



## **FAST FORWARD HERITAGE**

### **Culture Action Europe's principles and actions for a forward-looking legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage**

European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) has been a crucial initiative promoting a contemporary understanding of cultural heritage. This renewed vision, converging all art forms, aims to bring Europeans together, connects past, present and future. A Europe that protects creativity and cultural diversity is one that can confidently look into the past to find the energy to leap into the future. The EYCH has enabled rich exchanges across cultural heritage experts, European and national institutions, EYCH Stakeholders and Culture Action Europe (CAE) members. It has fostered better inter-institutional and cross-sectoral collaborations.

The EYCH has also provided a sound understanding of the points of convergence between actors active in the cultural heritage field, delimiting in this way the arena for joint European action. These interactions inform the recommendations presented below.

#### **KEY MESSAGES**

- Actions funded in the field of cultural heritage should guarantee its European added value and respect European values, with especial emphasis on democracy, humanistic and pluralistic values and cultural rights;
- Put into practice an inclusive and forward-looking definition of cultural heritage across policies, programmes and actions, and the subsequent adaptation of definitions, objectives and tools;
- Take in consideration a regenerative approach to cultural heritage based on an active engagement with present cultural production and contemporary society;
- Cultural spaces and cultural heritage must be placed in a broader European and global context within education and civic education structures and programmes;
- Funding mechanisms should ensure accessibility to a plurality of organisation in order to avoid concentration of public resources, enabling greater diversity of ideas and results for innovation to flourish;
- The establishment of the Cultural Heritage Forum is a welcomed development and should be properly supported. The Cultural Heritage Forum should include participation of all European institutions to advance towards a closer inter-institutional coordination and exchange with the wider culture and cultural heritage stakeholder community.

CAE's recommendations take into account recent policy developments, in particular the Rome Declaration from 25 March 2017, and the European Council Strategic Agenda 2019 – 2024. Where 'Investing in culture and cultural heritage is listed as a priority for building a fairer and more inclusive future for Europe. In addition, the 24 May 2018 Council conclusions call to **mainstream cultural heritage across policy fields as the basis 'for maintaining European solidarity and preserving the integrity of the European Union while at the same time promoting and protecting cultural diversity'**.

Thus, CAE calls for the inclusion of the following guiding principles and actions to the policies and programmes in order to ensure a dynamic approach to culture and cultural heritage that projects Europe into the future:

## PRINCIPLES:

### CORE PRINCIPLES

1. Respect for European values, with especial emphasis on democracy, humanistic and pluralistic values and cultural rights, as well as guaranteeing European Added Value must be a prerequisite of EU action in the cultural heritage field. European added value is found primarily in crossborder cooperation, actions that address, reach and benefit the citizens of Europe, and enhance mutual knowledge of their cultures. In times of growing inequality and polarisation within Europe and beyond, actions funded in the field of cultural heritage should be carefully assessed to ensure their European added value for EU citizens as a whole. A strong commitment to European values should be explicitly inscribed in the policy legacy of the EYCH.
2. The EYCH represents one of the most important concerted attempts between civil society, European institutions and Member States to promote and put into practice an inclusive and **forward-looking definition of cultural heritage**. The legacy of the year should be explicitly built upon the 21 May 2014 European Council's definition of Cultural Heritage, and reiterated in its 24 May 2018 Council conclusions, where cultural heritage is considered 'in all its diversity and forms – tangible and intangible, immovable and movable, digital and a value in its own right [...]. Progressing towards this wider understanding of cultural heritage **requires explicit recognition across policies, programmes and actions**, with the subsequent adaptation of definitions, objectives and tools.

### STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES AND ACTIONS

3. A forward-looking approach to heritage promotes **an ethical and dynamic relation with the present**. A value-based regenerative approach to cultural heritage is in continuous evolution, adaptation and dialogue with social and cultural changes. Cultural heritage and contemporary creation critically inform each other, and ultimately, co-create the heritage of the future. A new generation of cultural heritage policies and programmes should always take in consideration an active engagement with present cultural production and its impact in today's society as a guiding principle for future funding schemes;
4. The 4 principles articulating the EYCH are a useful guide to inform its legacy. Common trends across the EYCH Stakeholders and shared learnings arising from the implementation of the year have led to the identification of the following gaps in the principles of the EYCH:
  - i) Cultural heritage can provide a rich learning environment and should serve as a **place for public engagement for all people**. Culture, cultural heritage and history interpretation must be placed in a broader European and global context within **education and civic education** structures and programmes. Tools to understand and embrace the on-going encounters within and between;
  - ii) Europeans, other cultures and peoples of the world should be developed and made an intrinsic feature of heritage interventions;

