



CULTURE

The European Union's action in the field of culture supplements the cultural policy of the Member States in various areas, such as the preservation of European cultural heritage, cooperation between various countries' cultural institutions and the promotion of mobility among creative workers. The cultural sector is also affected by provisions of the Treaties that do not explicitly pertain to culture.

LEGAL BASIS AND OBJECTIVES

The Treaty of Lisbon places great importance on culture: the preamble to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) explicitly refers to 'drawing inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe'. One of the EU's key aims, as specified in the Treaty, is to 'respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and [...] ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced' (Article 3 of the TEU). Article 6 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states that the EU's competences in the field of culture are to 'carry out actions to support, coordinate or supplement the actions of the Member States'.

[Article 167 of the TFEU](#) provides further details on EU action in the field of culture: the EU must contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. The EU's actions should encourage cooperation between the Member States and support and supplement their action in improving the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of European peoples.

Article 13 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union stipulates that 'the arts and scientific research shall be free of constraint'. Furthermore, according to Article 22 of the Charter 'the EU shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity'.

ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Policy developments

1. [European Agenda for Culture](#)

On 22 May 2018, the Commission adopted a New European Agenda for Culture, which follows on from the one adopted in 2007, continuing the provision of the strategic framework for EU action in the cultural sector. The new agenda proposes three strategic objectives, with social, economic and external dimensions: (1) harnessing the power of culture for social cohesion and well-being; (2) supporting culture-based creativity in education and innovation, and for jobs and growth; and (3) strengthening international



cultural relations. The agenda sets out improved working methods with the Member States, civil society and international partners. It is implemented through work plans for culture. It is currently implemented by the [resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture \(2023-2026\)](#) adopted by the Council on 29 November 2022.

The resolution focuses on four different but complementary priorities:

- Artists and cultural professionals: empowering the cultural and creative sectors
- Culture for the people: enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture in society
- Culture for the planet: unleashing the power of culture
- Culture for co-creative partnerships: strengthening the cultural dimension of the EU external relations.

2. International cultural relations

The joint communication '[Towards an EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations](#)', presented by the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) in mid-2016, has the aim of encouraging cultural cooperation between the EU and its partner countries. It stresses the EU's commitment to fostering international cultural relations through support and assistance to non-EU countries and promoting the diverse cultures of the Member States through cultural diplomacy.

3. Intercultural dialogue

Intercultural dialogue is an ongoing priority of the EU, becoming even more significant with the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. Some important initiatives in the specific area of culture policy include those on Roma culture, intercultural cities and dialogue with the Platform for Intercultural Europe.

B. Funding programmes and support initiatives

1. [Creative Europe](#)

Creative Europe is a programme dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors, first launched in 2014 for seven years. It brought several earlier EU programmes together under one umbrella: the MEDIA programmes (1991-2013), the MEDIA Mundus programme (2011-2013) and the Culture programmes (2000-2013). Given its success, in May 2021, Parliament, the Commission and the Council adopted the second Creative Europe programme (2021-2027) securing EUR 2.44 billion, which represents a 36% increase.

The main objectives of the programme are to (1) safeguard, develop and promote European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage and (2) increase the competitiveness and economic potential of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the audiovisual sector. It is divided in three strands: media, culture and cross-sectoral.

For the 2021-2027 period, the main novelties in the programme are:

- Stronger emphasis on transnational creation and innovation;



- Easier access to funding through higher co-financing rates (more funding for projects from Creative Europe);
- Emphasis on supporting EU-level cooperation to make the European audiovisual sector more globally competitive
- A mobility scheme for artists and professionals;
- Actions that target the needs of specific creative sectors, such as music, architecture and cultural heritage.

The programme puts a special focus on three areas: (1) supporting the music sector, particularly contemporary and live music, which will receive funds from the culture strand to support platforms promoting emerging artists and distribution networks, among other initiatives; (2) prioritising female talent, supporting women's artistic and professional careers and promoting gender equality as one of the main values to be pursued by the programme; (3) fostering inclusion by facilitating participation in the programme for people with disabilities and socially marginalised groups and by simplifying the application process.

