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## "Micallef at POLITICO: Funding Culture Is Key To EU Security"

*"In an interview with POLITICO, EU Commissioner Glenn Micallef, for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture, and Sport advocates for expanding the Creative Europe program in the EU's upcoming 2028–2034 budget, emphasising its strategic role in countering threats to democracy and societal cohesion*

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EU Commissioner Glenn Micallef's, statement at POLITICO is bold and clear: Creative Europe "is a program that needs to be strengthened, and I will continue to make the case for that."

Micallef positions cultural funding as the cornerstone of European security and democratic resilience. Thus, he aligns with civil society's calls for a Cultural Deal for Europe (2% of EU funding for culture) as the public dialogue on budgetary commitments and cohesive policies for the next period begins. Furthermore, he warns that neglecting cultural funding weakens Europe's ability to safeguard democratic values and counter disinformation

He frames culture as a "first line of defence" against authoritarianism, asserting that attacks on cultural heritage—such as Russia's deliberate destruction of UNESCO sites in Ukraine—aiming to erase national identity and destabilise societies.

During a recent visit to Ukraine, Micallef witnessed the direct impact of cultural destruction, noting that just before crossing the border, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Odessa was deliberately targeted by Russian forces.

“If you want to destroy a nation, if you want to completely erase a country, you attack its culture” he explained.

Micallef also highlights recent incidents of cultural institutions being threatened in EU member states, including Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Portugal, and warns about consequences in the Commission's next Rule of Law report.

“Culture is part and parcel of our work on democracy and our work on strengthening the Union, including our security in Europe.” Micallef argues, emphasising the role of culture in safeguarding democratic values and societal cohesion.

The proposed expansion of cultural funding in the EU's next seven-year budget (2028-2034) reflects a growing recognition of framing culture as a security and democratic imperative.

“The Creative Europe program, a €2.4 billion initiative to support Europe’s creative and audiovisual industries, should be expanded in the EU’s next seven-year budget,” Micallef argued, highlighting the need for greater investment in culture amid competing priorities like defence and competitiveness