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**Centre Culture in the
Future of Europe**

Collective Recommendation

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Working across 12 EU countries, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, “Amplify: Make the Future of Europe Yours” gathers initiatives, organisations, and/or mediators in their respective countries, with a focus on underrepresented communities and/or citizens who are less likely involved in EU dialogues and actions. During Fall of 2021, these Hubs each met in participatory workgroups to collaborate around writing a recommendation to submit on the Conference of Europe digital platform. This document is the result of an exercise to combine and synthesise the contributions across all 12 hubs into a set of collective recommendations.

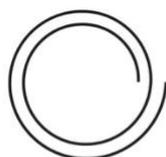
The project, coordinated by [Culture Action Europe](#), is executed on the local level through CAE members (Hubs) in their respective countries:



Denmark | [Center for Kunst & Interkultur](#)



France | [Michael Culture](#)



Greece | [Communitism](#)

EuropaNova

Hungary | [Europa Nova](#)



Italy | [ECCOM](#)



Netherlands | [H401](#)



Poland | [Baltic Sea Cultural Centre](#)



Portugal | [Mapa Das Ideias](#)



Romania | [Timisoara 2023](#)

MOTOVILA

Slovenia | [Motovila](#)



Spain | [Interarts Foundation](#)



Sweden | [Trans Europe Halles](#)

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Introduction

The Conference of the Future of Europe (CoFoE) represents an opportunity for European citizens to have their say on the bloc's challenges and priorities. Launched in Spring 2021 by the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the EU, with one year of delay caused by the outbreak of the pandemic, it has positioned itself as being an open, transparent and inclusive process dealing with generation-defining tasks such as the green and digital transition, economic security, post-Covid recovery.

The scope of the Conference reflects the areas in which the European Union has the potential to act in order to best benefit European citizens. With inclusivity as a cornerstone -and as a challenge- to the efficacy of the conference, the structure of CoFoE aims at the inclusion of diverse voices within its Citizens Panels, panel experts and plenary discussions.

Despite such proclamations, however, the process itself has paid little attention to diversity and to listening - let alone engaging - marginalised communities. In October 2021, over 50 civil society organisations across Europe signed a second open letter to the Executive Board of CoFoE, expressing strong concerns about the lack of inclusion of marginalised communities in the Conference and outlining key recommendations in order to address these concerns. By recommending implementations such as a diversity assessment and a Conference Inclusiveness Council, these letters are a basis for a larger call for strategically inclusive and equitable practises at the European level during and beyond the Conference.

Nonetheless, the Conference remains one of many avenues for social change. Although, culture and cultural policies are often overlooked or underemphasized the Conference is an opportunity to make culture central in the future of Europe. To achieve this ambition, it requires engaging, listening to, and acting upon the inclusion of marginalised voices within the cultural sector in the CoFoE process.

"Amplify: Make the Future of Europe Yours" main goal is to bring underrepresented voices in the cultural sector to the Conference. Across 12 EU countries (Hubs), Amplify has held participatory listening sessions which have gathered diverse groups of people within the cultural sector who face barriers to participation or access to EU decision-making processes in interactive and collaborative workshops. These sessions resulted in [each country's own set of recommendations](#) and key focus areas for the Future of Europe.

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Key areas of concern

This document synthesizes the contributions of each of the 12 Amplify Hubs, first by presenting diagnoses of the issues that project participants discussed as most affecting underrepresented communities across Europe. One of the most urgent areas of focus, is the issue of climate neglect, which the Hubs have identified as a dangerous situation that requires innovative, creative, diverse, and sustainable solutions.

The Hubs also focused on the current state of relationships between European communities and the institutions that serve them. One key area of discussion focused on how funding programmes are structured in ways that make it difficult for independent artists and micro and small organisations to apply to EU grants for projects. The cultural sphere (especially NGOs) is facing the issue of inhibited professionalisation of staff due to a lack of dedicated funding or systematic agreement.

Next, in light of the increasing inequalities and polarisation in our societies, Hubs discussed how European institutional action needs to safeguard the well-being and dignified life of the people and of the communities. They discussed that there is unequal access to participation in the cultural sector due to social disparities, including class, poverty, disability, gender, ethnicity, age and sexual orientation. Participants feel the possibility for creative and cultural agents to take direct action in European decision-making currently is limited.

