

Brussels, 21 September 2026

Dear Executive Vice-Presidents Fitto and Mînzatu,
Dear Commissioners Micallef, Serafin and Dombrovskis,
Dear Ministers Byrne, O'Donovan and Chambers,

We are writing on behalf of **Culture Action Europe**, a network representing more than 300 cultural organisations and associations across Europe.

We are calling on Member States to include dedicated cultural chapters in their National and Regional Partnership Plans (NRPPs), with at least 2% of general NRPPs allocation dedicated to culture. We ask you to support this commitment in the negotiations and in the preparation of the plans.

A local theatre in a small town creates work for artists, gives young people opportunities to bond through creativity and imagination, and brings residents together across generations. It strengthens the social ties that help communities withstand crises and adapt to change. Cultural investment helps regions offer people a fuller life close to home. This is a tangible contribution to cohesion.

There are positive precedents for supporting cultural and creative sectors across EU regions within the current EU funding period. Under the cohesion funds, around €5.1 billion in EU funding is planned for cultural heritage and cultural services, rising to €6.6 billion with national co-financing. The Commission **assessed** that during the pandemic, €11.7 billion was planned for culture and creative sectors in 18 national recovery plans, approximately 2% of the total Recovery and Resilience Facility budget.

The new plans should build on this investment, supporting cultural life and people who make it possible alongside infrastructure.

The proposed NRPP Regulation already includes 'promoting culture as a catalyst for European values and supporting a vibrant and diverse cultural sector' among its sub-objectives. The **Joint Declaration** 'Europe for Culture – Culture for Europe', signed by the Presidents of the European Commission, the Parliament, and the Council on 18 June 2026, also commits the institutions to advancing culture's contribution to territorial development, resilience and social cohesion. NRPPs provide a concrete way to put these commitments into practice.

Therefore, as Member States are preparing their NRPPs and the EU institutions are negotiating the framework governing their design and implementation, we ask you to act in five areas.

1. Make culture explicit in the framework for NRPPs

We ask you to ensure that Article 22 of the NRPPs Regulation (COM(2025) 565 final) requires Member States to explain how their plans address national and regional cultural needs, taking into account the relevant commitments on regional and territorial development of the [Joint Declaration](#) ‘Europe for Culture – Culture for Europe’. This can be incorporated into Article 22(2-b-ii) and Annex V ‘[Template for the National and Regional Partnership Plan](#)’, Title I, Part 1, section 1.2 of the proposed NRPP Fund Regulation.

The Commission should reflect these references in its programming guidance and support dedicated cultural chapters in its dialogue with Member States.

2. Bring culture into the European Semester

We call on you to integrate culture into the European Semester from the 2027 cycle onwards, including in the Autumn Package Communication and in the guidance and analytical framework used to prepare the Country Reports. The European Semester should systematically assess cultural investment and reform needs across Member States, including levels of public investment in culture; territorial disparities in cultural employment, access and participation; and the working conditions and social protection of artists and workers in the cultural and creative sectors.

Where significant structural challenges are identified, culture-related measures should be reflected in the relevant **Country-Specific Recommendations**, alongside other economic, social, employment or territorial priorities. Parliament’s resolutions of the European Semester for [2025](#) and [2026](#) highlight the particularly high rate of self-employment in the cultural and creative sectors and the need for targeted measures, in particular the monitoring of social protection for cultural and creative professionals.

The European Semester already integrates education and skills throughout its analytical and recommendation cycle. The 2026 Country Reports, for example, include a standardised Annex 13 on education and skills, while identified challenges are also reflected in Country-Specific Recommendations. It provides a practical precedent for a dedicated cultural section and annex.

3. Include culture in the Integrated Strategy Report

We encourage the Commission to ensure that the Integrated Strategy Report, foreseen in the [Communication](#) ‘A dynamic EU Budget for the priorities of the future - The Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034’, systematically recognises culture within its ‘major policy areas’ and identifies culture-related funding priorities.

When developing the Integrated Strategy Report, the Commission should use findings from the forthcoming State of Culture in the EU report and Culture Compass monitoring as part of its evidence base.

4. Involve the cultural sector in the NRPPs preparation

We ask that the partnership requirement proposed in **Article 6** of the NRPP Regulation be given effect by involving culture ministries, regional and local authorities, artists, workers in cultural and creative sectors and representative organisations in preparing, implementing and monitoring NRPPs.

Consultation should begin before priorities and allocations are decided.

Member States should ensure appropriate representation of the cultural sector, including independent organisations, in the NRPP monitoring committees, as per Article 54-56.

5. Set clear principles for cultural funding

We call for support to the cultural and creative sectors under NRPPs to:

- 1) uphold the autonomy of cultural organisations and artistic freedom according to Articles 11 and 13 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights;
- 2) promote fair pay and decent working conditions, drawing on the EU Artists' Charter once it is adopted;
- 3) remain accessible to small and independent actors;
- 4) reach rural, remote and underserved areas, including outermost regions.

Culture Action Europe would be glad to continue this discussion with the relevant Commission services and the Council Presidency and explore these proposals in more detail. Our members across the EU advocate to secure culture's place in NRPPs in their respective Member States, and a clear European commitment now would strengthen these efforts.

Kind regards,
Lars Ebert

Secretary General
Culture Action Europe

Culture Action Europe is a Brussels-based European cultural advocacy network bringing together over 320 members across 35 countries, including cultural networks, organisations, artists and activists. EU Transparency Register N° 856201551367-02.

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