BELONGING AND BECOMING

A cultural response to the White Paper on the Future of Europe and the accompanying reflection papers

The Rome declaration (2017) commits to build a Europe “where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development” and places culture squarely within the social domain of EU action, with the promotion of cultural diversity at its core. Nonetheless, the role of culture in building a positive future for Europe is absent from the European Commission’s White Paper.

Europe, as a cultural space, predates the European Union and extends beyond its geographical and institutional limits. A shared cultural heritage and history underpins our sense of belonging to a common project, reminding us of the need to come together in peace as Europeans. Culture is the foundation of who we are as human beings. It allows us to take part in collective life, binding us together when pursuing shared objectives. Without the explicit recognition of the European project’s cultural dimension, the future of the European Union as a common endeavour is difficult to imagine.

In the 60 years of existence of the European project, a supranational cultural space has emerged. Cultural operators have long understood that in an increasingly globalised and competitive world their strength resides in uniting on European level. Contemporary creation is producing a new and needed symbolic space that inscribes us as Europeans and projects us into the future. These practices accompany the emergence of European identities, coexisting with national, regional and local identities. They gift us with a plural, diverse European culture in constant progression that strengthens social cohesion and wellbeing. As shown in the Parliament’s study on European cultural identity, fostering a sense of belonging through both a political and a cultural identity is a systemic element for the sustainability of the European project (Prutsch, 2017). Culture and democracy are not independent one from the other; a robust relationship between culture and democratic participation has been proven (COE, 2016). Counteracting the instrumentalisation of culture by populist movements and reinforcing EU actions celebrating and strengthening heritage and cultural diversity, in accordance with the core remit of the EU in the cultural field (Art. 167), should be seen as fundamental to build the future of Europe. The cultural sector is ready to be a companion and ally in this endeavour.

A CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE ON CULTURE FOR THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Culture Action Europe (CAE) consulted member organisations, European networks, partners and the wider civil society on the implication of the White Paper, by convening regional meetings (“hubs”) in eight European countries and through an open real-time online conversation (“Jamm’Europe”), moderated by CAE experts and involving 527 people. During the process we discussed the proposed scenarios and their possible implications for the future of Europe, producing and debating a wide range of creative ideas, critical analysis, aspirations and concerns that directly inform the reflections and proposals below.
The Cultural Sector’s assessment of the 5 Scenarios

None of the scenarios proposed was found satisfactory as they do not recognise the fundamental role of culture.

Support for the European project is strong across the cultural sector. It is clear that the sector largely favours a vision of a Europe that boldly grows closer and advances together (Scenario 5) and rejects the single-market-only option (Scenario 2). The cultural sector recognises the difficulties of “doing much more together”. While acknowledging the progress of the EU project so far, “Carrying on” (Scenario 1) is only seen as the second best option, allowing for gradual change. However, it is stressed that the EU should carry on better, adjusting existing tools to better respond to citizens’ needs and aspirations. This includes strengthening those areas where culture is recognised as contributing to effective change (sustainable development, social cohesion, inclusive education, regional and urban development and economic development). Carry on better would also imply taking seriously the fundamental mandate of the EU in the cultural field as spelled out in the Treaties: to promote non-commercial cultural exchanges, artistic and literary creation, and improve the knowledge and dissemination of the cultures and history of the peoples in Europe.

Differentiated integration (Scenario 3) of Member States is seen positively in contexts where decisive action is needed to overcome specific challenges. However, scenario 3 risks deepening divergences among Member States, further undermining the sustainability of the European project. Overall, a multi-speed Europe is seen critically, particularly at a time when Europe seems to be disagreeing on values, fundamental rights and when safeguards for civil society are weakening. Scenario 3 is not seen as a viable option to rebuild the trust and legitimacy of the EU. Doing less together (Scenario 4), while potentially attractive as a means of focusing on core tasks, is rejected as it could imply that culture would be further side-lined as a field of EU action, hence jeopardising the future of the Union.

This critical reading of the five scenarios reflects the concerns of the cultural sector and underpin a call for a 6th scenario that will take the cultural foundations of Europe and the critical contribution of culture to the future of Europe into account.

Guiding principles and actions for a 6th Scenario

Much of what the cultural sector has identified as shortcomings of the White Paper and its scenarios has also been articulated previously by CAE (CAF, 2017) and argued by other European and international stakeholders. A formal and substantial recognition of culture as a positive force for the future of Europe would help restate the value and relevance of the EU’s foundational texts. The following proposals spell out key elements for such an alternative scenario as identified during the CAE-led joint reflection process. It is based on a preference for a Europe that grows closer and advances together, and acknowledges the contribution of culture to our future.

