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Let Culture Lead us Forward

European cultural sector unites to call for a stronger Creative Europe programme. A collaborative initiative has been launched urging EU institutions to double Creative Europe's budget, emphasizing culture's critical role in fostering unity, democratic values, and shared European identity.

The European cultural sector has come together to call on the European Commission, European Parliament and Member States to reinforce the Creative Europe programme in the next EU long-term budget (MFF).

The open letter has been endorsed by 70+ European associations, collectively representing close to 20.000 organisations active across the performing arts, music, literature, architecture, heritage, visual arts, audiovisual, and media sectors throughout Europe. In addition, 200+ national cultural organisations have expressed their support for the initiative.

According to the 2025 Eurobarometer, culture is the number one factor contributing to a sense of community among EU citizens, even above shared values, economy, and language. In a time of growing geopolitical uncertainty, economic pressure, and democratic backsliding, Europe needs unity more than ever. And that unity begins with cultural connection.

Creative Europe is the EU's only programme fully dedicated to culture and the creative sectors. Yet it represents a tiny fraction of the EU budget. Doubling the budget of Creative Europe would

be a modest investment financially, but a powerful signal of commitment to the values of solidarity, creativity, and European identity.

Across Europe, cultural organisations are under pressure: facing cuts, inflation, and increasingly constrained freedoms. If we want artists and institutions to continue inspiring, connecting and challenging our societies, we must give them the means to do so.

That's why the sector is coming together to urge the European institutions and member states to:

Support a stand-alone Creative Europe programme in the next MFF;

Double the budget of Creative Europe to reflect its real value and potential impact;

Defend culture as a strategic investment in the future of Europe.

Culture is how Europe speaks to its citizens and to the world. Let's give it the place and the support it deserves.

If you represent a cultural organisation and would like to [co-sign the letter](#), you can do so through this webform.

The letter follows:

A call to the European Parliament, the European Commission, and Member States Culture is the strongest force binding EU citizens together. According to the 2025 Eurobarometer, culture ranks as the number one factor contributing to a sense of community among Europeans - above other factors, such as shared values, history, economy, language, education, the rule of law, healthcare and environmental concerns.

Europe needs unity. In an era marked by geopolitical instability, military invasions, democratic backsliding, economic pressures, and weakened alliances, Europe faces profound tests. These challenges require bold investments in what makes this continent resilient and competitive. But let us be clear: no investment will succeed unless Europeans feel connected - to each other and to a shared vision for the future.

Competitiveness needs solidarity. Solidarity begins with culture.

The capacity to stand together in crisis, to make difficult compromises for the collective good, and to move forward as one Europe depends not just on treaties or budgets, but on trust, empathy, and a shared cultural horizon. Culture fosters these human ties. It is the bridge between peoples and the foundation of a meaningful European project. In a divided world, culture is our common ground. As hostility and polarisation rise globally, culture remains one of the few spaces where humanity can still imagine a better world - together, beyond today's divisions.

If Europe wants to lead in this fractured world, it must champion cultural dialogue, not as an afterthought, but as a strategic priority. Let's not abandon Europe's cultural leadership. The EU has long played a leading role in promoting cultural cooperation across borders - advancing mutual understanding, creative collaboration, and peace. This role is more vital than ever. While other global players retreat from cultural openness Europe has a historic opportunity to step forward. Not to promote its own culture above others, but to uphold culture as a universal good: a space for global connection, reflection, and shared responsibility. This is why we must invest in culture.

Creative Europe is the EU's only programme fully dedicated to culture and the creative sectors. Reiterating our support for the call and letter initiated by Culture Action Europe, we call on the European Parliament, the European Commission, and Member States to preserve Creative Europe as a stand-alone programme in the next Multiannual Financial Framework, double its budget and to raise the overall budget for culture to 2% of the MFF.

By doing it, what does the EU have to lose? Almost nothing, in financial terms. It would still be a tiny fraction of EU spending. What does it stand to gain? A great deal: renewed solidarity, deeper community, and strengthened global leadership - values no crisis can afford to lose. This call is urgent. Across the continent, public funding for culture is being reduced. Attacks on artistic freedom are growing. Inflation, austerity, and political pressure have left artists and cultural workers underpaid, undervalued, and vulnerable.

We risk silencing the very voices that keep European democracy alive, critical, and inclusive. Is this the reality that will inspire people to believe in Europe's future? Or act in solidarity when it matters most? If we believe in a stronger Europe - and a better world - we must invest in its cultural foundation. Double the Creative Europe budget. Safeguard its independence. Let culture lead us forward.