On the note of creative and cultural agents, it was discussed that collaboration and connection between small cultural agents across Europe are limited due to the lack of infrastructures, mobility and resources for bringing together actors from different territories, far from large urban centres, and to interconnect territories. More engagement at the local level is needed to support cultural agents to work together with marginalised communities in projects, to increase accessibility for underserved groups, and improve connection with EU-level projects and initiatives.

With a focus on youth and education, the Hubs touched on the fact that access to arts and cultural spaces and opportunities are not prioritised for youth. Additionally, spaces for arts and creativity in schools are shrinking and artistic education is fading from schools across Europe.

The following recommendations were developed to address these key focus areas. Also included are “Explanatory Notes,” which provide background information from the Amplify Hubs regarding how each recommendation was developed.

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Recommendations

- Address the fatal combination of climate neglect and political inaction that endanger communities and their futures. Include arts and culture in combating the climate crisis.
- Guarantee the conditions for a dignified life. Disrupt logics of exploitation, precarity and marginalisation. Implement a pedagogy of the commons which includes experimental and collaborative practices in local communities. Create institutional guarantees so that the intersection of culture, community building, and wellbeing is at the heart of public policies.
- Reinforce community participation. EU institutions need to be updated, from being perceived as solely a funding opportunity to a framework that is meant to empower communities. Bottom-up and participatory processes are crucial for creating new management models of common goods.
- Promote systemic change by creating synergies across different sectors, providing training, and pooling resources and knowledge for trans-sectoral cooperation.
- Involve youth in long-term decision-making for the future of Europe. Reinforce youth councils by including young emerging artists. Develop opportunities that further involve them in EU governance processes.
- Include arts education in school curricula and educational institutions as it is vital for the eradication of social inequalities, racism, and discrimination and developing critical thinking.
- Redesign and rethink policies to fully support the development of cultural ecosystems that are diverse, communitarian and transversal. Cultural rights such as accessibility, participation, the right to creation, equal opportunities, fair working conditions, and decentralisation must inspire new legislative frameworks. These should secure real, active and direct participation and prioritise underrepresented communities.
- Activate creative, cultural and social processes in marginalised communities by pushing institutions to work more in these contexts. Use existing knowledge and practices rooted in the territories and foster intercultural learning.
- Decentralise EU funding opportunities by making them accessible and flexible to all. Make EU regional and municipal offices closer to people, especially in non-urban and peripheral territories, to help with project ideas, funding, and exchanges. Build capacity of the cultural sector on financial sustainability with additional training, professionalisation, and peer-learning.

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Explanatory Notes

Address the fatal combination of climate neglect and political inaction that endanger communities and their futures. Include arts and culture in combating the climate crisis.

The [Netherlands Amplify Hub](#) sheds light on climate change through their question, “This summer would you like to drown in Maastricht or burn alive in Athens?” This vivid imagery “aims to make people aware that the actions taken today have an impact on the future” and by addressing “the lethal combination of climate neglect and political agendas that sacrifices people to the elements.” The [Greece Amplify Hub](#) offers the recommendation that “Policies should focus on polluting businesses and not on polluting citizens and focus should be given on system planning and designing (That could be a system of any kind, e.g. infrastructure, cultural activity etc.) There should also be a current broadcast of climate change ramifications and what we can do to mitigate them, promoting hope instead of fear-mongering.”

Guarantee the conditions for a dignified life. Disrupt logics of exploitation, precarity and marginalisation. Implement a pedagogy of the commons which includes experimental and collaborative practices in local communities. Create institutional guarantees so that the intersection of culture, community building, and wellbeing is at the heart of public policies.

In their recommendation, the [Hungary Amplify Hub](#) poses the question, “How can the European institutional system better reflect today’s globally changing world and reinvent in light of internal and external challenges?” Their answer is to “find institutional safeguards so that culture and its outcomes (community building, wellbeing) can be at the heart of all public policy.” The [Spain Amplify Hub](#) elaborates on this by giving specific recommendations, such as proposing “a basic rent at the European level..., one that guarantees a minimum of conditions of a dignified life. That would allow the cultural agents to develop projects connecting territories and cultures, responding to the challenge of ...the gap with the rural, implementing a pedagogy of the common with its collaborative practices, facilitating and sharing learnings and opening pathways to experiment in local communities to boost a rupture with logics of exploitation, precarity and marginalisation.”

