

Culture Action Europe reacts to Council agreement on future EU budget

Statement 11 February 2013

Political blindness prevailed over more farsighted positions when European national leaders agreed to severe cuts to the EU 2014-2020 budget.

Based on available information, the result for Heading 3, which provides funding for citizenship, culture, rights, security, etc., represents an increase compared to the 2007-13 EU budget but at the same time a reduction by 15% of the European Commission's proposal.

As a whole, Heading 3 represents less than 1,8% of the overall EU budget. Yet it has an important future oriented significance, symbolically and practically. Cuts in this heading have no serious impact on the EU budget; it is simply a mistake, a sign of passivity and panic.

At the same time, funds for the EU Cohesion Policy have been substantially cut (-50 billion Euros). The European Regional Development Fund, the Social Fund and Interreg will be hit. Less wealthy micro-regions in Northern Europe might end up paying most for these cuts. Investments considered less urgent, in the fields of culture, citizenship, education and values, become impossible. Naturally the European project loses its deeper meaning.

Financial resources available to local authorities for social development, crucial to strengthening cohesion, have been consistently reduced by most EU Member states over the last years. Additional cuts at EU level are bad news for us all. It manifests a lack of vision. It underlines the tragic mistake of putting finance before inclusion, exchange and development.

Our hope? A new phase begins. The European Parliament now takes its turn to exert the mandate received directly from European citizens.

- We call upon each member of the EP to stand strong in the budget negotiations
- We call upon concerned citizens to address their European representatives
- We commit support to all EP political groups making serious efforts to guarantee a better-balanced budget for the coming years, investing in the necessity of culture and education

Culture Action Europe (CAE) is the leading European advocacy network in the field of culture. CAE gives voice to more than 80,000 organisations all across Europe active in all cultural and artistic domains: from orchestras to writers associations, from research institutions to cultural contact points, from national theatres to international cultural networks, from museums to opera houses, from conservatoires to visual arts.