Signatories European associations, networks and platforms

IETM International network for contemporary performing arts ASSITEJ International - International Association of Theatre & Performing Arts for Children & Young People EDN - European Dance Development Network Circostrada, European network for street arts and contemporary circus Liveurope - the live music platform for new European talent European Festivals Association Culture Action Europe European Media Art Platform (EMAP) Res Artis Trans Europe Halles CICAIE - Arthouse Cinemas European Producers Club On the Move European Music Managers Alliance (EMMA) Opera Europa YOUROPE - The European Festival Association Aerowaves European Theatre Convention (ETC) IMPALA - European association of independent music companies Art Directors Club of Europe - ADCE

European Creative Hubs Network International Federation of Actors (FIA) International Federation of Film Distributors' and Publishers' Associations (FIAD) Reset! network LINIA, the European Architecture Platform REMA - European Early Music Network IMPF - the global trade body for independent music publishers ELIA European Crafts Alliance Live DMA EJM Europe Jazz Network circusnext Architects' Council of Europe (ACE) European Music Exporters Exchange - EMEE CEPIC INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE MEDIA LICENSING INDUSTRY Federation of European Publishers (FEP) Europa Distribution - The International Network of Independent Film Publishers and Distributors EUNIC (EU National Institutes of Culture) Michael Culture Association European Union Youth Orchestra International Union of Cinemas EURO-MEI - Media, Entertainment & Arts sector of UNI Europa Association Balkan Express Network European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) European Music Council Federation of Screenwriters in Europe (FSE) European Writers' Council (EWC) IAO (International Artist Organisation) AEPO-ARTIS ERIH European Route of Industrial Heritage Swinging Europe Network Magic Carpets / Openspace European Council of Literary Translators' Associations CEATL ACT Association for Independent Theatre European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC) GESAC Society of Audiovisual Authors (SAA) EAIPA - European Association of Independent Performing Arts European Choral Association European Composer and

Songwriter Alliance (ECSA) FERA - Federation of European
Screen Directors FIAPF - International Federation of Film
Producers' Associations European Federation of National
Youth Orchestras

Opera Europa Pearle*-Live Performance Europe CEPI -
European Audiovisual Production Association European
network on cultural management and policy, ENCATC National
organisations Ars Electronica Associazione Culturale
CapoTrave / Kilowatt Procurarte associação Cultural e Social
Fondazione Aida NeMe Selmer Media AS Urban
Gorillas Un-Label FZC - Zaragoza City of Knowledge
Foundation Beta Festival Aksioma - Institute for
Contemporary Art, Ljubljana VIDEOFORMES The NODE
Institute HEK (House of Electronic Arts) discotec ZIMMT
FutureEverything MOMus-Experimental Center for the
Arts D6 CULTURE EU Sala Apolo Fondation pour les
Musiques Actuelles r0g_agency for open culture and critical
transformation gGmbH Fab Lab Barcelona | IAAC SLStudio
Le Dimore del Quartetto Paavli Kultuurivabrik Club
Mixtape5 X Verleih AG Neural ass. cult. Museu Zer0
NonStop Entertainment Beletrina Academic Press alpha
nova & galerie futura Društvo DSI VEGA PLAION
PICTURES CYENS CoE Farbfilm Verleih GmbH

FUTURES Foundation Društvo Asociacija Zavod Projekt
Atol Posthof Linz déjà-vu film UG Pandora Film Medien
GmbH Cine Global GĀLOSA / SUKI Bjcem aisbl -
Biennale des jeunes créateurs de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée
Exodos Ljubljana Two Moons, Center for Poetisation of the
World Globus Hystericus Zavod Sploh Via Negativa
Alamode Filmdistribution oHG Društvo humanistov Goriške
Saša Nemec - cultural worker Hangvető LJUDMILA Art &
Science Laboratory the institute for advanced architecture of
catalonia iaac Music Hungary Forum For Folk Arts Wild
Bunch Germany GmbH Fab Lab Barcelona Radio Študent
MOTOVILA, Centre for the Promotion of Cooperation in the
CCSs Santeria Milano Senator Film Produktion GmbH
Ancienne Belgique Emanat Bússola Museum of
Architecture and Design (MAO) Around About Circus
Openspace Innsbruck & theater diemonopol DUM Association
Circuito CLAPS Katapult Berlin Teatro da Didascália
Tutti Matti per Colorno Teatro Necessario Grand Circus
Hotel La Brèche, Pôle National Cirque de Normandie
Noema La Central del Circ

Circus Futures Oerol Festival Filmdelights DYNAMO
Workspace for Circus and Performing Arts MKC Skopje
Wild Bunch Germany CSM Production GmbH Inter Alia
Fondazione Fitzcarraldo ETS Le Cratère - Scène Nationale

d'Alès Out of Sight vzw WpZimmer Autlook Filmsales
Filmladen Distribution Polyfilm Fundacja Sztuka w Mieście
Filmgarten BioArtLab Alpenrepublik GmbH Marche
Spettacolo DutchCulture Agora - Pôle national cirque
Boulazac Aquitaine Vereinigung deutscher Opern- und
Tanzensembles (VdO) National Circus Festival of Ireland
Forum Ljubljana STUDIOCANAL GmbH Kersnikova
Institute Ljubljana XTRAX Kersnikova Institute Ljubljana
VSI Art for Rainy Days AS Fidalgo Irish Equity
Pekinpah tanuki films Atabadoul(s) Les rencontres
professionnelles du cercle au Maroc. Teater na konfini
Centre for Creative and Social Practices Lindy Hop Bulgaria
Association for nature conservation Machaon International
Lucky Dogs RIXC Centre for New Media Culture Beta
Fiction Spain prfrm - produktion og formidling af scenekunst
Asociacija Aktyvistai

