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G.Micallef: “I want culture to pay the rent

“I want culture to pay the rent,” says EU Commissioner Glenn Micallef in an interview with the Malta Independent, pledging to transform cultural work, empower youth, and defend democratic values across Europe.

“Culture strengthens identity, community, and democracy. If we want to make the EU stronger, we must invest in culture like we invest in infrastructure.” In an interview with the Malta Independent, Glenn Micallef, EU Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sports, outlines his philosophy and vision for culture in the European Union, stressing its importance on all levels.

Micallef stresses the sector's importance, noting, “There is no cultural sector without people. This sector employs around nine million Europeans and contributes €200 billion annually.” He highlights the challenges faced by creatives, particularly with the rise of AI, and wants to ensure that cultural work can provide a decent living. “I want culture to pay the rent. It should not require a second job just to earn a decent living” he says in a bold statement.

Micallef explains that the Culture Compass is a policy tool aimed at giving voice to smaller cultural actors and mapping challenges in the sector : “We wanted to give more of a voice to those who are often unheard, the small theatres, music venues, independent artists, creative freelancers.”

Regarding emerging technologies like AI, Micallef is cautious but forward-thinking, calling for transparency, fair compensation for creators, and proper regulation of AI-generated content.

Intergenerational fairness and youth empowerment

“Intergenerational fairness is about harmony, not one generation blaming the other” says Micallef in the interview with the Malta Independent, and outlines his strategy focusing on “engagement, connection and empowerment” of young people. To that end he wants to increase youth participation in democratic processes, expand mobility programs like Erasmus, and address systemic challenges such as housing affordability.

Finally, in addressing global challenges, Micallef sees the EU's role as crucial in addressing global challenges and maintaining democratic values and reaffirms the EU's core mission as a project of peace: “Its aim was, and remains, to bring people around a table, to resolve conflict through dialogue” he says and expresses deep concern about the ongoing conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine, advocating for peace and dialogue.

Regarding the Conscience aid ship, which reportedly came under attack by an Israeli drone just outside Maltese territorial waters while en route to Gaza, Micallef stated that it is his duty to continue to convey the message that humanitarian aid must not be obstructed en route to its destination.

You can read the original interview: [Here](#)

Image: [@GlennMicallef](#) on X - At the European Prize for Literature