1. VALUES, RIGHTS AND INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS: The cultural sector reiterates that EU policies must support and apply international obligations, both within the Union and in its External Action. In particular, the right of individual cultural development and the right to take part in cultural life have been recognised by all EU Member States as signatories of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). EU leadership is expected in ensuring that Article 2 of the Treaty of the European Union and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights are upheld and applied, guaranteeing that freedom of expression, including artistic expression, is not undermined.

2. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND EDUCATION TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION: Promoting and investing in intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education is crucial for the sustainability of the European project (EP, 2016). Urgent action is needed to counterbalance movements advocating for closed and exclusionary cultural identities. Investing in this domain has clear EU added value as amateur and professional cultural practices support social cohesion, integration, convergence and foster ownership and belonging to the EU. Acknowledging the cultural dimension of the diverging development of urban and rural contexts will address key challenges of regional and structural policies.

Synergies between culture and education must be developed (CAF et al., 2013). Teaching EU fundamental values (EP, 2017), such as democracy or tolerance, intercultural competences, critical thinking, media literacy and cultural capabilities will
make of our youth creative, critical and open European citizens. Knowledge of the rich diversity of cultures, arts, languages and history in Europe allows us to understand the European cultural space and contributes to the development of all individuals. There are uncontested evidences of the direct impact of education, cultural participation and democratic engagement (EP, 2017; COE, 2016). Creative and social competences are also recognised among the core skills needed for the jobs of tomorrow’s digital world (EC, 2017). Culture is key to answering questions regarding the ethical, social and humanistic implications of digital developments. Lastly, education programmes, such as ERASMUS +, should ensure equal and appropriate access to European exchange and mobility programmes taking into consideration the specificities of technical and artistic educational paths. DG Education and Culture is well placed to reinforce the link between its two main remits, as currently, the full range of synergies between these policy domains are not fully explored.

3. SUPPORTING THE ARTS AND THE CULTURAL SECTOR AT EU LEVEL: Artistic companies are composed by artists of different nationalities. European cultural operators connect and create together. European contemporary creation participates in global markets. The EU can aid in the development of European creators and cultural organisations by providing EU added value through stable, reliable, and sustained support, enabling the development by the sector of peer-learning mechanisms, building integrated circuits, co-producing and jointly working towards reaping the benefits of internationalisation. In order to secure the development of its full potential, the cultural sector calls for the doubling of the budget assigned to culture in absolute terms.

4. BUILDING INFORMED TRUST THROUGH CIVIL SOCIETY DIALOGUE: An institutional paradigm shift is needed to regain the trust of citizens and foster a sense of belonging towards the European project. The Treaty recognises in article 11 the institutional duty to maintain an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations and civil society. Current mechanisms of participation and consultation are underdeveloped or under constant threat of budget cuts. Civil society dialogue can be enhanced by making better use of existing structures, such as the Commission representation offices in Member States, where the value of Europe and European policies at local and regional level can be discussed in ways that are comprehensible for citizens.

5. A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR CREATIVITY IN A DIGITAL FUTURE: As the digital future dawns, the EU must take steps to protect and promote EU-based creative endeavours, as non-EU digital monopolies and multinationals operate at a scale that renders some Member States unable to regulate and ensure appropriate tax regimes. To develop a fair trade and competition policy for the 21st century that is not in contradiction with both sharing and networking benefits and the distribution of creative content is a primary challenge facing European legislation. Non-standard forms of employment common in the artistic, cultural and creative fields will increasingly be expanded to other sectors of the economy. Ensuring that fair contractual relations can thrive in the digital future, as well as in the wider economy, is crucial for the future of the Union. This will only be achieved if the same level of social protection is guaranteed to all types of workers.

6. ADVANCING TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The future of the Union will be sustainable or it will not be at all. In order to achieve a sustainable future, a cultural change is needed. The transversal contribution of culture to sustainability, including to economic development, job creation, promoting democracy, social justice and solidarity, fostering cohesion, fighting social exclusion, poverty and generational and demographic disparities, has been increasingly recognised by European bodies (EESC, 2017; EP, 2017). Therefore, the cultural sector calls for its full incorporation into the objectives, definitions, tools and evaluation criteria of the European Commission’s Sustainable Development Goals strategy.

