

# CULTURE ACTION EUROPE ACTIVITY REPORT



From 1st January to 30th May **2020**



**Culture Action Europe**

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*CAE wants to thank all its members for their valuable contributions in our position papers, statements, campaigns, communication, working groups and HUBS.*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIRST HALF OF 2020

Culture Action Europe actively campaigns to bring culture at the centre of public-debate and decision-making. During the first half of the 2020, Culture Action Europe's activities were influenced by the spread of the Coronavirus and the subsequent lockdown measures adopted by governments to halt the pandemic. Culture Action Europe, together with other European cultural networks and organisations rapidly reacted to the new circumstances and started to explore ways to support culture and creative sectors severely affected by the crisis. The effects of the pandemics on the Creative Europe programme and the request for a substantial and sustainable support for culture in Europe's recovery initiative have been central in the last 4 months.

The ongoing negotiations around the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the EU budget for 2021-2027, has been one of the focus of our advocacy actions. Since the start of the negotiations in May 2018, CAE advocated for an increased budget for culture calling for doubling the budget for Creative Europe program (#double4culture) and ensuring at least 1% of the whole long-term budget across policy fields and MFF programmes is earmarked for culture (#cultureneedsmore).

Despite the difficult times, CAE continued to work towards achieving its main strategic goals by advancing the political debate around the freedom of artistic expression in Europe, promoting better working conditions for artists' and creators and exploring advocacy strategies for artistic research and experimentation and its role in interdisciplinary research practices. Additionally, special focus was put on implementing culture in the UN SDGs strategy and greening of European programmes like Creative Europe.

Culture Action Europe team and board members took the time to invest in strengthening direct connections with our members in this period. Through CAE Members Telethon, we identified main effects of the crisis on the work of our members and started a collective thinking process to imagine the CAE network of tomorrow.

## CULTURE ACTION EUROPE STRATEGIC TOPICS AND ACTIONS

### COVID RESPONSE

The Culture and Creative Sectors (CCS) all over Europe were hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. With live events and performances being cancelled, cultural venues closed, exhibition and performing opportunities decreased, the cultural workers have been severely affected. In a sector characterised by self-employment, freelancing and job flexibility, combined with little or no access to social benefits, the loss of income posed a direct and immediate threat to the existence of cultural operators.

CAE responded to the Covid crisis at different levels:

#### 1 (Joint) statements on COVID-19 and the situation of the cultural sector

At the onset of the crisis CAE called for solidarity between Member States and for a strong and united European response that respects foundations of the European Union and its core values in its letter [Remaining together in times of crisis](#) that was sent to president of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Parliament David Sassoli, to EP CULT committee members and to Permanent Representations of the Member States.

In a [joint statement](#), European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe urged the European Parliament, European Commission and the Member States to recognise CCS as an integral part of the economic, social and environmental recovery plan for Europe within the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 and to support the sector with at least 7% of the Recovery Initiative. We plead to put culture at the centre of the (revised) MFF by doubling the budget for Creative Europe and ensuring at least 1% of the whole long-term budget across policy fields and MFF programmes is earmarked for culture.

Culture Action Europe was among the signatories of [The Greens/EFA in the European Parliament Open Letter to the European Commission](#) and the Member States, demanding support for the Cultural and Creative Sectors, particularly cultural creators, affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

## 2) Clarifying the issues and challenges for Creative Europe beneficiaries

Together with European cultural networks, platforms and cultural organisations, CAE wrote a [joint letter](#) on the 20th of March, 2020 to the Commissioner Gabriel and Members of Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC). The letter listed proposals regarding the ways to cope with the consequences of COVID-19 on Creative Europe and the European CCSs. Subsequently, the European Commission has made available a list of [Questions & Answers](#) to shed some light on the most acute issues regarding the Creative Europe programme. However, few additional points were not tackled by the document. Further explanation on issues related to eligibility, match-funding and co-financing rates, budgetary shifts and

effects of the MFF extension on networks funded by Creative Europe were needed. These points were summarised in the [second letter](#) that was sent on behalf of the European cultural networks to the DG EAC and EACEA on the 30th of April.

