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The European Cultural Ecosystem Applauds the Culture Compass for Europe

The European Cultural Ecosystem warmly embraces the Culture Compass, highlighting its visionary approach while calling for strong implementation, robust funding, and enhanced artist protections to ensure meaningful progress in the cultural sector.

The European Commission's Culture Compass for Europe, unveiled on November 12, 2025, by Executive Vice-President Roxana Mînzatu and Commissioner Glenn Micallef, has elicited a predominantly positive response from the cultural ecosystem.

Reactions highlight enthusiasm for its visionary approach while underscoring calls for robust implementation, funding, and artist protections. Overall, the ecosystem views the Compass as a “game changer” and “leap forward”, crediting participatory processes but stressing execution through the proposed Joint Declaration, data hub, and dialogues to realise its 20 actions. Below is an overview of key sentiments from cultural organisations, artists, and sector representatives.

Europa Nostra, the pan-European voice for cultural heritage and leader of the European Heritage Hub, was the first to express enthusiasm, issuing a resounding welcome, stating, “When culture wins, Europe wins.” The organisation praised the Compass's “strategic vision – ‘Europe for Culture – Culture for Europe’” for connecting culture to broader EU goals like sustainability and democracy, crediting the inclusive consultation process.

Secretary General Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović called it a “groundbreaking moment” that elevates cultural heritage centrally in EU priorities. The European Heritage Hub, in a

related report, urged embedding the “Cultural Deal for Europe” into the Compass, advocating for at least 2% of the next EU budget (2028-2034) dedicated to culture to bolster democracy and sustainability—reflecting over 1,000 participants in prior debates.



Culture Action Europe (CAE) notes [in a first reaction](#) to the strategy that the 20 flagship actions align with sector needs but promises further analysis via their “Sector Blueprint” to ensure alignment with the network's goals: “The strategy is a positive and much-needed step forward, with clear values-driven language that highlights artistic freedom, cultural diversity, inclusion, and participation, and recognises the intrinsic value of culture as a sector in its own right. The network notes that the success of the strategy ultimately hinges on its effective implementation, which requires clarity on funding, particularly given that AgoraEU and other programmes for the 2028–2034 cycle are still under discussion.

In order to enable culture to contribute to EU priorities while thriving across Europe, Culture Action Europe reiterates the Cultural Deal for Europe partners' call for 2% of the next MFF to be dedicated to culture. In a first attempt to unpack the strategy, the network notes that “the Compass shows the direction, yet how far we go will be measured by the strength of our partnerships and commitment to sustained investment. “

In a similar vein, the European Cultural Foundation [welcomes the Culture Compass for Europe](#), praising its vision to centralise culture in EU policy. The organisation calls for robust funding and genuine citizen dialogue and recognises culture's power to strengthen European identity, democracy, and social cohesion through meaningful engagement. “Culture is what binds us as

individuals and as communities. It nourishes a sense of belonging, the European sentiment,” it writes in its initial analysis. The ECF calls for strong funding, at least 2% in the next EU budget, and emphasises culture’s role in building European identity, solidarity, and democratic values.

Eurocities, representing cities across Europe, [backed the initiative](#), standing “ready to work with the EU to turn its ambitions into local reality,” while calling for robust funding amid the next EU budget negotiations. “In a Europe where 75% of Europeans live in cities, Eurocities looks forward to working with the European Commission to turn this ambition into concrete local action,” stated Mathias De Clercq, President of Eurocities and Mayor of Ghent. The network will collaborate with the EU to implement the Culture Compass by defending artistic freedom, expanding cultural access, promoting inclusive policies, and discussing implementation strategies at the upcoming Eurocities Culture Forum in Gothenburg.

