

# A new structure for the European Commission is needed to deal with culture in the digital era

On 21st May 2014 the Council of EU Ministers stated: “*culture is a cross-cutting issue and a strategic approach to culture is therefore necessary*”.

Nevertheless the current breakdown of portfolios in the European Commission is in contradiction with this approach.

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**The major European cultural networks call on the European Council, the incoming Presidency of the Council of the EU, the European Parliament and the proposed President of the European Commission to:**

- **Revise the breakdown of portfolios of the European Commission in order to ensure that the decision-making process in the fields of culture, including as well cultural rights and heritage, is more effective. A comprehensive portfolio for culture and education is vital to address these broad issues in a digitalised society;**
- **Appoint for this new portfolio a Commissioner with a strong political mandate.**

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The impact on culture of policies tailored for other sectors, among which the audiovisual one, is not adequately represented in decision-making and implementation of those policies. The political answer offered by the EU to one of the major challenges of our times - the digital revolution - is symptomatic of this lack of integration in policy-making. **The fragmentation of the decision-making process** in the relevant fields for culture and heritage has indeed contributed to **preventing the development of comprehensive policies in several domains, including the inclusion of a cultural and social dimension into the Digital Agenda.**

The conclusion of the Council of the European Union on *cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe* adopted on 21/22 May represents a major progress to which the Commission and Civil society substantially contributed. However, despite some good will and results, the outgoing European Commission has been unable to answer the previous and other challenges, also because the distribution of tasks and responsibilities are scattered and the allocation of resources unbalanced.

**The new Commission should offer a solution to this fragmentation.**

In the aftermath of the European elections, lessons are to be drawn regarding the priorities that the EU must adopt to step out from the political crisis it has been enduring for several years.

Social - and not only economic - growth must be the priority for contemporary Europe. Enhancing our cultural competence, our capacity for cooperation and critical thinking, our openness to diversity, our curiosity; all of these are essential to develop a sustainable society where rights, responsibilities and shared well-being can grow and new types of employment can flourish. The Arts and Sciences powerfully contribute to enhancing such capacities, as does accessible education for all and the scrupulous fulfilment of all human rights.

It is time for decision-makers and citizens alike to form a broader discourse on the future of Europe, underlining cultural development as a strategic necessity. It is time for this broader discourse to be echoed in the incoming European Commission partition of portfolios.

***This call is launched by the following European networks, which together represent over 80,000 national and local cultural organisations, and millions of individual members across Europe:***

**CAE** - Culture Action Europe, the political platform for Arts and Culture

**ACCR** - European Network of Cultural Centres-Historic Monuments

**AEC** - Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique & Musikhochschulen

**BANLIEUES D'EUROPE** – European Network for the development of innovative artistic and cultural practices

**CEATL** - European Council of Associations of Literary Translators

**EAC-CE** - European Choral Association - Europa Cantat

**EBLIDA** - European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations

**EFA** - European Festival Association

**ELIA** - European League of Institutes of the Arts

**EMC** - European Music Council

**ENCATC** - European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centers

**ETC** - European Theatre Convention

**IETM**- international network for contemporary performing arts

**INTERPRET EUROPE** - European Association for Heritage Interpretation e.V.

**NEMO** - The Network of European Museum Organisations

**OPERA EUROPA** - The professional organisations for opera houses and festivals in Europe

**OTM** - On-the-move: Cultural mobility information network

**RES ARTIS** - International Network of Arts Residencies

**RESEO** - European Network for Opera and Dance Education

**TRANS EUROPE HALLES** - European Network of Independent Cultural Centres

**REMA** - Réseau Européen de Musique Ancienne/European Early Music Network

**SMartBE** - Making creative Europe work

*This call is now made public for endorsement.*

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