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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE  
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE  
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022**

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# REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION

## ON THE WORK PLAN FOR CULTURE 2019-2022

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 invited the Commission ‘to adopt (...) a final report on its implementation, based on voluntary written contributions from Member States, by June 2022. Based on this Report, the Presidency of the Council may consider whether to propose a new Work Plan for Culture for the subsequent period’<sup>1</sup>.

This report outlines the results achieved in implementing the work plan since January 2019 in terms of the priorities, working methods and actions, defined in the context of the coronavirus pandemic and the recovery process. The report also reflects on how to strengthen policymaking and cooperation on culture at EU level and makes suggestions for priorities to be addressed in a new work plan after 2022.

To prepare this report, the Commission conducted a survey seeking Member States’ views on the relevance and implementation of the 2019-2022 Work Plan for Culture (see Annex). Its assessment also draws on its work and regular exchanges with other EU institutions and dialogue with the cultural and creative sectors held in different fora.

This document focuses on the activities carried out under the 2019-2022 work plan. It is not an exhaustive analysis of all cultural policy actions developed at European level over these years.

### 2. CONTEXT

In recent years, EU policy action in the field of culture has been guided by the Commission’s European Agenda for Culture<sup>2</sup>, the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage<sup>3</sup>, which followed up on the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage<sup>4</sup>, the Joint Communication ‘Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations’<sup>5</sup>, and the multiannual Council Work Plans for Culture<sup>6</sup>.

Since early 2020, the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic on culture has exacerbated the challenges faced by the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the living and working conditions of artists and cultural professionals and the generation of income for the arts and culture. Public authorities have focused primarily on alleviating the impact of the crisis and on helping the sectors recover. Targeted measures have been taken at national and EU level<sup>7</sup>. In their cooperation on culture, Member States and the Commission have regularly monitored the support provided – a useful process led by the country holding the EU Presidency. The Commission has also launched the Creatives Unite<sup>8</sup> platform to gather information related to the cultural and creative sectors in the EU in response to the COVID-19 crisis. Following calls from the cultural and creative sectors for more EU-coordinated measures, the Commission issued EU guidelines on the safe resumption of cultural

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<sup>1</sup> [Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022](#)

<sup>2</sup> Communications from the Commission on a [European agenda for culture in a globalising world](#) and on a [New European Agenda for Culture](#)

<sup>3</sup> [European framework for action on cultural heritage](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Report: Assessment of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Joint communication towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations](#)

<sup>6</sup> Like the [Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2015-2018](#) which preceded the [current Work Plan](#).

<sup>7</sup> [Webpage: Coronavirus response in support of the cultural and creative sectors](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Webpage: Creatives Unite Platform](#)

activities in the cultural and creative sectors<sup>9</sup> in June 2021. The EU industrial strategy and its update<sup>10</sup> identified, among others, the cultural and creative industries ecosystem. This approach is key for the inclusive and sustainable recovery of the sectors and helps drive the twin transition of the EU economy as a whole, given its importance for other ecosystems (e.g. for the tourism ecosystem).<sup>11</sup> To lead the way out of the crisis, the Recovery and Resilience Facility was put in place and entered into force in February 2021. The cultural and creative sectors and industries benefit largely from support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility through direct measures in the national recovery and resilience plans, and indirectly through cross-cutting measures. The Commission mapped these investments and reforms planned and published a thematic fiche on culture and creative industries on the Recovery and Resilience Facility Scoreboard<sup>12</sup>. In addition, several of the EU programmes and funds under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027 have been adapted to provide more targeted support to the cultural and creative sectors in a recovery context, including an increased budget for the Creative Europe programme<sup>13</sup> and the ‘Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society’ cluster under Horizon Europe<sup>14</sup>. In November 2021, the Commission also launched CultureEU, the first interactive EU funding guide for culture<sup>15</sup>.

On EU institutional developments, the current Work Plan for Culture started almost in parallel with the European Council’s agreement on ‘A new strategic agenda 2019-2024’<sup>16</sup> and the new Commission’s mandate in December 2019, which set six overarching policy objectives. Policymaking and action in the field of culture in general has continued to focus and deliver on the objectives of the green and digital transition and has helped promote our European way of life. The COVID-19 crisis reconfirmed the relevance of these general priorities and has accelerated existing trends in culture, for instance the digital transformation as well as the attention paid to climate change and environmental degradation. It made visible culture’s invaluable role for people’s well-being and for improving social cohesion and transformation<sup>17</sup>.

Other major EU initiatives were launched in this new context. They either draw substantially on culture or shape cultural policymaking, such as the New European Bauhaus<sup>18</sup>, the 2022 European Year of Youth<sup>19</sup> or the European Skills Agenda<sup>20</sup>.

In the global context, culture as a policy field has gained visibility and recognition despite and even because of the COVID-19 crisis. For the first time, G20 leaders, in their Rome Declaration (October 2021)<sup>21</sup>, recalled the intrinsic value of culture and the role of culture in sustainable development and in boosting the resilience and regeneration of economies and societies. In addition, the December 2021 UN Resolution on Culture and Sustainable Development<sup>22</sup> reconfirmed the role of culture as a prerequisite for achieving the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and as a driver for their

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<sup>9</sup> [Communication from the Commission on EU guidelines for the safe resumption of activities in the cultural and creative sectors – COVID-19](#)

<sup>10</sup> [Website: European industrial strategy](#)

<sup>11</sup> The analysis of the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the cultural and creative industries, as well as of different risks and needs for their sustainable recovery have been assessed together with other industrial ecosystems in the [Annual Single Market Reports in 2021](#) and [2022](#)

<sup>12</sup> [RRF Scoreboard Thematic Analysis – Culture](#)

<sup>13</sup> [EU regulation 2021/818 establishing the Creative Europe Programme 2021-2027](#)

<sup>14</sup> [EU regulation 1295/2013 establishing Horizon Europe](#); [EU Council Decision establishing a Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe](#) (including an autonomous intervention area for Cultural Heritage, Cultural and Creative Industries)

<sup>15</sup> [Webpage: CulturEU Funding Guide](#)

<sup>16</sup> [EU’s strategic agenda for 2019-2024](#)

<sup>17</sup> Another important institutional development was the UK’s withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020, which has been affecting the cultural and creative sectors, industries and markets on both sides.

