than integrated components of a broader cultural strategy. Additionally, without strategic recognition, it is very difficult for CCS policies to be integrated into broader policy agendas (see section 3.1.1 on how the CCS could have been embedded within the strategic agenda 2024-2029).

The EU is a supranational body with a legal framework for culture and media based on the TFEU. The EU's cultural and media policy competences are founded on the principle of subsidiarity. Effective and coherent cultural and media policy governance within all MSs, and across the EU, therefore requires a cooperative multilevel governance framework in order to address cross-border matters such as effective IP-protection. However, **a comprehensive multilevel governance framework is not yet fully in place** between the EU institutions (horizontal governance), the CULT Committee and governance stakeholders in EU member states and in third countries or international bodies (multilevel governance).

Looking ahead, enhanced cross-sectoral governance and better coordinated (CCS) policy initiatives could provide promising options.

**Updated cooperation frameworks between the local, regional and EU level could boost the formation of regional or national networks** that foster mutual exchange and learning, collaboration and even joint funding across different policies and domains.

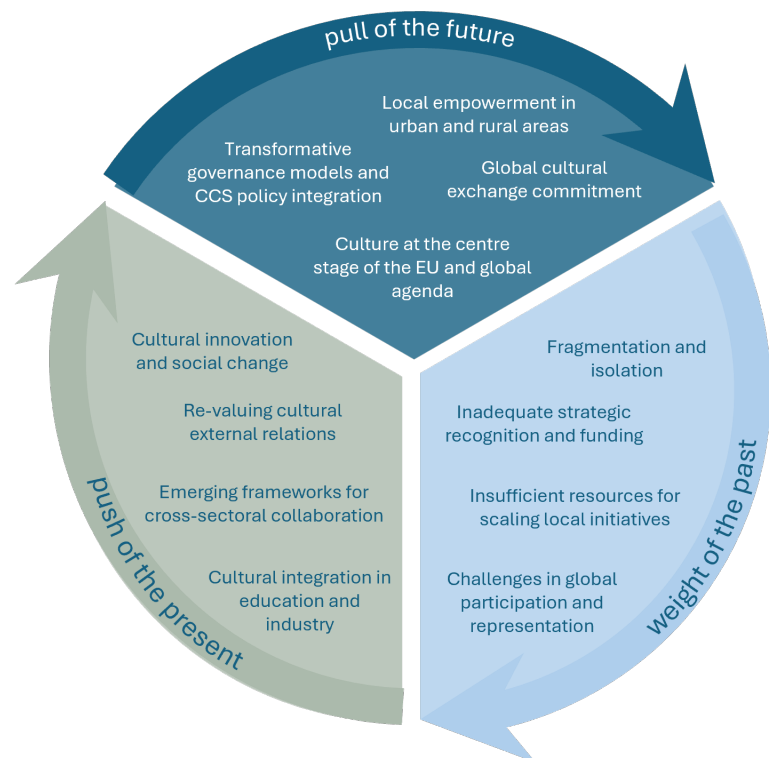
### 3.6. Designing policy options at the intersection of past, present and future CCS developments

The summarised futures triangle below (Figure 6) visualises the intricate interplay between the different weights of the past, the pushes of the present, and the pulls of the future, that have been discussed in this chapter. The analysis of these dynamics provides the foundation to develop strategic policy pathways that drive positive change. To effectively address the different areas of tension between past, present and future CCS developments, policy options in four specific areas are discussed in more detail in chapter 4:

- Policy area 1: Support for the CCS is an investment in better futures;
- Policy area 2: Updated CCS ecosystems build sustainable ground;
- Policy area 3: Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion;
- Policy area 4: Cooperative governance options for the CULT Committee.

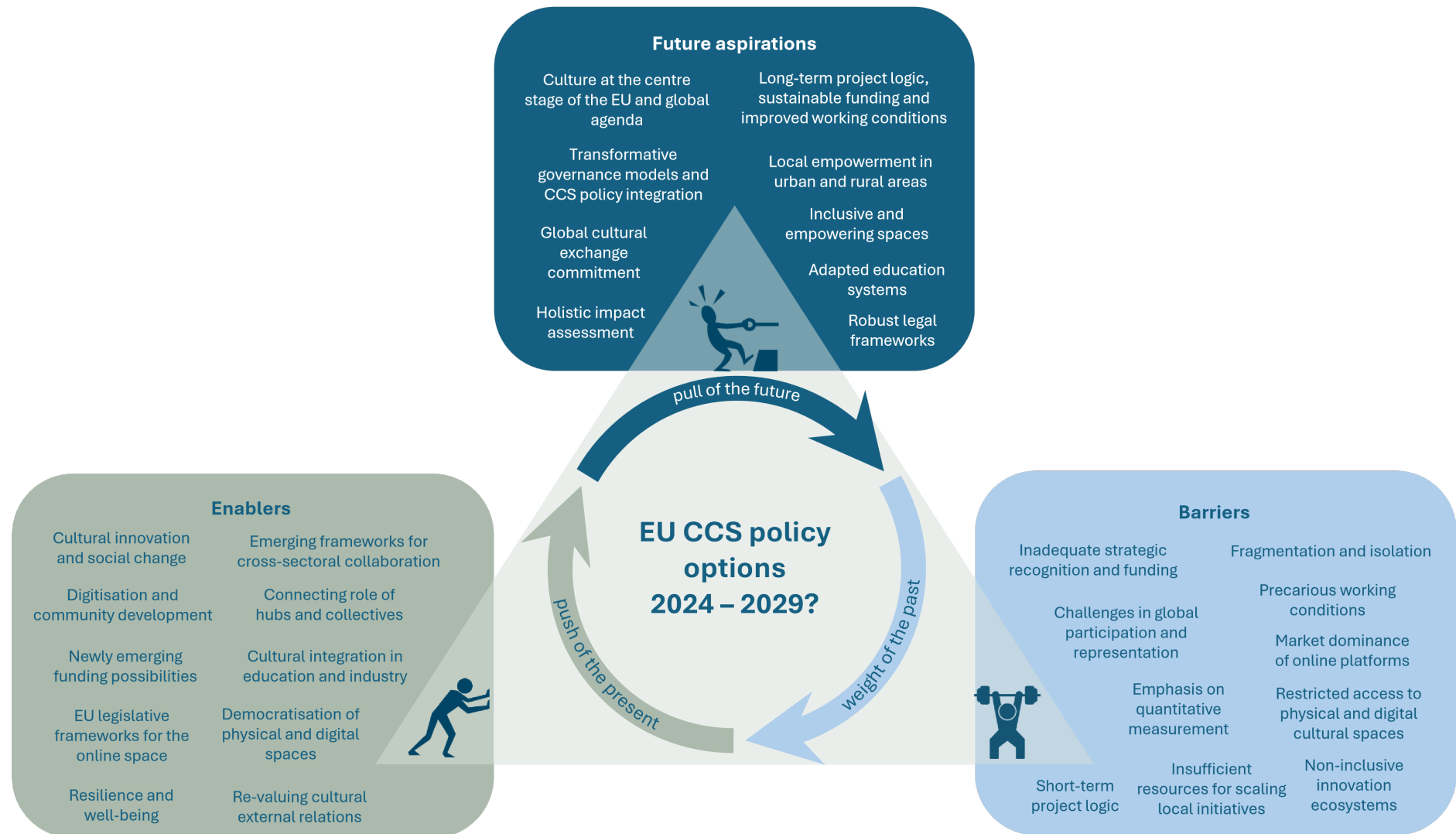
**Figure 5: Underlying dynamics Priority Area 4**

(cf. futures triangle analysis)





**Figure 6: Options for policy action at the intersection of past, present and future dynamics**



## 4. EU CCS POLICY OPTIONS FOR 2024-2029

### KEY FINDINGS

The CCS are not yet adequately addressed in most of the EU policies and strategic agendas. Robust supporting mechanisms for artistic and content creation and preservation are lacking. A range of important ‘bricks’ are already in place, such as legal frameworks for a better regulation of the digital sphere. However, **further unfolding the potential of the CCS to contribute to the European project, requires more holistic CCS visions** including related policy initiatives.

