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Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

**establishing the 'AgoraEU' programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing
Regulations (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/818**

{SEC(2025) 547 final} - {SWD(2025) 550 final} - {SWD(2025) 551 final}

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSAL

• Reasons for and objectives of the proposal

The EU is a community of values ingrained in Europe's history and identity and anchored in the EU Treaty. As set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), these are common to all Member States and encompass democracy, respect for human rights, non-discrimination, equality, the rule of law, and pluralism, with cultural diversity, freedom of expression, including media and artistic freedom and pluralism, also being enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.

Citizens' participation and engagement, transparency and accountability in decision-making, as well as respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law contribute to the vitality of European democracy. Media plays a crucial role in fostering public opinion and free debate. Audiovisual content and all other forms of artistic, cultural and creative expressions, including cultural heritage, are essential to Europe's diversity and to forging societal resilience and mutual understanding. Beyond their intrinsic value and social impact, they are powerful drivers of sustainable economic growth and competitiveness, innovation and employment, and soft power, making them essential to Europe's future.

The importance of an EU financial intervention in these areas lies in their ability to foster inclusive and participatory governance, facilitate informed and active citizenship, safeguard and promote fundamental rights, promote equality and non-discrimination, and celebrate cultural diversity and all types of artistic expressions. Europe's thriving creative and media sectors, its audiovisual industry and the richness of its cultures and heritage are central to its identity. However, these policy areas face serious challenges that require a holistic Union response.

Union values are the object of internal and external pressures, such as challenges to the rule of law, inequalities, discrimination, violations of fundamental rights, declining trust in democratic institutions as well as weakened confidence in democratic processes. Structural inequalities persist as well as violence and discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, often shown in racism and other forms of intolerance. Meanwhile, the traditional role of independent civil society organisations in counterbalancing these trends is challenged by a weakening of financial and political support.

The European media industries are a beacon of quality and creativity, but today they compete with global online platforms for the attention of citizens and consumers. Circulation of EU audiovisual content continues to be fragmented along national lines, and non-EU players capture most of the box office and streaming subscriptions. While the video game industry has gained a strong foothold in contemporary digital culture (more than half of the EU population regularly plays video games), the Union's video game market continues to be largely dominated by global competitors. Finally, the integrity of the information space is at risk through the spread of disinformation and the growth of foreign information manipulation and interference by hostile actors, such as Russia. Threats against media pluralism are compounded by phenomena such as concentration of media ownership. In parallel, news media experience declining advertising revenues and sales, as digital competitors have captured an increasing share of revenue and shaped consumption habits. As a result of all these factors, media viability is under pressure.

Culture and the cultural and creative sectors and industries in the Union are fragmented as well along national and linguistic lines, reflecting our rich diversity. This limits transnational artistic collaboration, audience reach, the development of innovative practices, as well as the sectors' resilience and potential for competitiveness, and strengthening societal wellbeing. Culture and creative sectors' professionals struggle to work across borders and to access new opportunities and markets, which exacerbates geographical imbalances and reduces the circulation of European cultural works. The limited cross-border mobility and cooperation hinders networking, economies of scale, pooling expertise, and co-creation, all that is crucial for sustaining careers and strong culture and creative sectors. Meanwhile, Europe's rich cultural heritage faces threats from a combination of budgetary constraints, vulnerability to pollution, climate change and natural disasters, as well as misappropriation or destruction.

Finally, societal, creative, cultural and media sectors experience common technological dependencies and could benefit from common activities. They are impacted by financial weaknesses, obstacles to accessing finance, difficulties in using and uptaking applied innovation, lack of adaptation to new sets of skills and digital transformation. Meanwhile, non-EU tech giants increasingly influence the civic, media, and cultural landscape, shaping content consumption through algorithmic recommendations, automated distribution and AI-generated content.

These are challenges of a transnational nature that cannot be effectively addressed without joint EU-level solutions, coordination, steering and support. EU actions can help enable cooperation, capacity building, and mutual learning, as well as optimise and combine the potential of these sectors to contribute to economic growth, societal development and cultural diversity.

EU support to address challenges affecting culture, media, and equality, citizens, rights and Union values has been provided through different funding programmes over the years. In the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), support to culture, the cultural and creative sectors and the audiovisual industries was addressed by **Creative Europe**, with the objectives of safeguarding, developing and promoting European cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage and contributing to the competitiveness of these sectors, notably the audiovisual sector. Meanwhile, the promotion and protection of rights and Union values as enshrined in the Treaties, the Charter and the applicable international human rights convention were primarily the object of the **Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV)** programme. CERV has supported civil society organisations working at European, national, regional and local levels, including grassroots, in their work to protect and promote Union values. The Union support in some areas, such as news media and countering disinformation, was fragmented across different programmes. The cross-sectoral strand of Creative Europe included specific actions on media pluralism, literacy, and media collaborations, while the **Multimedia actions** line supported the provision of information on EU topics. Tackling disinformation has so far been funded through **Digital Europe**.

The 2028-2034 MFF proposal aims at addressing 'complexities, weaknesses and rigidities' currently present in the EU's budget, and provides a framework that is more focused, simpler, with fewer and more impactful programmes. For this reason, and to increase the budget's flexibility and ability to respond to changing realities and emerging problems, this proposal seeks to streamline the EU intervention in the areas of culture, media and equality, citizens, rights and values, exploiting connections and synergies where relevant, while respecting the singularity and specific needs of each of these policy areas.

In the area of equality, citizens, rights and values, the proposal will contribute to upholding democracy and the rule of law, fundamental rights and equality, reducing discrimination and

empowering civil society. The new Programme will contribute as well to fighting against gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk. In addition, it will contribute to enhancing democratic resilience and participation.

Media is a driver of democratic values, cultural diversity and economic growth. The media sector encompasses inter alia content such as films, series, video games, news and information, immersive reality and multimedia, as well as services including theatrical exhibition, television and radio broadcasting, print and online publishing, online videos and podcasts. To be socially relevant, the audiovisual and media industries need to be resilient and competitive. The proposal will support a free, competitive and diverse media and audiovisual space. It will on one hand enhance the production, circulation, IP exploitation and consumption of audiovisual works and other forms of media content, such as gaming. On the other hand, it will contribute to protecting the viability and pluralism of the information market, notably by supporting news media and media independence including at regional and local levels. It will also contribute to tackling disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference.

Culture and the cultural and creative sectors are great assets for Europe, projecting the image of a dynamic continent on the world stage. Encompassing inter alia performing arts, literature and book publishing, music and visual arts, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts and design, they produce meanings on various mediums and through multiple formats. The EU intervention in the field of culture will contribute to increasing cross-border cultural creation and cooperation, cultural participation and accessibility to a diversity of European cultural expressions and to protecting and preserving cultural heritage. The proposal will also help increase the circulation of a diversity of cultural works and the mobility of professionals, as well as promote inclusiveness and intergenerational fairness through culture. Finally, it will strengthen the social, economic and external dimensions of the cultural and creative sectors.

Finally, the EU should promote synergies among the media, culture, and civic spheres, bringing together public and private entities as well as promoting cross-sectoral cooperation, and innovation, to address common challenges and contribute to societal resilience and democratic participation.

On this basis, the EU financing intervention will be best equipped to enhance and scale up existing successful schemes, to better address transnational challenges, and to fill gaps impossible to address at Member States level. It will also provide wider coherence and better alignment between regulatory policy and funding instruments, as well as between internal and external policies. Therefore, the proposal will contribute to reinforcing Europe's societies, media and culture, and foster Union values and democratic participation and help unlock the full potential of the Union as a source of progress, sustainable development and growth.

The policy areas covered by this legal proposal are firmly anchored in the EU Treaties, which provide the legal bases for EU action through Union funding programmes, and they contribute to the Union's long-term objectives. The proposal provides for a date of application as of 1 January 2028.

- **Consistency with existing policy provisions in the policy area**

Fundamental rights, EU values and democracy

The proposal is fully in line with the **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**, and all relevant EU policy and legislative frameworks in the field of equality and non-discrimination. It also contributes to the **Union of Equality strategy**. A core ambition of the

European Union is to ensure, through a multi stakeholder and intersectoral approach, that all people, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion or belief, can live free from discrimination and participate fully in society.

The European Union's commitment to equality is anchored in numerous key communications and action plans. The European Commission's 2020 Strategy for the Equality of LGBTIQ People and the 2021 Gender Equality Strategy underscore the EU's dedication to tackling discrimination and promoting equality across all aspects of society. Both strategies will be renewed, as the current ones end in 2025. These are complemented by the upcoming EU Anti-Racism Strategy 2026-2030, the EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation (2020–2030), the Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2021–2030), and the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, the EU Strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life (2021-2030) and the work strand on combatting anti-Muslim hatred. The upcoming Intergenerational Fairness Strategy is also of relevance in this context.

The first EU comprehensive framework on democracy has been developed through the 2020 European Democracy Action Plan, the 2021 package of measures to reinforce democracy and protect the integrity of elections and the 2023 Defence of Democracy Package in synergy with the External Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2027. The most recent legislation in this context includes the Regulation on transparency of political advertising, and the EU law protecting persons who engage in public participation from manifestly unfounded claims or abusive court proceedings ('strategic lawsuits against public participation').

The upcoming **European Democracy Shield** will seek to further protect and strengthen democracy and democratic resilience. It will seek to address the increasing threats to democratic institutions, systems and processes within the EU and to enhance citizens' trust and participation in democracy. The upcoming **EU Civil Society Strategy** will seek to further protect and empower civil society, sending a strong signal of recognition to the work carried out by civil society and their contribution to EU policies.

Media and audiovisual

This legal proposal also builds upon the EU media and audiovisual framework, where regulation, funding and policy effectively support each other, thereby facilitating democratic debate, enriching our culture, and driving the digital transformation with competitive EU media players.

It will accompany EU single market policies in the audiovisual and media sectors, and its design will complement and reinforce existing legislative instruments. The **Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD)** has laid down a common regulatory framework for audiovisual media services across the EU, including provisions such as the promotion of European and independent works, protection of minors, and regulation of audiovisual advertising. Together with AVMSD, the proposed Programme will strengthen the capacity of European audiovisual players to finance, produce and disseminate works that can be sufficiently visible on the different media available and are attractive to audiences in an increasingly open and competitive market within Europe and beyond.

The recently adopted **European Media Freedom Act (EMFA)** provides safeguards for media freedom and pluralism, including protections against political interference, enhanced transparency of media ownership, and obligations on the independence of public service media. The proposed Programme will complement EMFA by providing financial support to news media outlets and strengthening editorial independence.

It will also build on the Code of conduct on countering hate speech online, the **2018 Action Plan against disinformation**, and the **Code of Conduct on Disinformation** recently integrated within the co-regulatory framework of the **Digital Services Act (DSA)**, by enhancing media literacy and reinforcing situation awareness on the online information space across Member States.

Culture

Concerning culture, cultural heritage and the cultural and creative sectors, the initiative will accompany the upcoming **Culture Compass for Europe**, which is intended as a strategic policy approach aiming to embed culture and the CCS in the Union's overarching policy goals and to guide and harness their multiple dimensions.

The initiative builds on several key policy initiatives, including the **European Agenda for Culture**, the **Council's Work Plans for Culture**, the **EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations**, and the **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage**, which all plea for a stronger role for culture and the CCS in the further social, economic and international development of our Union. It aligns with European initiatives such as the **New European Bauhaus**, the **European Capitals of Culture** action and the **European Heritage Label** action. It is also in line with the Rome Declaration of March 2017, where the Member States and EU institutions envisioned a Union "where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development and economic growth [...]; a Union which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity".

Furthermore, it is consistent with the Commission Communication on Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture, which states that it is in the shared interest of all Member States "to harness the full potential of education and culture as drivers for jobs, economic growth, social fairness, active citizenship as well as a means to experience European identity in all its diversity". The initiative is also in line with the **2005 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions**, to which the Union and its Member States are parties.

Finally, the initiative is to be seen in the context of the upcoming EU Strategy on sustainable Tourism, aiming among others to support visitors in discovering lesser-known cultural routes and heritage sites across Europe, thus fostering economic development and promoting local jobs.

- **Consistency with other Union policies**

The initiative is aligned with the overarching Commission's 2024-2029 policy priorities, namely in terms of 1) Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model; 2) Protecting our democracy, upholding our values; 3) Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness; and 4) a global Europe.

Consistency with policies supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model

In the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2034), synergies will be fostered between media, culture, equality, rights and values initiatives and the future intervention in the fields of skills, education, social inclusion, solidarity, intergenerational fairness, youth and social and territorial cohesion. These synergies, such as in media literacy, digital skills, civic engagement and civic education and skills development and inclusion through creativity and the arts will be promoted in line with the objectives of the European Youth Strategy and the EU Citizenship Report. The initiative may also seek synergies and

complementarities with future interventions under shared management aimed at strengthening social and territorial cohesion within the EU.

The initiative complements some initiatives promoting the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights, including through employment and social policies, as well as of the European Child Guarantee. This includes promoting equal access to rights and fostering diversity, including at the regional and local level, as means to support social inclusion and fair labour markets, and to tackle child poverty. As key actors in shaping public discourse and fostering democratic engagement, culture and media are central to building inclusive, resilient societies. In the context of the **Union of Skills**, the initiative will actively contribute to the upskilling and reskilling of professionals in the cultural and creative industries (CCIs), supporting their adaptability in the face of digital and green transitions and labour market shifts. Furthermore, by reinforcing the competitiveness of cultural and creative sectors, the Programme favours the creation of jobs in these sectors. At the same time, the initiative will enhance capacity-building for civil society organisations (CSOs) working in the field of equality, rights and values.