The [Romania Amplify Hub](#) also contributes with a concrete recommendation to focus support towards helping “elderly and disabled people overcome loneliness and social exclusion...[as a way to build a] supportive Europe [and] a friendlier community with disadvantaged groups.”

Lastly, the [Sweden Amplify Hub](#) recommends openness and compassion within and outside of Europe by “recognis[ing] culture as the basic form of all human expression and bedrock for the freedom of expression. Freedom to express yourself through arts and culture is a prerequisite for the positive development of the future globalized world...Societies with strong art and cultural life are rich in innovations which will be crucial to solving the complex challenges of today’s society.”

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Reinforce community participation. EU institutions need to be updated, from being perceived as solely a funding opportunity to a framework that is meant to empower communities. Bottom-up and participatory processes are crucial for creating new management models of common goods.

The [Spain Amplify Hub](#) provides background information, stressing “the urgency of the improvement and adaptation of the implementation of mechanisms directed towards projects that introduce collective practices and that secure the real, active and direct participation, facilitating the citizens’ governance to attend the real necessities of the diverse populations and that they give visibility to other kinds of knowledge and practices rooted in the territories, other management models of the common goods.” The [Greece Amplify Hub](#) supports this with their recommendation that states that “[t]he role of the European Council needs to be updated, from being perceived as a funding opportunity, to creating a framework and policy-making that is meant to empower communities.”

The [Poland Amplify Hub](#) recommends the “participation of creatives and audiences in decision-making processes [by the] inclusion of target groups in the decision-making process from planning to completion of the project, cross-linking eg. of various networks with each other, creating incubators, [and] intercultural mutual learning and inspiration for decision-makers in culture management.”

The [Romania Amplify Hub](#) supports the key focus of processes being long-term impact, stating that “the results of EU funded projects must aim at their effectiveness on the medium- and long-term impact on the situation of the people in the target group” The [Spain Amplify Hub](#) supports this by recommending “long-term visions in which cultural sovereignty fits, collective creation processes are insisted upon, and which start from the necessities of the communities with the aim of generating vital projects with real and durable impacts, facilitating the creation of networks...between diverse agents.”

Promote systemic change by creating synergies across different sectors, providing training, and pooling resources and knowledge for trans-sectoral cooperation.

In terms of increasing efforts of collaboration, Amplify Hubs gave concrete recommendations, including creating “a platform where artists and organisations can be matched based on genre, values, aims, etc. [[Denmark](#)],” “support[ing] synergies - through alliances/networks - between different sectors to promote systemic change [[Italy](#)],” and “strengthen[ing] initiatives at all levels aimed at networking between actors from different sectors across Europe, from training to scientific and cultural cooperation (sharing resources, information, mobility, etc. [[France](#)].” Another very specific recommendation from the [France Amplify Hub](#) is to “better represent Europe at all levels (local, regional, national and international) and bring together actors from different territories and create meetings [by] offer[ing] mobility to structures, far from large urban centres, and to interconnect territories.

At the EU level, the [Italy Amplify Hub](#) recommends to “Promote the link between the territory and European institutions, through the dissemination of knowledge on EU activities in the various sectors and create opportunities for discussion.” [Hungary Amplify Hub](#) adds to this by

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recommending the promotion of “culture through common European instruments that encourage the active participation of all citizens...Only joint cultural projects could better integrate the marginalized lonely, elderly, ethnic minorities.”

Involve youth in long-term decision-making for the future of Europe. Reinforce youth councils by including young emerging artists. Develop opportunities that further involve them in EU governance processes.

[Denmark Amplify Hub](#) states that “[i]t is of major importance to actively involve the youth in the EU. for two reasons: A) they represent a critical mass that can help develop the EU for the future and B) They are the next generation of lawmakers, and they need to feel comfortable around the EU and feel like it is relevant to them.” They give the specific recommendation of “establishing youth councils.” [Italy Amplify Hub](#) echoes the need for youth involvement, by giving the recommendation to “promote training opportunities, of social and cultural/creative nature, for young people.” [Romania Amplify Hub](#) recommends “[making] the cultural funding and spaces accessible for young emerging artists,” which [Sweden Amplify Hub](#) support with their recommendation of enabling “access to arts and culture ensures in particular children and young people's right to develop an identity of their own.”

Include arts education in school curricula and educational institutions as it is vital for the eradication of social inequalities, racism, and discrimination and developing critical thinking.