<sup>18</sup> [Webpage: New European Bauhaus](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Webpage: European Year of Youth 2022](#)

<sup>20</sup> [Webpage: European Skills Agenda](#)

<sup>21</sup> [G20 Rome Leaders’ Declaration](#)

<sup>22</sup> [Website: UN resolution on culture and sustainable development](#)

implementation. The process leading to Mondiacult 2022, the global UNESCO conference on culture and sustainable development planned for September 2022 in Mexico, is helping maintain momentum in this field.

Since February 2022, Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and its people has also become a matter of serious concern for policy cooperation on culture. The Russian invasion not only threatens the lives of artists and cultural professionals in Ukraine, it also results in severe damage to the country's wide range of rich and diverse heritage and cultural expressions, requiring a united and coordinated EU response. While meeting in Angers on 7-8 March 2022, the European ministers responsible for culture and media issued a declaration<sup>23</sup> expressing their solidarity and strong commitment to helping Ukraine overcome these challenges. The Commission has been mobilising its tools and instruments to support Ukrainian artists and culture professionals fleeing their country as well as the cultural organisations of the countries receiving Ukrainian refugees, and to support the protection of cultural heritage, e.g. through the Creative Europe programme or the EU Civil Protection Mechanism<sup>24</sup> (see "Creatives Unite" platform).

### **3. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORK PLAN: PRIORITY AREAS**

Since 2002, EU Member States have defined their priorities for cultural policy cooperation in multi-annual work plans adopted through Council conclusions. The Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (as amended in May 2020)<sup>25</sup> has been a key strategic instrument guiding policy cooperation at EU level. It defines **6 priority areas for action**<sup>26</sup> and **18 topics** with corresponding actions for the Member States, the Commission and the EU Presidency, starting in 2019.

The findings from the survey conducted by the Commission indicate that the Member States consider 'sustainability in cultural heritage', 'culture as a driver for sustainable development' and 'an ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content' to be the most relevant priorities for policymaking at EU level. At national level, 'cohesion and well-being' was also highlighted. Member States agree that cultural statistics are a key cross-cutting priority.

Overall, all work plan actions have been implemented as planned. Delivering this high number of planned outputs within a short timeframe and during COVID-19 is a remarkable achievement. In a few cases, the situation required adaptations of working formats or timeframes to minimise the impact on deliverables. Maintaining an interconnection between different deliverables along a rolling agenda (where e.g. an EU study is followed by an open method of coordination<sup>27</sup> - OMC - group and subsequent Council conclusions) required additional coordination efforts but has proven beneficial to policymaking coherence at EU level. The topics agreed upon in 2019 under the Austrian Presidency proved to be highly appropriate and remained relevant throughout the work plan duration – this view is shared by the Member States.

The following sections describe implementation of the work plan under each priority by assessing the work and outputs in relation to each of the 18 topics.

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<sup>23</sup> [Declaration of the European Ministers responsible for Culture, Audiovisual and Media, meeting in Angers on 7 and 8 March 2022](#)

<sup>24</sup> [EU Civil Protection Mechanism \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Council conclusions amending the Work Plan for Culture 2019–2022](#)

<sup>26</sup> A) Sustainability in cultural heritage; B) Cohesion and well-being; An ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content; C) Gender equality; D) International cultural relations; E) Cultural dimension of sustainable development. In addition, digitalisation and cultural statistics are defined as important cross-cutting issues.

<sup>27</sup> The open method of coordination is a form of intergovernmental policymaking that does not result in binding EU legislative measures and does not require EU countries to introduce or amend their laws.

### 3.1. Priority A: Sustainability in cultural heritage

#### Participatory governance of cultural heritage

A peer-learning project entitled ‘Cultural Heritage in Action’ began in 2019. Designed by the Commission and funded by Creative Europe, this project is managed by a consortium (Eurocities, KEA European Affairs, European Regions Research and Innovation Network, Europa Nostra and the Architects Council of Europe). It is one of the legacies of the 2018 European Year for Cultural Heritage, included in the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage.

The project allows over 100 local and regional policymakers to exchange knowledge on cultural heritage. It focuses on participatory governance, adaptive reuse and quality principles for interventions in cultural heritage. The consortium published 32 innovative practices in November 2020<sup>28</sup>. The project will continue sharing knowledge and exchanging experiences in a second phase until January 2023, focusing on three interlinked topics: 1) recovery and resilience through cultural heritage in a post-pandemic world; 2) more sustainable cultural heritage to tackle the climate crisis; 3) governance and financing: new roles for local and regional authorities. The project is highly appreciated by the local and regional policymakers taking part.

Under this topic, the Croatian Presidency organised a Presidency Conference in February 2020 in Dubrovnik entitled “Fostering European cooperation for cultural heritage at risk”<sup>29</sup>. Related Council conclusions on risk management in the area of cultural heritage were adopted in May 2020<sup>30</sup>.

#### Adaptation of cultural heritage to climate change

The OMC group on ‘Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change’ was chaired by Germany. The report, along with recommendations, will be finalised by July 2022. The main objectives were to identify and exchange good practices and innovative measures for the protection of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in relation to climate change. This includes examining the contribution that cultural heritage can make to mitigating and combating climate change in line with the European Green Deal’s goals.