In light of increasing risks linked to natural hazards, health emergencies, technological accidents, evolving security threats, and other disruptions, this initiative will enhance the resilience of vital societal functions, and build a more resilient, secure, and prepared Union, in line with the objectives of the **EU Preparedness Union Strategy**.

Consistency with justice policies

The alignment between justice policies and the rule of law creates a robust framework that ensures accountability, promotes legal coherence across and within Member States, and protects fundamental rights, thereby enhancing trust and cooperation within the Union. The relationship between fundamental rights and justice policies is key in shaping fair and equitable societies. Fundamental rights – ranging from the right to a fair trial, freedom from discrimination to the protection of privacy – define the essential standards that justice systems must uphold, and translate abstract principles into concrete legal measures and practices. For instance, anti-discrimination laws enforce the principle of equality before the law.

Thus, the synergy between fundamental rights and justice policies ensures that legal systems not only prevent abuses but also actively promote dignity, equality, and freedom. This synergy is essential for building public trust in legal institutions, fostering social cohesion, and ultimately ensuring that justice is accessible and meaningful for all individuals. To this end, in the context of the Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2034), synergies will be fostered between this Programme and the future Justice programme.

Consistency with policies for the Single Market and competitiveness

By contributing to the competitiveness of media, audiovisual and the cultural and creative sectors, the initiative will complement the EU policy framework on industrial policy and economic competitiveness. Notably, it builds on the 2024 Single Market and Competitiveness Report, which adopts an ecosystem-based approach to strengthen the resilience and strategic autonomy of key industrial sectors, including cultural and creative industries. It also reflects the objectives of the Competitiveness Compass, which sets out clear benchmarks to improve the EU's long-term productivity and resilience and promote innovation.

In addition, the initiative relates to the 2020 Commission Communication “An SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe”, which aims to unleash the power of Europe's SMEs to lead the twin transitions, based on three pillars: capacity-building and support; reducing regulatory burden and improving market access; and improving access to financing. The

initiative also contributes to the European Commission's new Savings and Investments Union Strategy, which aims to enhance financial opportunities for businesses.

Research and innovation are essential to developing inclusive, rights-based cultural, creative, and media systems. The initiative will strengthen synergies with the future Framework Programme for research and innovation and the future European Competitiveness Fund. The latter includes support for multidisciplinary research on a variety of topics, including democracy, values, equality, and disinformation, but also on digital and industrial topics closely linked to the culture and creative sectors and cultural heritage. Synergies and complementarities will need to be strengthened to reinforce the European research ecosystem, so that the cultural and creative sectors and civil society fully benefit from the advances of European research and innovation areas. The Programme will thus contribute to the take-up of the results of research and innovation actions funded under the Research Framework Programme.

Moreover, the proposal contributes to addressing Europe's digital transformation, in line with the objectives of the Digital Decade 2030. It will complement it by supporting actions that promote digital preparedness, skills development and applied innovation in the societal, culture and media sectors, such as the AI Continent Action Plan and the Apply AI strategy. It will also accompany existing regulation, such as the Digital Services Act, the Digital Markets Act and the AI Act by increasing the audiovisual and media content access, strengthening media literacy, encouraging fair competition and platform-neutral access to audiences. Cross-border collaborations and availability of audiovisual content would also strengthen interoperability of digital products.

Consistency with policies for a global Europe

The proposed Programme will, once adopted, complement actions financed through the Union's external actions. For instance, by promoting cultural exchanges and supporting Union creative industries, media and audiovisual content globally including through international collaborations, it will open new markets, attract global talent, enhance the EU's influence and attractiveness on the world stage. The future intervention will include participation of third countries in the Programme and support for international collaborations, allowing for synergies with EU's policies on external action.

2. LEGAL BASIS, SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY

• Legal basis

The proposal is based on Articles 19(2), 21(2), 24, 167(5), 168(5) and 173(3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), to achieve the Programme's general objectives in a comprehensive way.

Article 19(2) TFEU provides for the adoption of incentive measures to support Member State action in combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation.

Democratic engagement, civic participation and the fostering of civil society are essential building blocks of the notion of Union citizenship. They constitute crucial factors and facilitators of the right to move and reside freely in the Union.

Article 21(2) TFEU provides for Union measures to facilitate the exercise of citizens' rights to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States. Actions to inform citizens and authorities about citizens voting rights when residing in another Member State can also be

covered by this Article, since in practice they also facilitate the exercise of a citizen's right to move and reside freely.

Article 24 TFEU obliges the European Parliament and the Council to adopt provisions for the procedures and conditions required for a citizens' initiative within the meaning of Article 11 TEU. This has been done by adopting Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹. The Programme should support the financing of technical and organisational support for the implementation of that Regulation, thereby underpinning the exercise by citizens of the right to launch and support European citizens' initiatives. Together with the other rights set out in Article 24 TFEU, that right ensures citizens' direct participation in the democratic life of the Union.

Article 167(5) TFEU tasks the Union to adopt incentive measures to contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and by bringing forward the common cultural heritage. The actions by the Union shall encourage co-operation between Member States and supplement their actions in areas such as improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples and conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance.

Article 168(5) TFEU provides a legal basis for the adoption of incentive measures designed to protect and improve human health. Violence, including against children and women, constitutes a danger to physical and mental health. Children are vulnerable citizens and need an increased level of protection against these dangers, which often include cross border threats. Violence against women also constitutes a serious threat to the physical and mental health of victims, who are in need of a high level of protection.

Article 173(3) TFEU states that the Union may decide on specific measures in support of action taken in the Member States to ensure that the conditions necessary for the competitiveness of the Union's industry exist, including taking action to encourage an environment favourable to initiative and to the development of undertakings.

- **Subsidiarity (for non-exclusive competence)**

The promotion and protection of culture, media and Union values requires transnational cooperation and coordinated efforts that extend beyond national borders. These are areas where the complexity of the challenges makes it difficult for Member States to address them sufficiently on their own. Coordinated action at EU level allows for more coherent and impactful responses to address transnational and common challenges that slow down progress and allow systemic impact through the identification and the resolution of structural gaps not prioritised by Member States. The EU budget plays a key role in enabling these collective responses. Such an approach also ensures greater coherence between internal policies and the Union's promotion of its values and international standards abroad.

By reason of the scale and effects of the proposed programme, a Union-level action brings added value, as these objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States acting alone. For instance, it strengthens a sense of EU citizenship and mutual understanding by facilitating cross-border activities that foster civic engagement, solidarity, and wider participation in culture and media. It also ensures consistent and high standards across the EU and effective application of rights enshrined in EU law across Member States, which is essential for the protection of EU citizens. Moreover, EU action reinforces the Single Market

¹ OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 55–81

by promoting fair access and mobility, while enabling more efficient delivery through coordinated frameworks and larger-scale joint projects. By addressing fragmentation, promoting collaboration across Member States and pooling resources at EU level, the initiative ensures that creative industries, audiovisual and media companies and creators can fully benefit from the Single Market. It improves access to diverse cultural and creative content, supports media pluralism, and increases the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry.

The added value of EU funding in these policy areas was highlighted by a vast majority of respondents to the open public consultation carried out by the Commission for the new EU programmes (see below).

- **Proportionality**

The proposal complies with the principle of proportionality, in that it does not go beyond the minimum required to achieve the stated objectives at EU level and what is necessary for those purposes.

- **Choice of the instrument**

The new ‘AgoraEU’ Programme builds primarily on the Creative Europe Programme (2021-2027), the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) Programme (2021-2027) and existing prerogative lines, bringing together EU financial support to sustain culture, media and Union values. The new instrument takes into account the specific features of the different sectors, their different target groups, and particular needs, while ensuring synergies and complementarities.

3. RESULTS OF EX-POST EVALUATIONS, STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATIONS AND IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

- **Ex-post evaluations/fitness checks of existing legislation**

The Commission has taken into account the results of the final evaluation of the Creative Europe programme 2014-2020 and interim final evaluation of the Creative Europe programme 2021-2027, as well as the interim evaluation of the CERV programme and the final evaluations of the Europe for Citizens programme and the Rights, Equality and Citizens programmes, which were carried out over the period 2023-2025.

These evaluations assessed the performance of the programmes, based on their effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, sustainability and EU added value.

The results of these evaluations indicate that the existing programmes have largely delivered on their policy objectives and provided EU added value, while highlighting areas for improvement in terms of design.

The evaluation of **Creative Europe** underscores the contribution of the Programme to the general objective of supporting cultural and linguistic diversity and cultural heritage by increasing people’s access to a variety of content coming in particular from beyond national borders and to the objective of competitiveness by helping audiovisual and other creative and cultural operators to improve their skills and scale up at European level. It has a unique place as the only source of funding for transnational cooperation, exchange of good practices, circulation and mobility in these sectors.

The interim evaluation of the **CERV programme** confirmed that the programme occupies an otherwise largely empty space in the values and fundamental rights funding landscape, as the

dedicated EU instrument to safeguard and promote fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination, democracy and the rule of law in Europe. The evaluation also showed the key role played by the programme in supporting civil society organisations working on rights and values, including those at the grassroots level, who would often lack other funding sources and forms of support.

The evaluation of the **Multimedia Actions line** (2021-2023) confirms that it was effective in strengthening news coverage on EU affairs from a European perspective. The actions supported the production of a high volume of original content, achieving a notable audience reach.

- **Stakeholder consultations**

A public consultation informed the impact assessment for EU programmes in the domains of cross-border education, youth, culture, media, values and civil society under the post-2027 MFF. It was conducted between 12 February and 7 May 2025. In total, the consultation gathered 5,845 valid replies.

The responses revealed a clear affirmation of the EU's continued role in fostering cross-border cooperation and supporting culture, media, democracy and fundamental rights. For example, the proportions of respondents finding it 'very important' or 'important' to 'protect democracy and democratic standards', to 'promote respect of fundamental rights (including children's and women's rights)', to 'promote media independence and media pluralism, fight against disinformation' and to 'promote cultural and creative diversity' were respectively at 91%, 88%, 85% and 78%.

The responses to the public consultation also confirmed that EU funding provided added value compared to funding at national, local or regional level in the areas it covered. For example, 66% of respondents considered that 'Protecting democracy and promoting democratic standards' is an area where EU funding provides significant added value. Nearly two thirds of respondents mentioned support to the audiovisual and media sectors as an "important" policy objective. Finally, approximately 80% of respondents see an added value in EU funding going to 'Promote cultural and linguistic diversity' and 'Promote and preserve cultural heritage and European remembrance' and 74% to 'Ensure widespread access to culture and cultural heritage'.

Asked to evaluate the obstacles preventing the EU budget from fully delivering on its objectives in the policy areas, respondents generally welcomed the Commission's focus on greater efficiency in funding, but not at the cost of "identity" and "trust", preserving thematic clarity and stakeholder ownership.

Quantitative results show that the most frequently cited obstacles across all groups were administrative burden (identified by 51% of citizens and 56% of organisations) and complex, fund-specific compliance rules (49% of citizens and 52% of organisations). These issues reflect concerns not only with regulatory complexity but also with fragmentation between instruments and inefficiencies in delivery. Additional barriers included lack of flexibility to reallocate resources in response to emerging needs (45% of citizens and 50% of organisations), delays in programme implementation and funding disbursement, and insufficient communication or clarity about funding opportunities. Public authorities and NGOs in particular emphasised delays as a source of reduced impact and local credibility.

- **Collection and use of expertise**

The proposal has been informed by external reports and assessments.

The proposal has been informed by a wealth of studies and reports, such as from the European Parliament, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and the European Institute for Gender Equality, which point towards the growing and serious challenges testing fundamental rights and values in the EU as well as the resilience of our democratic institutions².

In the field of media and audiovisual, it has relied on the conclusions of the 2023 European Media Industry Outlook³, which provided valuable insights into the structural challenges of the media and audiovisual industries (incl. gaming). Media companies in the EU are under increasing pressure from global competitors for users' attention and revenue. Consumer spending and media consumption have stagnated since the COVID-19 pandemic, with digital platforms aggregating more content and capturing more ad revenue than traditional media. The sectors also struggle with high technology adoption costs, limited private investment, and heavy dependence on non-EU technologies. In addition, the report revealed that, in the EU, the circulation of audiovisual works across borders is limited, hindering the industry's potential. Meanwhile, the viability of news media is increasingly at risk, with declining revenues, shrinking employment, and limited consumer trust.

In the field of culture and creative sectors, the proposal has been informed by thematic meetings, findings of independent studies, Council conclusions⁴, resolutions from the European Parliament⁵, the evaluation of the European Heritage Label action⁶ and the first interim evaluation of the European Capital of Culture action for the year 2020-2033⁷, as well as recommendations made by experts from Member States in the context of the Open Method of Coordination on culture⁸. These various sources underline the persisting relevance of the Culture strand of Creative Europe while pointing at areas of improvement, in particular in connection with the digital and green transitions and the surge of AI, working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals, as well as the international context.

² Including the EP 2021/2103(INI) on “The shrinking space of civil society in Europe”; the FRA Report on “Protecting civil society – update 2023”; the EIGE Gender Equality Index 2024: Tackling violence against women, tackling gender inequalities.

³ The second edition of the Media Industry Outlook will be published in July 2025.

⁴ In particular, Council conclusion of May 2025 on supporting young artists and cultural and creative professionals in starting their careers, Council Conclusions of November 2024 on improving and fostering access to culture, Council conclusions of May 2024 on empowering the cultural and creative sectors through data-driven audience development and Council Conclusions of May 2023 on at-risk and displaced artists.

