

Priorities for the Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026

Report of the Workshop with Culture Action Europe Members and the representatives of the Member States, in cooperation with the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU, held in Brussels on 11 July 2022

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Report

On 11 July, 2022 Culture Action Europe, in cooperation with the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU, organised a workshop on the priorities of the next Council Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026.

To be adopted in late November under the Czech Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Work Plan will represent the main roadmap for the coordination of cultural policies at the EU level in the years to come, those that will have to trigger a paradigm shift to adapt to new normality after a pandemic and a war, in addition to facing the climate emergency.

The workshop brought together Culture Action Europe members from the wider cultural ecosystem - transnational cultural networks, as well as national organisations, activists and policy-makers - and representatives from over 15 EU Member States. This created the opportunity for CAE Members to share their insights on key features of the cultural sector, engage in a shared dialogue around pertinent issues and develop a concrete set of suggestions to include in the drafting of the new Work Plan.

Through open discussion methods (a fishbowl conversation followed by breakout conversations), the meeting resulted in the following topic areas and concrete action points for the years to come. This is a living document that Culture Action Europe will use as a guiding outline to better strengthen the work of renewing the 2023-2026 Work Plan.

1. Working Conditions and Freedom of Artistic Expression:

Strategising towards a European Status of the Artists and improving working conditions of artists/cultural and creative workers based upon Member States' experiences to effectively benchmark, and take into account the specificities of the cultural work. Upholding freedom of artistic expression at the EU level in connection with rule of law, fundamental rights, democracy, and with a view to protecting artists at risk (Ukraine, Afghanistan, etc.). In order to do so, we suggest to:

- Find a common definition of artist, cultural and creative workers - and what is meant when we say "the sector";
- Create common standards at the European level;
- Strengthen the cultural and creative sectors and bring more people back post-COVID;

- Information around resources and skills is fragmented and should be more accessible, for example by including them in the education curricula, and by extending the mobility information points

2. Culture and Sustainability

Moving beyond the New European Bauhaus initiative to feature culture as a driver of sustainable development and social justice, also in connection with global campaigns such as the [#Culture2030 goal](#). In order to do so, we suggest to:

- Introduce a change in narrative, by speaking not only about a green transition, but about how the cultural vector is defined within it, defining a timeline and aspects to prioritise;
- Mainstream culture in sustainability by engaging other Ministries in the discussion;
- Push for culture to have a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) and to be represented as the fourth pillar of sustainability
- Identify financial opportunities available for culture in the green transition.

3. Culture, Health, and Wellbeing:

Making the connection between culture and the medical practice more visible and creating more cross-sectoral cooperation among decision-makers. In order to do so, we suggest to:

- Define what “health and wellbeing” means and recognise that culture plays a significant role in upholding them;
- Organise a major Presidency Conference or Informal Joint Council meetings under the auspices of Culture and Health ministries, with the participation of both the cultural and health sectors; be inclusive and clear about the difference between physical and mental health
- Implement participatory cultural practices in post-COVID culture, with focus on young people and mental health, on the one hand, and on post-pandemic isolation, on the other.
- Continue mapping good practices, benchmarking them via the contribution of experts and keeping the engagement not only of cultural stakeholders and Culture Ministries, but also of health stakeholders and Health Ministries.

4. Cultural Rights

Cultural Rights shift from access to culture and audience development, which remain important, to meaningful participation in culture and governance of the commons, with special regard (but not limited) to enhancing diversity, gender equality, inclusion and democratisation of the shared public spaces, fostering dialogue with the diverse communities, including in rural and non-urban areas and about decolonisation and LGBTIQ+ rights. In order to do so, we suggest to:

- Follow-Up by the Council on the Porto Santo Charter, adopted under the Portuguese Presidency in 2021;
- Create tools and means for informal and peer-to-peer learning on the subject;
- In parallel with the work on the professionalisation of the cultural and creative sectors, strategies should also be developed for the many amatorial artists.

5. Artistic Research and Education: Artistic Education and Artistic Research require working towards the consolidation of STEAM and transdisciplinary approaches and creating spaces for cross-cutting initiatives bundling together arts, sciences, technology and innovation.

- Artistic research should be approached from multiple perspectives, engaging academia, transdisciplinary research centers and the independent research actors.
- Artistic research should be brought to a peer dialogue with other research disciplines and needs to be reinforced and recognised through permanent dialogue with other research fields.

6. International Cultural Relations and Development Cooperation

Enhancing the contribution of culture for international cultural relations and development cooperation, and mapping the impact. In order to do so, we suggest to:

- Establish policy coherence and mainstream culture at national and EU levels through cultural attachés in intergovernmental development and cooperation coordination;
- Re-define methodologies for international cultural cooperation, based on fair practices;
- Establish equal partnership and reinforce equal and inclusive collaboration with third countries.

7. Bridging the gap with other public authorities at national level

This pertains more to a working method than a self-standing priority, but we urge Member States to create more room for exchange with peers from other Ministries to effectively mainstream the place for culture in other policy areas. In order to do so, we suggest to:

- Define guidelines on how to make Ministries cross-communicate and work together on a selected range of defined priorities;
- Organise major Presidency Conferences or Informal Joint Council meetings bringing together, from time to time, Ministries for Culture with their peers from the Finance, Health, Education, Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, and Social Affairs Ministries.