The [Portugal Amplify Hub](#) indicates the need to “value education and non-professional artistic practices,” stating that “artistic education is vital for territories’ autonomy and citizens’ development.” The [Greece Amplify Hub](#) adds to this by recommending that “art educators’ roles need to be restored and elevated in basic education, with more hours of art in school, access to funds and resources for art education, permanent teaching positions for art teachers in educational institutions, spaces for arts and creativity in schools.” The [Italy Amplify Hub](#) also recommends the promotion of “training opportunities, of social and cultural/creative nature, for young people.”

The [Slovenia Amplify Hub](#) states that in order to “ensure that quality provision in the various fields of culture and the arts is dispersed and accessible in all regions,...cross-sectoral integration is crucial, especially in the field of education, including the research sector. In-depth basic research in the field of cultural heritage, visual arts, architecture, design, ...and other circumstances of cultural creation is a necessary basis for creative activity.”

Redesign and rethink policies to fully support the development of cultural ecosystems that are diverse, communitarian and transversal. Cultural rights such as accessibility, participation, the right to creation, equal opportunities, fair working conditions, and decentralisation must inspire new legislative frameworks. These should secure real, active and direct participation and prioritise underrepresented communities.

The [Netherlands Amplify Hub](#) took care to outline a number of key areas they believe need to be focused on in order to be more inclusive with underrepresented communities. Their ideas include

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“shed[ding] light on labour rights of gig workers, fair economy, individualisation and labour migration,” “contribut[ing] to the recognition of mental illness and work on a dignified representation of the issue with all stakeholders involved,” “shed[ding] light on 'loving families outside of the norm' and the need for normalisation and emancipation of e.g. LGBTQI parents, by zooming into their happiness as well as their legal and social struggle,” and “includ[ing] differently-abled citizens in our cultural and educational fabric as a richness that is needed to innovate our societies and make them more socially sustainable.”

On a community level, the [Denmark Amplify Hub](#) recommends “an ongoing effort to evolve and be much more inclusive in the development by truly listening to the people.” The [Poland Amplify Hub](#) recommends creating “equality and universal access to culture and art [by]...provid[ing] each child with the real experience of being a spectator of theatre, exhibitions, etc., free admission to cultural institutions...[and] art scholarships for children facing financial barriers.”

On a policy level, the [Greece Amplify Hub](#) recommends the “[c]reation of a legislative framework that covers the whole spectrum of culture [with a] [l]ong term design of policies and actions [which] [e]nsure the legal framework treats artistic professions equally with the rest.” The [Spain Amplify Hub](#) adds the recommendation to “redesign and rethink ...policies that fully support the development of ecosystems of communitarian culture to elaborate transversal projects, in terrain, with marginalised and vulnerable populations.”

Activate creative, cultural and social processes in marginalised communities by pushing institutions to work more in these contexts. Use existing knowledge and practices rooted in the territories and foster intercultural learning.

From a process standpoint, the [Italy Amplify Hub](#) recommends “activat[ing] creative, cultural and social processes in marginalised contexts, also pushing institutions to work in these territories and in a more widespread way.” The [Greece Amplify Hub](#)'s recommendation to process change is to “[u]tilise embedded knowledge with bottom-up, participatory processes: Repurpose unused infrastructure in rural areas. Map, learn and acknowledge the experience from on the field, active, “bottom-up” cultural collectives and groups through bidirectional teaching-learning processes. They are effective in their actions, securing funding and support by using alternative paths of ‘economies of solidarity’. Decision making and policy design should require research into the specificities of every sector, including field visits, and on site evaluations involving representatives and citizens of all ages....These methods will reinforce efforts in decentralising power.” The [Poland Amplify Hub](#) also emphasised the importance of intercultural mutual learning and inspiration for both creatives and decision-makers.

Decentralise EU funding opportunities by making them accessible to all. Make EU regional and municipal offices closer to people, especially in non-urban and peripheral territories, to help with project ideas, funding, and exchanges. Build capacity of the cultural sector on financial sustainability with additional training, professionalisation, and peer-learning.

The [Denmark Amplify Hub](#) writes that “One of the many reasons that the EU feels far from the citizen is lack of local presence.” To address this, they recommend “opening regional or municipal

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offices where people can go to get help with project ideas, funding, Erasmus exchange, [etc]... [in order to] contribute to strengthening visibility, especially in more rural areas.” The [Italy Amplify Hub](#) adds to this by recommending there be a focus “not only to the relationship between cities and rural areas, but also between different urban contexts and encourage the presence of more cultural and social services in the territories.”