The group’s work focused on examining current and emerging threats and impacts, discussing the appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures available as well as building resilience of cultural heritage assets in the face of a changing environment while avoiding maladaptation.

Despite the urgency, this topic is still in its infancy. The final report and recommendations of this group are a valuable contribution to the much-needed debate on this topic and to the planning of climate change-related measures in the field of cultural heritage at European and national level.

#### Quality principles for EU-funded interventions with potential impact on cultural heritage

In 2019, following the European Year of Cultural Heritage, the International Council on Monuments and Sites published the European quality principles document<sup>31</sup>. The Romanian Presidency organised the Presidency Conference ‘Quality principles for cultural heritage’ in April 2019 in Sighisoara. The European quality principles were further revised in November 2020. The peer-learning project ‘Cultural Heritage in Action’ also covered quality principles. The project identified good practices on the quality of interventions in cultural heritage, which have been included in the list of good practices.

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<sup>28</sup> [Webpage: Cultural Heritage in Action compilation of case studies](#) and [selected good practices of quality of interventions on cultural heritage](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Webpage: Presidency conference on Strengthening European Cooperation for Cultural Heritage at Risk](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Council conclusions on risk management in the area of cultural heritage](#)

<sup>31</sup> [ICOMOS Manual: European quality principles for EU-funded Interventions with impact upon Cultural Heritage](#)

### **Complementary funding for cultural heritage**

The Commission organised an online workshop on complementary funding for cultural heritage on 25-26 January 2021. Over 100 people attended, including representatives from 22 Member States. Presentations covered examples of public-private partnerships, crowdfunding and fundraising, lotteries, donations and mixed sources. Among the high-level speakers, the European Investment Bank focused on how to make cultural heritage attractive for private investors, while the European Cultural Foundation focused on the role of philanthropy and foundations. Two EU-funded projects also shared the results of their research and some case studies. The report<sup>32</sup> from this workshop, which gathers over 100 good practices, has been widely distributed. The Culture Council held a policy debate on the topic on 18 May 2021<sup>33</sup>.

## **3.2. Priority B: Cohesion and well-being**

### **Social cohesion**

The Commission organised an online workshop on culture for social cohesion on 26-27 November 2020. It replaced the OMC group previously planned to address this topic. The group could not be set up as planned because of a delay in the work of the previous 2017-2018 OMC on social inclusion (on which the new group would have built) and because of COVID-19 constraints. During the event, over 50 participants from 22 Member States discussed how to promote social cohesion through culture at local and regional levels and explored sustainable, replicable and inclusive models for cooperation between public authorities and cultural sector practitioners. Experts also exchanged views on the interplay between culture and ageing, culture and well-being, culture's role in preventing rural depopulation as well as in empowering people to re-enter the job market. The workshop's background papers and report were published<sup>34</sup>.

The exchanges on this topic continued as part of the Portuguese Presidency Conference 'Culture, Cohesion and Social Impact' on 5-6 May 2021 in Porto.

### **High-quality architecture and built environment**

The OMC group on this topic, chaired by Estonia, published its report 'Towards a shared culture of architecture – Investing in a high-quality living environment for everyone'<sup>35</sup> on 6 October 2021.

The report is based on a collection of case studies that were gathered from multiple governance levels across Europe and examined by the OMC group between 2020 and 2021. It includes best practice examples and policy recommendations on how to operationalise quality criteria for architecture and built environment. One of the conclusions is that 'high-quality design and well-considered interventions can sustain the life and authenticity of cultural assets and prevent the adverse loss of their cultural significance'.

In addition to the report, a toolkit (available in all official EU languages) has been created to help local and regional decision makers assess the quality of places and building projects. A final conference to present and discuss the work was held in Graz and Maribor on 6-8 October 2021. The report also informed the Council conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative<sup>36</sup>, which were adopted in December 2021.

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<sup>32</sup> [Workshop report: Complementary funding for cultural heritage](#)

<sup>33</sup> [Webpage: Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council, 17-18 May 2021](#)

<sup>34</sup> [Workshop report: Workshop on culture for social cohesion](#)

<sup>35</sup> [OMC report: Towards a shared culture of architecture](#)

<sup>36</sup> [Council conclusions on culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative](#)



### Understanding digital audiences

At the end of 2021, the Commission launched the expert work on this theme through the Voices of Culture platform<sup>37</sup>. It aims to explore the possibility of voluntary guidelines for collecting and managing data on digital audiences, with a special focus on performing arts (theatre, dance, live music), and cultural heritage (museums, galleries, historic buildings, heritage sites, intangible heritage events and activities). The experts made use of the lessons learned from COVID-19-related practices and discussed the opportunities and challenges for collecting and managing digital audience data in a report<sup>38</sup> to be delivered in mid-2022.

### Young creative generations

Following the Presidency Conference ‘Young creative generations’ organised by Romania in March 2019 in Bucharest, Council conclusions were adopted in May 2019<sup>39</sup>.

### Citizenship, values and democracy

The Finnish Presidency organised a Presidency Conference ‘Citizenship, values and democracy’ in July 2019 in Helsinki.

In December 2021, the Commission launched an independent study entitled ‘The importance of citizens’ participation in culture for civic engagement and democracy – policy lessons from international research’. It will summarise existing knowledge and evidence on this topic, distil key policy lessons and highlight examples of successful actions from several EU Member States. It is expected to be completed in November 2022.

## **3.3. Priority C: An ecosystem supporting artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content**

### Status and working conditions of artists

The Commission published a study on the status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals in December 2020<sup>40</sup>. The European Expert Network on Culture and Audiovisual compiled the study, in close collaboration with sectoral stakeholder organisations. It has been widely distributed, including via a presentation at the Intergovernmental Committee of the UNESCO 2005 Convention in February 2021. The Commission took the process further by launching a Voices of Culture dialogue on the same topic. The Brainstorming Report ‘Status & Working Conditions for Artists, Cultural and Creative Professionals’ was published in June 2021<sup>41</sup>.

