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REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

on the cultural dimension of sustainable development in EU actions

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1. CONTEXT

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are interlinked with several policy fields. The European Commission is fully committed to delivering on all different dimensions of sustainable development[1]. On the role of culture, the Commission emphasised the cultural dimension of sustainable development in the 2018 New European Agenda for Culture[2] and committed to using it to help implement the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development[3].

In its Resolution on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development[4] of December 2019, the Council confirmed the Member States' commitment to sustainability as well as to the full and rapid implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda. The Council's Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022[5] was then

[1] Commission staff working document (2020), *Delivering on the UN's sustainable development goals – a comprehensive approach*.
[2] COM/2018/267 final
[3] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/
[4] OJ C410, 6 December 2019.
[5] Council conclusions amending the Work Plan for Culture (2019-2022)

amended in May 2020 to include 'Culture as a driver for sustainable development' as an additional priority. Under this priority, the work plan provides for two corresponding actions: (i) an Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of Member State experts on the cultural dimension of sustainable development set up in 2021, which delivered its report in September 2022[6]; and (ii) an invitation to the Commission to present an action plan on the cultural dimension of sustainable development.

This report is the Commission's response to the invitation. It advocates an **EU policy approach on the cultural dimension of sustainable development that builds on a stronger and more consistent connection between cultural policies and SDGs' implementation across EU initiatives, programmes and actions and across different sectors.**

It provides an overview of EU policies and programmes that reinforce the interplay between culture and sustainable development and identifies actions undertaken or planned by the Commission, with a view to propel culture as a driver or enabler of the UN 2030 Agenda. It also embraces strategic cross-cutting initiatives such as the Horizon Europe Mission on climate-neutral and smart cities[7] or the New European Bauhaus[8] that permeate several policy areas and programmes.

There is an increased demand for the full and effective recognition of culture as a key sector contributing to the SDGs and to Europe's sustainable recovery after the COVID-19 crisis. The parallel process of the OMC group, marked by close cooperation with UNESCO and international players[9], has confirmed the need for increased effective collaborations among national, EU and UN authorities and systems.

The debate and results from MONDIACULT 2022[10] – the UNESCO conference on cultural policies and sustainable development held in Mexico on 28-30 September 2022 – have further inspired and informed discussions on the future of SDGs and created additional momentum for reflection on a more prominent role for culture in sustainable development strategies. This report contributes to this reflection process and builds on the ambitions of the conference's Declaration for Culture.

2. STRENGTHENING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN CULTURAL POLICIES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The most important strategic EU actions for delivering on the SDGs include an intrinsic cultural dimension, despite the lack of a specific reference to culture. For instance, **deeply transformative EU policies and key strategies such as the European Green Deal and the overarching approach to make Europe fit for the digital age, as presented in the chart below, rely on a strong contribution from the cultural and creative sectors (CCS)** and on their diversity at local, regional and national levels. This report aims to make this understanding tangible.

Furthermore, as stressed by the recommendations of both the OMC group on the cultural dimension of sustainable development and the OMC group on cultural heritage resilience to climate change[11], **culture**

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6 OMC report *Stormy times: Nature and humans – cultural courage for change: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0380f31c-37c9-11ed-9c68-01aa75ed71a1/language-en*

7 https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/eu-missions-horizon-europe/climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en

8 The New European Bauhaus is a creative, participatory and transdisciplinary initiative that connects the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences: https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

9 2021 was declared the International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development.

10 https://www.unesco.org/en/mondiacult2022

11 OMC report *Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change*: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4bfcf605-2741-11ed-8fa0-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

and cultural policies should be used more systematically to tackle major contemporary issues relating to climate change and the European Green Deal goals. For example, the climate neutrality target of the Horizon Europe climate-neutral and smart cities mission promotes citizen engagement, inclusion and social innovation.

The preparatory discussions leading up to MONDIACULT organised around five thematic areas[12] also helped pave the way towards a better understanding of **the intrinsic and cross-cutting cultural dimension of sustainable development and the need for a more strategic approach to culture and sustainable development for the future**. MONDIACULT's final declaration reiterates this commitment. It calls for further action to strengthen public policy frameworks by anchoring culture more prominently to sustainable development strategies at global level and across all the SDGs dimensions of **social, economic and environmental development**. In the same spirit, the OMC group on the cultural dimension of sustainable development has looked at these three dimensions and strongly advocates the overarching theme of **re-forging the relationship between humans and nature while leveraging the underused power of culture[13].**

Overview of the Commission's approach to implementing the SDGs[14]

[12] Investing in culture and creativity for job creation and socio-economic development; Promoting cultural diversity in digital environment and advancing the status of artists; Safeguarding and promoting the diversity of cultural; heritage for social inclusion, dialogue and peace; Strengthening synergies between culture and education for human-centred development and sustainability; Regional and global partnerships for culture and sustainable development.