Updated 17/11/2025

IETM [welcomes the adoption of the new, consolidated strategy for culture](#), viewing it as a vital milestone in the EU’s approach to governing and supporting culture. “The discourse of this strategy is, in many ways, refreshing, bold, and valuable. It is not solely driven by crises and anxiety – which is unique in today’s political climate – and does not put competitiveness and security front and centre — but rather invites celebrating Europe’s assets, including its rich cultural diversity, and to explore the versatile potential of culture. IETM notes that the Culture Compass emphasises the essential values of culture, framing it as a “public good”, and highlights culture’s intrinsic value. Europe as a continent is positioned as a “vibrant hub of cultural diversity” and the EU as a “global leader in culture and creativity.” IETM also acknowledges that it is high time “to consistently include and elevate culture’s role in policymaking.” The strong focus on artistic freedom and artists’ working conditions is considered essential for an EU strategic framework for culture. While these breakthroughs can be regarded as a victory for culture advocates, including IETM, the network notes a risk that such victories will remain rhetorical unless concrete, new, and bold measures are implemented. A critical debate takes place on how culture can be genuinely elevated at the policy level.

A Clear Recognition That Artistic Freedom is Under Threat Across Europe

The [Artistic Freedom Initiative](#) also welcomed the Commission's clear recognition that artistic freedom is under threat across Europe. "Artistic Freedom Initiative's own monitoring has shown how urgently EU-wide, systematic documentation of artistic freedom is needed," AFI notes in its welcoming statement. "To build on this progress, we urge the Commission to take a further step: consider an EU Artistic Freedom Act to fill the current legislative gap and provide binding protections for artists and cultural workers across the Union."

IMPALA, representing independent music companies, [welcomed the initiative](#) as timely for leveraging Europe's cultural diversity as "social & economic strength & soft power", expressing eagerness to input on making the EU "the best place in the world to be an artist."

The Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC) committed to contributing and advocating for artistic freedom, diversity, inclusion, and excellence in music education, following a roundtable with music organisations. The EU National Institutes for Culture also [welcomed the Compass](#).

The European Crafts Alliance warmly [welcomes the launch of the EU Culture Compass](#). We consider it a timely and valuable initiative that brings much-needed coherence to how culture is understood within wider European policy priorities.

Joost Heinsius: Stronger Advocacy Efforts Are Needed for Concrete Goals in the EU Artists Charter



Policy expert, Joost Heinsius comments on the announcement regarding the Culture Compass, which “promises an EU Artists Charter, to outline fundamental principles, guidance, and commitments for fair working conditions in the sectors, and increase compliance and accountability, particularly by recipients of EU funding for culture.” He notes that it will organize an EU high-level exchange with stakeholders and social partners, with the outcomes contributing to the design of the charter. However, he expresses concern that the announcement is “interesting and new,” yet it provides no information about the content of the Charter or the fundamental principles, guidance, and commitments it will encompass.

“This means the cultural sector needs strong advocacy efforts to make sure this Charter will propose concrete goals and commitments to improve fair pay, fair access to social security and support stronger bargaining powers, especially for the artists who are too often on the weak side of the power balance. Since the Charter also promises increased compliance and accountability for fair working conditions, especially for recipients of EU funding for culture, the Commission has to raise the standards for fair pay in all its programs. This includes culture and how it will enforce these standards,” he concludes.

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“This is a step forward: a vision that starts from culture itself, not merely from what culture can serve,” comments policy expert Elena Polivtseva on the recent announcement in a comment on LinkedIn. “Earlier frameworks such as the New European Agenda for Culture overemphasised culture’s contribution to other policy fields. This new strategy rebalances three essential dimensions: the needs of cultural sectors, citizen participation, and culture’s broader spillovers,” she adds. Overall, Polivtseva believes the Culture Compass “succeeds in acknowledging the value of culture and recognising the sector’s key challenges.” However, she points out its shortcomings in translating rhetoric into action, as some measures are either too general or overly tied to existing initiatives. Finally, she concludes that “the strength of any vision lies in its implementation,” asserting that the Culture Compass is a milestone that requires stronger numbers in the next EU budget.

Not to be missed: On 19 November 2025 at 11:00 CET, Culture Action Europe will host a public online meeting with guest speakers from DG EAC. The meeting will see the speakers walk participants through the Culture Compass, share their initial thoughts, and create an open space for collective consideration of the Compass.