European citizens have never considered Europe as solely an economic project. While recognising the benefits that the single market has brought to Europeans, the overly economic self-presentation of the EU during the last decade has alienated many citizens. Data shows that Europeans consider “cultural diversity and openness to others” to be as important as the market economy and free trade when looking into the future of Europe (Eurobarometer, 2016) and place social equality and solidarity clearly above economic interests. These are core concerns of the European polis, based upon which a political, social and economic project can thrive.
A cultural response to the European Commission reflection papers

REFLECTION PAPER ON THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF EUROPE

The cultural sector welcomes the recognition in the paper that economic integration must be accompanied by a social and political dimension. Equally welcomed is the acknowledgement that in the face of “anxieties about cultural identity and cultural differences” cultural initiatives can contribute to alleviate such tensions and foster cohesion, dialogue and mutual understanding.

Since the paper fails to submit concrete proposals the sector recalls that much has been done by cultural, social, political and economic players to substantiate and agree on forward-looking actions. The European Parliament resolution on the role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting EU fundamental values (Ward report) offers a comprehensive range of proposals for determinate action in the field. The EU Member States experts group on intercultural dialogue has taken stock of policies and existing good practices, laying the foundations for sound action (EC, 2017).

The reflection paper identifies creative skills and cross-disciplinary competences as key for future employment. Foresight studies have shown, vis-à-vis increasing automation, that those professions that require social and creative skills show the best employment prospects (Berger and Frey, 2016a, Berger and Frey, 2016b). The jobs of the future digital economy will also require ethical and humanistic competences to develop their solutions in a socially responsible manner. In globalised markets, Europeans will need intercultural skills to engage in multicultural teams in order to remain competitive. Europe as a multicultural space is an ideal environment to teach such competences, alongside rights-based democratic approaches and critical thinking, emotional intelligence and creativity. These have been recognised among the top 10 skills needed by 2020 (WEF, 2016) and are all closely linked to the mastery of cultural skills.

As stated by the European Alliance for the Arts, a Social Europe could further flourish if cultural participation is encouraged and the acquisition of creative and soft skills for the most vulnerable groups in society is promoted. Culture and the arts can facilitate social integration given that they are key elements for social cohesion and contribute to combating marginalisation and poverty.

The cultural sector is concerned by the risk of an excessive focus on culture’s economic contribution, dismissing its intrinsic value, and thereby reducing its multifaceted social contribution as recognised in the Rome Declaration. Despite the promises of the Creative Economy there is increasing evidence of an unequal distribution of revenues (SACEM, 2015, KEA, 2017) in the cultural and creative field that is ultimately leading to a less diverse creative workforce (Oakley et al., 2017). Evidence-based cultural policy in the EU would require collecting EU-wide data on artists’ livelihoods, and reflecting on policies complementing copyright, which is often proving to be insufficient to reward creation.

In terms of jobs and growth, artists and creators have been taken as a referent for the expansion of the so-called gig economy. Discontinuous employment patterns are common in the cultural sector, and questions have arisen regarding the social sustainability of the current model. In particular, these contractual relations have lead to situations in which artists face insufficient pensions, female creators are penalised during and after maternity leaves, and public support between contracts is often absent. Different solutions have been tested across Member States. France found in the intermittents du spectacle model a way to stabilise irregular working patterns and Ireland has recognised a professional status for self-employed visual artists and writers within the existing social welfare system when actively looking for employment. Italy has developed a strong network of cultural cooperatives offering alternatives modes of organisation to cultural workers. All these options merit further exploration under the model of the Open method of coordination.

REFLECTION PAPER ON HARNESSING GLOBALISATION

Culture can bring forward a positive globalisation. The cultural sector shares the conviction that a cultural union extends beyond institutional and geographical borders, setting the arena for creative inspiration, the circulation of ideas and cooperation at global level. This reflection is equally valid towards and with all countries, and resonates with the position of the culture sector to maintain close cultural ties with the UK post-Referendum.
The European cultural sector retains a significant global advantage in terms of artistic recognition, built upon a long-standing tradition of public investment. In today’s multi-polar world, the European cultural sector will need additional support to remain competitive: EU added value is to be found in joint-initiatives that promote circulation of the EU’s creative works at a global level, for example through joint export missions, support for mobility within and beyond the EU or by supporting European co-productions that pool resources. Additionally, the EU can and should influence the emergence of a global framework that tackles fair circulation of digital creative content.