- iii) Supporting **intangible heritage and living heritage**, enabling skills development, promoting participation and the organic evolution of the different techniques and art forms as well as ensuring its contemporary relevance are among the most efficient approaches to guarantee culture and cultural heritage sustainability.
- iv) **Communities**, citizens' engagement, co-construction and participation are seen as critical elements for the success of heritage interventions. Informed participation of communities helps fostering ownership and ensures adequacy to local realities and needs. Promoting diversity in interventions, particularly intercultural encounters, contribute to the well-being of citizens as a whole. Thus, it is necessary to **rebalance interventions to pay greater attention to soft-infrastructure** and participation, rather than traditional approaches privileging hard-infrastructure. Such a shift requires the strengthening of participatory methodologies, intercultural mediation and new evaluation frameworks to measure social impact and engagement.
- v) There is a need to progress towards a fair and ethical digitisation of culture and cultural heritage:
  - (1) **Digitisation must take into account diversity criteria** with a view to provide an inclusive and nuanced understanding of the contributions of different groups to our shared past (women, minorities, etc).
  - (2) Digitisation is an enabling factor for new avenues of mutual understanding across Europe if access to digital cultural content is facilitated, among other means, through **curation and multilingualism**.
  - (3) The role of private **artificial intelligence (AI) in mediating our collective memories and shared heritage** should be urgently acknowledged. Collaborative frameworks between public institutions, civil society and private developers must emerge to co-design AI that reflects societal and cultural objectives enabling diverse and equal societies to thrive.
  - (4) The digital ecosystem has considerable impact on our environment through the resource intensive infrastructure required to store and transmit increasing volumes of data. Horizon Europe and the Digital Europe Programme should support developing responsible digitisation protocols, algorithms, interfaces and hardware aligning with the proposed mainstreaming of climate action objectives across all EU programmes.
- vi) The contested relation between heritage, urban development, regeneration, preservation and tourism should be carefully re-examined with the aim to **ensure sustainability of the host communities, their cultural practices and environment**. Lack of community involvement in the management of tourism, as well as in urban and heritage regeneration, especially in rural areas, can lead to the loss of cultural diversity, displacement of communities, gentrification and erosion of local authenticity, all at the basis of their economic potential. Community involvement to co-design and manage such processes should be placed at the core of the new Creative Europe programme, Horizon Europe, the European Regional Development and Cohesion Fund, European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the LIFE – Programme for the Environment and Climate Action, particularly in view of the mainstreaming of climate action in the proposed post-2020 MFF. vii)
- vii) **Research, innovation, science and technology** are domains where past and future heritage can come together. Cross-sectoral cooperation between arts and science nourishes innovation, including social, artistic and technological innovation. Arts, culture, heritage and scientific approaches must be seen in equal terms in all programmes, especially Horizon Europe. viii)
- viii) There is a need for research on the future of cultural heritage in order to **bridge traditional and contemporary perspectives of cultural heritage** and anticipate challenges and needs.

## GOVERNANCE:

5. Consultative structures on the cultural and cultural heritage field should be established within the remit and management of European Institutions, in order to **guarantee inclusivity of the wider culture and cultural heritage stakeholder community and inter-institutional coordination**. Shared and back to back stakeholders meetings with Member States and European Parliament have proved to be among the most successful elements of the EYCH. Thus, the new Cultural Heritage Forum should be continued and properly supported open to new actors and all European institutions.
6. The mainstreaming of culture and cultural heritage to maximise cross-overs with other policy fields should respond to **a coordinated strategy, ensuring a holistic understanding of culture and cultural policy**. In addition to the 24 May 2018 Council Conclusions calling to bring cultural heritage to the fore across policies in the EU, the Council conclusions of the 27 May 2015 on cultural and creative crossovers and Article 167, stating that the Union shall take cultural aspects into account in its action across policy fields **calls for the promotion of the diversity of European cultures, including cultural heritage, in all relevant policy domains**.

## SUPPORT MECHANISMS:

7. Funding mechanisms should ensure accessibility to a plurality of organisation in order to avoid concentration of public resources, enabling greater diversity of ideas and results for innovation to flourish.
8. As acknowledged in the new European Commission proposal, European Regional Development funds should allow for community-led local development (CLLD) in culture and cultural heritage urban development in order to guarantee adaptation to local realities and community needs.
9. The planned mobility scheme applicable to the wider cultural sector, should allow for cross-pollination to develop the skills needed for future oriented heritage practice.

CAE wishes to thank its members, who contributed to the formation of these points.

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## ABOUT CULTURE ACTION EUROPE

Culture Action Europe (CAE) is the first port of call for informed opinion and debate about arts and cultural policy in Europe. CAE is the biggest umbrella organisation and the only network representing all cultural sub-sectors. CAE represents 80.000 voices of the cultural sector through its 145 members, including transnational networks, national networks, private and public organisations and individual members.

[www.cultureactioneurope.org](http://www.cultureactioneurope.org)