⁵ European Parliament resolution of 17 January 2024 on cultural diversity and the conditions for authors in the European music streaming market ([2023/2054\(INI\)](#)), European Parliament resolution of 16 January 2024 on the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme 2021-2027 ([2023/2003\(INI\)](#)), European Parliament resolution of 21 November 2023 with recommendations to the Commission on an EU framework for the social and professional situation of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors ([2023/2051\(INI\)](#)), European Parliament resolution of 14 September 2023 on the future of the European book sector ([2023/2053\(INI\)](#)), European Parliament resolution of 14 December 2022 on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations ([2022/2047\(INI\)](#)), European Parliament resolution of 20 October 2021 on the situation of artists and the cultural recovery in the EU ([2020/2261\(INI\)](#))

⁶ Evaluation of the European Heritage Label (EHL) action for the period 2018-2024,, conducted by PPMI for the European Commission (July 2025).

⁷ First Interim Evaluation of the European Capital of Culture Action 2020–2033, conducted by Ecorys and KEA European Affairs for the European Commission (July 2025).

⁸ In particular, OMC Working Group of Member States' experts of June 2023 'The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals' and OMC Working Group of Member States' Experts of 4 June 2021 entitled 'Towards gender equality in the cultural and creative sectors'.

- **Impact assessment**

This proposal was subject to an impact assessment. Commission services have explored several alternative policy options to address the challenges of the sectors concerned and determined which option served better the policy areas and the priorities of the Commission. The various options were mutually exclusive. One option was to continue the existing Creative Europe and CERV programmes as stand-alone programmes, while introducing some incremental improvements. A second option consisted of bringing together the programmes aimed at protecting Union values, media and culture. A third option was a full integration under a single instrument of policies covered today by CERV, Creative Europe, together with those covered by Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps (ESC).

Other alternatives were also considered yet discarded at an early stage. One was the discontinuation of the EU funding in the fields currently covered by CERV and Creative Europe, but it was rejected given the importance of the problems affecting the sectors concerned, the prominence given to these policies in the Political Guidelines and the assessment of the continued relevance and added value of the EU funding intervention, underpinned by the respective mid-term evaluations. The option of alternative merging of programmes (e.g. only the Media strand of Creative Europe with the CERV programme) was also abandoned at an early stage, as it would not have effectively aligned with political priorities or adequately catered for the challenges of the sectors concerned.

The main potential impacts of the three shortlisted options (continuity, full integration, and objective-based merger) were analysed across various social, economic and environmental dimensions. Where relevant, the analysis also covered costs and benefits, impacts on competitiveness and SMEs and on digitalisation, as well as their contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The three policy options were assessed based on their effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and proportionality, applying the Social Multi-Criteria Evaluation (SMCE).

The evaluation of the options and their impacts highlighted that an integration based on policy objectives (objective-based merger) would offer better potential compared to the two alternatives. It would allow for reinforced coordination, targeted flexibility, and a more impactful use of the EU budget – without sacrificing policy focus or accessibility. It would offer the optimal balance between simplification and policy relevance. It is also congruent with stakeholders' calls, who ask for the simplification of access to funding, flexibility of resource allocation and the application of common rules. In line with the Political Guidelines, it follows a 'funding-follows-policy' principle, bringing together programmes aiming at protecting culture, media and Union values. It will build on the success of current programmes, best practices of the current MFF, as evidenced by evaluations, better addressing transnational and common challenges, filling funding gaps at Member States level, and enhancing coherence between internal and external policies, while enhancing synergies, efficiency and effectiveness, and reducing overlaps. It will pay due visibility to each of the policy areas included in the merged programme in full respect of the horizontal provisions detailed in Regulation (EU, Euratom) [202X/XXX, Performance Regulation] applicable to all Union programmes. It will also increase action on cross-cutting priorities and synergies affecting the societal, media and cultural and creative sectors (e.g. sectoral skills, access to finance, innovation uptake, etc.).

Based on the Better Regulation guidelines, this impact assessment report was submitted for quality scrutiny to the Regulatory Scrutiny Board (RSB). The RSB gave an opinion on the impact assessment on 13 June 2025. The RSB made a series of comments and recommendations on scope, problem definition and the use of evaluations, intervention logic

and objectives, comparison of options and cost-benefit analysis, governance, coherence and future monitoring and evaluation. The impact assessment accompanying this legal proposal was reviewed in accordance with the Board's comments.

- **Regulatory fitness and simplification**

The initiative will streamline EU management, governance and implementation of EU programmes to improve efficiency for applicants, beneficiaries and EU institutions. Application and reporting procedures will be simplified and further harmonised, through the introduction of common or aligned rules, making it easier for applicants to apply to calls addressing complementary policy objectives.

To simplify implementation and reduce administrative burden for beneficiaries, the use of simplified forms of funding (including financing not linked to costs and lump sums) will become the standard form of contribution for reimbursing grants. The use of financial support to third parties, which has proven efficient in making EU funding more accessible to small organisations, will also continue and could be extended where appropriate. Moreover, increasing the use of multi-annual grants will also have a positive impact. Obstacles encountered by grassroots organisations and first-time applicants will be addressed through targeted simplification measures addressing their circumstances, enhanced communication, and promotion of funding opportunities. The pooling of resources, including in areas such as monitoring, internal and external communication will bring economies of scale and enhance the predictability of EU funding more widely among beneficiaries, stakeholders and EU citizens.

- **Fundamental rights**

Building on the previous Creative Europe and Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programmes and pre-existing prerogative lines, the new instrument aims at promoting Union values, including respect for fundamental rights, equality, democracy, as well as culture and media.

It is in line with and promotes the values set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union. The objectives of the new Programme are closely linked to the promotion of fundamental rights and are thus in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. In particular, this proposal will contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights and principles enshrined in Articles 8 (protection of personal data), 11 (freedom of expression, rights to information, media freedom and pluralism), 12 (freedom of assembly and of association), 13 (freedom of the arts and science), 15 (freedom to choose an occupation and right to engage in work), 20 and 21 (equality and non-discrimination), 22 (cultural and linguistic diversity), 23 (equality between women and men), 24 (rights of the child), 26 (rights of persons with disabilities), 31 (fair and just working conditions), 32 (prohibition of child labour and protection of young people at work), 33 (family and professional life), 39 to 46 (citizens' rights) of the Charter.

4. BUDGETARY IMPLICATIONS

see Annex

5. OTHER ELEMENTS

- **Implementation plans and monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements**

This initiative will be monitored through the performance framework for the 2028-2034 budget defined in Regulation (EU) [XXX]* of the European Parliament and of the Council

[Performance], which also details the specific rules regarding evaluations. The evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the Commission's Better Regulation Guidelines and will be based on indicators relevant to the objectives of the Programme.

A part of the Programme will be implemented by an Executive Agency under the supervision of the Commission services responsible for the Programme.

- **Detailed explanation of the specific provisions of the proposal**

The general objectives of the Programme are to promote cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, to increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the media and audiovisual industries, to safeguard artistic and media freedom, and to protect and promote equality, active citizenship, rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter, thereby enhancing democratic participation and societal resilience within the Union.

Within this general objective, the Programme shall have three separate strands:

First, the 'Creative Europe – Culture' strand, which will implement the following specific objective:

- (a) Contribute to cross-border cultural creation, cooperation, participation and accessibility, and cross-border circulation of a diversity of cultural works, while strengthening the social, economic and international dimensions of the cultural and creative sectors.

Second, the 'MEDIA+' strand, which will implement the following specific objectives:

- (a) Contribute to the cultural diversity and competitiveness of the audiovisual and video games industries, notably by enhancing creation and cross-border distribution of European content and its access by citizens.
- (b) Contribute to a free, viable and diverse Union information ecosystem, notably by supporting free and independent journalism and news media, enhancing citizens' access to trustworthy information and tackling disinformation.

Third, the Democracy, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values ('CERV+') strand, which will implement the following specific objectives:

- (a) Contribute to protecting and promoting fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination and Union citizens' rights enshrined in the Treaties including free movement of citizens, and empowering civil society.
- (b) Contribute to fighting against gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk of such violence.
- (c) Contribute to enhancing democratic participation and upholding the rule of law.

To maximise impact and enhance synergies across the strands, the Programme shall support cross-cutting and horizontal activities contributing to the general objective, notably by developing synergies between the cultural, media and civic spheres and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration and innovation.

To be effective, the Programme should take into account the specific nature of the different policies, their different target groups and their particular needs through targeted approaches.

Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

establishing the 'AgoraEU' programme for the period 2028-2034, and repealing Regulations (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/818

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, and in particular Articles 19(2), 21(2), 24, 167(5), 168(5) and 173(3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the European Commission,

After transmission of the draft legislative act to the national parliaments,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee⁹,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions¹⁰,

Acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure

Whereas:

- (1) Pursuant to Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, which are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail ('Union values'). The Union values are reflected in the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the 'Charter'). Article 3 TEU further mandates the Union to promote the protection of the rights of the child. Article 10 TEU further states that the functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy, that citizens are directly represented at Union level in the European Parliament and that citizens have the right to participate in the democratic life of the Union. Article 20 establishes Union citizenship and sets out important rights that citizens of the Union shall, inter alia, enjoy.
- (2) Culture and media and promotion and respect of Union values are all crucial components of a free, fair, diverse, inclusive and cohesive Union. Citizens' participation and engagement, in due respect of Union values, constitutes the basis of the democratic life of the Union, with media playing a crucial role in shaping public opinion and free debate. Audiovisual works and all other forms of cultural and creative expressions, including cultural heritage, are essential to Europe's diversity and to forging societal resilience and mutual understanding among European citizens and communities.

⁹ OJ C , , p. .

¹⁰ OJ C , , p. .

- (3) The 'AgoraEU' Programme (the 'Programme') will provide a significant contribution to the attainment and realisation of these objectives, rights and values.
- (4) The Programme should succeed the Creative Europe Programme established by Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and the Council¹¹ and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme, established by Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council¹². It should streamline various funding actions in support of media freedom and pluralism, fight against disinformation in support of the provision on information on Union affairs. Free and pluralistic media and civil society are among key watchdogs of the Union's democratic systems, playing a crucial role for democratic resilience, and should be supported. The Programme should also support the cultural, creative and media sectors, harness the power of culture and cultural diversity, enhance the information space, and support the Union's efforts to strengthen a rights-based, inclusive, equal and democratic society. This Regulation lays down an indicative financial envelope for the 'AgoraEU' Programme¹³. For the purpose of this Regulation, current prices are calculated by applying a fixed 2% deflator.
- (5) To be effective, the Programme should take into account the specific nature and challenges of the different policy areas and sectors, their different target groups and their particular needs through targeted approaches.
- (6) In a fast changing economic, social and geopolitical environment, the recent experience has shown the need for a more flexible multiannual financial framework and its programmes. To that effect, and in line with the objectives of the 'AgoraEU' Programme, the funding will take due account of the evolving policy needs and Union's priorities as identified in relevant documents published by the Commission, in Council conclusions and European Parliament resolutions while ensuring sufficient predictability for the implementation.
- (7) The cultural and creative sectors, including performing arts (such as theatre and dance), literature and book publishing, music, visual arts, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, architecture, archives, libraries and museums, crafts and design (including fashion design), serve as 'public good', generating meaning and embodying the values of the Union. They are also a great asset for the Union and its regions, attracting sustainable tourism and projecting the image of a dynamic continent on the world stage. The Programme should take into account, on the one hand, their intrinsic and artistic value, as well as, on the other hand, their extrinsic social and economic contributions, including to social and territorial cohesion, well-being and health, growth and job creation, competitiveness, creativity and innovation.
- (8) The cultural and creative sectors are however fragmented along national and linguistic lines in the Union. They also face multiple challenges, such as attacks on freedom of

¹¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 34, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/818/oj>).

¹² Regulation (EU) 2021/692 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1381/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EU) No 390/2014 (OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/692/oj>).

¹³ Where relevant, the support provided by the Programme shall accelerate or boost investments by addressing market failures or sub-optimal investment situations, in a proportionate manner, avoiding duplication or crowding out, and by incentivising private funding, and shall have Union added-value.

artistic expression, precarious working conditions, digital transformations with the rise of artificial intelligence, and the need to adapt to climate change. The Programme should help those sectors respond to such challenges, untap their full potential and project themselves resolutely into the future while ensuring the widest participation, including from local and regional actors, through various channels and formats.

- (9) Europe's cultural heritage is a shared and priceless legacy facing budget constraints, natural and human-induced disasters, climate change, and regional conflicts. It is important to safeguard and preserve such a legacy, enhancing access and fostering a collective European identity. Digital preservation further ensures that future generations can learn from, appreciate, and draw inspiration from their cultural heritage.
- (10) The Programme should also give financial support to the European Heritage Label and the European Capitals of Culture actions, that celebrate and preserve Europe's rich cultural diversity and heritage, connecting it to the local level and contributing to culture-driven development strategies.
- (11) Europe's media sectors hold a unique position in our democracies, culture, and economies. They encompass, inter alia, content such as films, series, video games, news and information, immersive reality and multimedia, as well as services including theatrical exhibition, television and radio broadcasting, print and online publishing, advertising online videos and podcasts. The digital transformation, notably the rise of artificial intelligence, has accelerated media convergence, changed consumer behaviour, disrupted business and revenue models, as well as intellectual property management and exploitation. The Union should therefore help the Union's media thrive, foster innovation and access to finance, promote cross fertilisation between news, audiovisual and other media sectors and support collaborations between different types of media entities across the Union.
- (12) The Union audiovisual sector faces challenges stemming from limited cross-border circulation, shifting consumption habits and the dominance of non-Union players. Given these challenges, Union intervention should support the capacity of European audiovisual and video games industries to create, finance, produce and disseminate European works on all platforms that are available and attractive to audiences within the Union and beyond. It should foster transmedia adaptations of intellectual property between different media formats, contribute to promoting collaboration among Member States with different market capacities, and accompany the Union's audiovisual regulatory framework.
- (13) News media outlets and journalists across the Union are under increased pressure, notably due to the rise of global online platforms, shifting consumption habits and growing spread of disinformation. These challenges impact news revenues and distribution, undermining the viability and public trust in news media outlets, and limiting citizens' access to diverse, professionally produced European journalistic content. The Union should support a viable, independent and diverse information ecosystem, protect journalists under threat, promote media freedom and pluralism, and reinforce the integrity of the information space, by promoting measures and enhancing cooperation aimed at tackling disinformation and supporting digital and media literacy, including for young people.
- (14) Democracies in the Union are facing increasing challenges. Declining trust of citizens in democratic institutions and processes is exacerbated by disinformation, social

polarisation and hatred impacting the electoral and other democratic processes. A whole of society approach is needed to make European democracy more resilient.