The OMC group ‘Status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals’ started its work in September 2021, chaired by Austria and Ireland. Experts from both the Ministries of Culture and Employment/Social Affairs from all 27 EU Member States have been participating in the work. The group aims to address artists’ and creative professionals’ working conditions and to share good practices, also taking into account the wider ecosystem that supports artists, cultural and creative professionals and European content. Recommendations on these topics will be developed in the remaining group meetings. The group’s report is expected by mid-2023.

### Artistic freedom

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<sup>37</sup> [Webpage: Voices of Culture group on \(Re\)-Engaging digital audiences in the cultural sectors](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Voices of Culture report: \(Re\)-Engaging digital audiences in the cultural sectors](#)

<sup>39</sup> [Council conclusions on young creative generations](#)

<sup>40</sup> [Study: The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Voices of Culture report: Status and working conditions for artists, cultural and creative professionals](#)

The Commission organised an online workshop on artistic freedom on 21 October 2021, with around 60 participants from 20 Member States. It included speakers from international organisations (UN, UNESCO, Council of Europe), Member States (Sweden, Spain), civil society (Culture Action Europe, FreeMuse) and the University of Lodz, Poland. The three sessions focused on a) the current state of affairs on freedom of artistic expression in the EU; b) best practices for realising, promoting and protecting the freedom of artistic expression; and c) a legal framework to protect, promote and fulfil the freedom of artistic expression. The workshop's report was published and its proceedings will also inform work on the study on citizenship, values and democracy mentioned above.

### **Audiovisual co-productions**

The Romanian Presidency Conference 'Consolidation of European cooperation through co-productions' was organised in March 2019 in Bucharest<sup>42</sup>. It was followed by the adoption of Council conclusions on improving the cross-border circulation of European audiovisual works, with the emphasis on co-productions, in May 2019<sup>43</sup>.

The OMC group was chaired by the Netherlands, with Romania as vice-chair. Its report 'Co-productions that shine'<sup>44</sup> was published on 10 March 2022. Organisations such as the European Film Agency Directors Association, Cine-Regio, the European Audiovisual Observatory and Eurimages took part as observers. The group concluded that while all co-productions are driven by the objective of joining forces and collaborating, the status of 'official' co-production is key to opening the doors to public support. Co-productions travel better and reach wider audiences than purely national works, and in turn help boost the international careers of talents. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the nature of the audiovisual ecosystem and of co-productions, acting as the catalyser of trends and highlighting the importance of balanced relationships among the different players. Co-productions are an opportunity to rethink our way of working together to face the most pressing challenges of our time, which include the necessary greening of the audiovisual sector.

### **Music**

Romania organised a Presidency Conference 'Music Moves Europe – Opportunities and Challenges of the Music Sector in the Digital Era' in Bucharest in June 2019.

The 2019-2022 work plan included two workshops on music in 2020. These were merged into one major online conference that the Commission organised on 4-5 March 2021, entitled 'Music Moves Europe: Diversity and Competitiveness of the European Music Sector'. It brought together almost 100 participants – mainly experts from EU Member States and representatives of the music sector. Plenary discussions with external speakers included sessions on the impact of COVID-19, the role of music for social cohesion and well-being, music streaming and cultural diversity, and the Music Moves Europe initiative<sup>45</sup>. These four sessions were followed by a policy debate for Member State experts only. Results were summarised in a report that also informed a dedicated session at the Portuguese Presidency Conference about the launch of Creative Europe in June 2021.

### **Multilingualism and translation**

The OMC group was composed of literary translators, publishers, representatives of funding institutions or Ministries of Culture, and was chaired by France. The group published its report on 3 February 2022<sup>46</sup>. The work focused on the main challenges faced by translators, such as the low

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<sup>42</sup> [Webpage: Presidency conference on the consolidation of European cooperation through co-productions](#)

<sup>43</sup> [Council conclusions on improving the cross-border circulation of European audiovisual works, with an emphasis on co-productions](#)

<sup>44</sup> [OMC report: Co-productions that shine](#)

<sup>45</sup> [Music Moves Europe | Culture and Creativity \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>46</sup> [OMC report: Translators on the cover](#)

attractiveness of the profession (mainly due to poor pay and working conditions) and the market for translated works being a fragile economy, particularly for lesser-used languages. The group's report recommends measures to help make the translation profession more attractive, provide more training opportunities and allow the profession to negotiate better pay and working conditions. The report advocates more public funding to boost translation projects and fair pay through a broad approach covering the entire value chain – from authors to booksellers. Measures to promote reading should also have a strong European feel.

In February 2022, the French Presidency organised the 'Innovation, technologies et plurilinguisme' forum in Lille. Council conclusions on reinforcing intercultural exchanges through the mobility of artists and cultural and creative professionals, and through multilingualism in the digital era were adopted in April 2022<sup>47</sup>, also reflecting the OMC group's recommendations.

### **Financing and innovation in the cultural and creative sectors**

During its Presidency, Romania organised an informal meeting of culture ministers in Bucharest. This led to the adoption of the Bucharest Declaration of the Ministers of Culture and their representatives on the role of culture in building Europe's future on 16 April 2019<sup>48</sup>.

