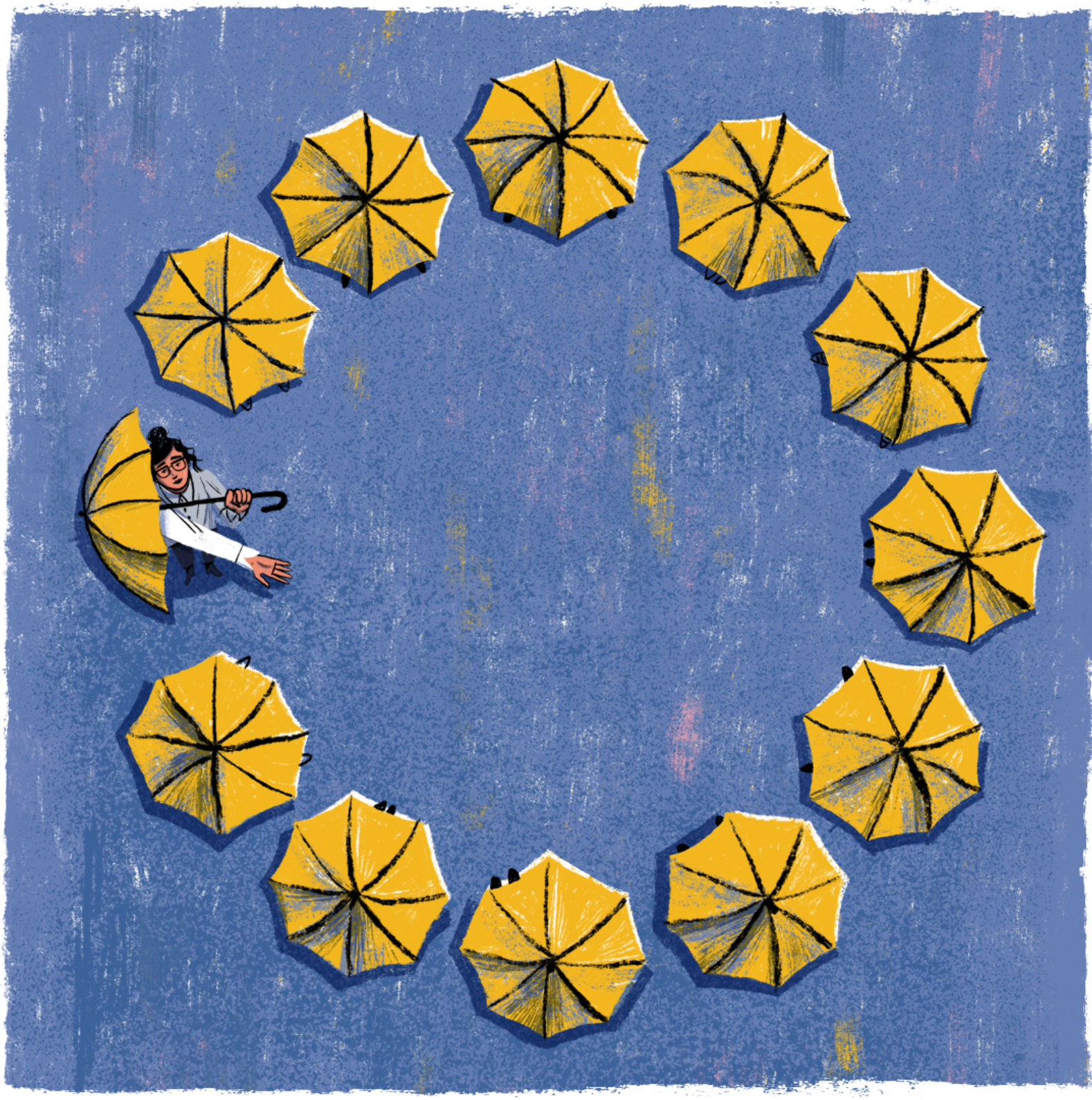

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70+ Cultural Organizations Are Calling For A stronger AgoraEU Programme for Culture

CREATIVESUNITE

Co-funded by the European Union

A coalition of over 70 cultural organisations, networks, and institutions from across Europe is signing an open letter addressed to EU policymakers on the future of Creative Europe in the next long-term EU budget. They are calling for at least 25% of the budget of the new AgoraEU programme to be allocated to its cultural component, while also calling for more accessible funding procedures, stronger support for international cultural cooperation, and fair pay and social security guarantees.

Culture Action Europe has initiated an open letter addressed to EU policymakers on the future of Creative Europe in the next long-term EU budget. More than 70 cultural organisations, networks, and institutions from across Europe have signed the open letter so far, which makes the case for a stronger dedicated Culture strand in the new AgoraEU programme. Read the full statement below

Nine cents for every hundred euros

The future of Creative Europe, the EU's sole dedicated funding

instrument for culture, is currently being shaped as part of negotiations on the EU's next long-term budget. More than 2000 cultural and creative professionals have already called for a well-resourced programme for culture in the next EU budget, but the Culture strand of the newly proposed AgoraEU programme allocates a modest €1.8 billion. Equating to approximately €260 million annually, such funding amounts to roughly the annual budget of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Put another way, culture would receive only nine cents for every hundred euros spent in the next budget cycle.

What are we calling for?

The open letter calls on the European Commission, European Parliament, and Council of the EU for:

An increased AgoraEU budget for culture: the European Parliament's €10.72 billion proposal for AgoraEU must act as the baseline, not a ceiling. At least 25% must be secured for its cultural component, while being supplemented by revenues from fines under the Digital Markets Act, Digital Services Act, and AI Act.

An autonomous and visible culture strand: a visible, separate budget line would ensure that funding for culture cannot be redirected to other areas, alongside distinct work programmes, dedicated governance, and a clear visual identity to support the full diversity of Europe's cultural ecosystem.

Fair remuneration and social security: social conditionality mechanisms should be incorporated into the programme and linked to the upcoming EU Artists' Charter, ensuring that all artists and staff involved in AgoraEU projects are paid fairly and covered by social security.

Accessible funding procedures: structural operating grants, two-stage application processes, cascading grants, and 100% co-financing options are all measures that would strengthen organisations — not only individual projects — and improve financial support for cultural organisations and other cultural actors.

People-centred international cultural cooperation: participation of end beneficiaries in projects should not be limited to people residing in programme-participating countries. Project holders should be trusted to involve individuals from third countries when their contribution is essential to the project. Such an inclusive approach to territoriality would promote co-creation, shared ownership, and cultural diversity.

Why do we need stronger investment in culture now?

The cultural and creative sectors are facing an acute funding crisis and unprecedented structural pressures, which, among other things, are exacerbated by:

Artificial intelligence: UNESCO warns that generative AI could slash creators' revenues by 24% in music and 21% in the audiovisual sector by 2028, exploiting works taken without consent or payment. Creators supply the fuel but keep none of the value.

Systemic precarity: Nearly half of Europe's artists and cultural professionals report poor working conditions, and more than two-thirds lack sufficient social protection. All artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors should be able to earn a decent living from their professional work.

Threats to artistic freedom: Artists and cultural workers increasingly face political pressure, legal restrictions, online threats, and politicised funding systems that erode cultural expression and compound self-censorship.

You can read the full letter here I You can sign the open letter here

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