- (15) The protection and promotion of fundamental rights contributes to the construction of a more democratic Union. Non-discrimination is a core principle of the Union enshrined in Article 19 TFEU and in Article 21 of the Charter. Working towards an equal and discrimination-free society contributes to untapping the potential of individuals in their diversity and to cultural, economic and social growth. It also helps to address important root causes of violence against vulnerable groups, which in turn is a frontal attack on equality. Therefore, the Programme should promote actions to address all forms of discrimination and intolerance, namely direct and indirect discrimination, paying attention to the specific forms of structural and intersectional discrimination, with a view to supporting relevant Union policy frameworks. The Programme should support actions to prevent and combat all forms of xenophobia and racism, antisemitism and anti-Muslim hatred, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, interphobia, intolerance and discrimination based on gender identity, intolerance towards persons belonging to minorities including Roma, as well as hate speech. The Programme should also contribute to enabling the Union to deliver on the commitment taken as Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities adopted on 13 December 2006¹⁴ to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities.
- (16) The rights to privacy and the protection of personal data, enshrined respectively in Article 7 of the Charter and in Article 16 TFEU and Article 8 of the Charter, are enforced through a dedicated Regulation¹⁵ and Directive¹⁶. The Union's legal framework lays down provisions to ensure that the right to protection of personal data is effectively protected. These legal instruments entrust the national data protection supervisory authorities with the task of promoting public awareness and understanding the risks, rules, safeguards and rights in relation to the processing of personal data. The Programme should contribute to raising awareness, carry out studies and other relevant activities in this field, including through the national data protection supervisory authorities, given the importance of the right to the protection of personal data in times of rapid technological developments.
- (17) Gender equality is a fundamental right and an objective of the Union and should be supported by the Programme. Despite many achievements, significant challenges remain, which require to reinforce the Union's commitment. This includes working towards freedom from gender-based violence, the highest standards of health, including in particular sexual and reproductive health, equal pay and economic empowerment, work-life balance and care, equal employment, career opportunities and working conditions, quality and inclusive education, political participation and equal representation, institutional mechanisms that deliver on women's rights, actively tackling gender stereotypes and addressing intersectional discrimination.
- (18) Gender-based violence and violence against women, children, young persons and other groups at risk, such as LGBTIQ persons and persons with disabilities, constitute a serious violation of fundamental rights and continue to persist throughout the Union,

¹⁴ OJ L 23, 27.01.2010, p. 35-36

¹⁵ OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 1-88.

¹⁶ OJ L 119, 4.5.2016, p. 89-131.

in all social and economic contexts. Violence against women and persons belonging to other groups at risk is a violation of human rights and a frontal attack on equality. Thus, preventing and addressing such violence is a societal imperative and contributes to tackling such discrimination as well as addressing the impacts of violence, including on health. At the same time, ensuring a discrimination-free society will also help address the root causes of violence against vulnerable groups, since they are intrinsically linked. Therefore, the Programme should continue the longstanding Union effort in preventing, responding to and fighting violence at all levels as well as in protecting and supporting all direct and indirect victims and survivors of violence, building on the five consecutive generations of the Daphne programme and strand¹⁷. The Programme should support the achievement of the objectives of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women adopted in Istanbul on 11 May 2011, the implementation of the Commission Recommendation on developing and strengthening integrated child protection systems in the best interests of the child¹⁸, which protects children from any form of violence, as well as contribute to enabling the Union to deliver on the commitment taken as Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which protects persons with disabilities against any form of exploitation, violence and abuse.

- (19) In accordance with Union acquis on equal treatment, the Member States have set up independent bodies for the promotion of equal treatment ('equality bodies'), which play a key role in promoting equality and ensuring the effective application of equal treatment legislation. Further, the Programme should support the European Network of Equality Bodies (Equinet) composed of the national equality bodies as provided for by Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499¹⁹ and Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council²⁰, since Equinet is the only entity which ensures coordination of activities between equality bodies. This is of key importance for the effective implementation of Union anti-discrimination law in the Member States.
- (20) Citizens throughout the Union, many of whom regularly or at least occasionally travel to, live, study, work or volunteer in another Member State, should feel able to enjoy and exercise their citizenship rights and to place their trust in equal access, full enforceability and protection of their rights without any discrimination, no matter where in the Union they happen to be. Citizens should be more aware of their rights deriving from citizenship of the Union, namely their right to move and reside freely in the Union, their voting rights when residing in another Member State, their right to petition the European Parliament in any of the official languages, their right to submit

¹⁷ Three consecutive generations of the Daphne programme ([OJ L 34, 9.2.2000, p. 1](#); [OJ L 143, 30.4.2004, p. 1](#); [OJ L 173, 3.7.2007, p. 19–26](#)), and the results of the Daphne strands of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme ([OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 62–72](#)) and the CERV Programme ([OJ L 156, 5.5.2021, p. 1–20](#)).

¹⁸ C(2024) 2680 final ([OJ L, 2024/1238, 14.5.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reco/2024/1238/oj>](#)).

¹⁹ Council Directive (EU) 2024/1499 of 7 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment between persons irrespective of their racial or ethnic origin, equal treatment in matters of employment and occupation between persons irrespective of their religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, equal treatment between women and men in matters of social security and in the access to and supply of goods and services, and amending Directives 2000/43/EC and 2004/113/EC ([OJ L, 2024/1499, 29.5.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1499/oj>](#)).

²⁰ Directive (EU) 2024/1500 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on standards for equality bodies in the field of equal treatment and equal opportunities between women and men in matters of employment and occupation, and amending Directives 2006/54/EC and 2010/41/EU ([OJ L, 2024/1500, 29.5.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1500/oj>](#)).

citizens' initiatives and their right to lodge complaints with the European ombudsman against institutional maladministration.

- (21) Encouraging citizens to play a more active role in democracy at Union level will strengthen European civil society and foster the development of a European identity. Civil society therefore needs to be supported in promoting, safeguarding and raising awareness of Union values and in contributing to the effective enjoyment of rights under Union law. When Union citizens participate in the democratic life of the Union, they contribute to making a reality representative democracy, a principle on which the functioning of the Union is founded and which gives concrete expression to the value of democracy enshrined in Article 2 TEU.
- (22) In order to bring the Union closer to its citizens and to foster democratic participation, a variety of actions and coordinated efforts are necessary. European citizenship and European identity should be developed and advanced by encouraging citizens' understanding of the policy-making process, and by promoting civic engagement in the actions of the Union. Remembrance activities and critical reflection on Europe's historical memory are necessary to make citizens aware of the common history, and to lay the foundation for a common future and shared values. Furthermore, supporting civil society organisations at local, regional, national and transnational level in the areas covered by the Programme will contribute to increasing citizens' engagement in society and ultimately to their active involvement in the democratic life of the Union. At the same time, supporting activities that promote mutual understanding, intercultural dialogue, cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and respect for others fosters a sense of belonging to the Union and of a common citizenship under a European identity, based on a shared understanding of our common European values, culture, history and heritage.
- (23) Civil society organisations, and other civic space actors, such as independent human rights bodies, equality bodies and Ombudspersons Institutions, play a vital role in contributing to the implementation of policy, encouraging people's participation, holding institutions accountable, and driving positive change. The Programme should help ensure sufficient resources and an enabling environment for them to operate independently, freely, safely, and effectively. To this end, Union funding should complement efforts at national level by supporting, protecting, empowering and building their capacity, as emphasised in the European Parliament resolution of 19 April 2018²¹, as well as Council conclusions of 10 March 2023²² and 7 March 2025²³. Civil society also plays an important role in ensuring an effective implementation of Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council²⁴ by fostering a speak-up culture and a favourable environment for whistleblowers.
- (24) The Court of Justice of the European Union has confirmed that the Union is a legal structure that is based on the fundamental premise that each Member State shares with

²¹ 2018/2619(RSP) (OJ C 390, 18.11.2019, p. 117–119, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2019_390_R_0017)

²² ST-7388/23, Council Conclusions on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights; The role of the civic space in protecting and promoting fundamental rights in the EU

²³ ST-6878/25, Council Conclusions on the application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights: funding to promote, protect and enforce fundamental rights

²⁴ Directive (EU) 2019/1937 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2019 on the protection of persons who report breaches of Union law (OJ L 305, 26.11.2019, p. 17, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2019/1937/oj>).

all the other Member States, and recognises that they share with it, the common values contained in Article 2 TEU, on which the Union is founded²⁵. That premise is based on the specific and essential characteristics of Union law, including the autonomy it enjoys in relation to the laws of the Member States and to international law. That premise implies and justifies the existence of mutual trust between the Member States that those values will be recognised and, therefore, that the Union law that implements them will be respected. It follows that compliance by a Member State with the values contained in Article 2 TEU is a condition for the enjoyment of all the rights deriving from the application of the Treaties to that Member State. The Court of Justice of the European Union has therefore confirmed that in the areas for which the Union is competent, it can take action to ensure respect for the values set out in Article 2 TEU.

- (25) At a time when European societies face challenges that affect democracies, such as raise of extremisms and intolerance, disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference by hostile actors, it is crucial that Union values such as respect for fundamental rights, equality and democracy, continue to be actively cultivated, protected, promoted, enforced, and shared among citizens and peoples, so that those values remain at the heart of the Union project. A deterioration in their protection in any Member State can have detrimental effects on the Union as a whole. It is therefore crucial that this Programme contributes to protecting Union values, including respect for fundamental rights, equality and democracy.
- (26) In light of increasing risks linked to natural hazards, climate and environmental disasters, health emergencies, technological accidents, evolving security threats, and other disruptions, it is essential to enhance the Union's and Member States' capability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to crises. The Programme should therefore support citizens' education and engagement on crisis preparedness thus enhancing societal resilience.
- (27) Hence, the Programme should also support actions aiming at safeguarding and strengthening democracy in the Union, reinforcing public trust in democracy and democratic institutions, strengthening democratic preparedness and resilience, fostering citizens' engagement, participation and awareness of common history and values, thereby supporting citizens' exercise of their rights, including their electoral rights, in full respect of Member States' competences in the organisation of elections. The Programme should also contribute to fostering critical thinking, civic participation and democracy through education as a lifelong effort, so that all citizens have the skills to recognise foreign information, manipulation and interference and disinformation.
- (28) The Programme should foster synergies and complementarity with Global Europe as it will contribute to the advancement of the Union's international cultural relations and to the Union's external action objectives through cultural cooperation.
- (29) The Programme should also support the financing of technical and organisational support for the implementation of Regulation (EU)2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council²⁶, thereby underpinning the exercise by citizens of the right to launch and support European citizens' initiatives. Together with the other rights set out in Article 24 TFEU, that right ensures citizens' direct participation in the democratic life of the Union.

²⁵ This stems directly from Opinion 2/13, EU:C:2014:2454, paragraph 168.

²⁶ Regulation (EU) 2019/788 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 April 2019 on the European citizens' initiative (OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 55, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/788/oj>).

- (30) To ensure consistency, the budgetary guarantee and financial instruments under the Programme, including when combined with other forms of non-repayable support in blending operations, should be implemented in accordance with the applicable rules of the European Competitiveness Fund (ECF) InvestEU Instrument through agreements concluded for that type of support under the ECF InvestEU Instrument.
- (31) Where Union support under the Programme is to be provided in the form of a budgetary guarantee or a financial instrument, including where combined with non-repayable support in a blending operation, it is necessary that such support is provided exclusively through the ECF InvestEU Instrument in accordance with the applicable rules of the ECF InvestEU Instrument.
- (32) The Commission should be able to divide budgetary commitments into annual instalments. In that case, the Commission should commit the annual instalments during the implementation of the Programme, taking into account the progress of the actions that receive financial assistance, their estimated needs and the budget available.
- (33) Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council²⁷ applies to the Programme. It lays down the rules on the establishment and the implementation of the general budget of the Union, including the rules on grants, prizes, non-financial donations, procurement, indirect implementation, financial assistance, financial instruments and budgetary guarantees.
- (34) In accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council²⁸, Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95²⁹, Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96³⁰ and Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939³¹, the financial interests of the Union are to be protected through proportionate measures, including the prevention, detection, correction and investigation of irregularities and fraud, the recovery of funds lost, wrongly paid or incorrectly used and, where appropriate, the imposition of administrative sanctions. In particular, in accordance with Regulations (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 and (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96, the European Anti-Fraud Office ('OLAF') may carry out investigations, including on-the-spot checks and inspections, with a view to establishing whether there has been fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the Union. In accordance with Regulation (EU) 2017/1939, the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) may

²⁷ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj>).