2. [European Capitals of Culture](#)

European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) is one of the EU's best-known and most successful cultural initiatives. Each year, two cities in two different EU countries are named European Capitals of Culture.

The cities are selected by an independent panel of experts on the basis of a cultural programme that must have a strong European dimension, involve local people of all ages and contribute to the long-term development of the city. Launched in 1985, the initiative has awarded more than 60 cities so far.

The rules and conditions for holding the title, which are valid up to and including 2033, are set out in [Decision No 445/2014/EU](#). Amended in 2017, the initiative is now open to European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and European Economic Area (EEA) countries as well ([Decision \(EU\)2017/1545](#)).

3. [The European Heritage Label](#) and the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018

The European Heritage Label began, in 2005, as an intergovernmental initiative between several Member States. In 2010, at their request, the Commission proposed making the European Heritage Label a formal EU initiative. The label was established in 2011 by [Decision No 1194/2011/EU](#). Its overarching objective is to strengthen intercultural dialogue and people's sense of belonging to the EU. European Heritage Label sites are selected for their high symbolic value, the role they have played in the history and culture of Europe and the EU, and their relation to democratic principles and human rights. Since 2013, 60 sites have been awarded the label.

On 30 August 2016, the Commission put forward a proposal to Parliament and the Council calling for 2018 to be designated the European Year of Cultural Heritage, in response to prior requests from both institutions. The proposal was adopted in the first half of 2017. The European Year of Cultural Heritage initiative sought to highlight the role of Europe's cultural heritage in fostering a shared sense of history



and identity. It received EUR 8 million in funding for the period from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018.

4. Prizes

The EU's cultural policy supports various [prizes](#) in the fields of cultural heritage, architecture, literature and music. The objective of these prizes is to recognise the excellent quality and success of European activities in these fields and put the spotlight on the work of artists, musicians, architects, writers and those working in the field of cultural heritage. They also serve as a showcase for Europe's rich cultural diversity and the importance of intercultural dialogue and cross-border cultural activities in the EU and beyond.

5. The New European Bauhaus (NBE)

[The New European Bauhaus](#) initiative was presented by Commission President Ursula Von der Leyen and officially launched on 18 January 2021. It is a creative and interdisciplinary project constituting a meeting point and a space to design future ways of living at the crossroads between art, culture, science and technology. Its main goal is to promote the creation of living places that are in line with the [European Green Deal](#) by supporting (1) inclusive, accessible spaces fostering dialogue between diverse cultures, disciplines, genders and ages, and (2) sustainable solutions that respect our planet's ecosystems. The initiative will also develop a framework of funding sources to align with the multiannual financial framework (MFF). On 15 September 2021, the Commission published a [communication](#) on the New European Bauhaus detailing its framework, core principles, key actions and funding possibilities.

C. Other initiatives

The EU's approach to culture also includes cultural heritage, in particular its protection. With [Directive 2014/60/EU](#), a recast of [Directive 93/7/EEC](#), the EU seeks to safeguard national cultural heritage and reconcile its protection with the principle of free movement of goods. The Directive provides for the physical [return of cultural objects](#) that have been unlawfully removed from the territory of one Member State after January 1993 and sets out cooperation mechanisms and proceedings to secure the return of unlawfully removed objects. The Directive covers all cultural objects identified as 'national treasures possessing artistic, historic or archaeological value' under national legislation.

Furthermore, following the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage, the Commission published a working document entitled 'European Framework for Action in Cultural Heritage' where the safeguarding of endangered heritage is one of the five pillars of the framework.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Parliament has, in various resolutions^[1], expressed its long-standing interest in the potential of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) and the prospect of developing

[1] [OJ C 377 E, 7.12.2012, p. 142](#); [OJ C 316, 22.9.2017, p. 88](#).



them. Not only do these sectors reflect the EU's cultural diversity, they also employ 7.5% of its workforce, creating approximately EUR 509 billion in value added to GDP.

