

Joint Declaration by EPP, S&D, Renew, the Greens/EFA, ECR and the Left in support of a strong culture comeback

We stress and recall the importance of culture and creativity in ensuring our wellbeing as well as its contribution to the EU economy. Culture and creativity are engrained in our DNA and our identities, they are a quintessential element of our social fabric, bringing us together to feel, experience and think about who we are and also who we could become. They are also a rich and diverse ecosystem, which generates high economic value in terms of both total turnover and employment.

However, **cultural and creative sectors and industries were among those who suffered the most from the confinement measures and ensuing cancellation of engagements and performances, closing of venues, exhibitions and festivals.** Instead of bringing much-needed relief or comfort to millions of people, the cultural and creative sectors and industries were brought to a long pause and lost around a third of their revenues in 2020, amounting to a cumulative loss estimated to be around EUR 200 billion. Performing arts and live music were especially hard hit, with a 90% and 76% drop respectively. Cultural and creative sector professionals, already often in a precarious situation, have been left without any regular sources of income and forced into partial inactivity.

We call on the Commission to urgently publish guidelines to facilitate the safe re-opening of cultural venues and organisation of cultural activities. Now that studies and test events confirm the low risks of contagion incurred at cultural events (both out- and indoors), and at a time when the re-opening of cultural venues in some countries has proved safe and successful, it is paramount to accelerate the re-opening of the sector throughout Europe without undue restrictions or delay. Member States need to restart cross-border cooperation and find ways to allow artists and artistic content to travel and reach diverse audiences. We, therefore, also call on the Commission and the Member States to provide clear, up-to-date information and guidelines on mobility opportunities and administrative steps, among others, as regard visas, taxation and social security.

Re-opening is only the first step. Cultural recovery is part and parcel of a sustainable European recovery. **We welcome the Council conclusions of 18 May on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors. In particular, we reiterate our call to the Commission and to Member States to earmark 2% of NRRPs' financial envelopes to culture.** We also call on Member States to encourage cross-overs between culture and education as a way to learn about different historical times, cultures, means of expression and the essence of living together. Confinement has been very tough on mental well-being especially that of children and youth, and access to culture is essential in helping them to resist dropout and climb up the social ladder.

Another essential step is finding ways to overcome the fragility of the sectors and the precariousness of artists and other professionals working in them, many of whom are freelancers or temporary workers. This past year has also underlined the need for greater protection of diversity of cultural expressions. **We, therefore, call on the Commission to propose a European framework for working conditions in the cultural and creative sectors and industries**, which would reflect the specificities of the sector and would introduce guidelines and principles with a view to improving working conditions, paying particular attention to transnational employment.

These past few months have seen the flow of new ideas and innovation in the way culture can be imagined, produced, displayed, shared and experienced. New formats in live performances, virtual visits of museums, finer strategies to reach audiences and develop partnerships are just a few. Digital means have been an important part of this process but not only. Sustainability objectives are also maturing in a number of sectors, which need to be encouraged albeit ensuring they can benefit organisations of all sizes. **We call on the Commission and the Member States to provide sufficient financial support and to eliminate administrative barriers to innovation in the cultural and creative sectors with a view to contributing the sectors' sustainability and resilience.**

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