The two stocktaking seminars initially proposed to build on the work done under the previous Work Plan on this topic were merged into a single event 'Cultural and creative sectors ecosystems: Flipping the Odds'. This was organised jointly by the Commission and the Creative FLIP project in Brussels on 28-29 January 2020<sup>49</sup>. The event gathered nearly 250 cultural and creative sectors stakeholders from across Europe. It involved EU policymakers, Voices of Culture representatives and the European Creative Hubs Network. This led to synergies between projects and policymaking, and work across silos and disciplines. Participants also discussed how the recommendations of the previous OMC groups 'Access to Finance' and 'Public Policies for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in cultural and creative sectors' and the cross-cutting Council conclusions had been implemented and what still needed to be done. The resulting recommendations were summarised in a brochure that has been widely distributed<sup>50</sup>.

## **3.4. Priority D: Gender equality**

### **Gender equality**

The Commission launched an independent study on gender gaps in cultural and creative sectors, which was published in August 2019. An updated version was issued in September 2020<sup>51</sup>. The European Expert Network on Culture and Audiovisual compiled the study, in close collaboration with sectoral stakeholders. The report was presented to the Council's Cultural Affairs Committee in October 2020 and to the OMC group on gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors in September 2019. The report has been widely distributed. In addition, it informed events on gender equality organised by the German Presidency. A Voices of Culture dialogue meeting on gender equality was organised, with support from the Commission, on 4-5 September 2019 when the Voices of Culture report<sup>52</sup> was presented.

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<sup>47</sup> [Council conclusions on reinforcing intercultural exchanges through the mobility of artists and cultural and creative professionals, and through multilingualism in the digital era](#)

<sup>48</sup> [Bucharest Declaration of the Ministers of Culture on the role of culture in building Europe's future](#)

<sup>49</sup> [Webpage: Flipping the Odds conference on CCS ecosystems, financing, innovation, entrepreneurship and wider support](#)

<sup>50</sup> [Conference conclusions: Flipping the Odds – CCS ecosystems, financing, innovation, entrepreneurship and wider support](#)

<sup>51</sup> [Study: Gender gaps in the cultural and creative sectors](#)

<sup>52</sup> [Voices of Culture report: Gender balance in the cultural and creative sectors](#)

The OMC group on gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors', chaired by Austria, shared experiences in order to provide recommendations on how to close the gender gap in the cultural and creative sectors. Its report, issued in June 2021<sup>53</sup>, focuses on key challenges such as gender stereotypes, sexual harassment, access to the labour market and the gender pay gap, access to social benefits, access to resources, access to leadership positions and female entrepreneurship, data collection, gender equality in the workplace, gender budgeting and gender mainstreaming methodologies, as well as gender-sensitive language.

Results from the OMC group were first presented at the Portuguese Presidency Conference on social cohesion on 5-6 May 2021. It concurred with the Commission's adoption of the 2020-2025 Gender Equality Strategy. In December 2020, Germany adopted Presidency conclusions on gender equality in culture broadly reflecting the experts' recommendations. A stock-taking exercise was conducted in April 2022 to identify progress and areas for improvement.

Lessons learned during the OMC process fed into a forum on gender equality hosted by the French Presidency on 8-10 March 2022 in Angers, and organised as part of the 2022 France-Portugal season.

### **3.5. Priority E: International cultural relations**

#### **Strategic approach**

The Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action were adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 8 April 2019<sup>54</sup>. The conclusions recognise the need for a cross-cutting approach to culture, while aiming to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of EU foreign policy by integrating international cultural relations into its foreign policy instruments. They ask for better policy coordination among Commission Directorates-General, Member States and cultural organisations, including in the joint development of local strategies by EU Delegations, EU Member States and the Commission. Cultural cooperation has continued to promote common values and Europe's unique cultural diversity as a driver for the EU's global influence in the world in terms of fair, equal and long-term partnerships.

The Slovenian Presidency event 'Future Unlocked!' discussed cultural and creative sectors as agents of change. Organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 12-15 September 2021, the event merged the High-Level Conference on Culture in Foreign Relations, Creative Forum Ljubljana, the European Creative Industries Summit and a senior officials meeting on international cultural relations. The geographic scope also included the Western Balkans, the South Mediterranean and Africa.

### **3.6. Priority F: Culture as a driver for sustainable development**

#### **Cultural dimension of sustainable development**

The OMC group, co-chaired by Finland and Germany, has seen the participation of experts from national administrations, scientific experts, representatives from UNESCO and other external experts. Its report is expected in September 2022. The work was preceded by a Voices of Culture dialogue on the topic of culture and Sustainable Development Goals, organised with support from the Commission in February 2021. This resulted in a Voices of Culture report<sup>55</sup>.

The OMC group focused on three topics: 1) supporting and improving the integration of culture into national sustainable development strategies through voluntary national reviews; 2) UNESCO reporting tools, where culture stands out as a driver of Sustainable Development Goals; and 3) bottom-up projects led by stakeholders and networks where cultural key players work together for

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<sup>53</sup> [OMC report: Towards gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors](#)

<sup>54</sup> [Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action](#)

<sup>55</sup> [Voices of Culture report: Culture and the Sustainable Development Goals](#)

sustainability goals and produce positive results. Another important task for the group is to provide input on the Commission's planned report on culture and sustainable development, which is expected to be released in the second half of 2022, as well as inform the positions and recommendations that will be included in the final declaration of UNESCO's Mondiacult event in Mexico in September 2022. The work of this OMC group is also interconnected with the evolving need for increased integration of culture into strategic public policy planning given that the life systems of societies have been severely affected by both the pandemic, the climate crisis and environmental degradation.

### **3.7. Cultural statistics**

The regular production of reliable data on culture is essential for evidence-based policymaking. The work plan highlights cultural statistics as a cross-cutting priority to be considered accordingly. Eurostat provides harmonised data at EU level and updates its dedicated web section on cultural statistics when new data become available following relevant European surveys. In 2020-2021, Eurostat launched three questionnaires on the music, cultural heritage and book sectors for national statistical institutes. The aim was to gather alternative data sources at national level. Eurostat's Culture Statistics Working Group is regularly informed and consulted to help improve the quality of statistics on culture and develop them further.

