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## Supporting young artists in the spotlight of EU Culture Ministers

# At their recent meeting in Brussels, EU culture ministers adopted a document setting out ways to support young artists and cultural and creative professionals at the start of their careers.

Support for young artists was a key topic during the discussions of EU Culture Ministers on 13 March in Brussels. The ministers adopted the Council conclusions on supporting young artists and cultural and creative professionals at the start of their careers. This meeting formed part of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, with the Polish Presidency of the Council of Europe coordinating the initiative.

The document adopted by the EU's Culture Ministers provides a detailed description of the precarious professional and social situation faced by young artists and proposes an ambitious framework of initiatives for Member States and the Commission to improve their circumstances. It explicitly defines young artists as individuals aged 18–30, as well as emerging artists and cultural and creative professionals of any age who are starting their careers.

It recognises their contribution to cultural diversity through innovative concepts and fresh creative approaches, as well as their role in making the cultural sector more resilient and sustainable.

However, regardless of their employment status, gender, or other inequalities, the social and professional situation of young artists and cultural and creative professionals is often characterised by precariousness, intermittent work, unpredictable income, a weak position vis-à-vis contractors. They also have limited or no access to social security.

## Concrete Actions for Youth Development"

According to the Council's findings, young artists are poorly

paid. Despite their artistic training, they regularly struggle to find good jobs in the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) and have to look for other ways to earn money. When they enter the labour market, they frequently have limited knowledge of entrepreneurship, economics, accounting, and legal frameworks, including copyright and other intellectual property rights. They also have limited awareness of access to finance and social security.

These precarious professional conditions appear to be connected to a lack of public awareness of the importance and nature of work in the CCS, and of the complexity of the creative process

The document therefore identifies the need for initiatives to support young artists and cultural and creative professionals at the start of their careers. It also calls for a more systematic approach to supporting such individuals, ensuring that they are fairly and adequately remunerated in a manner that reflects their education, skills, and professional experience.

In line with discussions in the Council and the European Parliament, the text adopted by EU culture ministers invites the European Commission to promote appropriate conditions for the social and professional situation of young artists and cultural and creative professionals. This is a key issue within a future EU strategic framework for culture. It also applies to the next EU Work Plan for Culture.

## Building Sustainable Career Paths: From Education to Professional Practice

The European Commission is also invited to simplify EU funding application processes to reduce the administrative burden on young artists, and to promote the Creative Europe Programme further, including the Culture Moves Europe mobility initiative. This allows young artists to participate in individual cultural mobility projects and residencies in all Creative Europe countries and potentially beyond.

The document calls on EU members to recognise artistic professions as a source of livelihood, and to acknowledge the importance of mental health and the challenges faced by young artists and cultural and creative professionals. It also encourages the development of appropriate support systems.

The document recognises the need for EU members to develop or improve social security and rights for young artists, and calls on them to promote effective support systems and incentive

schemes for private patronage targeted at this group, which is underrepresented in the labour market. These schemes should integrate fair principles regarding adequate remuneration and working conditions into funding strategies.

Other initiatives proposed by the document to Member States and the European Commission include:

- the maintenance and further development of scholarship programmes for young artists and cultural and creative professionals.
- The support and facilitation of initiatives that involve a direct connection between established and young artists and cultural and creative professionals, such as dedicated matchmaking sessions, networking events or mentorship programmes to help bridge the gap between education and employment in the CCS.
- the maintenance of their updated contributions to the CreativesUnite map on working conditions in the CCS and actions, including those applicable to Ukrainian artists.
- The encouragement of young artists to participate in existing programmes such as Creative Europe, including Culture Moves Europe, Erasmus+, Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs and Horizon Europe. In addition, where applicable, create incentives to enable young artists and cultural and creative professionals to exchange best practices and gain experience in the EU Member States and other countries participating in those programmes.
- The inclusion of data on young artists and cultural and creative professionals in public statistics, where appropriate and without imposing an excessive administrative burden.
- The promotion where appropriate of informal and non-formal forms of learning for everyone (e.g. through amateur arts), and lifelong learning for young artists and cultural and creative professionals (e.g. through workshops and artistic residencies), in order to stimulate their development and equip them with the know-how and skills necessary to launch their careers.
- The encouragement of projects involving research into the situation of young artists and cultural and creative professionals starting out in the labour market, having regard to labour legislation, taxation and social protection.
- The facilitation of processes where young people acquire all the necessary skills in the cultural and creative sector and learn about important issues such as employment opportunities,

entrepreneurship, fair practices, copyright and the broader intellectual property framework, digital and technological tools, including artificial intelligence (AI).

You can read the document [here](#).

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