Based on the analysis, this study presents four specific areas that would need strategic EU CCS policy attention in the 10th parliamentary term:

- Policy Area 1 **“Support for the CCS is an investment in creating better futures”** focuses on leveraging the CCS’ role in transforming European societies. Related options for policy action focus on (1) better including the storytelling power of the CCS in transformation policies, (2) better integrating the innovation potential of the CCS in societal and economic development, and (3) improving cross-sectoral cooperation capacities in and with the CCS.
- Policy Area 2 **“Updated CCS ecosystems build sustainable ground”** relates to (further) bringing CCS ecosystems up-to-date with current transformative times. It provides options for policy action that concentrate on (1) enhancing the transformation capacities in the CCS, (2) investing in democratic culture and media institutions, and (3) enabling better international cooperation in and with the CCS.
- Policy Area 3 **“Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion”** focuses on safeguarding (physical, digital, and hybrid) spaces of interaction for cultural processes and media actions, which are under threat due to rapid technological, societal and political transformations while the required housekeeping rules are still too fragmented. Options for policy action concentrate on (1) addressing access barriers related to physical, digital and hybrid spaces, (2) preventing aggression and harm in interaction spaces, and (3) ensuring the well-being of individuals through cultural and media expression.
- Policy Area 4 **“Cooperative governance options for the CULT Committee”** contextualises the (CCS) policy-making in the EU. It challenges the persisting work in institutional silos and the lack of multilevel governance frameworks that result in duplicity of policy initiatives, limited access to good practices in CCS policy, inefficient use of financial means, and less visibility of EU CCS policies. Proposed options for policy action relate to (1) improving CCS horizontal governance between EU institutions and (2) enhancing multilevel governance with other strategic partners at local, regional, national and international level.

### 4.1. Four areas of (future) EU CCS policy attention

Culture is intrinsic to human life. Creativity, artistic creation, culture, and media content production provide comfort and joy, feelings of community, inspiration for change, insights as well as income. This **transversal nature of culture and the potential it holds for the CCS and society at large is multidimensional**, as the analysis in the previous chapters has shown. However, this study also finds that this **potential is not yet fully explored in social and economic terms** in Europe nor globally (cf.

section 3.1). Strong CCS policies and strengthened CCS ecosystems are a precondition to tap into the full potential of culture.

In past years, important policy work has been done to put a range of important ‘bricks’ in place that support the development of the CCS (e.g. legislative initiatives for a better regulation of the digital sphere, policy work on working conditions) (see chapter 2). However, adding only ‘bricks’ to the current supporting EU framework for the CCS, appears insufficient for the CCS to fully cope with the new environments. Further **unfolding the potential of the CCS to contribute to the European project will require more strategic and holistic CCS visions** as well as substantial engagement in the legislative period of 2024 to 2029 – and beyond (see Table 1 and Table 2 to view the expected dates of adoption, transposition and review of the main CCS-related Directives and Regulations in the upcoming term, 2024-2029).

**Table 1: Expected timetable of adoption, transposition and review of the main Directives/Regulations under CULT’s remit during the 2024-2029 term**

| Key legislative acts under CULT’s remit                               |   |
|---|---|
| Instrument  | Timing  |
| <a href="#"><u>Creative Europe programme 2021–2027</u></a>            | <p>Full application from 1 January 2021.</p> <p>No later than 31 December 2024, the Commission shall carry out an interim evaluation of the Programme and submit a report to the EP and Council no later than 6 months after the interim evaluation. (cfr. Art. 21).</p> <p>After 31 December 2027, but no later than 31 December 2029, the Commission shall carry out a final evaluation of the Programme and submit a report to the EP and Council no later than 6 months after the interim evaluation. (cfr. Art. 21).</p> |
| <a href="#"><u>Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)</u></a>   | By 19 December 2026: the EC presents to the EP and the Council an ex-post evaluation, accompanied where appropriate by proposals for its review, of the impact of the AVMSD and its added value (cfr. Art. 33).   |
| <a href="#"><u>European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)</u></a>              | From 8 August 2025: full application of EMFA (although some parts will be applicable sooner/later - cfr. Art. 29).  |
| <a href="#"><u>EP Resolution on working conditions in the CCS</u></a> | 2024 onwards: follow-up of recommendations made in EP Resolution 2023/2051(INL) and the initiatives mentioned in the Commission’s response  |
| <a href="#"><u>European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) action</u></a>     | <p>By 31 December 2024: the EC presents an initial interim report to the EP, the Council and the Committee of the Regions (cfr. Art. 16).</p> <p>By 31 December 2029: the EC presents a second interim report to the EP, the Council and the Committee of the Regions (cfr. Art. 16).</p> <p>By 31 December 2034: the EC presents an ex-post report to the EP, the Council and the Committee of the Regions (cfr. Art. 16).</p>   |

**Table 2: Expected timetable of adoption, transposition and review of additional CCS-related Directives/Regulations during the 2024-2029 term**

| Other key legislative acts relevant for CULT |   |
|--|---|
| Instrument                                   | Timing  |
| <u>Anti-SLAPP Directive</u>                  | By 7 May 2026: transposition by Member States (cfr. Art. 22)  |
| <u>Artificial Intelligence Act</u>           | From 2 August 2026: full application of AI Act (24 months after entering into force) (although some parts will be applicable sooner/later - cfr. Art. 113).<br><br>By 2 August 2029 (and every 4 years thereafter): the EC presents to the EP and the Council a report on the evaluation and review of the AI Act. In carrying out the evaluation, the EC shall take into account the positions and findings of the Board, the EP, the Council and other relevant bodies or sources (Art. 112).                               |
| <u>Copyright Directive</u>                   | No sooner than 7 June 2026: the EC carries out a review of the Copyright Directive and presents a report on the main findings to the EP, the Council and the EESC (cfr. Art. 30).   |
| <u>Digital Markets Act (DMA)</u>             | By 3 May 2026 (and every 3 years thereafter): the EC presents to the EP, the Council and the EESC a report on the evaluation of the DMA, accompanied where appropriate by proposals for review of the regulation (cfr. Art. 53).  |
| <u>Digital Services Act (DSA)</u>            | By 17 November 2025: the EC presents a report on the evaluation of the DSA to the EP, the Council and the EESC (Art. 91).<br><br>By 17 November 2027 (and every 5 years thereafter): the EC presents a report on the evaluation of the DSA to the EP, the Council and the EESC, accompanied where appropriate by proposals for amendments of the regulation. In carrying out the evaluation, the EC shall take into account the positions and findings of the EP, the Council and other relevant bodies or sources (Art. 91). |
| 2027+ EU programmes                          | 2028: adoption of regulation on the new EU funding programmes 2027+   |

Source: Based on own research

Looking ahead at the next ten years – covering two legislative periods (2024-2034) – this study highlights the need to build new ‘houses’ with and for the CCS, as major transformation areas for both the CCS and European society become fully visible. This last chapter elaborates on evidence-based policy options to strengthen and stimulate the CCS in the upcoming 10th parliamentary term.

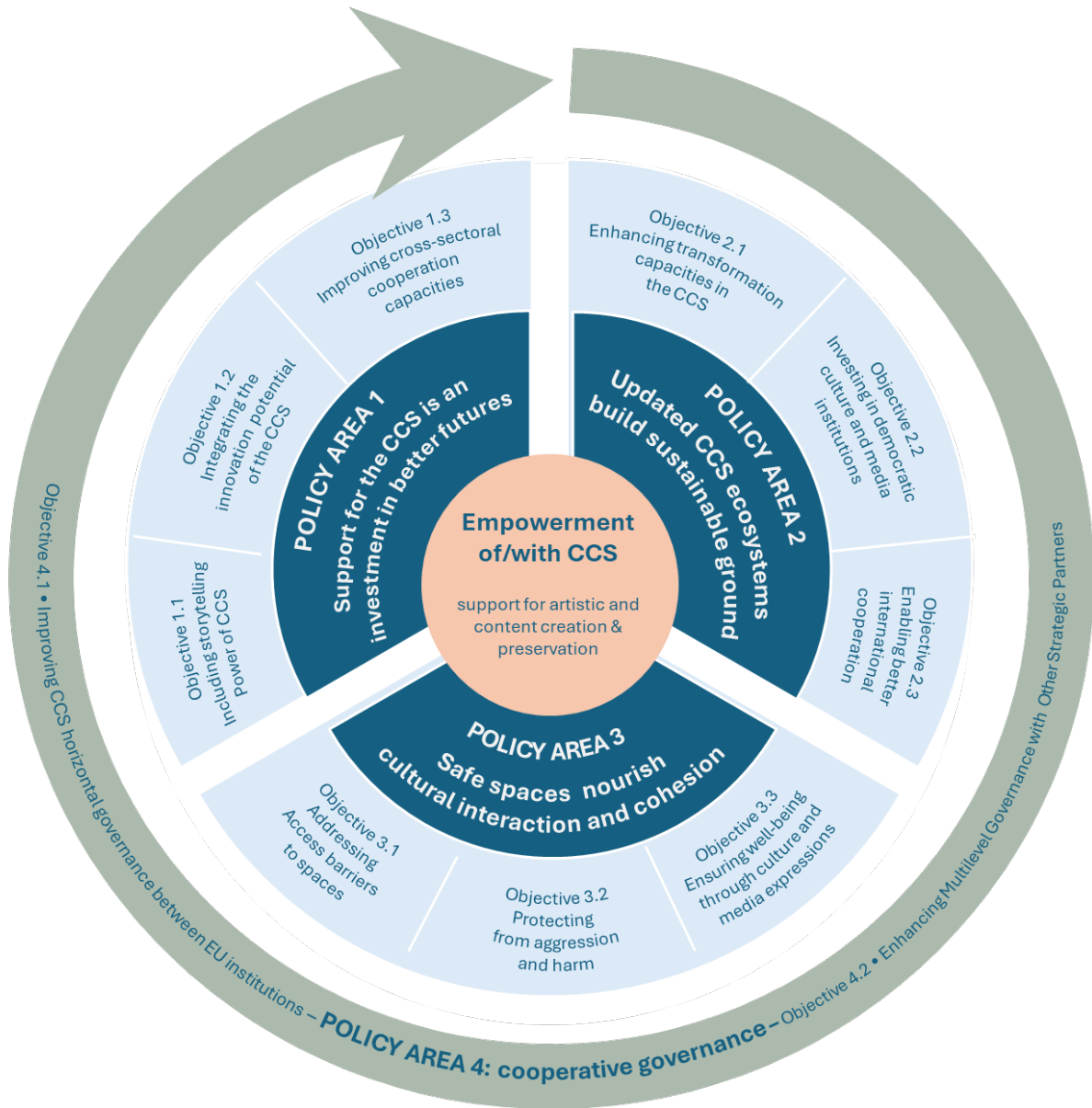
The proposed policy options are clustered into **three thematic areas** (Figure 7):

