Dear Heads of State and Government,

Ministers for European Affairs,
Ministers for Culture,

Culture has always been a vibrant social resource, able to heal wounds in times of crisis. Culture carries tremendous intrinsic value and contributes significantly to the economy, with 4.2% of the EU GDP and 7.4 million jobs created.

As our societies are going through an unprecedented turmoil, we call on the EU and its Member States to place culture at the core of each and every recovery plan, which aims at a sustainable, inclusive and future-looking revival of our social and economic life.

Cultural and creative sectors (CCSs) themselves are among the most seriously damaged by the pandemic. Cultural activities are being halted, millions of jobs are frozen or wiped out, micro and small businesses are on the brink of bankruptcy and many talents are forced to leave the sector altogether.

On top of that, we are at the beginning of a second wave in Europe that will undoubtedly increase the impact of the pandemic crisis on the CCSs.

This unprecedented uncertainty prevents the CCSs from bouncing back, devising viable short and medium-term plans and imagining a different future. There is a risk that citizens will not find their vibrant cultural life back in the post-pandemic world. This would be a huge loss in terms of social cohesion, communities’ empowerment, individual well-being, and the economic revival of Europe.

While some first steps have been taken to support the CCSs, the ongoing pandemic and the measures taken to contain it continue to have severe effects on the entire cultural and creative ecosystem. More actions are needed to rescue the CCSs from total devastation.

On 28 May 2020, the European Commission adopted a Proposal for a Regulation on the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), which is meant to help the Member States to address the challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and boost their recovery. The Member States are invited to design their recovery and resilience plans, detailing how the RRF resources will be allocated and spent.

Culture is recognised by the European Commission as one of the 14 priority ecosystems for the recovery of Europe. Moreover, CCSs are extremely relevant for each of the four main objectives outlined in the Commission’s Staff Working Document “Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans”: i) CCSs contribute to the Union’s economic, social and territorial cohesion; ii) carry a tremendous resource for economic and social resilience; iii) have a key role to play in mitigating the social and economic impact of the crisis; and iv) have the potential to facilitate and boost the green and digital transitions. Therefore, the cultural and creative sectors as a whole should be considered as an indispensable part of your recovery and resilience plans.

Therefore, we, the pan-European community of 110 networks and associations, urge you to make sure that CCSs are consulted in the design of and integrated in the national recovery and resilience plan of your respective countries.

Namely, we ask that at the very least 2% of your national RRF budget is allocated to the CCSs, as called for by the European Parliament in its recent Resolution on the “Cultural Recovery of Europe”, and that culture is an integral part of your recovery and resilience plans, that could be also mainstreamed across the flagship initiatives identified by the Commission.

It is our common duty to preserve culture in these challenging times, and we hope you will do everything possible to safeguard the diversity, vibrancy and richness of Europe’s CCSs.
SIGNATORIES:
