

To:

Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark  
Ministers of Finance of the EU Member States  
Ministers of Culture of the EU Member States

Brussels, 1 October 2025

**Letter regarding the Council's position on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2026: Creative Europe programme**

Dear Prime Minister, Dear Ministers,

We, the undersigned European cultural networks and organisations, are writing to urge you to reverse the proposed **€27.56 million cuts in commitment appropriations and €9.86 million cuts in payment appropriations** [outlined](#) by the Council of the European Union for the Creative Europe programme in the 2026 financial year.

**The Creative Europe programme plays an integral role in supporting the arts, culture, cultural heritage and creative sectors in Europe.** More than 22,000 cultural professionals were supported under Creative Europe 2014-2020, and more than [7,500 cultural activities](#) were funded. Each supported project boosts national and European visibility worldwide, delivers democratic public value, and sparks new services and market collaborations. Countless partnerships, emerging artists, and cultural, creative and heritage organisations may never have flourished had it not been for Creative Europe funding. As recalled by the Council in its [conclusions](#) in May 2025, European artists and cultural professionals are ‘an engine of creativity and innovation [...] often marked by precarity,’ which is why the reduction in financial support outlined threatens not only the sustainability of one of the European Union’s flagship programmes, but also livelihoods across the cultural and creative sectors. We expect you to act upon your commitment to a strong Creative Europe programme, as expressed in the [letter](#) from national culture ministers in November 2024.

**Culture, creativity, and heritage are an essential part of our daily lives and form a key pillar of European society.** Cultural participation and infrastructure are fundamental to a flourishing democracy; they improve our health and well-being, they bring people together across various art forms and disciplines, and they embolden us to act to shape a more sustainable, inclusive future for all based on shared values. We co-create and enjoy culture collectively as a public good with intrinsic value. As the Council [recalled](#) in May, the European cultural and creative sectors and industries provide a ‘critical contribution’ not only to European creativity and innovation, but also to ‘maintaining and

promoting international peace and security.’ Reducing cultural funding is an affront to its transformative power and disregards the importance of creative, innovative thinking to overcome the challenges of our time.

**Despite its very modest financial allocation, currently representing just 0.2% of the total EU budget (€2.44 billion over seven years), Creative Europe has had a measurable and strategic impact. It provides an estimated €11 in GDP for every euro invested** according to the [European Parliament Research Service](#). Creative Europe funding also bolsters European innovation and competitiveness. The programme is cost-effective and has a clear European value added: it concentrates funding in transnational partnerships, allowing cultural organisations to share resources, reduce costs, and develop shared solutions like common platforms, co-productions, or training programmes.

We recognise the concerns raised by the Budget Committee of the Council and the importance of resilience and preparedness in financial planning to confront current and future challenges. However, the budgetary cuts outlined to the Resilience and Values sub-heading of the 2026 budget only risk undermining these objectives, harming financial flexibility and adaptability in the process. During the [presentation](#) of preliminary findings of the mid-term evaluation of Creative Europe programme 2021-2027, the Commission shared that a recent call for proposals, which received over 1,600 applications, will only see 10 to 15 % of projects selected for funding, with many ‘extraordinary projects’ missing out. In other words, current levels of funding are already insufficient to meet the demand for Creative Europe calls for applications. While acknowledging the current fiscal constraints, we highlight that Creative Europe is not a major expenditure line; it is a strategic, low-risk investment with cross-sectoral impact.

Culture is a vital building block for the common future of a more sustainable, global Europe. **The cultural sector urges you to reverse the proposed budget cut to Creative Europe, the EU’s sole dedicated instrument for cultural funding.** These cuts would only serve to harm the interests of European citizens, cultural, creative, and heritage sectors, and international partnerships. On the contrary, we call for additional funding to be allocated to the Creative Europe programme for the 2026 financial year to ensure the programme may carry out its objectives and not reject future outstanding, high-quality project applications.

Looking ahead, we believe that 2% of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028-2034) should be allocated to European cultural content creation and the reinforcement of Europe’s democratic cultural ecosystem, both through AgoraEU and across other funding programmes.

We stand ready to work with you and other stakeholders to achieve this vision and provide any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,

Culture Action Europe

AEC — European Association of Conservatoires

Arty Farty

CEATL — European Council of Literary Translators' Associations

Circostrada — European Network for Contemporary Circus and Outdoor Arts

ECSA — European Composer and Songwriter Alliance

EFA — European Festivals Association

EIBF — European and International Booksellers Federation

ELIA — European Network in Higher Arts Education and Research

EMMA — European Music Managers Alliance

EURead — European Reading Promotion and Literacy Network

Europa Nostra

European Choral Association

European Cultural Foundation

European Music Council

European Music School Union

European Network of Cultural Centres

European Theatre Convention

European Writers' Council

Europe Jazz Network

Federation of European Publishers

IETM — International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts

JMI — Jeunesses Musicales International

Michael Culture Association

NEMO — Network of European Museum Organisations

On the Move

Opera Europa

Pearle — Live Performance Europe\*

REMA — European Early Music Network

Reset! Network

Trans Europe Halles

YOUROPE — The European Festival Association

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