²⁸ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999 (OJ L248, 18.9.2013, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/883/oj>).

²⁹ Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95 of 18 December 1995 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests (OJ L 312, 23.12.95, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/1995/2988/oj>).

³⁰ Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities (OJ L 292, 15.11.1996, p. 2, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/1996/2185/oj>).

³¹ Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office ('the EPPO') (OJ L 283, 31.10.2017, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2017/1939/oj>).

investigate and prosecute fraud and other illegal activities affecting the financial interests of the Union as provided for in Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council³². In accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, any person or entity receiving Union funds is to fully cooperate in the protection of the Union's financial interests, to grant the necessary rights and access to the Commission, OLAF, EPPO and the European Court of Auditors and to ensure that any third parties involved in the implementation of Union funds grant equivalent rights.

- (35) The Programme is to be implemented in accordance with Regulation (EU) [XXX]* of the European Parliament and of the Council [Performance] which establishes the rules for the expenditure tracking and the performance framework for the budget, including rules for ensuring a uniform application of the principles of 'do no significant harm' and gender equality referred to in Article 33(2), points (d) and (f), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 respectively, rules for monitoring and reporting on the performance of Union programmes and activities, rules for establishing a Union funding portal, rules for the evaluation of the programmes, as well as other horizontal provisions applicable to all Union programmes such as those on information, communication and visibility, while taking into account the scope and nature of the activities and priorities.
- (36) The Programme should also support the role of Programme Desks, which Member States have the possibility to establish, and which should provide guidance and assistance to applicants on funding opportunities and cross-border collaborations, contributing to the Programme's outreach visibility and dissemination in accordance with Regulation (EU) [XXX]* of the European Parliament and of the Council [Performance]. Programme Desks should carry out their functions independently and without interference from public authorities in their decision making, and ought not to have any responsibility regarding the management of the programme³³.
- (37) Pursuant to Article 85(1) of Council Decision (EU) 2021/1764³⁴, persons and entities established in overseas countries and territories are eligible for funding subject to the ruled objectives of the Programme and possible arrangements applicable to the Member State to which the relevant overseas country or territory is linked.
- (38) Participation of third countries in the 'Audiovisual' specific objective requires a certain level of reciprocity and regulatory alignment. For this reason, the situation of their audiovisual markets, the proximity of their legal frameworks with the Union

³² Directive (EU) 2017/1371 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2017 on the fight against fraud to the Union's financial interests by means of criminal law (OJ L 198, 28.7.2017, p. 29, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2017/1371/oj>).

³³ In order to promote the Programme at national level, provide relevant information on the various types of financial support available under Union policy, and assist operators to apply for support under the Programme, the Programme shall support the establishment of Desks in participating countries. The Desks shall implement their activities aiming to enhance outreach, visibility and dissemination of the Programme results in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) 202X/XXXX which establishes the rules for the expenditure tracking and the performance framework for the budget, including the rules applicable to all Union programmes regarding information, communication and visibility obligations, including in particular obligations for beneficiaries and implementing partners

³⁴ Council Decision (EU) 2021/1764 of 5 October 2021 on the association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the European Union including relations between the European Union on the one hand, and Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark on the other (Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland) (OJ L 355, 7.10.2021, p. 6, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/1764/oj>).

audiovisual media acquis, in particular Directive 2010/13/EU, and the access to their support schemes should be taken into consideration when concluding Association Agreements. This is of particular importance concerning other European countries, whose audiovisual works benefit from the provisions of Directive 2010/13/EU that promote European works, notably the quotas system. In the specific case of acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates, the requirement to align their national legislations with Directive 2010/13/EU was already included in Regulation (EU) 2021/818 establishing the Creative Europe Programme. This condition has been an efficient incentive to accelerate their work on the overall alignment with the EU acquis in view of accession.

- (39) Since the objectives of this Regulation cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States but can rather, by reason of the transnational nature of the challenges, be better achieved at Union level, the Union may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, as set out in Article 5 TEU. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Regulation does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives.
- (40) This Regulation establishes the Programme for 2028 to 2034, which succeeds to the Programmes established by Regulations (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/818 for 2021 to 2027. Regulations (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/818 should therefore be repealed,

HAVE ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Chapter I

General provisions

Article 1

Subject matter

This Regulation establishes the ‘AgoraEU’ Programme (the ‘Programme’) and lays down the objectives of the Programme, its budget for the period 2028-2034, the forms of Union funding and the rules for providing such funding.

Article 2

Definitions

For the purposes of this Regulation, the following definition applies:

‘award procedure’ means an award procedure, as defined in Article 2, point (3), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, as well as procedures for entrusting the implementation and provision of support through financial instruments, for granting the budgetary guarantee, or for providing support under the budgetary guarantee.

Programme objectives

- (1) The general objectives of the Programme are to promote cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, to increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the media and audiovisual industries, to safeguard artistic and media freedom, and to protect and promote equality, active citizenship, rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter, thereby enhancing democratic participation and societal resilience.
- (2) Within the general objectives set out in paragraph 1, the Programme shall have the following strands, implementing the following specific objectives:
 - (a) the ‘Creative Europe - Culture’ Strand shall:
 - i. contribute to cross-border cultural creation, cooperation, participation and accessibility, and cross-border circulation of a diversity of cultural works, while strengthening the social, economic and international dimensions of the cultural and creative sectors (‘culture’);
 - (b) the ‘MEDIA+’ strand shall:
 - i. contribute to the cultural diversity and competitiveness of the audiovisual and video games industries, notably by enhancing creation and cross-border distribution of European content and its access by citizens (‘audiovisual’);
 - ii. contribute to a free, viable and diverse Union information ecosystem, notably by supporting free and independent journalism and news media, enhancing citizens’ access to trustworthy information and tackling disinformation (‘news’);
 - (c) the Democracy, Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (‘CERV+’) strand shall:
 - i. contribute to protecting and promoting fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination and Union citizen’s rights enshrined in the Treaties including free movement of citizens, and empowering civil society (‘rights, equality, citizens and civil society’);
 - ii. contribute to fighting against gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk of such violence (‘Daphne’);
 - iii. contribute to enhancing democratic participation and upholding the rule of law (‘democratic participation and rule of law’).
- (3) To maximise impact and enhance synergies across the strands referred to in paragraph 2, the Programme shall support cross-cutting and horizontal activities contributing to the general objective referred to in paragraph 1, notably by

developing synergies between the cultural, media and civic spheres and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration and innovation.

Chapter II

Creative Europe - Culture strand

Article 4

Culture

Within the Creative Europe - Culture strand, the 'Culture' specific objective, covering the cultural and creative sectors, shall focus on:

- (a) fostering cross-border creation, cooperation and exchanges across various formats, including through the mobility of artists and cultural and creative professionals, artistic residencies, as well as partnerships between organisations of all sizes;
- (b) improving access to and participation in culture and cultural heritage for all, notably for young people, and strengthening social resilience and social cohesion, in particular intergenerational fairness, equality and diversity, through cultural engagement;
- (c) supporting the circulation, distribution, promotion and visibility of diverse European cultural content through various channels across the Union and internationally, including through European platforms for emerging artists, support to entities aiming at training and promoting young artists, prizes that promote artistic talent and excellence, touring initiatives, festivals, and translation;
- (d) strengthening the capacity and skills in the cultural and creative sectors to drive innovation and competitiveness and to navigate the green and digital transitions, including through support for networks of cultural and creative organisations, training and peer-learning activities;
- (e) promoting cultural policy development through cooperation and exchange of good practices at Union level, and improving evidence base through enhanced data collection, analysis, and pilot actions;
- (f) advancing the Union's international cultural relations and contributing to the Union's external action objectives through cultural cooperation;
- (g) supporting the implementation of the Decisions No 445/2014/EU³⁵ and No 1194/2011/EU³⁶ of the European Parliament and the Council of the Union.

³⁵ Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2023 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC (OJ L 132, 3.5.2014, p. 1, ELI: [http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/445\(1\)/oj](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2014/445(1)/oj)). .

³⁶ Decision No 1194/2011/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 November 2011 establishing a European Union action for the European Heritage Label (OJ L 303, 22.11.2011, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2011/1194/oj>). .

The implementation of the ‘Culture’ specific objective shall be carried out with full respect of artistic freedom and diversity of cultural expressions, and contribute to the improvement of working conditions for artists and cultural and creative professionals.

Chapter III

MEDIA+ strand

Article 5

Audiovisual

Within the MEDIA+ strand, the ‘Audiovisual’ specific objective shall focus on:

- (a) supporting the creation of European audiovisual works across multiple formats and genres, with the potential to reach diverse audiences across borders;
- (b) fostering the cross-border circulation, distribution, prominence and visibility of European audiovisual works on all mediums across the Union and internationally, including through coordinated distribution strategies, marketing and promotion tools;
- (c) building audiences for European audiovisual works, including through a network of European cinemas, festivals and outreach campaigns, and addressing in particular young Europeans and underserved communities;
- (d) supporting the development and prototyping of European video games and immersive content, including through market testing, promotion and discoverability audience-driven strategies, and distribution across all platforms;
- (e) enhancing talent development, supporting access to finance, business-to-business exchanges and networking, adoption of innovative tools and business models and cross-media intellectual property exploitation strategies, particularly in response to creative, market and technological shifts;
- (f) fostering policy dialogue, exchange of best practices, data collection and analysis, including the payment of the contribution fee for Union membership of the European Audiovisual Observatory;
- (g) contributing to the implementation of Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council.³⁷

³⁷ Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision of audiovisual media services (OJ L 95, 15.4.2010, p. 1, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2010/13/oj>).

The implementation of the ‘Audiovisual’ specific objective shall be carried out with full respect for artistic freedom and ensuring collaboration among entities from Member States with different audiovisual capacities.

Article 6

News

Within the MEDIA+ strand, the ‘News’ specific objective shall focus on:

- (a) protecting news media outlets and journalists, especially where they face threats, monitoring, assessing and addressing risks to media freedom and pluralism in the internal market and promoting journalistic and editorial standards;
- (b) enhancing the production, distribution and consumption of professional journalistic content, including coverage of Union affairs, investigative journalism, local news, and public interest media;
- (c) supporting the digital transformation of news organisations, innovative practices, new production, distribution and business models, facilitating access to finance and encouraging cross-border activities and the reskilling and upskilling of news media professionals;
- (d) enhancing cooperation and promoting measures aimed at monitoring and safeguarding the online information space, including detecting and combating disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference, thereby contributing to greater resilience across the Union;
- (e) promoting digital and media literacy activities in order to enable citizens, including young people, to use and develop a critical understanding of the information ecosystem;
- (f) reinforcing policy dialogue, data collection and analysis and development of common standards, including by supporting the work of the European Board for Media Services.

The implementation of the ‘News’ specific objective shall be carried out with full respect for media editorial independence and professional standards.

Chapter IV

CERV+ Strand

Article 7

Rights, equality, citizens and civil society

Within the CERV+ strand, the ‘Rights, Equality, Citizens and Civil Society’ specific objective shall focus on:

- (a) promoting equality, and preventing and fighting against discrimination on the grounds of sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, and all forms of racism and intolerance;
- (b) promoting gender equality, gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment, and protecting and promoting women’s full enjoyment of rights;
- (c) promoting accessibility and protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, supporting the EU implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- (d) protecting and promoting the rights of the child;
- (e) protecting and promoting freedom of expression, the right to privacy, the protection of personal data as well as rights in the digital space;
- (f) nurturing a vibrant civic space by building the capacity of, and providing financial support to, civil society organisations, human rights defenders, and other relevant actors, which are active at all levels in protecting, promoting and raising citizen’s awareness of rights enshrined in the Treaty, promoting EU democratic resilience, non-discrimination and equality and more broadly Union values, such as the respect for fundamental rights, the rule of law, democracy and in protecting and promoting respect of the Charter.

Article 8

Daphne

Within the CERV+ strand, the ‘Daphne’ specific objective shall focus on:

- (a) preventing, responding to and fighting at all levels all forms of gender-based violence against women and girls, domestic violence, and violence against children, young and older people, LGBTIQ people, persons with disabilities and other groups at risk;
- (b) protecting and supporting all direct and indirect victims and survivors of violence as referred in point (a);
- (c) supporting the achievement of the objectives of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in the Union.

Article 9

Democratic participation and rule of law

Within the CERV+ strand, the ‘Democratic participation and rule of law’ specific objective of the Programme shall focus on:

- (a) protecting and promoting Union citizenship rights as well as citizens’ participation and engagement in the democratic and civic life of the Union, and support open, resilient, rights-based, and equal societies based on the rule of law;
- (b) supporting free, fair, resilient, accessible and inclusive electoral and democratic processes;
- (c) promoting civic awareness and better understanding of the Union, its common history, memory and diversity to foster mutual understanding and tolerance.

Chapter V

Cross-cutting and horizontal priorities and activities

Article 10

Within the general objectives set out in Article 3, the Programme shall support the following cross-cutting and horizontal priorities and activities:

- (a) cross-sectoral cooperation and innovation across the cultural, media and civic fields, and protection of the integrity of the public discourse, thereby bolstering democratic resilience, societal preparedness and cultural and civic engagement;
- (b) a responsible use of innovative tools and content technologies, notably Artificial Intelligence, as well as skills development and capacity-building through cross sectoral approaches;
- (c) actions for the development, implementation, and monitoring of relevant Union legislation and policy in the culture, media and civic fields, including, where applicable, through cooperation among national authorities and stakeholders.
- (d) in line with the provisions of the Regulation (EU) [XXX]* of the European Parliament and of the Council [Performance], the promotion of the Programme, and its funding opportunities, including through Programme Desks, thereby enhancing outreach, visibility and the dissemination of the Programme results;

The financing of cross-cutting and horizontal priorities and activities shall be determined by their nature and scope.