- Policy Area 1: Support for the CCS is an investment in creating better futures;
- Policy Area 2: Updated CCS ecosystems to build sustainable ground; and
- Policy Area 3: Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion.

In addition to these three areas, a **4th Policy Area focuses on innovating governance**, as current policy-making practices need to transform both within the EU institutions and with other partners

(Policy Area 4). Such a reform will allow to make more impactful progress in each of the other three key areas.

**Figure 7: Key areas for EU CCS policy attention**



Source: Inforelais, Sylvia Amann and IDEA Consult

The four policy areas are further detailed with concrete policy actions in the following sections. When drafting the policy recommendations, the following **frameworks of EU CCS policymaking** were taken into account (Figure 8):

- the insights from the EC foresight studies that serve as a compass for (future) EU policy making, including CCS policies;
- the EU framework defining the culture and media domains, incorporating the arts, culture & heritage, creative industries, media and news;

- the specific nature of EU CCS policy making; and
- the CULT Committee’s mandate related to the CCS.

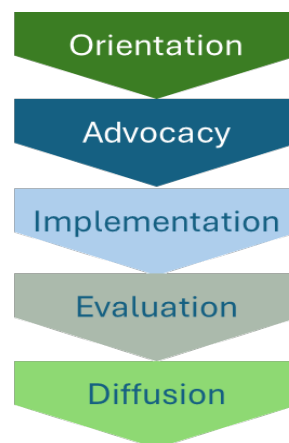
**Figure 8: Towards policy options for the CULT - frameworks to consider**



Source: Inforelais, Sylvia Amann

All policy options presented in this chapter refer to different **stages in the policymaking cycle**. Building further on the work from the OECD-OPSI<sup>321</sup>, the following stages in the policy life cycle are used for the purpose of this study:

- **Orientation:** identifying problems, and generating ideas for new instruments and policies;
- **Advocacy:** amplifying voices on issues where decisions cannot be made by CCS policymakers alone;
- **Implementation:** developing instruments, and implementing instruments and policies;
- **Monitoring & evaluation:** analysing outputs and results from instruments;
- **Diffusion:** sharing and exchanging lessons learned among policymakers.



## 4.2. Policy Area 1: Support for the CCS is an investment in creating better futures

The CCS are powerful enablers of positive change having the capacity to accompany people on the ongoing transformation journeys (see sections 2.2.4 to 2.2.7). Cross-sectoral (EU) policies that fully tap into this important potential are not (yet) comprehensively in place, including with reference to the thematic fields of the strategic agenda 2024-2029 of the EU (see section 3.1.1). An urgent policy area to

<sup>321</sup> See <https://oecd-opsi.org/>

address is the establishment of understanding among policymakers and the broader policy community that supporting the CCS is an investment in creating better futures.

Related policy objectives:

- Including the storytelling power of the CCS in transformation policies (1.1)
- Integrating the innovation potential of the CCS in societal and economic development (1.2)
- Improving cross-sectoral cooperation capacities in and with the CCS (1.3)

**Policy objective 1.1: Including the storytelling power of the CCS in transformation policies**

Transformation is difficult for citizens and for policymakers. The perception of a polycrisis negatively impacts the capacities and motivation for necessary individual and collective change. The CCS have the capacity to depict different futures through cultural content, artistic interventions, storytelling, and connections with heritage. In that sense, these sectors can be enablers of action and hope. The following policy actions are recommended (all actions are cross-sectoral, involving the CCS and transformation areas):

- *Action 1.1.1: A European Lab for Transformation Narratives*

Establishing a European Lab for Transformation Narratives that explores and advocates for various options and potentials that fully consider and include citizens in transformation processes through storytelling and the CCS' further abilities to foster understanding on diverse issues.

- *Action 1.1.2: Valorising existing EU cross-sectoral initiatives*

The EU implements already a range of high-level cross-sectoral initiatives (e.g. EIT Culture & Creativity, NEB, ECoCs, OMC groups involving policymakers and experts from social and economic fields together with CCS representatives). These front-running actions are not sufficiently valorised inside the EU nor at the international level. Promotion strategies are needed, in addition to enhanced communication channels. An updated ECoC framework constitutes a promising area for cross-sectoral action.

Table 3 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 1.1, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 3: Towards Policy objective 1.1 - Including the storytelling power of the CCS in transformation policies**

|   |  | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|--|--|-----------------------|
| <b>Policy Area 1:<br/>Support for the CCS is an investment in creating better futures</b> | Action 1.1.1:<br>A European Lab for Transformation Narratives      | Initiating an EP Pilot Project for a European Lab of Transformation Narratives. This Initiative could be followed by an EP Preparatory Action to further mainstream the initiative. As a new policy priority, it could be linked to the further greening of the Creative Europe Programme as well as to policy learning approaches (see also Action 4.1.2).  |                       |
|   | Action 1.1.2:<br>Valorising existing EU cross-sectoral initiatives | Better documentation and integration of lessons learned from cross-sectoral initiatives in existing platforms (e.g. EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform <sup>322</sup> , NEB Community Platform <sup>323</sup> ) to better the accessibility of related information and inform policy-making processes.<br><br>The updated rules for the implementation of the European Capitals of Culture starting in 2028 (visibility in cities from 2034) provide an interesting framework for a better valorisation with cross-sectoral and international promotion strategies. The implementation of recognised good practices could serve as a model for similar policy initiatives. |                       |

**Policy objective 1.2: Integrating the innovation potential of the CCS in societal and economic development**

Cross-sectoral innovation is crucial for European societies and economies as the EU needs improved global competitiveness and strategic autonomy (cf. the strategic agenda 2024-2029). The CCS can be central players in this regard (see section 3.1.1). However, inadequate frameworks harm substantial participation of culture and media stakeholders in (EU) (cross-sectoral) innovation. Contexts that enable the CCS to tap into this considerable potential are not yet (fully) in place. The following policy actions are therefore recommended:

- *Action 1.2.1: A broader definition of innovation, fully recognizing the CCS as innovation actors*

Anchoring a more inclusive definition of innovation (ecosystems) at EU level can ensure that artistic, creative, cultural and media innovation can be integrated into EU policies at the same level as technological and economic innovation. This updated definition should be used in all new EU funding programmes (2028-2034) to ensure its broad uptake across the EU.

- *Action 1.2.2: Furthering innovation partnerships, cross-sectoral programmes and STEAM approaches*

The encouragement of cross-sectoral cooperation inside the CCS, and with stakeholders of major transformation (green, digital, social) and strategic agenda areas (security, competitiveness, energy and resources, migration, global engagement, enlargement) is needed. Furthering the testing of new

<sup>322</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform_en)

<sup>323</sup> [https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/about/frequently-asked-questions/accessing-community-platform\\_en](https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/about/frequently-asked-questions/accessing-community-platform_en)



sustainable cooperation formats related to monitoring, documenting and sharing will improve policy results. This approach should also include the continuation of related successful cross-sectoral programmes with the CCS, like ERDF and ESF.