## 3) Research on the effects of COVID-19 on the cultural sector

The European Cultural Foundation (ECF) and CAE mapped together the emergency initiatives and measures across Europe to tackle the effects of the Covid-19 crisis on the arts, culture, creative sectors and cultural heritage (compensations, dedicated funding, combined efforts or public and private actors, information sharing etc.). The mapping was done [through a survey](#) with the goal to identify the gaps between these measures and to pull together more resources and share them widely with cultural actors across Europe and beyond. The report on the findings will be published in June.

## 4) Advocacy and awareness raising

Additional to the drafting of (joint) statements, CAE advocated for the issues raised in various online meetings with European decision makers, described below in more details. CAE also contributed to online talks and seminars such as:

- [The Rome Charter - Agenda on Cultural Rights](#) (March 18th, 19th, April 20th, 21st)
- [Òmnium Cultural's](#) first online talk (28 April)
- Intercult webinar [State of Culture in Europe](#) (May 15th)

- Launch of the [Statement on Culture and the COVID-19 pandemic](#) #culture2030goal campaign (May 21st)
- [DISCE Webinars](#) (May 28th, June 4th)

[CAE's Newsletter](#), issued on May 9 Europe day described which measures and which actions need to be taken in order to put culture at the centre of a fair and sustainable future. Several Newsdigests informed CAE members on the latest cultural news and policy developments at the European level.

## MFF CAMPAIGN AND THE RECOVERY INITIATIVE

The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027 discussions are seriously lagging behind. Before the special MFF summit in February CAE organised an #ActforCulture day on February 17 and offered [concrete tools](#) to the community to contribute to CAE's MFF campaign. No agreement was reached during the February summit. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered a renewed MFF proposal to be put on the table by the European Commission at the end of May, starting the process from scratch again. CAE therefore formulated an updated position on [the post-coronavirus 2021-2027 MFF](#). We called on the European Institutions and the Member States to recognise culture as an integral part of the economic, social and environmental recovery plan for Europe within the new MFF and support the highly-affected CCSs with at least 7% of the Recovery Fund which is set to front-load money over the first programming years.

Alongside the statement, CAE took significant advocacy actions by video meeting EU Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Mariya Gabriel's cabinet and Vice-President Margaritis Schinas before the Culture Ministers meeting of 19 May. We also continued active online campaign to highlight the contribution of culture in building sustainable, resilient and healthy societies (#actforculture).

Despite its historic relevance, the revised Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal presented by the European Commission on 27 May is unambitious for culture. Indeed, the Commission has

made some step backwards by decreasing the overall figure for Creative Europe from 1,64 billion euros in its previous proposal from May 2018 to 1,52 billion euros in May 2020 communication. As the new financial envelope to fund Europe's recovery accounts for 1,85 trillion euros, Creative Europe represents only the 0,08% of the whole package.

As soon as the new MFF came out, CAE started coordinating a joint effort of various CCS European stakeholders to draft a joint statement addressed to the Member States, who are responsible for adopting the long-term budget, calling on them to make sure that:

- More funding is made available for Creative Europe, the only EU programme dedicated to culture and European cultural cooperation.
- The additional top-up cohesion funds, foreseen for example under the new “Next Generation EU” Initiative to support workers in regions and sectors most affected by the pandemic, ultimately reach the cultural operators.

## ADVOCACY WORKING GROUP

The advocacy working group was very active in this period- gathering in online meetings on the topics of “ Greening Creative Europe, COVID-19 effects on Creative Europe and the new MFF statement. CAE network members and members closely following our advocacy actions have been regularly updated on our actions. On 14 May, CAE held an online [networks meeting](#) to update and gather all inputs for future advocacy actions.

Also working on a wider scale - In February, Culture Action Europe participated in [European cultural networks: connections, collaborations and opportunities](#) organised by the Arts Council of Malta.