Chapter VI

Financial provisions

Article 11

Budget

1. The indicative financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2028-2034 is set at EUR 8 582 000 000 in current prices.
2. Budgetary commitments for activities extending over more than one financial year may be broken down over several years into annual instalments.
3. Appropriations may be entered in the Union budget beyond 2034 to cover the expenses necessary and to enable the management of actions not completed by the end of the Programme.
4. The financial envelope referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article and the amounts of additional resources referred to in Article 12 may also be used for technical and administrative assistance for the implementation of the Programme, such as preparatory, monitoring, control, audit and evaluation activities, corporate information technology systems and platforms, information and communication activities, including corporate communication on the political priorities of the Union, and all other technical and administrative assistance or staff-related expenses incurred by the Commission for the management of the Programme.

Article 12

Additional resources

1. Member States, Union institutions, bodies and agencies, third countries, international organisations, international financial institutions, or other third parties, may make additional financial or non-financial contributions to the Programme. Additional financial contributions shall constitute external assigned revenue within the meaning of Article 21(2), points (a), (d), or (e), or Article 21(5) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.
2. Resources allocated to Member States under shared management may, at their request, be made available to the Programme. The Commission shall implement those resources directly or indirectly in accordance with Article 62(1), point (a) or (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. They shall be additional to the amount referred to in Article 11(1) of this Regulation. Those resources shall be used for the benefit of the Member State concerned. Where the Commission has not entered into a legal commitment under direct or indirect management for additional amounts thus made available to the Programme, the corresponding uncommitted amounts may, at the request of the Member State concerned, be transferred back to one or more respective source programmes or their successors.

Article 13

Alternative, combined and cumulative funding

1. The Programme shall be implemented in synergy with other Union programmes. An action that has received Union contribution from another programme may also receive a contribution under this Programme. The rules of the relevant Union programme shall apply to the corresponding contribution, or a single set of rules may be applied to all contributions and a single legal commitment may be concluded. If all Union contributions are provided based on eligible cost, the cumulative support from the Union budget shall not exceed the total eligible costs of the action and may be calculated on a pro-rata basis in accordance with the documents setting out the conditions for support.
2. Award procedures under the Programme may be jointly conducted under direct or indirect management with Member States, Union institutions, bodies and agencies, third countries, international organisations, international financial institutions, or other third parties ('partners to the joint award procedure'), provided the protection of the financial interests of the Union is ensured. Such procedures shall be subject to a single set of rules and lead to the conclusion of single legal commitments. For that purpose, the partners to the joint award procedure may make resources available to the Programme in accordance with Article 12 of this Regulation, or the partners may be entrusted with the implementation of the award procedure, where applicable in accordance with Article 62(1), point (c), of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. In joint award procedures, representatives of the partners to the joint award procedure may also be members of the evaluation committee referred to in Article 153(3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.

Article 14

Third countries associated to the Programme

1. The Programme may be opened to the participation of the following third countries through full or partial association, in accordance with the objectives laid down in Article 3 and in accordance with the relevant international agreements or any decisions adopted under the framework of those agreements and applicable to:
 - (a) members of the European Free Trade Association which are members of the European Economic Area, as well as European micro-states;
 - (b) acceding countries, candidate countries and potential candidates;
 - (c) European Neighbourhood Policy countries;
 - (d) other third countries.
2. The Association Agreements for participation in the Programmes shall:
 - (a) ensure a fair balance as regards the contributions and benefits of the third country participating in the Programmes;
 - (b) lay down the conditions of participation in the Union Programme, including the calculation of financial contributions, consisting of an operational contribution and a participation fee, to a programme and its general administrative costs;
 - (c) not confer on the third country any decision-making power in the Programme;

- (d) guarantee the rights of the Union to ensure sound financial management and to protect its financial interests;
- (e) where relevant, ensure the protection of security and public order interests of the Union.

For the purposes of point (d), the third country shall grant the necessary rights and access required under Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 and Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013, and guarantee that enforcement decisions imposing a pecuniary obligation on the basis of Article 299 TFEU, as well as judgements and orders of the Court of Justice of the European Union, are enforceable.

3. The association agreements granting participation in the ‘Audiovisual’ specific objective referred to in Article 3 shall take into account the situation of the audiovisual market in the country concerned, including the proximity of their legal framework with the Union audiovisual media acquis and the access to its equivalent support schemes, in particular with regard to other European countries. The agreements concluded with the countries referred to in paragraph 1 (b) shall require the alignment of their national law to Directive 2010/13/EU to grant participation in the ‘Audiovisual’ specific objective.

Article 15

Implementation and forms of Union funding

1. The Programme shall be implemented in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, under direct management or under indirect management with entities referred to in Article 62(1), point (c) of that Regulation.
1. Union funding may be provided in any form in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, in particular grants, prizes, procurement and non-financial donations.
2. Where Union support is provided in the form of a budgetary guarantee or a financial instrument, including where combined with non-repayable support in a blending operation, it shall be exclusively provided through the ECF InvestEU Instrument and implemented in accordance with the applicable rules of the ECF InvestEU Instrument through agreements concluded for that type of support under the ECF InvestEU Instrument.
3. Union support in the form of a budgetary guarantee shall be provided within the maximum amount of the budgetary guarantee established by the ECF Regulation.
4. Where the Programme makes use of the ECF InvestEU Instrument, it shall provide the provisioning for the budgetary guarantee and the financing to financial instruments, including when combined with non-repayable support in the form of a blending operation.
5. Where Union funding is provided in the form of a grant, funding shall be provided as financing not linked to costs or, where necessary, simplified cost options, in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. Funding may be provided in the form of actual eligible cost reimbursement only where the objectives of an action cannot be achieved otherwise.

6. For the purposes of Article 153(3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, the evaluation committee may be composed partially or fully of independent external experts.
7. Entities applying for a funding under the Creative Europe - Culture strand of the Programme that have received over 50% of their annual revenue from public sources over the last two years, shall be considered as having the necessary financial, professional and administrative capacity to carry out activities under the Programme. They shall not be required to present further documentation to demonstrate that capacity.

Article 16

Eligibility

1. Eligibility criteria shall be set to support achievement of the objectives laid down in Article 3, in accordance with Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 and shall apply to all award procedures under the Programme.
2. In award procedures under direct and indirect management, one or more of the following legal entities may be eligible to provide or receive Union support:
 - (a) entities established in a Member States;
 - (b) entities established in an associated third country;
 - (c) international organisations;
 - (d) other entities established in non-associated third countries where the funding of such entities is essential for implementing the action and contributes to the objectives laid down in Article 3.
3. In addition to Article 168(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, associated third countries referred to in Article 14(1) of this Regulation may, where relevant, participate in and benefit from any procurement mechanisms set out in Article 168(2) and (3) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. Rules applicable to Member States shall be applied, mutatis mutandis, to participating associated third countries.
4. Award procedures affecting security or public order, in particular concerning strategic assets and interests of the Union or its Member States, shall be restricted in accordance with Article 136 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509.
5. The work programme referred to in Article 110 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 may further specify the eligibility criteria set out in this Regulation or set additional eligibility criteria for specific actions.
6. An operating grant may be awarded without a call for proposals to the European Network of National Equality Bodies (Equinet), to cover expenditure associated with the permanent work programme of Equinet.

Article 17

Work programme

The Programme shall be implemented by work programmes referred to in Article 110 Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509. The work programmes shall set out, where applicable, the activities and related amounts of Union support to be implemented through the ECF InvestEU instrument.

Chapter VII

Final provisions

Article 18

Repeal

Regulations (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/818 are repealed with effect from 1 January 2028.

Article 19

Transitional provisions

1. This Regulation shall not affect the continuation or modification of the actions concerned, until their closure, under Regulations (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/818 , which shall continue to apply to the actions concerned until their closure.
2. The financial envelope for the Programme may also cover technical and administrative assistance expenses necessary to ensure the transition between the Programme and the measures adopted under Regulations (EU) 2021/692 and (EU) 2021/81.

Article 20

Entry into force and application

This Regulation shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

It shall apply from 1 January 2028.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

LEGISLATIVE FINANCIAL AND DIGITAL STATEMENT

1.	FRAMEWORK OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE	3
1.1.	Title of the proposal/initiative	3
1.2.	Policy area(s) concerned	3
1.3.	Objective(s)	3
1.3.1.	General objective(s)	3
1.3.2.	Specific objective(s)	3
1.3.3.	Expected result(s) and impact	3
1.3.4.	Indicators of performance	3
1.4.	The proposal/initiative relates to:	4
1.5.	Grounds for the proposal/initiative	4
1.5.1.	Requirement(s) to be met in the short or long term including a detailed timeline for roll-out of the implementation of the initiative	4
1.5.2.	Added value of EU involvement (it may result from different factors, e.g. coordination gains, legal certainty, greater effectiveness or complementarities). For the purposes of this section 'added value of EU involvement' is the value resulting from EU action, that is additional to the value that would have been otherwise created by Member States alone.	4
1.5.3.	Lessons learned from similar experiences in the past	4
1.5.4.	Compatibility with the multiannual financial framework and possible synergies with other appropriate instruments	5
1.5.5.	Assessment of the different available financing options, including scope for redeployment	5
1.6.	Duration of the proposal/initiative and of its financial impact	6
1.7.	Method(s) of budget implementation planned	6
2.	MANAGEMENT MEASURES	8
2.1.	Monitoring and reporting rules	8
2.2.	Management and control system(s)	8
2.2.1.	Justification of the budget implementation method(s), the funding implementation mechanism(s), the payment modalities and the control strategy proposed	8
2.2.2.	Information concerning the risks identified and the internal control system(s) set up to mitigate them	8
2.2.3.	Estimation and justification of the cost-effectiveness of the controls (ratio between the control costs and the value of the related funds managed), and assessment of the expected levels of risk of error (at payment & at closure)	8
2.3.	Measures to prevent fraud and irregularities	9
3.	ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE	10
3.1.	Heading(s) of the multiannual financial framework and expenditure budget line(s) affected	10

3.2.	Estimated financial impact of the proposal on appropriations	12
3.2.1.	Summary of estimated impact on operational appropriations.....	12
3.2.1.1.	Appropriations from voted budget	12
3.2.1.2.	Appropriations from external assigned revenues	17
3.2.2.	Estimated output funded from operational appropriations.....	22
3.2.3.	Summary of estimated impact on administrative appropriations.....	24
3.2.3.1.	Appropriations from voted budget	24
3.2.3.2.	Appropriations from external assigned revenues	24
3.2.3.3.	Total appropriations	24
3.2.4.	Estimated requirements of human resources.....	25
3.2.4.1.	Financed from voted budget.....	25
3.2.4.2.	Financed from external assigned revenues	26
3.2.4.3.	Total requirements of human resources	26
3.2.5.	Overview of estimated impact on digital technology-related investments	28
3.2.6.	Compatibility with the current multiannual financial framework.....	28
3.2.7.	Third-party contributions	28
3.3.	Estimated impact on revenue	29
4.	DIGITAL DIMENSIONS	29
4.1.	Requirements of digital relevance.....	30
4.2.	Data	30
4.3.	Digital solutions	31
4.4.	Interoperability assessment	31
4.5.	Measures to support digital implementation	32

1. FRAMEWORK OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE

1.1. Title of the proposal/initiative

Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the ‘AgoraEU’ Programme and repealing regulations (EU) No 2021/692 and No 2021/818 for the period 2028-2034

1.2. Policy area(s) concerned

Culture, audiovisual and media, fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination, the rule of law, civil society, democratic participation.

1.3. Objective(s)

1.3.1. General objective(s)

The general objectives of the Programme are to promote cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, to increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the media and audiovisual industries, to safeguard artistic and media freedom, and to protect and promote equality, active citizenship, rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter, thereby enhancing democratic participation and societal resilience within the Union.

1.3.2. Specific objective(s)

The Programme will underpin the following specific objectives:

- a) contribute to cross-border cultural creation, cooperation, participation and accessibility, and cross-border circulation of a diversity of cultural works, while strengthening the social, economic and international dimensions of the cultural and creative sectors (‘culture’);
- b) contribute to the cultural diversity and competitiveness of the audiovisual and video games industries, notably by enhancing creation and cross-border distribution of European content and its access by citizens (‘audiovisual’);
- c) contribute to a free, viable and diverse Union information ecosystem, notably by supporting free and independent journalism and news media, enhancing citizens’ access to trustworthy information and tackling disinformation (‘news’);
- d) contribute to protecting and promoting fundamental rights, equality and non-discrimination and Union citizen’s rights enshrined in the Treaties including free movement of citizens, and empowering civil society (‘rights, equality, citizens and civil society’);
- e) contribute to fighting against gender-based violence, violence against children and other groups at risk of such violence (‘Daphne’);
- f) contribute to enhancing democratic participation and upholding the rule of law (‘democratic participation and rule of law’).

To maximise impact and enhance synergies, the Programme shall support cross-cutting and horizontal activities contributing to the general objectives, notably by developing synergies between the cultural, media and civic spheres and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration and innovation.

1.3.3. *Expected result(s) and impact*

Specify the effects which the proposal/initiative should have on the beneficiaries/groups targeted.