In its 2016 [resolution on a coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries](#), Parliament called for a strategic approach to unleash the potential of the CCS and asked the Commission to develop a comprehensive and long-term industrial policy framework for them. It called for measures to be put in place to improve working conditions in these sectors, for example by including them in the Youth Employment Initiative and by providing funds to facilitate careers, entrepreneurship and training.

Parliament has also pushed for a strategic approach to the role of culture in external relations. In its Preparatory Action in the 2013 and 2014 budgets, entitled 'Culture in EU External Relations', it highlighted the considerable potential for culture in the EU's external relations. In 2016, it adopted a [resolution on intercultural dialogue](#). In response to the Commission and EEAS Joint communication '[Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations](#)', Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) drafted jointly by the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) in July 2017, in which MEPs recommended developing an effective EU strategy for international cultural relations, providing a separate EU budget line for this, launching an EU programme on international mobility and creating a Cultural Visa Programme.

In its role as co-legislator, Parliament adopted the Commission's proposals to open the ECOC initiative to EFTA and EEA countries and to make 2018 a European Year of Cultural Heritage. In the previous legislature, it shaped the European Heritage Label and the Directive on the return of cultural objects. Parliament took up the subject of cultural heritage in its 2015 [resolution towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe](#), emphasising the role cultural heritage plays in growth and jobs. On 20 January 2021, Parliament adopted a [resolution on achieving an effective policy legacy for the European Year of Cultural Heritage](#), based on an own-initiative report by the CULT Committee. The resolution called on the Commission and the Member States to step up their action to protect and promote linguistic diversity in the digital age, include the cultural heritage of minorities present in Europe in any discussion on European heritage and to support traditional European and pan-European cultural events.

During negotiations on the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 Creative Europe programmes, as well as throughout the annual budgetary procedures, Parliament has consistently advocated for increased budgetary allocations for the cultural and creative sectors. During negotiations on the 2014-2020 and 2021-2027 MFFs, as well as throughout the annual budgetary procedures, Parliament fought consistently for increased budgetary allocations for the cultural and creative sectors, in particular for the Creative Europe programme. In its draft opinion on the Commission's proposal for a new 2021-2027 MFF, voted on in October 2018, the CULT Committee called for a doubling of resources for the new Creative Europe programme (2021-2027). On 14 December 2020, an agreement securing EUR 2.2 billion in funding for the programme was reached, increasing its current budget by 36%. As regards its amendments to the Commission proposal on the 2021-2027 Creative Europe programme voted on in plenary in March 2019, Parliament proposed that funds be distributed to different programme strands in percentages rather than figures, ensuring a special allocation for cooperation



projects in the cultural sector. Furthermore, MEPs suggested amendments in order to better support the competitiveness of the creative market, promote greater inclusivity and communicate the importance of culture for the development of European people and societies. The agreement between Parliament and the Council was endorsed in the CULT Committee meeting of [11 January 2021](#). On 10 May 2021 the CULT Committee voted to [recommend approval of the text](#), which was formally adopted in plenary on 19 May 2021.

Recently, MEPs have urged for adequate and targeted financial support to alleviate the crisis in the CCS, notably due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help those employed in them. This point was raised during the plenary debate before the final vote on the 2021-2027 Creative Europe programme in May 2021. Furthermore, in an own-initiative report on the situation of artists and cultural recovery in the EU, [voted on in the CULT Committee](#) in September 2021, and in a corresponding [resolution](#) adopted in plenary on 20 October 2021, MEPs called for a 'European Status of the Artist'. This would set out a common framework for working conditions and minimum standards for artists and cultural workers in all EU countries.

On 8 March 2022, Parliament adopted a [resolution on the role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism](#) based on a [resolution by the CULT Committee](#). The report called on EU countries to take measures to address the structural roots of racism and discrimination in the EU. It also called on Member States to agree on the proposed [anti-discrimination directive](#) that has been blocked in the Council since 2008.

Lastly, based on the current situation in Ukraine, the CULT committee requested a [study](#) about protecting cultural heritage from armed conflict.

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