- *Action 1.2.3: Investing in new culture-based professions and career paths*

A ‘future jobs and new creative entrepreneurs’ initiative can investigate new skills and employment paths for and with culture-based professionals and artists. These cross-sectoral approaches should involve stakeholders in charge of life-long learning, employment and entrepreneurial policies, as well as those involved in a broad range of transformation areas.

Table 4 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 1.2, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 4: Towards Policy objective 1.2 - Integrating the innovation potential of the CCS in societal and economic development**

|   |  | Policy instruments to mobilise  | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|--|---|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 1:<br>Support for the CCS is an investment in creating better futures | Action 1.2.1:<br>A broader definition of innovation, fully recognizing the CCS as innovation actors  | Integration of an updated definition of innovation in the MFF 2028-2034, as well as in the new EU funding programmes 2027+ including the Cohesion Programmes, Rural Development Programmes, and International Cooperation Programmes.<br><br>Advocacy for the recognition of the CCS as an integral part of EU innovation ecosystems in, for example, the new ERA (European Research Area), Rural and Urban Innovation Actions. |                       |
|   | Action 1.2.2:<br>Furthering innovation partnerships and cross-sectoral programmes & STEAM approaches | Integration of cross-sectoral innovation and STEAM actions in the 2021-2027 and 2028-2034 MFFs, as well as in the new EU funding programmes 2027+ including the Cohesion Programmes, Rural Development Programmes, and International Cooperation Programmes.<br><br>Investigating an updated agenda in view of cross-sectoral partnerships and STEAM in the framework of EIT Culture & Creativity, to ensure related synergies. |                       |
|   | Action 1.2.3:<br>Investing in new culture-based professions and career paths                         | A study commissioned by the EP investigating the state of play and future scenarios of new culture- and media-based professions and career paths with an option for a later uptake by, for example, EIT Culture & Creativity and its wide network of partners in higher education and industry.   |                       |

**Policy objective 1.3: Improving cross-sectoral cooperation capacities in and with the CCS**

Substantial capacities need to be in place to achieve the full potential for innovation. Shortcomings in terms of access to high-quality information on EU cross-sectoral (policy) initiatives within and with the CCS persist. The accessibility of high-performing innovation support infrastructures for the CCS is another element of central importance. Beyond facilitating creative innovation, a balanced territorial

availability of these structures is a matter of just development. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 1.3.1: Improving interservice cooperation*

The EC Working Methods (2019-2024) require updating and prolongation to ensure that interservice consultations take place effectively (processes to be defined), that the CCS are more broadly covered as a transversal area with appropriate cross-sectoral governance settings.

- *Action 1.3.2: Better access to cross-sectoral innovation practices*

An EU monitor for cross-sectoral innovation and governance can provide EU policymakers with easy access to good practices, data and cross-sectoral governance examples. The approach could be inspired by the EC’s JRC Cultural and Creative Cities Monitor<sup>324</sup> or the EU Knowledge Valorisation Platform<sup>325</sup>.

- *Action 1.3.3: Promoting cross-sectoral research & innovation infrastructures*

Advocacy is needed for improved (access to) research infrastructures for the CCS, as well as for the recognition and for the structural funding of existing CCS organisations, such as creative hubs, socio-cultural centres, and museums, as they are valuable infrastructures for cross-sectoral and social innovation. Furthermore, the CCS needs to be fully integrated into the ESFRI Roadmap 2021 on Research Infrastructures<sup>326</sup>.

Table 5 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 1.3, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 5: Towards Policy objective 1.3 - Improving cross-sectoral cooperation capacities in and with the CCS**

|   |   | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 1:<br>Support for the CCS is an investment in | Action 1.3.1:<br>Improving interservice cooperation                   | An updated EC Working Method (2024-2029) with special attention to interservice consultations and cooperation should be prioritised by the new Commissioners and prominently highlighted in their work programmes for the upcoming years. The EP can address this issue during the hearings with the Commissioners in autumn 2024.   |                       |
|   | Action 1.3.2:<br>Better access to cross-sectoral innovation practices | The EU- funded projects Creative FLIP and ekip address key areas of CCS (policy) development including cross-sectoral innovation in view of a range of transformation areas. A pilot testing of a database of innovative practices by Creative FLIP and ekip, in close cooperation with the JRC, could provide valuable insights on how to make inspiring practices and lessons learned more accessible for policymakers and stakeholders. |                       |

<sup>324</sup> <https://composite-indicators.jrc.ec.europa.eu/cultural-creative-cities-monitor>

<sup>325</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/industrial-research-and-innovation/eu-valorisation-policy/knowledge-valorisation-platform_en)

<sup>326</sup> <https://www.esfri.eu/esfri-roadmap>

|  |  | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
|  | Action 1.3.3: Promoting cross-sectoral research & innovation infrastructures | The integration of an updated definition of research infrastructures including those related to the CCS in the MFF 2028-2034. CCS related infrastructures should fully be integrated into the new EU funding programmes 2027+, as well as in the innovation and research frameworks (e.g. ESFRI Roadmap 2021 on Research Infrastructures). |                       |

### 4.3. Policy Area 2: Updated CCS ecosystems to build sustainable ground

Policy area 2 relates to bringing CCS ecosystems (further) up-to-date with current transformative times. The CCS are equally impacted by the changing environment, while still suffering from persistent structural deficits post-COVID-19. CCS ecosystems require further updating to better cope with future challenges and structural deficits. Only when operating in sustainable frameworks are they able to be fully involved as actors of change in positive future generations.

Related policy objectives include:

- Enhancing the transformation capacities in the CCS (2.1)
- Investing in democratic culture and media institutions (2.2)
- Enabling better international cooperation in and with the CCS (2.3)

#### Policy objective 2.1: Enhancing the transformation capacities in the CCS

Due to persisting structural deficits in CCS markets and (public, private) support, CCS stakeholders are most often ill-prepared for major disruptions, such as raising energy prices, technological shifts and/or new competitors. CCS ecosystems require updates regarding funding (for innovation), as well as planning for major risks, CCS labour force challenges, and major digital transformations. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 2.1.1: Adapting financing programmes & opening-up further funding alternatives*

An updated framework is required for the post-2027 EU funding programmes to reflect the potential and needs of the CCS. This includes longer-term funding, sustainable funding for cross-sectoral and international collaboration, integration of elements for exchanging experiences, and improved access to (international) markets. Furthermore, the CCS needs to be better connected with alternative funding options that go beyond public support.

- *Action 2.1.2: Understanding and addressing key risk areas*

A comprehensive analysis of major cross-border, transnational and EU-wide risk areas for CCS is required. These areas include the major disruptions due to climate change (e. g. impact on insurances for cultural events), developments in the digital world (e. g. content-generated income), geopolitical challenges (e. g. effects on touring and access to international markets) and democracies under pressure (e. g. related impacts on the media). A range of comprehensive risk mitigation plans need to be brought into place in the near future.

- *Action 2.1.3: Empowering the CCS with updated skills*

Initiatives are needed for updated education and lifelong learning frameworks. These should cover new skills, as well as the re-investing in traditional or craft skills of experienced workers. Furthermore, a next generation of artists, creative entrepreneurs and media professionals needs to be trained to ensure the availability of the necessary qualifications and sufficient work force for the CCS.

- *Action 2.1.4: Monitoring the implementation efforts of the AI Act and further tech developments*

The EU provided a front-running initiative related to artificial intelligence. The AI Act will be implemented in the coming years. AI applications may strongly impact the CCS. The implementation of the AI Act needs to be closely monitored, also considering further tech developments such as generative AI, including the related effects on the CCS (policies).

- *Action 2.1.5: Monitoring the implementation efforts of the AVMS Directive*

The AVMSD was updated in 2018. The implementation of the amended instrument is slow. Application of the updated rules to online influencers, vloggers, and similar stakeholders should be monitored. Many of those engage in artistic activities or other actions, which (so far) have been implemented by the CCS. These facts might require updating related (CCS) policies and rules.

