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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:

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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.

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## 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   LINA, the European Architecture Platform   REMA - European Early Music Network   IMPF - the global trade body for independent music publishers   ELIA   European Crafts Alliance   Live DMA   EJA 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 GČLOSA / 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. (VTFF)   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   VTFF - 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

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