Eyrie Entertainment GmbH 70 STEPS Baker, Tenné GbR
PLAION PICTURES GmbH HDF KINO e.V. Arkanum
Pictures SPASA Kitt Johnson X-act IMZ International
Music + Media Centre Glej Theatre Sola Media Kanta
Company CineStar Group C.Re.S.Co. - Coordinamento delle
Realtà della Scena Contemporanea Club Mixtape 5, Sofia,
Bulgaria / Every Night Events LTD RIXC Center for New
Media Culture SCCA, Center for Contemporary Arts –
Ljubljana Koridor - križišča umetnosti Kurzfilm Agentur
Hamburg e.V. GLiMT AMAGER eksystemt Filmverleih
Association Ars Navitas Dansnät Sverige Amerikafilm
KLYS KONTEJNER | bureau of contemporary art praxis
Dansens Hus Stockholm Quo Artis Foundation Lotta
Lekvall Baltic Film & Creative Tech Cluster VSIA Rigas
cirks Grafiskie stāsti ISSP (Latvia) Intercult, Sweden
Smart Coop Sweden Cirko – Center for New Circus Teater
Giljotin AB CapoTrave/Kilowatt Fablevision Majestic
Filmverleih Johnson & Bergsmark SCHMIEDE HALLEIN
Subnet salzburg Acting for Climate Musikcentrum Riks

Illustratörcentrum - The Center for Illustration & Graphic
Design Cultivamos Cultura Ectopia Lab Project Earth
Metropolis - Københavns Internationale Teater Radiona.org -
Association for Development of 'do-it-yourself' Culture
MMMAD Festival Kristina R Johnsen Centrum för dramatik
/ Swedish Centre for Dramatic Writing Bioart Society Art of
Spectra Barbacka Sthlm production Circle of Arts (former
Ørkenfortet) JA Circus FRAME Prague Comics Art Festival,
z.s. Spolek Skutek Vzdělávací a kulturní centrum Broumov
River Cities Kulturhuset Stadsteatern HH Producties
Prokino Filmverleih GmbH SNAC Subnet - Salzburger
Plattform für Medienkunst und experimentelle Technologien
Music Managers Forum Netherlands AG Kino - Gilde e.V.

Norwegian Film Distributors Association The Swedish Film Distributors Association Syndicat Suisse Romand du Spectacle Norske Dansekunstnere - The Union of Norwegian Dance artists Spitzenorganisation der Filmwirtschaft (SPIO) Estonian Actors' Association Sindikat kulture in narave Slovenije - Glosa Glosa SKG - sindikalna konferenca glasbenikov AllScreens Deutsche Filmakademie (German Film Academy) Finnish Actors Union AG Verleih – Verband unabhängiger Filmverleihe e.V. City of Women, Association for the Promotion of Women in Culture Polish Actors Association ZASP Film and Music Austria (FAMA) Cirkuscentrum Norwegian Crafts Verband der Agenturen (VdA) Circuscentrum Flanders

PROG Producers of Germany Slovenian Association of Literary Translators (DSKP) Verband deutscher Filmexporteure VDFF e.V. Bundesverband Freie Darstellende Künste e.V. Verband Technischer Betriebe für Film und Fernsehen e.V. (VTFB) Initiative Urheberrecht / Authors' Rights Initiative Syndicat Français des Artistes interprètes CGT Associació d'Escriptors en Llengua Catalana (AELC) / Association of Catalan Language Writers A:LL Schrëftsteller*innen asbl Latvian Writers' Union Vlaamse Auteursvereniging Danish Authors of Fiction and Poetry - Danske Skønlitterære Forfattere CACO (Associação de artesãos de Odemira Danscentrum Sverige VTFB - Verband Technischer Betriebe für Film & Fernsehen e.V. Teatercentrum Writers Guild of Sweden Dansk Samtidscirkus Danish Authors' Society Romanian Writers' Union Das SYNDIKAT - VEREIN FÜR DEUTSCHSPRACHIGE KRIMINALLITERATUR The Icelandic Association for Translators and Interpreters (BTHOT) Kulturní a kreativní federace České republiky Norwegian Society of Authors The Danish Producers Association Asociația ARTLIT - The Romanian Association of Literary Translators

Image by [Alexia Souvalioti](#) for Fine Acts