The Programme will have positive impact on cross-border cultural cooperation, cultural participation and accessibility, and circulation of diverse cultural works. This will come through promotion of cooperation, creation, networking and pooling of experience in the cultural and creative sectors (CCS), support of circulation of diverse cultural content and access to cultural diversity and heritage, and support of mobility of artists and CCS professionals beyond national borders. Actions will result in, among others, better equipped CCS to address key challenges, reinforced CCS creative potential in respect of artistic freedom, a more diverse cultural content circulating beyond national borders, more artists and CCS professionals expanding their careers, increased and more inclusive access to more diverse cultural content and heritage, increased international cultural partnerships and exchanges, increased digitisation, access, preservation and reuse of digital heritage.

The Programme will have positive impact on supporting the creation, circulation and access of EU audiovisual and media content, and a diverse information market. Support to audiovisual works will contribute to strengthening European cultural diversity and competitiveness, through e.g. co-productions. It will bring improvements as well in the creation, circulation and access to video games content, and foster cross-media IP exploitation. The integrity of the EU information market will be protected through support to media pluralism and independence, media viability and media literacy, and by strengthening situational awareness.

The Programme will have positive impact on the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and non-discrimination, as well as on a thriving civic space. Actions will have the effect to increase the visibility and awareness of fundamental rights, reduce discrimination and harassment. Actions will also have the effect to protect individuals, and particularly women, children and groups at risk from violence and to support victims in addressing its consequences. Citizens and organisations will be able to participate meaningfully in the political, economic, social and cultural life of their societies. Citizens will be able to freely express their views, choose their political leaders, and have a say about their future.

1.3.4. *Indicators of performance*

Specify the indicators for monitoring progress and achievements.

The output and result indicators for the purpose of monitoring progress and achievements of this programme will correspond to the common indicators provided under Regulation (EU) [XXX]* of the European Parliament and of the Council [Performance].

1.4. **The proposal/initiative relates to:**

☐ a new action

☐ a new action following a pilot project / preparatory action³⁸

☒ the extension of an existing action

☐ a merger or redirection of one or more actions towards another/a new action

³⁸

As referred to in Article 58(2), point (a) or (b) of the Financial Regulation.

1.5. Grounds for the proposal/initiative

1.5.1. Requirement(s) to be met in the short or long term including a detailed timeline for roll-out of the implementation of the initiative

The Programme will contribute to tackling specific and common challenges and fostering synergies in the culture, media, and civic spheres while taking into account the specific nature and challenges of the different policy areas, their different target groups and their particular needs. By bringing together support in these areas, the Union will be better equipped to address recurrent but also new and emerging policy priorities, such as protecting democracies, rights and equality, fostering an enabling space for civil society, contributing to cultural and linguistic diversity and to the protection of cultural heritage, strengthening the cultural and creative sectors and increasing their resilience, promoting media freedom and pluralism, and enhancing the economic growth of the media and cultural players.

1.5.2. Added value of EU involvement (it may result from different factors, e.g. coordination gains, legal certainty, greater effectiveness or complementarities). For the purposes of this section 'added value of EU involvement' is the value resulting from EU action, that is additional to the value that would have been otherwise created by Member States alone.

Reasons for action at EU level (ex-ante)

Funding covered by the programme concentrates on activities where the EU intervention can bring additional value compared to action of Member States alone.

In particular:

- Addressing transnational and common challenges (e.g., shrinking civic spaces, threats to media freedom and pluralism, fragmentation of the cultural, creative and media sectors along national and linguistic borders): these challenges makes it difficult for Member States to address them sufficiently on their own. EU level efforts enable cooperation, capacity building, mutual learning and the pooling of resources, sharing of expertise and best practices.
- National-level funding and policies alone are insufficient to protect and promote EU values and democratic standards, and to safeguard the civic space. This also applies to the overall competitiveness and diversity of the media, audiovisual and other cultural and creative sectors.
- EU support is essential to maintain access to audiovisual and cultural content across all Member States and a high level of protection of fundamental rights.
- EU support fill funding and service gaps not covered at Member State level.
- EU action is critical to promote Union values at international level, implementing international standards coherently with internal policies.

Expected generated EU added value (ex-post)

- EU-level action will enable transnational cooperation, pooling of resources, and exchange of best practices across Member States, leading to more coherent and impactful responses to shared challenges.
- EU support will complement national measures by supporting areas underfunded or deprioritized nationally.

- EU action will enhance mobility of professionals and circulation, reinforcing the functioning of the internal market and cultural and linguistic diversity.
- EU-level actions will raise awareness of rights and nurture a sense of EU citizenship and mutual understanding, through the greater awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity, the protection and promotion of Union values, supporting democratic and societal resilience, and a trustworthy information space, objectives that national interventions alone cannot fully achieve.
- EU support will foster cross border access to media, audiovisual and other cultural and creative content to European citizens.

1.5.3. *Lessons learned from similar experiences in the past*

The results of the mid-term evaluations for the period 2021-2027 indicate that the existing programmes have largely delivered on their policy objectives and provided EU added value, while highlighting areas for improvement in terms of design. For example, the interim evaluation of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme confirmed that the programme occupies a largely empty space in the values and fundamental rights funding landscape. Creative Europe has contributed to support cultural and linguistic diversity by increasing people's access to diverse European content as well as to help audiovisual and other creative and cultural operators to scale up at European level and become more competitive. The evaluation on Multimedia Actions equally confirmed the added value of supporting independent news coverage on EU affairs.

The evaluations also point to areas of improvement in terms of design. These include expanding the reach of the programmes, easing access, simplifying management, enhancing monitoring, strengthening synergies and avoiding overlaps with other programmes, and increasing flexibility to address new challenges.

1.5.4. *Compatibility with the multiannual financial framework and possible synergies with other appropriate instruments*

The initiative is part of the 2028-2034 multiannual financial framework proposal.

The initiative is aligned with the overarching Commission's 2024-2029 policy priorities, namely in terms of 1) Supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model; 2) Protecting our democracy, upholding our values; 3) Europe's sustainable prosperity and competitiveness; and 4) a global Europe.

1) Synergies with policies supporting people, strengthening our societies and our social model

Synergies will be fostered between media, culture, values and rights initiatives and the future intervention in the fields of education, solidarity and youth. These synergies, such as in media literacy, digital skills, civic engagement and civic education, arts and culture education, and skills development and inclusion, will be promoted in line with the objectives of the European Youth Strategy and the EU Citizenship Report as well as other upcoming policy initiatives. The initiative complements some initiatives under employment and social policies. Promoting equal access to rights and fostering diversity will support social inclusion and fair labour markets. The cultural and creative sectors and media industries will actively contribute to the upskilling and reskilling of professionals, in the context of the

Union of Skills, likewise, it will likely favour the creation of jobs in these sectors. The cultural and creative sectors will also focus on improving working conditions of artists and of cultural and creative professionals.

2) Synergies with justice policies

The alignment between justice policies and the rule of law creates a robust framework that ensures accountability, promotes legal coherence across Member States, and protects fundamental rights, thereby enhancing trust and cooperation within the Union. The relationship between fundamental rights and justice policies is key in shaping fair and equitable societies. Fundamental rights – ranging from the right to a fair trial, freedom from discrimination to the protection of privacy – define the essential standards that justice systems must uphold, and translate abstract principles into concrete legal measures and practices. For instance, anti-discrimination laws enforce the principle of equality before the law. Thus, the synergy between fundamental rights and justice policies ensures that legal systems not only prevent abuses but actively promote dignity, equality, and freedom. This synergy is essential for building public trust in legal institutions, fostering social cohesion, and ultimately ensuring that justice is accessible and meaningful for all individuals. To this end, synergies will be fostered between this programme and the future Justice programme.

3) Synergies with policies for the Single Market and competitiveness

The initiative will complement the EU policy framework on Single Market and economic competitiveness. Notably, it builds on the 2024 Single Market and Competitiveness Report, which adopts an ecosystem-based approach to strengthen the resilience and strategic autonomy of key industrial sectors, including cultural and creative industries. It also reflects the objectives of the Competitiveness Compass, which sets out clear benchmarks to improve the EU's long-term productivity and promote innovation.

The initiative will strengthen synergies with the future European Competitiveness Fund and the future programme for research and innovation. This includes support for multidisciplinary research in a variety of topics including democracy, values, equality, and disinformation, but also on digital and industrial topics closely linked to the cultural and creative sectors (e.g., extended reality, immersive environments, new media). Moreover, the proposal contributes to addressing Europe's digital transformation, in line with the objectives of the Digital Decade 2030.

4) Synergies with policies for a global Europe

The future programme will complement actions financed through the Union external actions. For instance, by promoting cultural exchanges and supporting EU media and audiovisual content globally including through international collaborations, it will open new markets, attract global talent, enhance the EU's influence and attractiveness on the world stage.

1.5.5. *Assessment of the different available financing options, including scope for redeployment*

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1.6. Duration of the proposal/initiative and of its financial impact

☒ limited duration

- ☒ in effect from 01/01/2028 to 31/12/2034
- ☒ financial impact from 2028 to 2034 for commitment appropriations and from 2028 to 203x for payment appropriations.

☐ unlimited duration

- Implementation with a start-up period from YYYY to YYYY,
- followed by full-scale operation.

1.7. Method(s) of budget implementation planned

☒ Direct management by the Commission

- ☒ by its departments, including by its staff in the Union delegations;
- ☒ by the executive agencies

☐ Shared management with the Member States

☒ Indirect management by entrusting budget implementation tasks to:

- ☐ third countries or the bodies they have designated
- ☒ international organisations and their agencies (e.g. UNESCO, OECD, CoE...)
- ☒ the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund
- ☐ bodies referred to in Articles 70 and 71 of the Financial Regulation
- ☒ public law bodies (eg Pillar assessed bodies)
- ☒ bodies governed by private law with a public service mission to the extent that they are provided with adequate financial guarantees
- ☒ bodies governed by the private law of a Member State that are entrusted with the implementation of a public-private partnership and that are provided with adequate financial guarantees (Pillar assessed bodies)
- ☐ bodies or persons entrusted with the implementation of specific actions in the common foreign and security policy pursuant to Title V of the Treaty on European Union, and identified in the relevant basic act
- ☐ bodies established in a Member State, governed by the private law of a Member State or Union law and eligible to be entrusted, in accordance with sector-specific rules, with the implementation of Union funds or budgetary guarantees, to the extent that such bodies are controlled by public law bodies or by bodies governed by private law with a public service mission, and are provided with adequate financial guarantees in the form of joint and several liability by the controlling bodies or equivalent financial guarantees and which may be, for each action, limited to the maximum amount of the Union support.

Comments

The programme will be implemented under direct management (with parts delegated to the European Education and Culture Executive Agency) as well as under indirect management
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through International organisations (e.g. UNESCO, OECD, CoE,...) and other Pillar assessed bodies, which has proven to be successful in previous Multiannual Financial Frameworks (MFFs).

2. MANAGEMENT MEASURES

2.1. Monitoring and reporting rules

- (41) The monitoring and reporting rules for this programme will follow the requirements laid down in Regulation (EU) [XXX]* of the European Parliament and of the Council [Performance].

2.2. Management and control system(s)

2.2.1. Justification of the budget implementation method(s), the funding implementation mechanism(s), the payment modalities and the control strategy proposed

The majority of the Programme's actions will be implemented under direct management mode, and partly delegated to the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The current implementing mode has proven effective in the predecessor programmes, and the error rates are currently less than 2% for the Creative Europe programme, based on preliminary results for the current MFF. Funding will be implemented using the implementation modes offered by the Financial Regulation, mainly grants and procurement, as this allows to better adapt the actions to the needs of the policy and to have more flexibility to re-adjust priorities in particular through grants. Grants will be in the form of actual costs, lump sums, flat rates, unit costs or a combination of these. The use of scales of unit costs and other simplified measures will reduce the scope for error in cost claims. Several measures to allow better access for example for smaller organisations, simplification of guidelines and procedures on the basis of the Financial Regulation will be applied (see above).

Direct management by the Commission will also allow to establish direct contacts with the beneficiaries/contractors engaged in the implementation of activities that serve Union policies.

2.2.2. Information concerning the risks identified and the internal control system(s) set up to mitigate them

The Programme faces the same risks as other Commission programmes that target beneficiaries which are diverse in nature. In particular, some beneficiaries are not recurring or do not have extensive administrative structures. Risks are mainly related to (1) ensuring quality of selected projects and their subsequent technical implementation; (2) risk of inefficient or non-economic use of funds awarded, both for grants and procurement; (3) fraud.

Most of these risks are expected to be reduced thanks to: (1) careful design of calls for proposals; (2) guidance to applicants and beneficiaries; (3) the use of the simplified cost options of unit costs, flat rates and lump sums, which have been effectively applied in the current MFF and are provided in the Financial Regulation; (4) the use of corporate procedures and systems for the management of proposals and grants (e.g. grants vademecum, e-Grants etc.) to ensure a full alignment with best practice in all stages of the grant and procurement lifecycles.

The control strategy is composed of different building blocks: (1) programming, evaluation and selection of proposals to ensure that only best proposals are funded; (2) signing and monitoring of grant agreements, subject to ex ante verification at both financial and policy level; (3) ex post audits based on a “detection strategy”

aimed at identifying a maximum of anomalies in view of recovering undue payments.

Parts of the Programme will continue to be implemented by the Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) which uses the same corporate procedures applied throughout the Commission.

EACEA applies an annual *ex post* audit plan which covers all actions, and confirms an error rate below 2% for the current MFF.

Currently, EACEA is supervised by its Steering Committee with DG EAC and DG CNECT as the parent DGs regarding the Creative Europe programme as well as DG JUST as parent DG for the CERV programme. Regular reporting via dashboards is ensured as well as regular coordination meetings with the parent DGs.