In mid-2020, the Commission launched a call for proposals on 'Measuring the Cultural and Creative Sectors in the EU' to implement a pilot project proposed by the European Parliament in 2019. The aim is to create a framework for measuring these sectors and fill the data gaps at Eurostat level. The project is expected to finish in December 2022.

As a follow-up to the feasibility study for the establishment of a European music observatory<sup>56</sup> under the Music Moves Europe initiative, certain data-related activities have been integrated into the European Observatory on Infringement of Intellectual Property Rights. Other statistical work described in the study has been included in the 2022 specific sectoral call on music under Horizon Europe ('Towards a competitive, fair and sustainable European music ecosystem').

### **3.8. Digitisation**

The way in which the cultural and creative sectors and industries create, produce, curate and share content is increasingly digital, with tremendous opportunities for the sector to grow and experiment, rethink how to better engage with traditional and more difficult to reach audiences, and increase cultural participation. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this digital transformation. Moreover, the crisis made the existing challenges for a fair digital uptake even more visible. Some of the issues to be tackled to ensure that the digital transition benefits European cultural players and citizens include: (i) costs of access to technology; (ii) shortage of (digital and data management) skills; (iii) unfair sharing of revenues for digital uses; (iv) dependency on external platforms; (v) predominance of mainstream providers; (vi) promotion and preservation of cultural diversity; (vii) lack of infrastructure/services for certain sectors; and (viii) the digital divide. Some of these issues have been at the core of the Work Plan for Culture as well as part of the digital policy work of the Commission and the Member States within their respective competencies.

## **4. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORK PLAN: WORKING METHODS**

For all the actions envisaged, the work plan also identifies the working methods to be used. These include: OMC groups, conferences, peer-learning projects, studies, workshops, stocktaking seminars, expert groups, Council conclusions and informal meetings of culture ministers<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>56</sup> [Feasibility study for the establishment of a European Music Observatory](#)

<sup>57</sup> The work plan also lists dialogue with civil society, pilot projects, joint initiatives with international organisations and the European Culture Forum as working methods that can be applied, among others. The latter have however not been linked to the implementation of a work plan action.

The work plan listed eight OMC groups in total. However, the OMC group on social cohesion was converted into an online workshop. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, minor additional adaptations were needed, including rearrangements for some of the 10 planned conferences, for the workshops (two workshops were merged, four were delayed) and for the peer-learning activities (two were merged).

In their replies to the Commission survey, a large majority of Member States consider that the current working methods are appropriate for achieving the ambitions of the work plan. They consider the OMC groups to be the most appropriate working method, followed by workshops. Conferences, studies, stocktaking seminars and peer-learning were rated less popular. Given the advantages and limitations of each working method, a few suggestions were made for other working formats that could be added in the future (see section 6 of this report).

#### **4.1. Open method of coordination (OMC)**

The OMC, being a flexible and non-binding framework, continued to be a key working method in the work plan's implementation and facilitated structured cooperation between Member States. The work of each OMC group was aligned with a work plan priority. The novelty with this work plan was that the groups' mandates were prepared by the Commission and then agreed by the Council's Cultural Affairs Committee. This gave the groups a clear framework and focus. Member States have a positive view of this approach.

The OMC groups held an average of six formal meetings (most online), all organised by the Commission. Some of the groups held extra informal meetings and drafting sessions. Some of them also split into sub-groups to work on sub-topics. This working method involves between 25 and 50 experts per group, from around 23 Member States on average. The groups' work tends to last 1-2 years, including the time needed to finalise the report. One OMC report included, as a novelty, a web page with case studies, downloadable material and podcasts; however, this did increase the workload of the experts and the Commission.

Three out of seven OMCs involved partner countries such as Switzerland, Norway and Iceland. Member States consider this collaboration with non-EU countries in OMC groups to be useful, and also express being open to the Western Balkans participating in relevant topics.

According to the survey, Member States value the OMC highly as a working method, but also acknowledge the burden of the reporting demands for these groups. Member States rate the OMC reports and the meetings themselves as important. Yet these reports appear to have only a limited direct influence on policymaking and stakeholder practices. The survey also indicates that the vast majority of Member States did not use more than 5 out of the 10 OMC reports (listed) for policymaking at national, regional or local level. Nevertheless, Member States also reported several concrete examples of OMC reports having an influence on policymaking at national level, such as in developing strategies and reforms or forming new organisations.

#### **4.2. Distribution and communication of work plan outputs**

According to the survey, the majority of Member States do not see a need for the work plan to specify distribution activities that would be binding. A range of activities have already been developed, such as the translation of reports, publication of information on government websites and platforms, conferences, discussions and workshops that feed public debate on the topics related to the work plan deliverables.

Experience shows that there is a lot of work and expertise invested in implementing other work plan actions. To increase the impact of this work on policymaking and stakeholder practices, it would appear most useful to increase the **distribution** and **communication** of OMC results and other work plan outputs in the Member States in a targeted and intelligent manner. This should include all administrative levels, stakeholder organisations, professional associations, the press, etc. To this end, OMC and other work plan deliverables should be of a high standard and suitable for policymakers. Although rich in content, reports can be complex, long and difficult to operationalise. To maximise

their potential, they must present clear and concrete policy recommendations supported by relevant evidence. They must be concise and written in a jargon-free, non-academic language that non-specialists can understand and act upon. Shorter, more targeted reports, including summaries with key findings, should be encouraged. This would also help speed up translation and communication processes.

