

A new European agenda for culture

Culture can have various meanings and roles in our lives and societies. Continuous research into this subject reveals its significant contribution not only to economic growth and job creation but also to wellbeing, social cohesion and a sense of belonging. Together with culture's importance in shaping and maintaining international relations, these aspects define Europe's cultural strategy for the future.

The March 2016 [Rome Declaration](#) and the November 2017 [Gothenburg Leaders' Agenda](#) on Education and Culture put culture and education at the heart of the social and economic aspirations of the EU on its way to creating a thriving cultural and creative economy. Access to culture and education, cultural engagement, and awareness of the shared history and values that unite, more than separate, us, have the potential to make societies more inclusive and to ensure rich and peaceful international cultural relations.

European Commission proposal

In line with this vision, in May 2018 the Commission presented its strategy for culture, in a communication on '[A new European agenda](#) for culture' that builds upon the current European agenda for [culture in a globalising world](#). It focuses on attaining three strategic objectives (each linked to one of three dimensions of culture: social, economic and external) as well as on cultural and creative activities.

Concerning the social dimension of culture, the Commission proposes actions to address artists' hampered mobility; to ensure fair pay for creators (particularly in the Digital Single Market); to work towards gender equality and social inclusion; to incentivise culture in urban and rural areas; and to reinforce the impact of culture on health and wellbeing. Actions on the economic dimension cover education: developing digital and entrepreneurial skills as well as transferable skills of creativity and critical thinking, which are all to be taught and assessed in curricula that include arts alongside science, technology, engineering and maths. Dialogue on the renewed industrial policy strategy with representatives of the music sector and the audiovisual industry are high on the Commission agenda in this domain as well. Actions linked to the international dimension aim to make the EU a stronger global player, and include opening European houses of culture and incorporating cultural heritage protection into the common security and defence policy.

Certain policy actions cut across all three dimensions. Some – such as an action plan resulting from the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage – are focused on cultural heritage, while others – such as the Digital4Culture strategy, aimed at strengthening coherence among cultural, digital and audiovisual initiatives – are focused on digital culture.

European Parliament's position

In December 2018, the Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) insisting on more support for the intrinsic value of culture and for cultural diversity in the EU's cultural policies, including through a significant increase in funding for the only EU programme financing cultural activities, [Creative Europe](#). Given the digital shift's impact on artists' and creators' working conditions, it welcomes the Digital4Culture strategy and draws attention to copyright protection, while calling for actions facilitating artists' mobility and improved working conditions. The role of music and arts education in schools, as well as the protection of artistic freedom, cultural rights, media pluralism and the right to participate freely in cultural life are also highlighted.

The new agenda is seen as an opportunity to frame a comprehensive cultural policy at EU level, but such an ambition calls for a significant increase in funding and access to finance for cultural and creative industry SMEs. The resolution calls on the Commission to mainstream culture in other policy areas to the development of which it contributes, and to allocate to it at least 1 % of funding across all programmes in 2021-2027, particularly for cultural heritage and the cultural and creative sectors in structural funds.

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