



Culture Action Europe

Position Paper on the New European Bauhaus

*Culture Action Europe (CAE), the major European cross sectoral cultural network, has been a **partner of the New European Bauhaus** since 2021, both in its individual capacity and as a member of the New European Bauhaus Collective (NEBC), an informal gathering of organisations from the European cultural and architectural landscape overcoming differences and barriers to meaningfully give an added value to joint collaborations.*

*In reaction to the Commission's Communication on the New European Bauhaus, and in order to constructively contribute to the own-initiative report by the European Parliament, Culture Action Europe has consulted its wide cross sectoral membership made by over 170 networks, organisations, policy-makers, activists, individuals, to draft the following **policy recommendations**.*

INTRODUCTION

Almost 18 months on, the **New European Bauhaus (NEB)** initiative is taking shape. First promoted by the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen during the State of the Union speech of September 2020, it aims at '**bringing the Green Deal closer to the citizens**' by highlighting its cultural dimension and making the EU's ambition to become the first climate neutral continent in the world '**tangible and palpable**' in a '**sustainable, inclusive and beautiful way**.'

Despite the proclaims, however, **culture does not seem to be an equal partner in the NEB so far**, notwithstanding the wide participation of cultural and creative stakeholders in the co-creation phase. The NEB perspective about beauty needs to be widened to adopt the overarching concept of aesthetics as a multilayered approach: culture represents an intrinsic value in the way we approach reality, and at the same time it articulates who we are and where we want to go individually and as communities.

In the Commission's own words, the Green Deal is not just an environmental and economic plan, but part of a new cultural and societal paradigm. If given the means and the space to contribute, **culture has a great potential to make this initiative fly**.



In this sense, we believe the **New European Bauhaus should be part of a broader Cultural Deal for Europe**, triggering - among other things - a major shift in public policy, combining bottom-up participatory approaches to co-create spaces and ways of (well)-living together, and empowering the people (and their working conditions) beyond buildings.

With war back in the European continent, we want to reaffirm that **culture is key in building democratic communities based on dialogue and promoting peace**.

We also believe in **culture as the fourth pillar of sustainable development** and in its crucial role to raise awareness on and [contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#), **while becoming a goal in itself**, and on grassroots action to mobilise people around the climate emergency. Several global cultural networks, including Culture Action Europe, have supported this aim for almost 10 years, with initiatives such as the [#culture2030goal campaign](#) and its predecessors.

In addition, **we are committed to advocate to ensure the sustainability of the cultural practices and the cultural sector itself** - something which the first steps of the NEB initiative have unfortunately challenged. So far, the initiative has been promoting free calls for ideas, often exploiting already precarious cultural workers and benefitting from their quality labour, while not foreseeing any fair remuneration for it.

Hence, we believe we need a general paradigm shift. The solution to the structural crisis, to which the **climate emergency** is added, will not be achieved only by green-washing, leaving the whole current system unchanged. The cultural dimension is fundamental to tackle these challenges and enhance these changes - also from within the cultural and creative sectors -, notably contributing to the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels and to the EU's ambition of becoming the first climate neutral block by 2050



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1.** **Artists, cultural and creative workers** from all cultural sectors - also beyond the heritage, design and architecture domains -, as well as non-tangible art forms, including digital creation, should be better **featured as key interlocutors and equal partners of the initiative**, highlighting their active role in 'bringing the Green Deal closer to the citizens' in a trans-disciplinary way and in dialogue with other disciplines.
- 2.** The European Commission should create the conditions for **a more prominent involvement and engagement of the artistic community**, empowering cross sectoral artistic creation and promoting practices not limited to environmental, economical and societal sustainability. This initiative should be considered as one potential instrument to do so, but not the only one, and **cultural and creative sectors should not be urged to meet the NEB objectives also when applying for calls non immediately related to the New European Bauhaus.**
- 3.** The NEB should become **a self-standing programme part of the EU Green Deal**, 'freeing up' the budget of already established funding programmes and envelopes dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors such as Creative Europe or the Cluster 2 of Horizon Europe, dedicated to Culture, Creativity and Inclusive society.
- 4.** With a dedicated budget, the NEB should mobilise resources to make its calls for ideas and prototyping exercises more sustainable. In this way, it would **concretely contribute to the shared efforts in improving working conditions and securing fair remuneration in the cultural and creative sectors**, as well as recognising the economic and social value of the cultural work.
- 5.** As a policy framework, the NEB should serve as a **platform for the European Commission and the Member States to benchmark** what **resources** they have invested and what initiatives they have put forward **to sustain the green transition** of the cultural and creative sectors, on the one hand, and to **promote the role of cultural stakeholders in the green transition**, on the other.
- 6.** At the core of the NEB values, **the participation of local communities - as well as of non-European actors - should be enhanced.** In line with the objectives of the European Year of Youth, the NEB should engage specifically with young people.
- 7.** The NEB should also focus on **urban and non-urban areas**, contributing to the cultural practices in rural and peripheral territories.



- 8.** The NEB should **create and support the frame for trans sectoral dialogues between knowledge silos**, enhancing trans-disciplinary research and innovation among Arts, Humanities, Sciences, Technologies and Urbanism and between them and the society.
- 9.** Going beyond building materials and the built environment (the human-made space in which people live, work and recreate), **the NEB initiative should be about the way of living together** in a fair and sustainable ecosystem in our post-pandemic societies. Hence, it should shed light on **communities, public spaces and common grounds, community practices, participation, cultural democracy**, prototyping existing good practices in view to share them across the EU.
- 10.** In the frame of the NEB, different ways of equal partnership, collaboration and participatory methodologies are to be further built, and clear proposals and methodologies for collective design should be put in place to **provide a peer-learning ecosystem and foster grassroots production of knowledge**.
- 11.** The NEB should help **efforts to decentralise and decrease the hierarchies** among disciplines and institutions, to **allow open-minded processes** where knowledge exchange and collective thinking are at the centre.
- 12.** The New European Bauhaus should contribute to **methodological innovation in the study of complex interrelated phenomena**, moving from the established reliance on the known and quantifiable in policy-making towards qualitative and mid and long term indicators such as Social Readiness Levels to assess the social impact of initiatives/products.
- 13.** The NEB should support evidence gathering on modes of assessment and delivery of sustainable designed and built environments that place **less reliance on quantifiable assessment and instead include qualitative, artistic, design-based, and culturally and socially based values and behaviour**.
- 14.** With inclusion as one of the three key pillars of the New European Bauhaus, the initiative should be a key asset in **helping shift the paradigm from the production of cultural products to access to culture and to cultural democracy**.
- 15.** **The New European Bauhaus Festival should not become a single standing new flagship** or compete with already existing trans-disciplinary European Festivals, Forum and Fairs with the competitive advantage of being fuelled by EU money. Instead, it should support **already existing Festivals as well as future-to-be established local initiatives that are aligned with the NEB principles**, mobilising specific NEB funding for these initiatives.



Published by Culture Action Europe

March 2022



**Funded by
the European Union**

Culture Action Europe thanks the European Commission for the support. This communication reflects the views of Culture Action Europe and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.