The [Portugal Amplify Hub](#) recommends to “[d]ecentralise and diversify cultural production and offer... [in order to] promote long-term policies that drive local development. Cultural experiences improve wellbeing and foster a sense of belonging, creating a common ground for civic values and practices.” The [Sweden Amplify Hub](#) adds to the topic of local development by recommending to “support locally operating and transnationally innovating micro-organisations and artists.” In addition to organisations and artists, the [Slovenia Amplify Hub](#) recommends “more support and opportunities for engaging audiences in culture at the local level” as well.

The [Denmark Amplify Hub](#) specifically recommends “writing a guidebook that is easy to understand” in order to make it more accessible, “especially for those aiming at underrepresented groups” to apply to EU funding. The [France Amplify Hub](#) adds that “project engineering...and European governance for European projects [should be made] accessible and understandable for better transmission.” The [Poland Amplify Hub](#) continues giving specific examples of how to make funding more accessible, including ideas such as implementing “greater flexibility: [weight the] process and outputs [as] more important than strict compliance with the procedures,” “providing access to funds for immigrant creatives waiting for the legalisation of stay,” and setting “more realistic (lower) funds-matching.”

It should be noted that the improvement of EU funding opportunities not only increases accessibility to artists and organisations, but also enables more sustainable, long-term investments. The [France Amplify Hub](#) stated that “culture should be included in climate programs to promote cross-sectoral approaches [in order to] valu[e] alternative solutions, collaborations, and experiments.” The [Greece Amplify Hub](#) adds that there should be an “offer [of] capacity building to the cultural sector on financial sustainability in order to ensure effective management of said funds.”

Across Amplify hubs, the discussion also touched on the decentralisation of funding. The [Greece Amplify Hub](#) wrote in their recommendation that there should be the creation of “funding focused on local actions, and local funding institutions in order to decentralise governmental and institutional management.” The [Slovenia Amplify Hub](#) also spoke to this, saying that “[i]nternational cultural projects supported by the EU programs urgently need an established system of co-financing at the national and local (regional) level, which is why it is necessary to create dedicated financial resources for international cultural cooperation.”

The [Slovenia Amplify Hub](#) provided an important background as to why support for professionalisation is crucial, stating that “the cultural sphere (especially NGOs) is facing the issue of inhibited professionalisation of staff due to a lack of dedicated funding or a systemic agreement, strategic document, etc., which would show that decision-makers understand why staff professionalisation is necessary. It is disastrous for the sector to operate in a non-professional environment at a level of work that requires professionalism.” Their concrete

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recommendation is “the introduction of a voucher for culture available to all citizens...[to implement a strategy for the professionalisation of local environments with dedicated EU funds (also in cooperation with the sector of education). [Italy Amplify Hub](#) adds a focus on process-building, specifically recommending to “Invest more in the cultural and creative sector, especially in updating professionals and systems for assessing and measuring the social impact of culture and creativity.”

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Background

[“Amplify: Make the Future of Europe Yours”](#) is a project aimed at raising awareness and strategically engaging marginalized and underrepresented communities in the cultural sector to participate in the Conference on the Future of Europe process. Amplify seeks to widen the diversity of voices that are included in EU-driven project by gathering ideas, proposals, recommendations, and concerns about the vision of culture in the future of Europe.

Working across 12 EU countries, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the project gathers initiatives, organisations, and/or mediators in their respective countries, with a focus on underrepresented communities and/or citizens who are less likely involved in EU dialogues and actions. During Fall of 2021, these hubs each met in participatory workgroups to collaborate around writing a recommendation to submit on the CoFoE digital platform ahead of the Conference Plenaries that began in October and November. Over 300 participants contributed to the Amplify recommendation-writing process. Other members of Culture Action Europe

Amplify emphasizes the public discourse that more work needs to be done to create accessible and inclusive pathways for marginalised people to participate within the cultural sector across Europe. While there are a number of initiatives to engage European citizens in the democratic process, it is still a reality that a number of voices across Europe are left out. Amplify is specifically searching for these gaps in communication and fill them by creating platforms for those voices to be included in the Future of Europe process. A communications project at its core, Amplify acts as a foundational step within a larger inclusive initiative.

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