[13] According to Eurostat, the registered value of cultural goods exports and imports is around 1% of the EU's overall value of (extra-EU) exports and imports in total goods. In absolute terms, in 2020, exports of cultural goods beyond the EU accounted for EUR 17.5 billion, and imports of such goods to the EU amounted to EUR 16 billion. The EU Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) includes data on social and cultural participation that will be available at the second half of 2023. Eurostat has gathered statistics related to the cultural sector on a dedicated section at its website (Overview - Culture).

[14] Commission staff working document (2020), *Delivering on the UN's sustainable development goals – a comprehensive approach*.

3. CULTURE AND THE SDGS IN EU POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

The cultural dimension of sustainable development is being promoted under a range of EU policies and programmes (A-O). For each EU policy, this section describes the relevant policy framework and main priorities as well as the strategic actions or initiatives. The aim is to support societal changes and mitigate the effects of green and digital transitions.

A. Cultural policy

Policy framework and main priorities

The EU actions in the field of culture directly contribute to all dimensions of the SDGs, in line with the strategic guidance of the main framework documents:

- the **New European Agenda for Culture;**
- the **European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage**[15];
- the multiannual **work plans for culture** or, for external action, the 2016 joint communication *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*[16] and the 2019 *Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action*[17].

EU policy action and cooperation in this field focuses on harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion and well-being by:

- promoting cultural participation, the mobility of artists and the protection of cultural heritage;
- boosting jobs and growth in the cultural and creative sectors through arts and culture in education, promoting skills and innovation in culture;
- strengthening international cultural relations through culture to promote sustainable development and peace.

The need to preserve and promote the intrinsic value of culture and of artistic expression is also highlighted in the guiding EU cultural policy documents. However, the strategic framework for EU cooperation and policymaking on culture can still be strengthened (as the Commission's report on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022[18] pointed out) and the cultural dimension of sustainable development highlighted.

On the funding side, the 2021-2027 **Creative Europe programme**[19], the only EU programme that targets the cultural and creative sectors, supports the EU's commitment towards the UN SDGs, in particular their cultural dimension, under all three programme strands. Creative Europe invests in actions that reinforce cultural diversity and respond to the needs of the cultural and creative sectors. Both **greening and inclusiveness are horizontal priorities of the entire programme**, and there is an ongoing reflection on greening the Creative Europe programme further. Creative Europe helps make the Green Deal tangible by rewarding cultural projects that address sustainability and environmental aspects strategically and in the CCS.

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[15] European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5a9c3144-80f1-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1

[16] JOIN/2016/029 final: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=JOIN%3A2016%3A29%3AFIN

[17] OJ 2019/C 192/04

[18] COM/2022/317 final

[19] Creative Europe

The programme's *cultural strand* covers CCS' initiatives such as those that promote cross-border cooperation, platforms, networks and literary translations. These include mechanisms to ensure that the CCS offer diversity, inclusion and equality for all and contribute to climate action. Calls under the 2021-2027 programme that support European networks and cooperation projects have included as a specific priority the **contribution of the projects to the sustainability agenda.** The previous programme (2014-2020) paved the way to the promotion of grassroots and of sustainable practices under the *cultural strand*[20]. It supported a large number of projects on gender equality, sustainability and digitisation[21]. These have helped ease the environmental impact of the sectors' activities, promote a sustainable urban and rural environment, develop new visions for the future and raise awareness. They tackle global issues at local or regional level, including among others: health and well-being[22], gender equality[23], (food) production and consumption models[24], water pollution[25], sustainable housing[26], as well as the reduction of inequalities between urban and rural areas[27].

In the current programme's *cultural strand*, a new sectoral approach was added to **strengthen the sustainability of specific sectors** (cultural heritage, architecture, music, the book sector, design, fashion and cultural tourism) and to help them become among other things greener, more resilient and more inclusive. This strand also supports the **European Capitals of Culture** initiative, which aims to promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common elements they share and boost how culture contributes to the long-term development of cities. Cities holding the title embed their project in their overall strategy and increasingly include sustainable considerations as part of their endeavour, such as the promotion of greener cultural practices.

