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UNESCO empowers creativity with the Status of the Artist Recommendation

CREATIVESUNITE

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The UNESCO publication on the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist aims to empower creativity.

Artists are the driving force behind creativity, fostering a sense of belonging and economic values. The UNESCO 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist has contributed to better responding to their specific needs. The fifth global consultation on the implementation of the Recommendation, conducted between July 2022 and January 2023, demonstrates the ongoing actions of UNESCO to protect the status of artists.

The report, highlighting both positive trends and remaining challenges gathered through the consultation, features practices worldwide which testify to the enormous efforts made by Member States to support effective policies such as intellectual property laws, pension regulations and tax incentives, in line with the 1980 Recommendation. Yet, the findings also reveal the lack of comprehensive data, persisting censorship and attacks on artists, emphasizing the imperative necessity for more encompassing and 'omnibus' laws and enhanced enforcement of the existing legal frameworks.

The UNESCO publication calls for wider employment and social security access, broader reflection on the ambivalence of digital transformation, as well as improved opportunities for artists from all backgrounds.

The report is primarily based on an analysis of submissions to the fifth global consultation on the implementation of the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist by UNESCO Member States, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and international non-governmental organizations (INGO), while it also draws from complementary sources.

UNESCO launched its fifth global consultation on the implementation of the 1980 Recommendation to understand these challenges better and to highlight good practices and policies by Member States. The survey was also widely shared among NGOs and INGOs to document their

involvement as significant stakeholders in the sector.

The research was conducted around eight areas that structure this report: legal and regulatory frameworks; fair remuneration and access to financing; social and economic rights; digital environment; preferential treatment; artistic freedom; equality, inclusion and diversity; and finally, responses to COVID-19.

The findings show us that the objectives set by the 1980 Recommendation four decades ago are still relevant today. Although the status of artists and cultural professionals are increasingly recognized by laws and legal frameworks in UNESCO Member States, there need to be more concrete measures to enforce the related policies.

In a highly competitive sector, artists often lack the leverage needed to influence policy compared to corporate players, while women and minorities often face serious challenges breaking into the cultural and creative industries. The rising restrictions on artistic freedom around the world – including censorship, legal prosecution, violence and even death as the ultimate way of silencing dissent – are also deeply alarming.

Find the full publication here