International cultural relations have been recognised as an important part of the EU’s common foreign policy (EC, 2017). This is an opportunity to promote a global order based on peace, the rule of law, freedom of expression, mutual understanding, respect for fundamental values and cultural diversity. A forward looking approach to EU foreign policy should assign a key role to civil society, as noted by High Representative Mogherini (2017). Equally relevant is to ensure open artistic exchange, demonstrating European cultural diversity on equal footing with other countries and also engaging with minority cultures within Europe. The EU should facilitate mobility, peer-learning, also in the arts education sector, exchange and support opportunities for joint creation among international artists. The establishment of a cultural and education visa could contribute to this end (EP, 2017). The new partnership between Member States and the EU represents a positive step forward and an inspiration on how to advance in the cultural field at a EU level. Key steps for a successful future EU cultural relations strategy are defining a clear governance structure on EU level, as well as ensuring that efforts are properly resourced.

The development of open exchange in the field of culture goes hand in hand with freedom of expression, including artistic expression. Attacks on artists and freedom of expression should concern us all, as the closing of the minds is often the first sign of greater political restrictions to come. The cases of censorship, persecution, incarceration and violence against creators have doubled in a one-year time span (Freemuse, 2016). The EU should ensure that cultural and artistic rights are included in all international instruments, as well as defended and upheld in its broader action.

Tourists are attracted by Europe’s human landscapes, its cultural heritage, values and way of life. The EU should make full use of this power of attraction by developing sustainable tourism strategies that respect citizens’ rights to the city and minimizes displacements and depopulation, as in the case of Venice (UNESCO, 2015) or Barcelona (Eurostat, 2016), and overburdening of services (Lisbon 2017).

REFLECTION PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN DEFENCE

A future EU security and defence strategy should recognise the multifaceted nature of conflict and security. Often, tensions and perceptions of threat are best dealt with social engagement, mediation or early investment in conflict prevention. The EU Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy (2016) has already recognised the role of culture in areas such as counter-terrorism, societal resilience and conflict settlement. A such, the reflection paper on the future of EU defence appears too narrow in its approach and should recognise the cultural dimensions of peace and security.

The soft power of the EU at a global level is indisputable. The EU’s recognition of culture, diversity and core values prove a viable and forward-looking alternative to economic or arms-based strategies. This soft power should be properly harnessed and supported within a coherent, long-term vision that rigorously implements these values within and outside of the EU itself.

When approaching a future security strategy, culture will become of extreme importance when dealing with border management. Refugees and migrants will require support to overcome their traumatic journeys. Newcomers and welcoming communities will also need structures and tools to get to know each other. In face of growing racism, xenophobic populism and hate speech (CoE, 2017) facilitating cultural exchange appears all the more urgent. Projects in the cultural field have proven to be effective to facilitate inter-cultural dialogue and promote wellbeing (EP, 2017). In order to avoid future tensions between diverse communities, the Union should support Member States by continuing such actions with stable frameworks and budget lines.
REFLECTION PAPER ON THE FUTURE OF EU FINANCES

The reflection paper calls for an approach to investment where EU added value is guaranteed. The cultural sector welcomes the recognition of the fundamental role of the EU budget in providing added value in upholding common European values and, among others, a better knowledge of European cultures. The cultural sector sees EU added value of cultural investment as residing mainly, yet not solely, in two domains. First, culture supports convergence, social cohesion, dialogue, integration and fosters ownership and belonging to the EU. A better knowledge and implementation of EU values should be at the core of the Union's internal and external action. Secondly, EU added value is to be found in developing the artistic and cultural sector at a EU level by enabling the sharing of resources, developing flexible peer-learning mechanisms, building integrated circuits, co-producing and jointly working towards the internationalisation of the sector.

European cultural heritage and contemporary cultural production receive significant recognition at a global level. Yet, the cultural sector in its European dimension cannot function when the main EU programme focusing on culture, “Creative Europe”, represents a mere 0.14% of the total budget (MFF period 2014-2020), out of which under one third (31%) is earmarked for Culture. These very limited resources are time and again re-allocated towards new and ever wide-ranging initiatives, so that consistent and sustainable planning is impossible. The cultural sector asks that new initiatives must be endowed with adequate funding: funding must remain focused and be expanded on what the Treaties describe as the core remit of EU cultural investment, namely non-commercial cultural exchanges, artistic and literary creation, and improving the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples, while allowing it to successfully face the challenges of the 21st century. In view of the results and track-record of the programme, the cost-effectiveness of investing in European culture is beyond doubt. Given that cultural and creative sectors contribute to 4.4% of the EU's GDP and 3.8% of its workforce (EP, 2017), the current degree of under-investment in European culture is more than clear. In light of the above, the cultural sector calls for the doubling of the budget associated to the programme in absolute terms.

