

Culture Action Europe values Ms Silvia Costa's report on *Creative Europe* and calls on the EU institutions to support the proposed budget increase and to reach a first-reading agreement

Statement 8 Nov 2012

At the European Parliament CULT committee meeting held on the 8th of October MEP Silvia Costa presented her report on the legal basis for the future *Creative Europe* programme. Culture Action Europe (CAE) welcomes Ms Costa's proposal, which clearly aims at improving the balance between the economic-driven and social-driven objectives foreseen by the initial proposal. Indeed, many of the suggested improvements to the legal basis reflect the demands that, in the past months, CAE has supported.

We are at a critical juncture. EU Member States' political commitments towards achieving EU responsibilities, both within and outside its borders, will be judged against decisions taken now. Many of the operating actors in the cultural sector are partly supported through European programmes and funds, which empower them to operate on a European level and on issues of European interest. A late adoption of the 2014-2020 Framework Programme, and the subsequent delay in the implementation of its operating schemes, would only create a funding gap in 2014 endangering the subsistence and operating capacity of many cultural organisations and scaling down their potential contribution to Europe's recovery from the crisis. At a time of growing mistrust between European institutions, member States and citizens, delays that are not strongly justified would also result in a further blow to the European project.

Given the clear convergence between Ms Costa's report and the Partial General approach adopted by the Council of Culture Ministers on the 11th of May, CAE considers that all relevant institutional actors should engage, with no further delay, **to reach a first-reading agreement**¹.

Moreover, CAE calls on the European Parliament, the Member States, the European Council and the European Commission **to confirm the proposed budget increase** for the *Creative Europe* programme: it is an investment in one of the most valuable assets for Europe's future economic and social development albeit with an almost negligible impact on the global EU budget. CAE also calls on the European Parliament and the European Council **to approve the Cross-sectoral Strand and the financial facility**.

Regarding the proposal made by Ms Costa to introduce the '**safeguard[ing] and enhancement of Europe's cultural heritage**' (art. 4) as an objective of the framework programme, CAE notes that the notion of *safeguarding* prioritizes the heritage protection to the detriment of contemporary production and to the interactions between heritage and contemporary culture. Therefore, CAE **calls on the European Parliament to restore the balance**.

CAE also demands **to raise** the ceiling for the *financial support* introduced by Ms Costa's proposed amendment to article 19.1 (b) **to 80%** (i.e. to the current ceiling for networks).

Finally, both the EC proposal and Ms Costa's report clearly refer to article 167(4) of the Lisbon Treaty on the complementarity of EU support to Member States' activities (recital 20). CAE considers that **the new regulation should recall all principles included in Article 167** of the Treaty, and especially paragraph (2) which states that the aim of EU action is to encourage cooperation between Member states or, if necessary, to supplement their action in certain sectors, including non-commercial cultural exchanges.

It is not an easy time in Europe today. While reiterating its full commitment to sustaining the role of culture as a pillar for a better Europe, **Culture Action Europe** asks policy makers and all civil society members that strive to foster new and sustainable developmental models for our societies **to stand strong with the *Creative Europe* proposal and its budget as an investment in our collective future**.

¹ The proposal will become a regulatory instrument upon convergence of the vote by the Council's Common Position and the Parliament. If there is a divergence between the reading done by both bodies, the text is passed on for a second reading in order to resolve the existing differences.