### 4.3. Cultural stakeholders

Cultural organisations and stakeholders have been involved more closely than before in implementing the Work Plan for Culture, particularly in light of the pandemic. This has led to more events and discussions taking place online and has also made the cultural and creative sectors act jointly at EU level and speak with one voice to address the sectors' needs (e.g. joint public statements). Stakeholder involvement has also been described in other parts of this document.

In line with the New European Agenda for Culture, the Commission has further strengthened its structured dialogue with civil society on culture. It launched a new series of Voices of Culture from 2019-2022 on topical themes, also aligned with the work plan priorities. These covered: the role of culture in non-urban areas of the EU<sup>58</sup>; gender balance in cultural and creative sectors (linking to the OMC); culture and sustainable development goals (linking to the OMC); status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals (linking to the OMC); international cultural relations (contributing to the discussion of the senior officials meeting under the French Presidency)<sup>59</sup>. Synergies have been improved, including meetings that bring OMC and Voices of Culture participants together to share their outputs and reports.

In addition, the Commission has developed further targeted sectoral dialogues on culture, in particular on cultural heritage (Cultural Heritage Expert Group) and music (Music Moves Europe). Also, under the EU Pact for skills<sup>60</sup> and in line with EU industrial strategy, the Commission mobilised stakeholders to set-up a large-scale skills partnership in the cultural and creative industries ecosystem<sup>61</sup>.

There is still room for greater engagement between stakeholders and civil society and for improving delivery of the work plan, as also expressed by Member States in the survey.

## 5. ASSESSMENT OF THE WORK PLAN: POLICY OUTPUTS

In addition to the priorities for culture set by each EU Presidency, the Work Plan for Culture already planned to adopt several (possible) Council conclusions from the outset, with prior technical work – OMC groups, studies and workshops (dynamic rolling agenda). Member States, in their replies to the survey, considered this link between the outputs of the work plan and the work of the rotating presidencies useful. Linking the expert and academic work to tangible policy outputs has proven to be beneficial in tackling key priorities, and this should be strengthened in the future. This led to the following Council conclusions:

- **Young creative generations**, adopted in May 2019 under the Romanian Presidency;
- **Improving the cross-border circulation of European audiovisual works**, adopted in May 2019 under the Romanian Presidency;
- **Risk management in the area of cultural heritage**, adopted in May 2020 under the Croatian Presidency;

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<sup>58</sup> [Voices of Culture report: The role of culture in non-urban areas of the European Union](#)

<sup>59</sup> [Voices of Culture report: International Cultural Relations](#)

<sup>60</sup> [Webpage: Pact for Skills – Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion](#)

<sup>61</sup> This partnership will contribute to, and complement, the [support already available to the industry](#) for reskilling and upskilling, including through several EU funding instruments and through the Creative Europe Programme

- **Gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors**, adopted in December 2020 under the German Presidency (Presidency conclusions)<sup>62</sup>;
- **Culture, high-quality architecture and built environment as key elements of the New European Bauhaus initiative**, adopted in December 2021 under the Slovenian Presidency;
- **Reinforcing intercultural exchanges through the mobility of artists and cultural and creative professionals, and through multilingualism in the digital era**, adopted in April 2022 under the French Presidency.

In addition, new issues with major relevance for cultural policymaking and affecting the cultural and creative sectors in Europe (e.g. the devastating earthquake in Zagreb in March 2020, the rising momentum of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the COVID-19 pandemic and recovery process) have led the respective presidencies to work on policy responses and outputs in the following fields:

- **The cultural dimension of sustainable development**, adopted in November 2019 under the Finnish Presidency (Council Resolution)<sup>63</sup>;
- **Amendment of the Work Plan for Culture (2019-2022)**, adopted in May 2020 under the Croatian Presidency;
- **The recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors**, adopted in May 2021 under the Portuguese Presidency<sup>64</sup>.

A range of high-level events have been launched by the presidencies relating to work plan priorities and driving the policy agenda; however, they are not listed in the work plan. These include:

- Informal meetings of culture ministers to protect Europe's common cultural heritage, address the consequences of COVID-19 and the impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine;
- Senior officials meetings in the field of international cultural relations organised by/in cooperation with the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in September 2020, September 2021 and in April 2022;
- Presidency conferences and events, e.g. on cultural heritage protection and multilateralism in November 2020; on cultural democracy in April 2021; on risks faced by heritage, museums, archives and architecture in March 2022.

The plethora of policy outputs produced under this – and also previous – Work Plans for Culture points to the need to take stock and assess progress made on the follow-up to the findings, recommendations and invitations in national and European policymaking.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS: REFLECTIONS ON AN IMPROVED FRAMEWORK AND NEW PRIORITIES**

The coronavirus pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine have sent shock waves through our societies. They have had a profound impact on culture, the cultural and creative sectors and the lives and working conditions of artists and cultural professionals. The COVID-19 crisis has also made it clear how invaluable culture is for Europe and for the resilience of societies and people's well-being; the situation in Ukraine also shows how essential culture is to expressing our European values. Globally speaking, the systemic importance of culture and the cultural and creative sectors as positive enactors for sustainable societal transformation has been confirmed. In the meantime, past important challenges for culture remain, such as climate change, digitisation or working conditions.

The new phase of EU cooperation on culture from 2022 onwards should be seen in light of these developments and should reflect the increased focus on culture for human resilience and collective sustainability. Alongside a new Work Plan for Culture, a more integrated EU framework for cooperation on culture might therefore enable Member States and the Commission to react to existing and new challenges in a concerted manner. This would improve cooperation on culture, while fully

<sup>62</sup> [Presidency conclusions on gender equality in the field of culture](#)

<sup>63</sup> [Council resolution on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development](#)

<sup>64</sup> [Council conclusions on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors](#)



respecting subsidiarity and national/regional diversity. It would create consistency between multiple cultural policy tools, while ensuring synergies with major initiatives as well as coherence with EU funds and programmes. This approach would improve the accessibility to and the visibility, effect and EU added value of cultural policymaking at EU level, bringing benefits that are more tangible for the cultural and creative sectors.