2.2.3. *Estimation and justification of the cost-effectiveness of the controls (ratio between the control costs and the value of the related funds managed), and assessment of the expected levels of risk of error (at payment & at closure)*

The cost of controls of the programme amounts to approximately 6% of the payments done by the Commission. This is expected to stay stable or slightly decrease if the use of simplified cost options is further expanded. The objective for the management and control system is to maintain the expected levels of risk of error (at payment and at closure) below the materiality threshold of 2%.

2.3. **Measures to prevent fraud and irregularities**

The responsible services will continue to apply their Anti-Fraud Strategy – that are in line with the Commission’s Anti-Fraud Strategy (CAFS) – to ensure inter alia that their internal anti-fraud related controls are fully aligned with the CAFS and that its fraud risk management approach is geared to identify fraud risk cases and adequate responses.

Anti-fraud strategies of both EACEA and the Commission enable fraud risk to be addressed, mainly via measures to prevent irregularity which are then escalated in the event of fraud detection. The following measures will continue to be implemented, both at the parent DGs as in EACEA: Desk monitoring, monitoring missions in accordance with a defined monitoring strategy, clear reporting requirements in the grant agreements with beneficiaries, kick-off meetings with new beneficiaries, possibility to cut grants upon non-delivery of results or non-compliance with certain funding conditions such as those linked to communication.

Beneficiaries in exclusion cases are submitted to the Early Detection and Exclusion Database (EDES) and cases are followed up with OLAF and the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO).

3. ESTIMATED FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL/INITIATIVE

3.1. Heading(s) of the multiannual financial framework and expenditure budget line(s) affected

- New budget lines requested

In order of multiannual financial framework headings and budget lines.

Heading of multiannual financial framework	Budget line	Type of expenditure	Contribution			
	Number	Diff./Non-diff.	from EFTA countries	from candidate countries and potential candidates	from other third countries	other assigned revenue
2	06 01 02 Support expenditure for 'AgoraEU'	Non-diff	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
2	06 03 01 Creative Europe - Culture	Diff.	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
2	06 03 02 MEDIA+	Diff.	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO
2	06 03 03 CERV+	Diff.	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO	YES/NO

3.2. Estimated financial impact of the proposal on appropriations

3.2.1. Summary of estimated impact on operational appropriations

- ☐ The proposal/initiative does not require the use of operational appropriations
- ☒ The proposal/initiative requires the use of operational appropriations, as explained below

3.2.1.1. Appropriations from voted budget

EUR million (to three decimal places)

Heading of multiannual financial framework		2								
		Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	TOTAL MFF 2028-2034	
		2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034		
Operational appropriations										
Budget line 06 03 01 Creative Europe - Culture	Commitments	(1a)	0,230	0,238	0,247	0,256	0,265	0,275	0,285	1,796
	Payments	(2a)	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Budget line 06 03 02 MEDIA+	Commitments	(1b)	0,409	0,424	0,439	0,455	0,472	0,489	0,506	3,194
	Payments	(2b)	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Budget line 06 03 03 CERV+	Commitments	(1c)	0,460	0,477	0,494	0,512	0,531	0,550	0,569	3,593
	Payments	(2c)	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Of which: 06 03 03 01 Equality, Rights, Citizens and Values	Commitments		pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
	Payments		pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Of which: 06 03 03 02 Democratic participation and rule of law	Commitments		pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
	Payments		pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Of which: 06 03 03 03 Daphne	Commitments		pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm

Payments			pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
Appropriations of an administrative nature financed from the envelope of specific programmes ^{39,40}											
Budget line 06 01 02 support expenditure for AgoraEU		(3)	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm
TOTAL appropriations	Commitments	= 1a+1b+3	1,099	1,139	1,180	1,223	1,268	1,313	1,360		8,582
	Payments	= 2a+2b+3	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm	pm

Heading of multiannual financial framework	4	'Administrative expenditure' ⁴¹
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EUR million (to three decimal places)

DG: <EAC/CNECT/JUST>		Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	TOTAL MFF 2028-2034
• Human resources		37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	259,490
• Other administrative expenditure		1,523	1,538	1,553	1,569	1,585	1,602	1,619	1,619	10,988
TOTAL	Appropriations	38,593	38,608	38,623	38,639	38,655	38,672	38,689	38,689	270,478

TOTAL appropriations under HEADING 4 of the multiannual financial framework	(Total commitments = Total)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
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⁴⁰ Technical and/or administrative assistance and expenditure in support of the implementation of EU programmes and/or actions (former 'BA' lines), indirect research, direct research.

⁴¹ The necessary appropriations should be determined using the annual average cost figures available on the appropriate BUDGpedia webpage.

16

3.2.3. Summary of estimated impact on administrative appropriations

- ☐ The proposal/initiative does not require the use of appropriations of an administrative nature
- ☒ The proposal/initiative requires the use of appropriations of an administrative nature, as explained below

3.2.3.1. Appropriations from voted budget

VOTED APPROPRIATIONS	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	TOTAL 2028 - 2034
	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	
HEADING 4								
Human resources	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	37,070	259,4900,000
Other administrative expenditure	1,523	1,538	1,553	1,569	1,585	1,602	1,619	10,988
Subtotal HEADING 4	38,593	38,608	38,623	38,639	38,655	38,672	38,689	270,4780,000
Outside HEADING 4								
Human resources	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Other expenditure of an administrative nature	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.	p.m.
Subtotal outside HEADING 4								
TOTAL								

3.2.4. Estimated requirements of human resources

- ☐ The proposal/initiative does not require the use of human resources
- ☒ The proposal/initiative requires the use of human resources, as explained below

3.2.4.1. Financed from voted budget

Estimate to be expressed in full-time equivalent units (FTEs)

VOTED APPROPRIATIONS		Year 2028	Year 2029	Year 2030	Year 2031	Year 2032	Year 2033	Year 2034
• Establishment plan posts (officials and temporary staff)								
20 01 02 01 (Headquarters and Commission's Representation Offices)		182	182	182	182	182	182	182
20 01 02 03 (EU Delegations)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Indirect research)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(Direct research)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other budget lines (specify)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
• External staff (inFTEs)								
20 02 01 (AC, END from the 'global envelope')		28	28	28	28	28	28	28
20 02 03 (AC, AL, END and JPD in the EU Delegations)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Admin. Support line [XX.01.YY.YY]	- at Headquarters	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	- in EU Delegations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(AC, END - Indirect research)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
(AC, END - Direct research)		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other budget lines (specify) - Heading 4		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other budget lines (specify) - Outside Heading 4		10	10	10	10	10	10	10
TOTAL		0	0	0	0	0	0	0
[XX.01.YY.YY]	- in EU Delegations	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(AC, END - Indirect research)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

(AC, END - Direct research)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other budget lines (specify) - Heading 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other budget lines (specify) - Outside Heading 4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	220	220	220	220	220	220	220	220	220

The staff required to implement the proposal (in FTEs):

	To be covered by current staff available in the Commission services	Exceptional additional staff*			
		To be financed under Heading 4 or Research	To be financed from BA line	To be financed from fees	
Establishment plan posts	139	43	N/A		
External staff (CA, SNEs, INT)	25	3	10		

Description of tasks to be carried out by:

Officials and temporary staff	
External staff	

3.2.5. Overview of estimated impact on digital technology-related investments

TOTAL Digital and IT appropriations	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	TOTAL MFF 2028 - 2034
	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034

HEADING 4									
IT expenditure (corporate)	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	12,628
Subtotal HEADING 4	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	1,804	12,628
Outside HEADING 4									
Policy/IT expenditure on operational programmes	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	59,500
Subtotal outside HEADING 4	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	8,500	59,500
TOTAL	10,304	10,304	10,304	10,304	10,304	10,304	10,304	10,304	72,128

3.2.6. *Compatibility with the current multiannual financial framework*
The initiative is consistent with the proposal for the MFF 2028-2034.

3.2.7. *Third-party contributions*
The proposal/initiative:
– ☒ does not provide for co-financing by third parties
– ☐ provides for the co-financing by third parties estimated below:

Appropriations in EUR million (to three decimal places)									
	Year 2028	Year 2029	Year 2030	Year 2031	Year 2032	Year 2033	Year 2034	Total	

4. DIGITAL DIMENSIONS

4.1. Requirements of digital relevance

Reference to the requirement	Requirement description	Actors affected or concerned by the requirement	High-level Processes	Categories
Chapter VI – Article 11	[...] Technical and administrative assistance for the implementation of the Programme	European Commission; Beneficiaries	Programme implementation through Direct Grant Management	Digital solutions
Chapter V – Article 10	[...] including through Programme Desks, thereby enhancing outreach, visibility and dissemination of the Programme's results.	European Commission, National Authorities; Beneficiaries	Dissemination	Digital solutions
Chapter II – Article 4(e)	[...] improving evidence base through enhanced data collection, analysis[...]	European Commission, Executive Agencies, Beneficiaries	Evidence-based policy-making, programme implementation and monitoring; evaluation	Digital solutions, Digital data
Chapter III – Article 5(f)	Fostering [...]data collection and analysis [...]	European Commission, Executive Agencies, Beneficiaries	Evidence-based policy-making, programme implementation and monitoring;	Digital solutions, Digital data

Chapter III – Article 6(f)	Focus on [...] data collection and analysis, and development of common standards [...]	European Commission, Executive Agencies, Beneficiaries	evidence-based policy-making, programme implementation and monitoring; evaluation	Digital solutions, data

4.2. Data

High-level description of the data in scope and any related standards/specifications

Type of data	Reference(s) to the requirement	Standard and/or specification (if applicable)
Countries, organisations, budget, participants and priorities per project	Chapter VI, Article 11 Chapter V, Article 10 Chapter II – Article 4(e) Chapter III, Article 5(f) and Article 6(f) Regulation (EU, Euratom) (202X-XXXX Performance regulation)	eGrants and databases of any implementing body in the frame of the programme

Alignment with the European Data Strategy

Explain how the requirement(s) are aligned with the European Data Strategy

The provisions under the proposal support interoperability, reusability, and secure data sharing, in line with the European Data Strategy. Where personal data is processed (e.g., participants), it aligns with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The architecture is also consistent with the Open Data Directive, as relevant aggregated, non-personal data may be made available for reuse by researchers or public bodies.

Alignment with the once-only principle

Explain how the once-only principle has been considered how the possibility to reuse existing data explored

Dashboards established are the source of traceability and re-usability of the data available from the programme implementation. Data comes from application forms, and final reports as well as possibly Programme desks.

Explain how newly created data is findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable, and meets high-quality standards

(43) For specific strands of the Programme, traceability and re-usability of the data available from the programme implementation will be ensured. The data will be recorded via the project lifecycle documents and made accessible, in line with the provisions of the Regulation (EU) [XXX]* of the European Parliament and of the Council [performance] regarding transparency of information on programmes performance and achievements through the Single Gateway portal.

Data flows

Type of data	Reference(s) to the requirement(s)	Actor who provides the data	Actor who receives the data	Trigger for the data exchange	Frequency (if applicable)
Countries, organisations, budget, participants and priorities per project	Chapter VI – Article 11 Chapter V – Article 10 Chapter II – Article 4(e) Chapter III, Article 5(f)	Beneficiaries, Programme Desks	General public Commission European Parliament Council of the	Regulation (EU, Euratom) [202X-XXXX Performance Regulation]: Article XXX (monitoring) and Article XXX (implementation report)	Regulation (EU, Euratom) [202X-XXXX Performance Regulation] Article XXX (monitoring) and Article XXX (implementation report and retrospective

	and Article 6(f) Regulation (EU, Euratom) [202X-XXXX Performance Regulation]		European Union	and retrospective evaluations). Regular programme reporting	evaluations).
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4.3. Digital solutions

Digital solution	Reference(s) to the requirement(s)	Main mandated functionalities	Responsible body	How is accessibility catered for?	How is reusability considered?	Use of AI technologies (if applicable)
Digital solution #1 – Direct Grant Management platform	Chapter VI – Article 11	Direct Grant Management	European Commission	In accordance with Commission Standard	//	The platform shall leverage the use of artificial intelligence where relevant and adhering with the precautionary principle.
Digital solution #2 – Dissemination platform(s)	Chapter V – Article 10	Disseminate Programme's results	European Commission	In accordance with Commission Standard	//	The platform shall leverage the use of artificial intelligence where relevant and adhering with the precautionary principle.

Digital solution #1 - Direct Grant Management platform

Digital and/or sectorial policy (when these are applicable)	Explanation on how it aligns
<i>AI Act</i>	When leveraging AI, the European Commission will ensure the compliance with the AI Act.
<i>EU Cybersecurity framework</i>	Without prejudice to Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the European Commission shall ensure the security, integrity, authenticity and confidentiality of the data collected and stored for the purpose of this regulation.
<i>eIDAS</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Single Digital Gateway and IMI</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Others</i>	//

Digital solution #2 - Dissemination platform(s)

Digital and/or sectorial policy (when these are applicable)	Explanation on how it aligns
<i>AI Act</i>	When leveraging AI, the European Commission will ensure the compliance with the AI Act.
<i>EU Cybersecurity framework</i>	Without prejudice to Regulation (EU) 2016/679, the European Commission shall ensure the security, integrity, authenticity and confidentiality of the data collected and stored for the purpose of this regulation.
<i>eIDAS</i>	Not Applicable

<i>Single Digital Gateway and IMI</i>	Not Applicable
<i>Others</i>	//

4.4. *Interoperability assessment*

Not applicable

4.5. Measures to support digital implementation

Description of the measure	Reference(s) to the requirement(s)	Commission role (if applicable)	Actors to be involved (if applicable)	Expected timeline (if applicable)