

This appeal is addressed to the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, Vice-President Margaritis Schinas, Commissioner Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner Thierry Breton, President of the European Council Charles Michel, President of the European Parliament David Sassoli, Nina Obuljen Koržinek, Minister of Culture of Croatia and EU Presidency, all EU Ministers of Culture, Permanent Representatives of EU Member States, and the European Parliament Committee of Culture and Education.

The Future of Culture and Creative sectors in post-COVID-19 Europe

The European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe highly value the initiatives and measures taken by the European Commission, the Member States, cities, regions and the cultural and creative sectors themselves in response to the unprecedented crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The cultural and creative sectors are among the most severely impacted at this time. According to preliminary estimates by Eurostat, the COVID-19 crisis may affect about 7.3 million cultural and creative jobs across the EU. Over 30% of the people affected are self-employed and lack adequate social protection.¹ The protracted social confinement will have a long-term impact on the cultural and creative sectors by deepening their economic precariousness. Despite these difficulties, these sectors have shown tremendous solidarity amidst the crisis – offering their works for free online, easing feelings of isolation and contributing to the mental and emotional health and well-being of people in these challenging times.

The European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe welcome the [European Parliament Resolution on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences \(17 April 2020/2616\)](#) acknowledging the important social and economic roles of the cultural and creative sectors and emphasising the devastating effect of the crisis on people working in these areas. We fully support the resolution's urgent call to the European Commission and the European Council to save lives, protect jobs, ensure equality and democracy.

To achieve true European unity in diversity and imagine a common future, we need to act together – European institutions, governments, cultural stakeholders and citizens – to devise new, imaginative ways to move forward. A new culture of solidarity needs to be nurtured, supported and sustained well beyond the current crisis. We are ready to work together with the European institutions, governments, foundations and citizens to support this endeavour through cultural and creative action.

The crisis is testing the EU's capacity to think and act in unconventional and effective ways in order to respond to these unprecedented circumstances. Extraordinary situations require extraordinary measures, flexibility, collaboration and coordination. The EU's response to the crisis and evidence of solidarity among Member States will determine Europe's future.

¹ Joint Research Centre (JRC) ongoing investigation (2020): [link](#).

The world of arts, culture, heritage and creativity will not be the same after COVID-19. The state of emergency at both a local and national level has forced governments to redirect their resources to respond to the most urgent needs and this has left little room to address issues on a European scale. Our existing approaches, strategies and instruments may need to be fundamentally revised. We need to join forces at the EU level to re-imagine the future, to rethink the existing models and to ensure a fair transition towards more sustainable patterns in future.

On 9 April 2020, the Ministers of Finance of the Eurogroup welcomed the Commission's intention to adapt its current EU multiannual budget (MFF) proposal to reflect the impact of the crisis and the size of the challenges ahead, by setting priorities to ensure cohesion within the EU through solidarity, fairness and responsibility.

- We therefore [urge](#) the European Parliament, European Commission and the Member States to **recognise cultural and creative sectors as an integral part of the economic, social and environmental recovery plan for Europe within the new multiannual financial framework (MFF 2021-2027)**, and to support these sectors with at least 7% of the Recovery Fund over the first programming years.
- We call on them to mainstream culture across the MFF and make sure that the next **Creative Europe** programme is strengthened with a doubled financial envelope. Given that Creative Europe does not cover all the needs of the sector, we recall the pledge for [1% for culture across the whole MFF](#).
- The new **Horizon Europe** programme (2021-2027) is a tool for experimentation, research and innovation. It must lay out new foundations for collaboration between cultural experimentation, artistic research and other sectors (such as environment, health, new economy etc.) and help to tackle our biggest challenges in the context of a world that needs transversal approaches to address complex challenges.

The European Commission has proposed the creation of two platforms for sharing best practice among Member States and for coming up with bottom-up solutions from the sector. These could, if well and jointly conceived, create a framework in which a European public space for culture would be nourished, and these could become platforms for debate and new ideas. In order to **be beneficial to all stakeholders and sectors, these platforms must be designed together with the European Commission, the Member States, as well as the cultural and creative sectors.**

- We therefore propose to the European Commission to open up a dialogue with all cultural and creative sectors on the purpose and the role of the platforms, taking into consideration all the identified needs, good practice, learnings and anticipated challenges for the CCSs in the post-COVID-19 period. It is only through regular exchanges and mutual support of one another that we can make progress in these difficult times.

In addition, we encourage the European Commission and national governments to include cultural and creative professionals and their perspectives in the national task forces, which will accompany the easing up of the restrictive measures and the return to a new normality. European Commissioner Mariya Gabriel has taken the lead to support the sector by announcing seven sector-specific measures by the European Commission to address the COVID-19 crisis.² She has underlined the horizontal measures adopted by the European Commission, which can apply to the cultural and creative sectors.³

- This unprecedented and vital EU support must benefit the most vulnerable cultural and creative organisations and individuals in EU Member States. We expect the European Commission to ensure transparency, regular information and good practice exchange on the way these specific measures contribute to cultural and creative sectors across Europe.

The existential crisis we are experiencing calls for all stakeholders to come together and find creative solutions to help **build multi-stakeholder partnerships for solidarity**. The European Cultural Foundation has therefore launched the [Culture of Solidarity Fund](#) – a public-philanthropic partnership initiative to support imaginative actions that reinforce European solidarity and the idea of Europe as a shared public space.

Matching public and private resources for greater impact can help to pave the way towards rebuilding the world after COVID-19. New models of cooperation and innovative financial tools must be developed for European philanthropy to unfold and serve Europe in partnership with the European institutions, Member States and civil society actors.

The European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe have mapped emergency initiatives and measures carried out across Europe by public, private and civic actors, addressing the immediate effects of the COVID-19 crisis on culture, arts, creative sectors and cultural heritage. The results of this mapping will be published soon. We hope these insights will help the European Commission, Member States and the civil society sector to design short-term and long-term measures in the field.

² Press conference after the EU Ministers of Culture video-conference, 8 April 2020.

³ These measures are [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative](#) (CRII) and the European instrument for temporary [Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency](#) (SURE), together with the [Temporary Framework for State Aid](#) measures to make use of the full flexibility foreseen under State Aid rules.