Table 6 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 2.1, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 6: Towards Policy objective 2.1 - Enhancing the transformation capacities in the CCS**

|  |  | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 2:<br>Updated CCS ecosystems to build sustainable ground | Action 2.1.1:<br>Adapting financing programmes & opening-up further funding alternatives | The integration of updated financing and funding settings in the MFF 2028-2034, as well as in the new EU funding programmes 2027+, with a special focus on the New Creative Europe Programme in view of content and budget.<br><br>The further development of Single Point of Contact (SPOC) type of initiatives like Creative Unites for alternative funding and IP valorisation.   |                       |
|  | Action 2.1.2:<br>Understanding and addressing key risk areas                             | A study commissioned by the EP to address the main risk areas for the CSS including those related to climate change, geopolitical turmoil, pressure on democracy as well as digital disruptions. Furthermore, the study should address resource-shortages including available labour. Mitigation plans should show pathways to enhance CCS transformation readiness. The EP could follow-up with related policy-initiatives. |                       |
|  | Action 2.1.3:<br>Empowering the CCS with updated skills                                  | Implementation of a common initiative with the educational part of the CULT Committee in view of all skills-related initiatives of the EU (especially the Pact for Skills for the CCI as part of the EU Skills Agenda) and related to the new generation of funding programmes 2027+.  |                       |

|  |  | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|--|--|--|-----------------------|
|  | <p>Action 2.1.4:<br/>Monitoring the implementation efforts of the AI Act and further tech developments</p> | <p>Monitoring of the AI Act related to issues that are specifically relevant to the CCS. This includes the impact of the new rules for marking AI-generated content and copyright requirements for the use of data to train AI.</p>  |                       |
|  | <p>Action 2.1.5:<br/>Monitoring the implementation efforts of the AVMS Directive</p>                       | <p>By 19 December 2026, at the latest, the EC is expected to submit an ex-post evaluation of the AVMSD, accompanied where appropriate by proposals for its review. This will evaluate the impact of the Directive and its added value (Article 33 AVMSD). Furthermore, a revision of the AVMSD is under discussion requiring the engagement of the CULT Committee.</p> |                       |

**Policy objective 2.2: Investing in democratic culture and media institutions**

CCS professionals face considerable barriers in their (cross-border) work inside the EU. Regulatory and social security frameworks are not harmonized, this negatively affects access beyond national markets and fair remuneration. CCS institutions are not yet fully reflecting the diversity of the EU populations, including the CCS professionals they work with and the audiences which they are able to address. Investments are needed for just and integrated CCS ecosystems, including organisations, administrations and networks. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 2.2.1: Improving working conditions & earning opportunities*

Engagement for the improvement of the working conditions in the CCS should be continued. It can build on the lessons learned from the related initiatives of the CULT and/or JURI committees<sup>327</sup>, the OMC group on working conditions and the Cultural Creators Friendship Group (CCFG). Key areas of attention include copyright law, fair remuneration of creatives who have transferred or licensed their rights to third parties or whose content is used to train AI systems. Furthermore, collective bargaining frameworks and collectively managed remunerations rights require further attention.

- *Action 2.2.2: Overcoming regulative and other access barriers*

The access barriers in the CCS ecosystems require further (policy) initiatives. These comprise a wide range of obstacles, related to, for example, cross-border working and unharmonised social systems. Furthermore, not all culture and media organisations and administrations are (fully) accessible in view of the diversity of the staff or of audiences. Colonial and hierarchical approaches persist in some CCS institutions causing potential harm including for the full and safe participation of women. Investments in fully democratic institutional frameworks in the CCS are required.

Table 7 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 2.2, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 7: Towards Policy objective 2.2 - Investing in democratic culture and media institutions**

|  |   | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 2:<br>Updated CCS ecosystems to build sustainable ground | Action 2.2.1:<br>Improving working conditions & earning opportunities | Following the activities mentioned by the EC in its answer to the EP INL on an EU framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors (2023/2051 (INL), a resolution of the EP on the application of the Social Pillar on the CCS can be a meaningful follow-up.<br><br>Close monitoring of the EP legislative proposal on the Status of the artist. |                       |
|  | Action 2.2.2:<br>Overcoming regulative and other access barriers      | A study commissioned by the EP to provide further insights related to the main access barriers in the CCS ecosystems. Special attention should be dedicated to the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion in view of (EU) cultural institutions, administrations and networks. The study could be a common activity of the CULT Committee with the EMPL and FEMM committees in the EP.                         |                       |

<sup>327</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/754184/IPOL\\_STU\(2023\)754184\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2023/754184/IPOL_STU(2023)754184_EN.pdf)

**Policy objective 2.3: Enabling better international cooperation in and with the CCS**

International cultural exchange and cooperation is crucial for the CCS. Many artistic productions face the challenge of (too) small national markets and thereby require access to European and international opportunities. The access to third country markets is impacted by geopolitical tensions. The international support system is not up-to-date at the EU level. Crisis response mechanisms are not structurally in place. A comprehensive international framework is needed for better international cultural cooperation in enlargement processes. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 2.3.1: An updated EU International Cultural Relations Strategy*

The EU requires an international cultural relations strategy that is better in tune with the new geopolitical realities. A new strategy should bring forward a comprehensive multilevel governance framework for: cultural cooperation with international partners; EU initiatives with international organisations; international trade in CCS goods and services; and addressing labour shortages in the CCS. It should address the issues of decolonisation at the EU level.

- *Action 2.3.2: Improving crisis readiness and international intervention mechanisms*

A continued support as well as a comprehensive strategy for culture and media sectors in allied countries under threats, like the Ukraine, is needed with a focus on a range of longer-term perspectives comprising investing in skills, preventing brain drain and supporting displaced artists, creatives and media professionals. This can, for example, be achieved through digital platforms which provide access to cultural products and services produced in regions that are in danger.

- *Action 2.3.3: Supporting enlargement with and for full CCS power*

A comprehensive accompanying framework for the CCS in all candidate countries is required. Such a structural approach can ensure a smooth accession process. It should dedicate special focus on networking, as well as the exchange of experiences and know-how. Specific funding opportunities to support the development of local as well as regional cultural ecosystems in candidate countries is a meaningful tool for smooth enlargement processes in the field of culture.

Table 8 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 2.3, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 8: Towards Policy objective 2.3 - Enabling better international cooperation in and with the CCS**

|  |   | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|--|---|--|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 2:<br>Updated CCS ecosystems to build sustainable ground | Action 2.3.1:<br>An updated EU International Cultural Relations Strategy              | Bringing forward an updated EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations through an own-initiative report (INI). The Implementation Report “Implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations” <sup>328</sup> , adopted in 2022 by the EP, provides first orientations, such as the improved Commission-EEAS coordination, the return of cultural works and artefacts to their places of origin, and promoting culture as a facilitator of sustainable development.   |                       |
|  | Action 2.3.2:<br>Improving crisis readiness and international intervention mechanisms | <p>Integration of international cultural cooperation in the MFF 2028-2034, as well as in the new EU funding programmes 2027+ including Creative Europe and its international potential, the Cohesion Programmes with a special focus on cross-border and transnational programmes with Third Countries, Rural Development Programmes including improving the international dimension of LEADER Transnational, and International Cooperation Programmes. Related key thematic areas are, for example, better addressing emerging and emergency needs, traffic of cultural goods, and strategic cooperation.</p> <p>The EP Resolution on “Cultural solidarity with Ukraine and a joint emergency response mechanism for cultural recovery in Europe” (2022)<sup>329</sup> and the EP Research for the CULT Committee on “Protecting cultural heritage from armed conflicts in Ukraine and beyond” (2023)<sup>330</sup> provides good grounds for the promotion of an EU Crisis and Intervention Hub. This Hub would support culture and media ecosystems in third countries which are in danger and ensure the international flow of know-how to strengthen the EU creative innovation capacities.</p> |                       |
|  | Action 2.3.3:<br>Supporting enlargement with and for full CCS power                   | Integration of the cultural dimensions of enlargement in the MFF 2028-2034, as well as in the new EU funding programmes 2027+, including Creative Europe and its international potential, the Cohesion Programmes with a special focus on cross-border and transnational programmes with Candidate Countries, Rural Development Programmes including improving the international dimension of LEADER Transnational, and International Cooperation Programmes and Pre-Accession-Support measures. Specific support measures should be oriented towards the strengthening of the CCS in candidate countries and include a comprehensive framework for guidance of policy action (potentially as part of an updated EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations).  |                       |

<sup>328</sup> [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2022/2047\(INI\)&l=en](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2022/2047(INI)&l=en)

<sup>329</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022IP0374>

<sup>330</sup> [https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2022/2759\(RSP\)&l=en](https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/ficheprocedure.do?reference=2022/2759(RSP)&l=en)



#### 4.4. Policy Area 3: Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion

Policy area 3 focuses on safeguarding (physical, digital, and hybrid) spaces of interaction for cultural processes and media, which are under threat due to rapid technological, societal and political transformations, while the required housekeeping rules are still too fragmented. As individual and societal well-being depends on safe spaces of interaction and cultures of dialogue, fundamental investment in safe (physical, digital, and hybrid) spaces are required. Europe, as a geographic area covering many democratic countries, has a huge global potential and responsibility to shape such safe spaces for just societies and economies.