In 2020, the European Court of Auditors' special report<sup>65</sup> recommended 'to improve the current EU strategic framework for culture, including strategic and operational objectives' – a viewpoint broadly shared by the Council in its subsequent conclusions<sup>66</sup>. The need for increased coordination of EU policymaking and support to culture, cultural heritage and the cultural and creative sectors was also echoed by the European Parliament in its resolution on the cultural recovery of Europe<sup>67</sup>. A transversal and overarching framework for reviving and reimagining Europe through culture has also become a recurrent plea from civil society<sup>68</sup>. In the survey for this report, several Member States expressed clear support for strengthening the EU cultural policy framework, while others remained more cautious.

Among the priorities of the current Work Plan for Culture, the relationship between culture and sustainability values keeps its full relevance for the future, both in the broader sense of sustainable development and focused on specific themes like climate change (incl. the greening of the cultural sector) and well-being. The Communication on the New European Bauhaus<sup>69</sup> highlights the fundamental role of culture to address sustainability challenges and support positive societal transformation. A continued focus on climate change and the environment is needed to address and mitigate the major risks and challenges for cultural and natural heritage, on the one side, and to build on the role of culture and the arts to accompany the behavioural and mental adaptations to climate change and environmental degradation (such as the capacity of art and design to redefine human interaction with nature), on the other.

The recovery and resilience of the cultural and creative sectors and industries post-COVID remains of vital importance and should be prioritised. This could be linked with the implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility in Member States and the opportunity it creates for sharing best practices and identifying common obstacles. The focus needs to go beyond resilience (i.e. adaptability to shocks) towards empowering the sectors to be better prepared for future challenges. The effects of the digital transformation on cultural and artistic diversity – business models, relationships with audiences and the shift in conception, production and consumption modes – also remain relevant.

The status, working and social conditions as well as the resilience of cultural and creative professionals clearly continue to be major issues for EU cooperation for the years to come. Artists' working conditions have dramatically worsened due to the COVID-19 crisis. Member States have been paying increasing attention to this topic, including in their discussions at EU level. The European Parliament, in its resolution of October 2021, called on the Commission 'to propose a European Status of the Artist, setting out a common framework for working conditions and minimum standards common to all EU countries'<sup>70</sup>. The Commission supports ambitions in this field.

Moreover, in light of the lessons learned from the crisis, a renewed focus should be put on the work done to strengthen social cohesion as well as broaden access to culture. For instance, the impact of culture and the arts on well-being and mental health, access to culture and creativity by people with disabilities (as spectators, and also as artists and creators) and the persisting rural-urban asymmetries

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<sup>65</sup> [European Court of Auditors' special report 08/2020 on EU investments in cultural sites](#)

<sup>66</sup> [Council conclusions on European Court of Auditors' Special Report 08/2020](#)

<sup>67</sup> [European Parliament resolution on the cultural recovery of Europe](#)

<sup>68</sup> For example: Culture Action Europe, European Cultural Foundation and Europa Nostra: A Cultural Deal for Europe (2020); [#CulturalDealEU Campaign](#)

<sup>69</sup> [Communication from the Commission on the New European Bauhaus](#)

<sup>70</sup> [European Parliament resolution on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU](#)

in access to culture are topical issues that have not yet been sufficiently addressed in the EU culture policy discussion. Similarly, promoting inclusion and non-discrimination and combating racism through culture would be a topic of interest, especially taking into account the recommendations of the European Parliament resolution of 8 March 2022 on ‘The role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism’<sup>71</sup>. The advances made in gender equality in the sectors can now take further steps by focusing on gender-sensitive data collection – one of the key recommendations from the OMC.

An important topic that needs further coordination is the illicit trade in cultural goods. As announced in the EU strategy against organised crime, the Commission will propose an action plan to combat illicit trade in cultural goods by the end of 2022. Opportunities to exchange good practices and peer learning between different Member States in this field are considered beneficial. Another priority to develop further is the strategic approach to EU international cultural relations, which deserves more focus, especially given the diversity of bodies involved in this policy field and the need for concerted efforts, in particular the mainstreaming of culture into other policies and programmes. The relationship between culture, democracy, cultural rights and the link with education is also high on most Member States’ agendas.

The working methods in the work plan should evolve in the future, including planning and implementing actions based on the rolling agenda. Certain working methods, including the culture OMC, could be revisited to make them procedurally lighter and more effective. Leaner processes with fewer reporting demands, such as more experimental and pilot-type actions, as well as shorter targeted working groups could be considered. More expert work as well as informal meetings of the Cultural Affairs Committee, think-tank meetings or joint meetings of Council preparatory bodies would also allow for more in-depth exchange on important issues. New working methods, as proposed by Member States, e.g. meetings of directors-general for culture, could also improve the policy uptake of outputs at national levels. A greater focus on sector-specific challenges with corresponding work structures, bringing together experts from European and national levels and the culture sector, should be supported. The next work plan could also be explicit on the participation of non-EU countries in the implementation of actions.

A new phase of cooperation on culture at EU level is also an opportunity to ensure greater direct engagement with the cultural and creative sectors. A new EU framework for cooperation on culture, within its principles, could establish more structured and inclusive cooperation between public authorities and the cultural and creative sectors at EU level, building on the dialogue formats set up by the Commission.

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ANNEX: Survey on the implementation of the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 – Analysis of replies from EU Member States

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<sup>71</sup> [European Parliament resolution on the role of culture, education, media and sport in the fight against racism](#)