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Seeking the compass to increase funding for culture

The three partners in the Cultural Deal initiative have launched a dialogue on funding for the cultural and creative sectors ahead of discussions on the next MFF and the ambitious ‘Cultural Compass’ framework.

“A Cultural Deal for Europe requires funding... I will advocate for the increased funding” said the European Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness, Youth, Culture and Sport, Glenn Micallef, in his introduction to the annual policy dialogue of the Cultural Deal for Europe initiative, held in Bozar, Brussels.

Representatives of the three co-organisers of the dialogue - Culture Action Europe, Europa Nostra and the European Cultural Foundation - stressed the urgent need to make culture a strategic priority for Europe and to raise the target for funding the cultural and creative sectors from the future EU budget to 2%. "We need to present a united front... This is just the first conversation," the Commissioner pointed out.

Glen Micallef focused on the importance of culture for Europe and the need to build bridges for international cooperation. “We need to take care of the cultural sector and its working conditions. We need to see the opportunities and challenges of emerging technological development and AI. We also need to see culture as a catalyst and an enabler in different policy areas” said the Commissioner.

Nela Riehl, chair of the CULT committee, spoke of freedom of expression and freedom in the arts, commenting that "culture as a value isn't as safe as we had hoped in previous years". Riehl declared herself an ally in the fight "for proper funding of culture".

Both Commissioner Micallef and other speakers referred to the "Cultural Compass" a strategic initiative aimed at giving European cultural policy a clear direction and a human face. The core pillars of the “Cultural Compass” are freedom of expression, protection of cultural heritage, access to culture in the regions,

intellectual property and artificial intelligence, and working conditions for artists.

"We need a lot of debates, to ask real questions and to not agree on everything. The Compass should be something tangible, not just nice speeches" said Georg Häusler, Director, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission.

Leander Kampf, emerging dancer and choreographer pointed out that "we cannot do it for free, otherwise we have to work in other situations. If I didn't have to work in a café I could spend so much more energy to creating culture, to work with young people, to work intergenerationally".



Marta Cienkowska, Deputy Minister of Culture and National Heritage in Poland, outlined the priorities of the Polish Presidency for the next six months, including initiatives for young artists and their security in an uncertain world, identifying the risks of AI, the reconstruction of Ukrainian monuments affected by Russian strikes, the launch of the Culture Ministers' discussion on the 'Cultural Compass', the creation of a major forum on security and crisis management in culture in the event of conflict, and the promotion of digitisation to record cultural heritage on a single basis. "Remember that culture is the soft power, it speaks more than words, more than everything. Remember that we can create through culture a perception without any force or battle, we can create narratives through culture" Cienkowska said.

MEP Hélder Sousa-Silva, a member of both the CULT and BUDG committees, spoke out against the fragmentation of the culture programmes and in favour of the idea of having only one simpler and more flexible culture programme with more investment. "In the next MFF there should be fewer programmes and more

investment, especially in culture. We need to rethink our priorities and our realisation of Creative Europe and other fragmented programmes. We need to have a flagship cultural program in the next MFF" said Sousa-Silva.

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Photos: Culture Action Europe