CAE also joined the discussions on the initiative proposed by ENCATC to set up a Think Tank on COVID-19 effects on the cultural sector.

## FREEDOM OF ARTISTIC EXPRESSION

Freedom of Artistic Expression is one of the three main strategic goals for CAE's 2018-2021 advocacy agenda. The first meeting of the CAE working group on Freedom of Artistic Expression took place in November 2019, bringing together key experts from the field to review current opportunities and challenges, and to identify a common strategic path to defend freedom of artistic and cultural expression in Europe. The next WG meeting, announced on the 13 March was postponed to 26th of June, due to the pandemic.

On the 21st of January 2020, CAE in partnership with Freemuse organised a public debate and the launch of Freemuse's report on the State of Artistic Freedom in Europe in the European Parliament, an event co-hosted by MEP Domènec Ruiz Devesa and MEP Julie Ward. At the launch, CAE and Freemuse presented [recommendations](#) to the European Institutions that call to ensure that the right to artistic expression is protected and promoted across the EU.

In February CAE was also present and contributed to the “[Intergovernmental Committee of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#)” in Paris at UNESCO HQ.

In May, CAE published a paper by Yamam Al-Zubaidi on the topic. [Protecting artistic freedom as a European value](#) describes how art is often used as a means in political propaganda to discredit minorities, how political nominations are used for ideological control of artistic spaces, commissioning public art with taxpayers' money is subjected to ideological criteria and publicly funded art institutions are forced into self-censorship. While we would expect the rule of law to protect the freedom of artistic expression, we see legal provisions becoming a tool for contesting that same artistic expression. There is little doubt, if any, that this tendency needs to be paid adequate and acute attention by the EU and the paper is the basis for a future CAEs handbook for FoAE in Europe.

## ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL RESEARCH AND STEAM PRACTICES

On the 16th of January, Culture Action Europe, in collaboration with BOZAR LAB and Joint Research Centre (JRC) facilitated a multifaceted evening to create the space to '[occupy the middle](#)', of artistic, scientific and technological approaches. As the closing event of BOZAR and JRC's Datami exposition, the three-part session brought forward the [MAST – Master Module in Art, Science and Technology](#) project as well as numerous contemporary research and artistic projects highlighting what is crucial about crossing borders within and in between institutionalised disciplines and research categories.

The opening session presenting the MAST project by Peter Purg, set the tone on the innovative possibilities of using art thinking in non-artistic fields. Freddy Paul Grunert and Christina Fiordimela,

curators of Resonances III festival week invited the public to a tour of DATAMI. This exhibition presented by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission and BOZAR allowed the public to be part of the dialogue of artists creations jointly working with scientists and policymakers.

The closing session organised by Culture Action Europe, was a panel of five experts on the topic of intersections of Arts, Science and Technology. The debate was focused on the one hand, to identify some of the specificities (not unique though) of artistic research practices outside the academy. On the other hand, the discussion dived into the relationships between the specificities of artistic research and their relevance when working with other fields of research: the challenges of the connections between knowledge domains or disciplines (ethical questions, translation needs, peer recognition, isolation, methodological clashes).

As part of this strand of CAE's work, the working meeting for continuing writing the position paper on Artistic research planned for April 2020 was postponed to the second half of 2020.

Culture Action Europe is also partnering with the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) for the organisation of the International Symposium of Experimental Arts (ISEA) that will take place in Barcelona in 2021.

CAE was also present, co-organising and moderating a panel discussion on Data Economy, AI, Privacy and Sustainability in times of Climate Emergency in the framework of [CPDP 2020](#): Data protection and artificial intelligence conference.

CAE's participation in the MAST – [Master Module in Art, Science and Technology](#) project enables further encounters and learnings in the planned Interfacing Academy for September 2020.

## WELFARE AND WORK CONDITIONS IN THE CULTURAL FIELD

The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals is one of the five priority themes of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022. On this basis, the European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture has requested a study to be carried out on this subject by [Panteia](#), a Dutch research company. This study will serve as input for the Open Method of Coordination working group on the status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals that will be published this year.