Related policy objectives include:

- Addressing access barriers related to physical, digital, and hybrid spaces (3.1)
- Preventing aggression and harm in interaction spaces (3.2)
- Ensuring the well-being of individuals through cultural and media expressions (3.3)

##### **Policy objective 3.1: Addressing access barriers related to physical, digital, and hybrid Spaces**

The CCS, including media professionals, are (yet) to have full access to physical, digital and hybrid spaces. Cultural interaction spaces are not equally available through the EU. There is no (full) understanding of the (rapid) changes that are occurring within cultural interaction spaces. Additionally, all interactions generate data. However, the valorisation of that data is not well-regulated which can harm earning opportunities in the CCS. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 3.1.1: Better understanding changes in interaction spaces*

The range of barriers in cultural interaction spaces are manifold. Territorial barriers might include obstacles to international exchange or relate to the accessibility of public space. Social barriers include, for instance, the exposure to discrimination on digital platforms. Thus far, not all major risk factors and access barriers are fully known in the EU. Yet, the (creative, economic and social) potential of the CSS is impacted by these barriers. However, the related effects thereof have not yet been quantified.

- *Action 3.1.2: Investing in data sovereignty and valorisation*

Data is a key resource for the further development of the digital spaces (e. g. AI). While media and cultural sectors produce a considerable amount of data, including with publicly financed digitisation initiatives, related remuneration strategies are not yet in place. Remuneration strategies should for used data should be appropriate and proportionate for creative professionals and cultural institutions.

- *Action 3.1.3: Addressing imbalances in availability of spaces*

Physical, digital and hybrid spaces are not equally available throughout the EU. The availability depends on, for instance, the high-debit internet access, investments (or not) in (hybrid) spaces for co-creation or transdisciplinary collaboration, (applied) research infrastructures related to the CCS or (regional) mobility opportunities to access spaces in remote areas.

Table 9 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 3.1, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 9: Towards Policy objective 3.1 - Addressing access barriers related to physical, digital, and hybrid spaces**

|   |   | Policy instruments to mobilise  | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 3:<br>Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion | Action 3.1.1:<br>Better understanding changes in interaction spaces | A study commissioned by the EP to shed light on the multitude of access barriers and how these affect (creative, economic, social) interaction opportunities for the CCS, media professionals and audiences. Follow-up policy-initiatives of the EP should address major challenges and opportunities in interaction spaces (e. g. updated territorial, creative industries, and digital policies). |                       |
|   | Action 3.1.2:<br>Investing in data sovereignty and valorisation     | A study commissioned by the EP to explore different options and opportunities for culture- and media-related data valorisation strategies including licensing options. Furthermore, the ongoing initiatives on the Common European Data Spaces <sup>331</sup> in the CCS should be monitored with this perspective in mind.   |                       |
|   | Action 3.1.3:<br>Addressing imbalances in availability of spaces    | Integration of investment possibilities for spaces of and for the CCS in the MFF 2028-2034, as well as the new EU funding programmes 2027+, with special focus on the Cohesion and Regional Development, and Rural Development Programmes.  |                       |

**Policy objective 3.2: Preventing aggression and harm in interaction spaces**

Interaction spaces are not (fully) safe for the CCS and their audiences. Social, political and economic harm is generated by unsustainable practices in physical, hybrid and digital spaces. International players interfere in these interaction spaces. Democratic processes are negatively impacted. Many platform owners comply with difficulties to the regulative frameworks brought into place by the EU. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 3.2.1: Monitoring status and implementation of the anti-SLAPP Directive*

Member States will have two years to transpose the adopted anti-SLAPP Directive into national legislation. The situation regarding journalists and human rights defenders subject to manifestly unfounded lawsuits should be monitored continuously. Transposition and implementation efforts should be monitored and evaluated. Potential further steps to increase the protection of journalists and human rights defenders and broaden the policy’s scope should be considered.

- *Action 3.2.2: Monitoring content moderation practices of online platforms*

Multiple obligations resulting from new instruments (DSA, DSM Directive, EMFA (media privilege)) could lead to excessive removal of legal content on online platforms. It could also impact the attempts

<sup>331</sup> <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-spaces>

to combat disinformation. Efforts to comply with multiple obligations should be monitored, potentially by expanding the scope of the DSA Dashboard.

- *Action 3.2.3: Building safe EU Digital Platform(s) for Interaction*

The current digital frameworks are already considerably regulated with frontrunning initiatives of the EU (e.g., DSA, AI Act). However, enforcement frameworks remain fragmented due to an imbalance of power (offer, demand) to international platform owners and (geo-)political tensions (e.g. misinformation). Platforms fully complying with EU rules and that function under European ownership can ensure EU digital sovereignty.

- *Action 3.2.4: Monitoring implementation efforts of the European Media Freedom Act*

Successful implementation of the EMFA will have tremendous impact on the right to freedom of expression and access to information in the EU. The implementation efforts should be monitored, with particular attention to the provisions on: (1) state interference in editorial decisions of media services; (2) independent governance and funding of public service media; (3) media ownership transparency; (4) screening of national decisions that could affect the internal market; (5) assessment of media market concentrations; (6) transparency of audience measurement; (7) state advertising; and (8) customisation of user interfaces.

- *Action 3.2.5: Investing in safe public areas for cultural interactions*

Public indoor and outdoor spaces are where most of the CCS activities take place. Due to tensions in society and in international markets (such as illegal trade) some areas in cities and regions in the EU are becoming less safe. These spaces are no longer fully accessible to specific groups of creative and media professionals (e. g. journalists, female artists, LGBTIQ artists), as certain interest groups intimidate those who's cultural expressions they do not agree with. These trends are not in line with artistic freedom, or the rights of the population to fully participate in culture and need to be addressed.

Table 10 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 3.2, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 10: Towards Policy objective 3.2 - Preventing aggression and harm in interaction spaces**

|   | Policy Area 3  | Policy instruments to mobilise  | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|--|---|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 3:<br>Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion | Action 3.2.1:<br>Monitoring status and implementation of the anti-SLAPP Directive    | Monitoring of the anti-SLAPP Directive by the CULT Committee, protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded or abusive court proceedings. Related Implementation Reports by the EP could be an appropriate tool to bring this agenda forward.                                   |                       |
|   | Action 3.2.2:<br>Monitoring content moderation practices of online platforms         | Monitoring of the implementation of the DSA, DSM Directive and EMFA (media privilege) by the CULT Committee. Furthermore, the effects on the availability of content related to potentially overlapping obligations should be closely monitored.  |                       |
|   | Action 3.2.3:<br>Building safe EU Digital Platform(s) for Interaction                | An EP pilot project potentially followed by an EP Preparatory Action to bring forward safe EU digital platforms fully compliant with European standards and regulations built by European owners. Due to the urgency of the issue a high-level top-down policy initiatives could be considered as an alternative. |                       |
|   | Action 3.3.1:<br>Monitoring implementation efforts of the European Media Freedom Act | Monitoring of the implementation of the EMFA by the CULT Committee. In particular, monitoring of measures that require adaptations by Member States and the set-up of the European Board for Media Services that will replace the European Regulators Group for Audiovisual Media Services (ERGA).                |                       |
|   | Action 3.2.5:<br>Investing in safe public areas for cultural interactions            | Integration of funding opportunities for safe spaces and cultural rights in the MFF 2028-2034, as well as in the new EU funding programmes 2027+, with special focus on the Cohesion and Regional Development, and Rural Development Programmes as well as the New Creative Europe Programme.                     |                       |

**Policy objective 3.3: Ensuring the well-being of individuals through cultural and media expression**

Social contact and interaction are facilitated by most of the practices of the CCS. These social interactions take place in physical, hybrid and digital spaces. They contribute to the building of society based on exchange and debate. Despite growing evidence of the valuable effects that (active and passive) cultural practices have on human and societal health, related policy frameworks are not yet (fully) in place. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 3.3.1: Investing in culture for healthy individuals and societies*

New concepts such as social prescribing in health care to make individuals benefit from the valuable effects of culture, are promising ways forward to tap into the well-being dimensions of the CCS. Furthermore, these approaches are interesting demonstrators of cross-sectoral cooperation between CCS and health professionals. Programmes can be set up that are co-financed by culture and health budgets (see e.g. Fancourt et al., 2019). In addition, culture and health related initiatives offer new job perspectives for CCS professionals.

