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Defend AgoraEU: Invest in Europe's Citizens' Future

Ahead of the European Council meeting in Brussels on 15-16 October 2026, a broad coalition of culture, media and civil society organisations has published an open letter urging EU leaders to protect the AgoraEU programme in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2034).

The letter, led by the [Future of Europe Cohort](#), a coalition of six organisations (the [Centre for Sustainable Media](#), [Civil Society Europe](#), [Culture Action Europe](#), the [European Civic Forum](#), the [European Federation of Journalists](#) and the [Irish Council for Civil Liberties](#)), is backed by hundreds of supporting organisations across Europe. It asks Member States to preserve AgoraEU's budget at no less than the European Commission's proposal of €8.58 billion and to move towards the higher figure proposed by the European Parliament. It warns that the cuts floated under the Irish Presidency are far larger than those to other programmes, yet would save only about 0.2% of the total budget, a negligible gain set against potentially irreversible damage.

The signatories argue that AgoraEU supports the infrastructure that holds democratic societies together: cultural organisations, film and audiovisual production, independent journalism, and civil society and local networks. These help people connect, access reliable information, understand and defend their rights, and take part in decisions that affect their lives. The letter points to evidence of what is at stake. Protecting democracy and fundamental values is the top reason Europeans trust the EU (42%); 87% believe cultural exchange should play a very important role in the Union; and two-thirds of Europeans encountered disinformation in the week before being surveyed. The programme matters most in remote and economically

disadvantaged areas already affected by news deserts.

The letter also argues that AgoraEU is part of Europe's competitiveness agenda, not a trade-off against it. It notes that the annual budget for groups helping implement Europe's digital rulebook and safeguard rights online amounts to just €0.27 per resident, and that cultural employment, including journalism, publishing and broadcasting, accounts for 8.9 million people, or 4.3% of EU employment. It argues that strong communities, trusted information, and civic participation are foundations for economic dynamism and long-term security. The signatories call on Member States to recognise AgoraEU as critical infrastructure for Europe's collective future.

Creatives Unite supports the campaign for the protection of the cultural and creative sectors as critical European infrastructure

Read the letter: [Civitates | AgoraEU Joint Letter Signature Form Ahead of Council Meeting](#)

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This post is republished from Culture Action Europe. Read the first publication and more on the story [here](#)