Panteia and Culture Action Europe called for a meeting in Brussels (28th of February), consolidating organisations and networks representing different art forms, to validate the draft proposal of the study presented by Panteia. Constructive comments and contributions were collected during this intensive exchange, which shaped the second draft of the study. CAE is awaiting the draft of the study in order to comment on it. The meeting also served as the first meeting of Culture Action Europe's Working Group on Welfare and Work Conditions in the Cultural Field.

The study is still under preparation by Panteia. The presentation of the end result will probably be in the second half of 2020.

## OTHER TOPICS

### SUSTAINABILITY AND GREENING OF THE CREATIVE EUROPE PROGRAMME

In the beginning of February, CAE participated in the European Parliament's stakeholder consultation on "Effective Measures to 'Green' the Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps Programmes" and together with its members drafted a submission to the EP on how to envision a greener Creative Europe programme.

As part of the Culture 2030 Goal Coalition, CAE continued advocating for inclusion of culture in the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030. We call diverse stakeholders to reconsider the sustainability concept which is based on the three-pillar paradigm: economic, environmental and social and add the fourth cultural pillar. Culture must be a pillar in its own right, in an equal relation with other three dimensions of sustainability for its contribution to the creation of collective narratives, its ability to heal and consolidate communities, and foster diversity. Culture Action Europe continuously brings these considerations at the SDG Watch Groupe Europe platform, where we are members. CAE also participated in the exchange on the same topic in March, organised by the [European Foundation Centre's Thematic Network for Arts and Culture](#).

The Culture 2030 Goal Campaign members also reacted to the COVID19 crisis, by issuing a statement, calling to harness culture's potential to bring inspiration, comfort and hope in peoples lives and



pleaded on UN agencies, governments and all other stakeholders to act and implement culture in the UN 2030 Agenda. The statement was publicly launched during an [online presentation](#) on the World Day of Cultural Diversity on the 21st of May.

## CULTURE IN NON-URBAN AREAS

Following up on our previous Beyond the Obvious 2019 Conference: Culture Crops, CAE, in collaboration with the European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC), IETM – International network for contemporary performing arts, Trans Europe Halles (TEH) published “[Beyond the Urban – Contemporary arts and culture in non-urban areas as keys to a sustainable and cohesive Europe](#)”, a joint policy paper aiming at supporting culture in non-urban areas.

On the 16th of March the paper was presented by four partners during a [webinar](#) attended by cultural operators and policy-makers. Comments and contributions received will shape our future advocacy actions to ensure better recognition of arts and culture in non-urban and peripheral areas.

## NETWORK

### CAE MEMBER INTERVIEWS

Initiated by the CAE Executive Committee, CAE launched a mass-consultation with its members - aiming to video talk with our members and exchange on two key topics: 1) how COVID-19 is affecting them and the main challenges they will face post-pandemic and 2) exploring new path for CAE: how do they see the mid- and long term future of CAE.

The answers are being gathered at the time of drafting this report, and the findings will be presented in the Annual General Assembly 2020 on June 12.

### CAE GEOGRAPHICAL HUBS

CAE hub is a platform where CAE members, members of members and external invited participants from a specific geographical area come together. Any CAE member can initiate a hub meeting, if they get at least one other member on board.

On 14th of January CAE, Trans Europe Halles and the City of Lund organised the [CAE Swedish Hub](#) meeting to discuss joint advocacy strategies for 1% for Culture campaign. The meeting focused on developing advocacy actions to increase public investment in culture in the upcoming EU budget 2021-2027. As an output of this meeting,

Swedish cultural stakeholders co-drafted a [letter](#) addressed to the Swedish ministries of Culture and Finances, as well as to Swedish MPs and MEPs calling for increased financial support for culture.