- *Action 3.3.2: Integrating culture in well-being assessment*

A good measurement of the role of culture and media expressions for well-being is crucial to increase understanding and better monitor and demonstrate (evolution in) impact. Quantitative as well as qualitative evaluation results are valuable support instruments to bring this policy agenda forward. To make progress, the Culture 2030 Indicators developed by UNESCO<sup>332</sup> might be particularly relevant.

- *Action 3.3.3: Promoting further knowledge and skills development*

As knowledge gaps about the impact of cultural and media expressions on well-being remain, it is important to continue to invest in new knowledge development in this area. In that respect, it is noteworthy that many interesting research initiatives in this area also take place at the international level (e.g. Jameel Arts and Health Lab, in which the WHO embarked in 2023<sup>333</sup>). They offer potential for structurally connecting EU efforts to the actions of international stakeholders. Such new cross-sectoral collaborations also come with new skills needs for both CCS and health professionals. Although education is rather a supportive EU competence, the Erasmus+ programme can play an important role in developing these skills and adapting curricula in that respect.

Table 11 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 3.3, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

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<sup>332</sup> The indicators focus on measuring culture's contribution across several SDGs and linking them. They consider inclusion and participation, prosperity and livelihood, environment and resilience, and knowledge and skills. By enhancing the transversal visibility of culture within the 2030 Agenda, the UNESCO Culture 2030 Indicators contribute to building a coherent and evidence-based narrative on culture and development that informs decision-making processes. See <https://whc.unesco.org/en/culture2030indicators/>

<sup>333</sup> Post Covid the WHO embarked on the Jameel Arts and Health Lab, together with the Steinhardt School of New York University, Community Jameel, and Culturunners. The Lab aims to measurably improve health and well-being through the arts, exploring the positive effects of the arts on health and wellbeing alongside classical medical treatment, and with the aim of encouraging more initiatives in this area in Europe and beyond. Affiliate labs are the ARTIS (Art and Research on Transformations of Individuals and Societies) in Vienna and the Research Center for Arts and Well-being in the UK. See <https://www.jameelartshhealthlab.org/>

**Table 11: Towards Policy objective 3.3 - Ensuring the well-being of individuals through cultural and media expressions**

|   |   | Policy instruments to mobilise  | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|---|---|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 3:<br>Safe spaces nourish cultural interaction and cohesion | Action 3.3.1:<br>Investing in culture for healthy individuals and societies | Bringing forward EU cultural health policies through a partnership between the CULT and SANT committees. Common exchanges of views or hearings can provide insights into good practices. Also a follow-up of the status of implementation of the EU Health Policy framework and related cooperation options with the CCS can provide more good practices. In addition, a diffusion and learning platform could be envisaged, further building on the Culture4Health project. The next generation of funding programmes 2027+ could further address the topic. |                       |
|   | Action 3.3.2:<br>Integrating culture in well-being assessment               | Bringing forward updated measurement practices on the beneficial effects of the CCS for societies and individuals by the means of an own-initiative report (INI). This work should build on the Culture 2030 Indicators framework by UNESCO. It should be implemented in close exchange with Eurostat. Furthermore, EU initiatives like “beyond GDP” and Eurofound’s European Quality of Life surveys <sup>334</sup> are of relevance.  |                       |
|   | Action 3.3.3:<br>Promoting further knowledge and skills development         | Advocacy by the CULT Committee for the inclusion of the topic of culture for health and well-being in both innovation and education and training programmes. Moreover, exchanges on the topic could be organised with key international stakeholders like UNESCO and the WHO, who are already engaged on the topic.<br><br>The next generation of funding programmes 2027+, specifically the successors of Horizon Europe and Erasmus+ could further address the topic.   |                       |

#### 4.5. Policy Area 4: Cooperative governance options for the CULT Committee

Policy area 4 provides options for EU policymakers to make better use of cooperative governance opportunities. Better horizontal governance is needed between the EU institutions for the development of more transversal CCS policies. Furthermore, multilevel governance with public and research stakeholders has the potential for synergies and reinforcement of (policy) initiatives. For more impactful EU CCS policy design and implementation, the wider coordination should also include the different territorial dimensions and international organisations.

Related policy objectives include:

- Improving CCS horizontal governance between EU institutions (4.1)
- Enhancing multilevel governance with other strategic partners (4.2)

<sup>334</sup> <https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/en/surveys/european-quality-life-surveys-eqls>

**Policy objective 4.1: Improving CCS horizontal governance between EU institutions**

Many policy initiatives are still developed and implemented in institutional silos at the EU level. The CCS (policymakers) face fragmented information and limited access to good practices. Furthermore, the current fragmentation bears the risk of duplicity, limited use of synergies and inefficient use of financial means. In addition, the visibility of EU CCS policies might be negatively impacted. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 4.1.1: Intensifying cross-sectoral cooperation with other EP committees*

Due to the transversal nature of culture as well as the cross-sectoral dimensions of many policies which are relevant for the CCS, more cross-sectoral cooperation between the different EP committees is needed. In parallel with the EC Working Method (2019-2024 and proposed updates outlined in Action 1.3.1) which foresee interservice consultations, the CULT Committee should enlarge these cross-sectoral aspects of governance with other EP committees.

- *Action 4.1.2: Improving coordination between EU institutions*

The different EU institutions drive own governance-related initiatives, such as the Work Plan for Culture (Council), the OMC groups (Council and EC), the relations with international organisations (EEAS, CULT Committee). Investigating better synergies in view of policy initiatives, information and research-related cooperation would be beneficial for the development and implementation of CCS policies and for the required budgetary frameworks.

Table 12 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 4.1, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 12: Towards Policy objective 4.1 - Improving CCS horizontal governance between EU institutions**

|   |   | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 4:<br>Cooperative Governance Options for the CULT | Action 4.1.1:<br>Intensifying cross-sectoral cooperation with other EP committees | Investigating and testing enhanced cross-sectoral exchange and governance with other EP committees such as the Committees on Foreign Affairs, International Trade, Human Rights, Environment, Regional Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, Civil Liberties, and Women’s Rights and Gender Equality based on the requirements of CCS policies. The updated Rules of Procedure for the EP <sup>335</sup> that enter into force on 16 July 2024 provide related legal ground (e. g. Rule 59 – Joint Committee Procedure, Rule 57 – Opinions of Committees).                                   |                       |
|   | Action 4.1.2:<br>Improving coordination between EU institutions                   | Initiating an EP Pilot Project, potentially followed by an EP Preparatory Action, to build ground for an EU CCS Policy Support and Learning Platform. The initiative could be based on the experiences with the INTERREG EUROPE Policy Learning Platform. Related content could cover CCS-policy research, investments in a stronger evidence-base for CCS-policy options providing more (aggregated) facts and figures, as well as qualitative analyses at EU level.<br><br>Alternatively, a Team Europe type of action or an Open OMC approach involving further EU institutions could be envisaged. |                       |

**Policy objective 4.2: Enhancing multilevel governance with other strategic partners**

The exchange of know-how and experience related to CCS policymaking is still substantially fragmented between the different governance levels in the EU, including cities, regions and Member States. Furthermore, the EU policy action related to CCS does not sufficiently build on major international and global CCS-related initiatives. This leads to missing out on substantial added value for the EU CCS policy development. A potential which should not further be missed out on. The following policy actions are recommended:

- *Action 4.2.1: Enhancing the cooperation with international organisations and initiatives*

The development of CCS policies is very dynamic in many areas of the world. Furthermore, international organisations, such as the UN (Pact for the Future, SDGs and a Culture Goal, UNESCO initiatives like Creative Cities or Mondiacult including Culture as Public Good) and the Council of Europe (Cultural Routes, Heritage Policies), engage for ambitious CCS policies. CCS policy action also takes place in the framework of the COP Climate Conferences (friendship groups, and climate heritage network). The related governance frameworks are not yet fully in place to ensure a maximum of synergies between the international bodies, the EU institutions and the Member States.

