

DECLARATION



We, the Members of the Cultural Creators Friendship Group (CCFG)¹,

- Committed to the objective of the CCFG to bring the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) to the political focus, and on the occasion of the Special European Council of 17-18 July 2020² that will discuss the new recovery instrument and the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027;
- Praising the solidarity that the sector has shown during the pandemic, often releasing cultural content for free through digital channels, and contributing to the wellbeing of the population under lockdown.
- Believing that the COVID-19 outbreak and measures necessary to halt the spreading of the pandemic have harshly affected the CCS due to the closure of cultural venues, namely cinemas, theatres, concert halls, galleries, cultural institutions, festivals, museums and music venues, accentuating detrimental trends and economic challenges for the CCS³, and convinced that all efforts should be put in order to safeguard and further promote the survival and development of the CCS;
- Reiterating the call of the European Parliament to the Union and the Member States to provide support to the CCS as they play an important role in both our economy and our social life, and are severely affected by the current crisis as depicted in the *European Parliament Resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU Coordinated action to combat COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences (2020/2616(RSP))*⁴;
- Considering that the CCS are the EU's third biggest employer, employ 7.5% of the total workforce and contribute 5.3% to the EU's GDP; whereas the CCS are one of the first and hardest hit by the pandemic crisis and will be one of the last ones to recover, and that some ecosystems might not be able to recover at all as creation is driven by individuals and small organizations and enterprises;
- Acknowledging that the CCS are facing structural challenges in addition to immediate changes; according to the Commission's own estimates, the CCS – which account for €509bn in value added to GDP and over 12 million full-time jobs – are expected to have lost 80% of their turnover in the 2nd quarter of 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis and the containment measures;
- Strongly believing that the announcement of the Recovery Plan of the Commission in late May does not offer any guarantees to the CCS for accessing the emergency funding;
- Recalling that the CCS contribute significantly to youth employment, being the sector that typically employs a higher number of people aged 15-29⁵; consequently, #NextGenerationEU cannot be without the CCS;
- Underlining that culture is the driving force holding the European Union together, and thus a European recovery strategy based on solidarity and fairness cannot treat culture as an auxiliary tool, but needs to make it pivotal in all its actions; on top of that, the CCS stimulate other industries and play a primary role in stimulating other sectors and industries; there is a strong interconnectedness and interrelatedness between culture and tourism for example. According to the World Tourism Organization, four out of ten tourists choose their destination based on its cultural offering⁶;
- Stating that the revised Commission's proposal presents a 20% cut to the European Solidarity Corps, a 8% cut to Creative Europe and a 7% cut to Erasmus+, compared to the 2018 Commission's MFF proposal, whereas Creative Europe is the only EU programme that provides direct support to the CCS across Europe; considering the initiatives that Creative Europe is supposed to cover, its budget is not capable of providing the support required for this already oversubscribed and underfunded programme;

¹ The CCFG is an informal group consisting of MEPs representing the entirety of the political spectrum that was created in order to bring issues of the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) into political focus and act as a platform for discussion and cooperation with stakeholders and representatives of the CCS.

² <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/european-council/2020/07/17-18/>

³ Strong global competition, digital shift affecting creators' revenues, creation, distribution, promotion of and access to content, market fragmented along linguistic lines, poor transnational circulation of European audio-visual productions and market concentration.

⁴ European Parliament Resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU Coordinated action to combat COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences (2020/2616(RSP)), 17 April 2020, Brussels, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2020-0054_EN.html

⁵ UNESCO, Cultural Times: The first global map of cultural and creative industries, 2015, available at:

https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/cultural_times_the_first_global_map_of_cultural_and_creative_industries.pdf

⁶ World Tourism Organization, Tourism and Culture Synergies, UNWTO, Madrid, 2018, available at: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/pdf/10.18111/9789284418978>

We declare the following on behalf of the CCFG:

- Guided by article 167 TFEU, the CCFG fully supports calls initiated by the CCS for strong and systemic support measures in order to help the CCS to recover from this unprecedented crisis.
- We fully support the European Parliament's proposal for doubling the budget of Creative Europe (€2.8bn) as the core programme for reinforcing European cultural cooperation (#Double4Culture). We call upon the Commission to work on better quantitative and qualitative indicators⁷.

Doubling Creative Europe's budget is urgent now more than ever, in order to reach out to micro-organisations and individual artists, who are struggling to be back on track after the pandemic crisis.

- In addition, we call for mainstreaming of culture throughout the MFF in order to benefit from other programmes as well. We support that the budget of culture will be at least 1% across the MFF.
- We strongly support the unconditional inclusion of the CCS in the Recovery Plan and call for the earmarking of, at least, 7% of the Recovery Fund for culture, with a clear budgetary pre-allocation in the relevant programmes. We urge the Commission to give clear guidelines to Member States before approving their national action plans to ensure that the Recovery Fund reaches the CCS in each country.
- We call for sizeable and primary grant-based support for CCS.

We ask for a coordination network between European, national and regional levels so that the targeting and reaching of cultural operators by additional funds stemming from the Next Generation EU initiative, such as REACT-EU, which is up to €55bn, as well as other structural and cohesion funds, should target and reach cultural operators, by granting a better coordination between the European and national levels.

- The CCS are characterized by a high share of self-employed professionals and freelancers. We urge the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Member States to support the CCS in a manner that takes into consideration the precarious working conditions that many artists and creators face, while ensuring a geographical balance, and facilitating access to EU funds for this type of workers.

⁷ Position of the European Parliament adopted at first reading on 28 March 2019 with a view to the adoption of Regulation (EU) .../... of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2019-0323_EN.html?redirect#title2; Same call was repeated by the Chair of the Committee on Culture and Education, Sabine Verheyen on the 12th May 2020, available at : <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20200511IPR78814/culture-committee-chair-verheyen-calls-for-doubling-money-for-creative-europe>

Signatories:

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