The cultural sector joins the reflection paper in underlining that financial instruments such as guarantees, loans and equity, are only appropriate for revenue-generating projects and consequently, there will be a need to give continuity to grants and subsidies for projects that do not generate revenues, such as in the social domain or for people-based investments. We welcome existing EU initiatives exploring debt-finance for selected actors in the creative economy. Yet, a substantial part of the cultural sector operates within the not-for profit domain and has socially-oriented missions. These initiatives should be carefully monitored in terms of their socio-economic impact and the type of organisations benefiting from debt-instruments in order to avoid blanket approaches that could be harmful to the cultural and creative ecosystem.

The reflection paper identifies a range of challenges where additional EU investment will be needed, such as sustainability and solidarity, reducing economic and social divergences, education and training, the integration of refugees, equality and social inclusion, particularly in regions with high social inequalities. Great additional impact can be expected from supporting and strengthening the contribution of culture to tackle such challenges in areas such as sustainable development, social cohesion, inclusive education, regional and urban development and economic development.

The Commission cannot live up to its own ambitions and address the multiple challenges Europe will have to face in the future with the current budget. The cultural sector supports the development of the EU’s own resources. As noted in the reflection paper, exploring the potential for own revenues arising from tax coordination in the area of corporate taxation appears as an appropriate way forward. For example, third country global digital monopolies controlling the distribution of creative content, often without offering proper remuneration to creators, while making use of aggressive corporate tax planning should be considered within this scope. Where EU action supports Member States to collect otherwise un-captured tax revenues, a percentage of such salvaged funds should be reinvested in the cultural and artistic sector.
BY 2025…

1. EU programmes enable a greater diversity of EU citizens and citizens from neighbouring countries to increase their knowledge and understanding of European cultures thanks to the introduction of cultural exchanges programmes and visa facilitation in the cultural field.

2. The Creative Europe programme has doubled its budget and become an European flagship programme for European artistic and cultural exchange, bringing contemporary cultural creation to European citizens.

3. Social security systems across the Union fully take into account the specificities of non-standard forms of employment common in the creative field, guaranteeing the same level of protection to all workers.

4. Culture and the arts are recognised and fully supported as a pillar of a global framework based on values and mutual recognition. Cultural operators and civil society contribute to a sustainable strategy of international cultural relations.

5. The EU is close to finalising negotiations with its international partners leading to a level playing field for the digital economy and the global circulation of content.

6. Europe is a champion of advancing culture in the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. Cultural and creative skills and intercultural competences are fully included in European education curricula.

8. The cultural sector and EU institutions have partnered to further develop and strengthen mechanisms allowing for meaningful civil society dialogue.

A vision of the future built on hope and peace brought us together as Europeans. 60 years ago, the Treaty of Rome recognised “culture as a factor capable of uniting people”. 60 years later, the Rome declaration pledges to build a social Europe through the promotion of cultural diversity. Stronger bonds between its people make Europe stronger. Today, looking into the future of the European project, we must cultivate this collective ethos. In order to create a flourishing future, culture is not an “extra” thing to have, it’s a necessity. This reflection paper presents a wide range of proposals and evidences to mainstream culture as a fundamental building block for Europe. Leadership to bring them forward is now needed to ensure a positive future of the Union and its citizens.
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: 31 transnational networks, 33 national networks, 36 private and public organisations and 45 individual members.

www.cultureactioneurope.org

The recommendations included in this reflection paper stem from a collective discussion process that engaged over 500 cultural players. CAE wishes to thank the members, partners and friends that supported this effort to jointly build a better future for Europe.

CAE MEMBERS:

acted on the basis of representations, reflections, and suggestions taken from the consultation process.

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CAE Members:


And more than 400 voices during an online consultation Jamm’Europe (www.jammart.eu)

In particular we are very grateful to the following individual members for their ideas, engagement, and support:

Annalisa Cicerchia, Cecilia Balestra, Daniela Utem, Inigo Lopez, Julie Ward, Micaela Casalboni, Luciano Gloor, Nikos Anastasopoulos, Yelena Kharitonova

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