Similarly, on the 6th of February, ahead of the Council meeting of 20 February, Culture Action Europe members in the [Netherlands](#) mobilised to advocate for the increase of budget for arts and culture in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) negotiations. The meeting initiated by CAE, Kunsten92 and European Cultural Foundation (ECF) coincided with the regular gathering of Europeplatform.

On the 6th of March, [CAE French members](#) and partners met in Paris to further strengthen connections between the French and European cultural sector, to identify common prospects and challenges as well as paving the way for stronger representation of the French cultural sector in the European institutions and in European cultural policy debates. The Paris meeting served as a starting point of a wider strategy to consolidate and strengthen Culture Action Europe's membership in France.

## PROJECTS

### CAE IS A PARTNER IN THE FOLLOWING ONGOING PROJECTS

#### MUSEUM SECTOR ALLIANCE (MU.SA)

Mu.SA addresses the shortage of digital and transferrable skills identified in the museum sector and supports the continuous professional development of museum professionals. On April 15, Culture Action Europe and the DAISy Research Group of the Hellenic Open University hosted the [final event of the Mu.SA project](#), adapted and transformed into an online conference due to the mobility and meeting limitations with over 700 participants. The Musa project was finished in April 2020.

#### CAPACITY BUILDING FOR EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE (ECOC)

CAE is one of the partners of the 'Capacity Building for European Capitals of Culture' project, which was initiated by the European Commission as a tender to support capacity building and peer-learning activities for European Capitals of Culture (ECOCs). Within this recently started project (October 2019) CAE was leading the work on mapping the capacity building needs of present and future ECOC, which was successfully completed in Q1 2020. Early summer a Call for Experts will be opened for professionals interested in and available to join the pool of experts.

**HERITAGE CONTACT ZONE (HCZ)**

HCZ is an EU-funded project in the frame of the European Year for Cultural Heritage. In the two years of the project, HCZ investigates the potential of heritage spaces for creative processes and dialogue. HCZ especially focuses on contested, neglected or marginalised heritage with exhibitions, workshops and a toolkit. The project was initially due to complete in August 2020, but will now be extended by half a year.

**MASTER MODULE IN ART, SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY (MAST)**

The MAST project is developing an applied study module at the intersections of Art, Science and Technology, combining methodologies and practices that intertwine the academic sphere closely with the Culture and Creative Sectors. The project was extended till November 2020, and is currently preparing the final showcasing event Interfacing Academy on the 25-27 September in Ljubljana.

**FABULAMUNDI PLAYWRITING EUROPE:  
BEYOND BORDERS? (FAB)**

FAB is a cooperation project among theatres, festivals and cultural organisations from 10 EU Countries for the promotion of contemporary dramaturgy. The network aims to support and promote contemporary playwriting across Europe. Its final event, the Fabulamundi European Festival will be moved online and is planned for September 2020 - stay tuned.

# PROJECTS PRESENTED IN 2020

CAE was asked to be a partner for the following project applications in the first half of 2020

## **Creative Learning Hub- Education through Culture**

The aim is to design, implement and assess an innovative capacity building program and supporting tools to enable professionals of the education and culture sectors in developing joint Inclusive Education Programs (IEPs), that can respond to locally-specific exclusion issues, with local culture.

## **Cultural Greenways: Green Actions through Cultural Engagement**

Cultural Greenways introduces an innovative approach to the modifications that will be required to position arts, culture and heritage as an asset in climate action, able to anticipate the consequences of the environmental crisis. It targets cultural and education practitioners, specifically from the museum and heritage sector, to empower them through a capacity building programme that will complement their skillset with new green skills and tools to promote information, knowledge, organisational and behavioural change on the environmental emergency and engage their communities in climate actions.

## **Creative community in rural/non urban areas of Europe (E-EUse)**

The project's aim is to promote new skills for local development through arts, cultural innovation and sustainable tourism in the rural/non urban areas of Europe.

Additionally, CAE applied for funding at the French Ministry of Culture, presented a proposal to the Open Society Foundation, and a study proposal on freedom of artistic expression to the Green Party at the European Parliament.

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