- *Action 4.2.2: Ensuring exchange with cities, regions and Member States in CCS policies*

Member States dispose of long-lasting experience with CCS policy initiatives. Many regions and cities in the EU have considerably developed high-level cultural development initiatives. However, the

<sup>335</sup> [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/rules/rules20240716/Rules20240716\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/rules/rules20240716/Rules20240716_EN.pdf)



vertical (top-down and bottom-up) flow of information and of experience between the EU, Member States, regions and cities is still much too limited. This harms citizens’ understanding of the European project and the access of policymakers to relevant insights. Strategic cooperation and initiatives to exchange experiences are not fully in place yet. Think Tanks and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating at sub-EU level are not sufficiently involved in related debates. Furthermore, the EU is lacking the potential to position culture as a superpower in the world (e. g. by developing integrated global communication and valorisation strategies) that involves EU, national and subnational stakeholders.

Table 13 summarises the related policy instruments that can be activated to operationalise the actions under policy objective 4.2, including where they are situated in the policy cycle.

**Table 13: Towards Policy objective 4.2 - Enhancing multilevel governance with other strategic partners**

|   |   | Policy instruments to mobilise   | Phase in policy cycle |
|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| Policy Area 4:<br>Cooperative governance options for the CULT Committee | Action 4.2.1:<br>Enhancing the cooperation with international organisations and initiatives | <p>The organisation of regular meetings of the CULT Committee with international cooperation partners (UN, UNESCO, Council of Europe, COP, Parliamentary Assemblies in other world regions, etc.) for an enhanced exchange of information as well as the development of common high-level international initiatives.</p> <p>Monitoring of a potential uptake of the results of the 2023-2024 OMC group on better coordination mechanisms for international cultural relations by the CULT Committee.</p>   |                       |
|   | Action 4.2.2:<br>Ensuring exchange with cities, regions and Member States in CCS policies   | <p>Initiating an EP Pilot Project, potentially followed by an EP Preparatory Action, to test improved multilevel governance in the EU related to the ECoC initiative. Synergies in view of integrated policy learning and global valorisation strategies could be tested and implemented (see also Action 1.1.2).</p> <p>The organisation of an annual CULT Committee event dedicated to trends and research on Cultural and Media Policies in Europe covering EU, national, regional and city initiatives. This would allow for networking between stakeholders and for stimulating policy learning. This event could include potential follow-ups of decentralised actions in the constituencies of the members of the CULT Committee. The conference could be backed with an annual implementation report on CCS policy action (INI).</p> <p>In addition, the proposed action 4.1.2 “EU CCS Policy Support and Learning Platform” could be extended to subnational policy levels.</p> |                       |

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## ANNEX I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

- **Identification of future trends and developments: Horizon scanning and strategic conversations**

To identify emerging developments in various CCS-related domains that might impact future CCS policy, the research team combined literature review with a process of horizon scanning and strategic conversations.

The method of horizon scanning specifically focuses on detecting ‘early signals of change’ existing at the fringes of knowledge and awareness today, but which could evolve into significant trends in the future (Amanatidou et al., 2012; Dator, 2005, 2009; Hiltunen, 2007, 2008a, 2008b). For this study, the early signs of change have been primarily identified and developed collectively by the research team. Several team members -covering diverse CCS-related areas of expertise - individually scanned a wide variety of sources (e.g. scientific publications, conference discussions, social media, etc.) for weak signals and emerging issues. This collective effort resulted in a pool of 100+ signals of change, documented in a shared online platform, and further structured and clustered by the team.

The insights from the research team’s horizon scanning were further enriched through one-to-one strategic conversations with a number of CCS representatives, relevant experts, thought leaders and researchers (see Table 14). These conversations provided a further qualitative and nuanced understanding of potential future developments in the CCS landscape.

**Table 14: Interviewees strategic conversations**

| Name                             | Position  |
|----------------------------------|---|
| <b>Burak Özgen</b>               | GESAC – European Authors Societies                            |
| <b>Cristina Farinha</b>          | freelance CCS policy expert and researcher                    |
| <b>Dea Vidovic</b>               | Kultura Nova Foundation                                       |
| <b>Elda Brogi</b>                | Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom                  |
| <b>Evangelia Psychogiopoulou</b> | Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) |
| <b>Florian Schneider</b>         | Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)         |
| <b>Indrek Ibrus</b>              | Talinn University   |
| <b>Jakob Isak Nielsen</b>        | Aarhus University   |
| <b>Jordi Pascual</b>             | UCLG Culture Agenda 21  |
| <b>Marleen Stikker</b>           | Waag Futurelab  |
| <b>Pier Luigi Sacco</b>          | University of Chieti-Pescara                                  |
| <b>Sara Turra</b>                | European Network of Cultural Centres                          |

The strategic conversations were organised as semi-open interviews making use of the “seven-questions approach” as defined by Amara and Lipinski (1983):

1. If you could pose three questions to a clairvoyant foretelling the future, what would you ask?

2. In the best possible world, what would you hope for?
3. In the worst possible world, what are your greatest fears?
4. What pivotal events from the past few years provide good lessons for the future?
5. What major decisions with long-term implications are faced at the moment?
6. What major constraints do you experience inside/outside the organisation/system?
7. If all constraints were removed and you could direct what should be done, what steps would you take?

The questions invite interviewees to reflect on the role of change in their field(s) of practice in the past, to then start gradually imagining best-case and worst-case scenarios for the future development of their field(s). For the formulation of future scenarios, we invited the interviewees to set the horizon on the year 2034 (10 years from now, corresponding to two parliamentary terms).

The data that emerged from these conversations led to a repository of esteemed key uncertainties, driving forces of change, emerging issues, challenges, opportunities, assumptions and aspirations for the CCS and CCS policymaking.

- **Analysing the interplay between past, present and future development: the futures triangle**

For EU policymakers to successfully navigate the multifaceted transitions affecting the CCS, a comprehensive compass is essential, that takes into account past achievements, acknowledges present realities and cultivates visions for the future. To **structure the most crucial insights from the analysis** of existing literature, the horizon scanning and the strategic conversations, the research team made use of the **futures triangle**, a methodology rooted in Futures Studies and developed by Inayatullah (2008).

The futures triangle is an analytical mapping tool that enables to gain deeper insights into the possibilities for EU CCS policy action in the coming period occurring from the dynamic tensions between the past, present and (preferable) futures for the CCS in the EU. While not exhaustive, the futures triangle helps **map out key cross-thematic challenges and opportunities facing the CCS and, by extension, CCS policy**. Although this broad approach may overlook some sector- or theme-specific nuances, it allows for grasping the complex yet dynamic interplay between recurring barriers, enablers and visions for the future co-shaping the future state of play of the CCS in the EU.

- **Formulation of policy options: organization of policy design workshop**

For the formulation of policy options, the research team first organised an internal backcasting workshop, to translate the insights from the previous research phases into a series of concrete policy options within the context of CCS policy development, with a specific focus on those areas that appear to be requiring attention or enhancement in the coming period.

In a second step, the outcome of the internal backcasting workshop was presented and further discussed in an online policy design workshop with CCS policy practitioners and experts (see Table 15) to further refine the policy options and explore the potential effects of proposed policy options.

**Table 15: Participants policy design workshop<sup>336</sup>**

| <b>Name</b>                   | <b>Organisation</b>   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <b>Aiva Rozemberga</b>        | Strategic Advisor on policy, culture and communications   |
| <b>Catarina Vaz-Pinto</b>     | Consultant for Arts and Culture   |
| <b>Christophe Ebermann</b>    | Head of Project Unit – Operations, Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Joint Secretariat  |
| <b>Edwin Korver</b>           | Policy advisor culture & economics, Department Culture, Youth, Media, Flemish government  |
| <b>Heidemarie Meissnitzer</b> | Counsellor Arts, Culture and Audiovisual, Permanent Representation of Austria to the EU   |
| <b>Irena Kregar Segota</b>    | Croatia Ministry of Culture and Media, Head of Sector for Cultural and Artistic Development   |
| <b>Julie Hervé</b>            | Head of culture Eurocities  |
| <b>Marc du Moulin</b>         | Secretary General, European Composer and Songwriter Alliance (ECSA)   |
| <b>Marianne Crosserat</b>     | Cooperation and external cultural affairs delegate, French Permanent Representation to the EU   |
| <b>Ragnar Siil</b>            | Director, Creativity Lab  |
| <b>Sally Broughton Micova</b> | Associate Professor in Communications Policy and Politics & PPL<br>Director of Post-graduate studies, University of East Anglia &<br>Academic Co-Director, Centre on Regulation in Europe (CERRE) |
| ***                           | Digital and media governance expert   |
| ***                           | Digitisation and heritage expert  |

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<sup>336</sup> \*\*\*: participant' name not to be disclosed





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This study provides a comprehensive overview and understanding of the main current and future issues to be expected in the area of EU culture and creative sectors policy in the term 2024-2029 of the European Parliament.

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