On the external side, the **Cultural Relations Platform** supports cooperation between European and global cultural and creative sectors by increasing the capacity of EU delegations worldwide (SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals) to engage with cultural operators and address key challenges through culture (SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth and SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities). The

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[20] There are many good examples of sustainability-focused actions funded under Creative Europe. For instance, the Culture Action Europe network developed the 'Culture in Sustainable Cities. Learning with Culture 21 Actions' programme, in partnership with the international organisation United Cities and Local Governments. This programme aims to provide opportunities for cities to participate in a learning process so they can evaluate, design and implement cultural policies that contribute to local sustainable development.

[21] For more details, see the brochure available at: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/aebc62b7-8fa5-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

[22] The 'Birth cultures' project, for example, aimed to preserve and transmit traditional birth and maternity knowledge and practices as part of European intangible cultural heritage. It demonstrated how culture can have a leverage effect on citizens' engagement in public health issues.

[23] Many funded projects, such as 'Keychange', work towards a restructuring of cultural sectors in reaching full gender equality, equal pay, equal working conditions and visibility for female professionals in the sector.

[24] Projects such as 'Creative food Cycles', 'The Table and the territory' and 'The Mediterranean garden' explored and prototyped new food production, distribution and consumption models, exploring alternatives to the mainstream food production chain. By doing so, they raise awareness of the loss of biodiversity.

[25] The 'Universal Sea – Pure or plastic' project aimed to reveal the opportunities of art meeting entrepreneurship while promoting creative solutions to the plastic epidemic in seas and oceans.

[26] The Architects' Council of Europe network works towards the achievement of affordable and quality housing at European level. Thanks to its lobbying capacity, geographical spread and extensive policy work, the network helps promote the common good and quality of life and puts people and nature at the core of housing and urban developments in Europe and at national level.

[27] 'Smoties – Creative works with small and remote places' employs design-thinking methodologies to transform remote European places into more liveable spaces by involving local residents in the development of cultural and creative activities. 'Cultures for resilience' strengthens the action of a range of actors (citizens, administrations, local associations) working on environmental and urban resilience issues.

platform also organises an annual Global Cultural Relations programme, bringing together 40 young cultural leaders and professionals from around the world (SDG 10 Reduced inequalities and SDG 5 Gender equality).

In the field of **Media and Audiovisual**, the 2021-2027 Creative Europe programme has introduced two horizontal priorities: greening the audiovisual industry and diversity and inclusion for the audiovisual sector. Greening and diversity have been introduced in the call for proposals of all schemes of the Creative Europe *MEDIA strand*. Applicants should present a strategy for their greening practices and a strategy for promoting diversity and inclusion in their activities. These strategies are evaluated as part of the award criteria. The projects selected under the 2021 and 2022 work programmes have provided indications on how the audiovisual companies and organisations are dealing with these policy priorities. Among the projects selected, 'TheGreenShot', first digital solution with a real time interface for film commissions to connect with productions shooting in their region or cities and the Green Charter for Festivals, supported in the context of the festival network call of 2022 and initiated by the Moving Images Open Border network of festivals are worth mentioning. The Charter is an instrument to calculate the CO2 footprint of festivals, with the purpose to create awareness on one side and set common goals for sustainability.

Moreover, the *cross-sectoral programme strand* supports transnational policy cooperation and contributes to the implementation of the **New European Bauhaus initiative** to reinforce the programme's green dimension.

A new European Parliament pilot project for a **European Heritage Hub** will also contribute to the green transition and the fight against climate change and environmental degradation[28].

Strategic actions or key examples

- Commission-led works on the status and **working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals** (EU study, Voices of Culture dialogue & report, OMC Member State expert group's upcoming report and recommendations in 2023) that are aimed at addressing key issues ranging from the status of artists, fairness and public support, as well as the regulatory environment and social security, to topics such as skills development and freedom of artistic expression.
- Measures on **climate change and cultural heritage**. The Commission organised the work of a Member States' expert group on Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change. The group's report was issued in September 2022. It identifies good practices and innovative measures to protect cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in relation to climate change. This includes recommendations on the contribution that cultural heritage can make to mitigating and combating climate change in line with the Green Deal. The Commission also launched a **study on the greening of the Creative Europe programme**. It aims to investigate how environmental, sustainable and proportional measures can be introduced in the programme to boost its contribution to climate action and biodiversity mainstreaming.
- Actions to address the **effects of digital transformation on cultural and artistic diversity**, that is business models, relationships with audiences and the shift in conception, production and consumption modes. At the end of 2021, the Commission started working with experts to explore the possibility of voluntary guidelines for collecting and managing data on **digital audiences**, with a

[28] The call for proposals launched under the pilot project includes the following priority: contribute to the green transition and the fight against climate change and environmental degradation: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/pppa-cult-2022-euheritagehub;callCode=null;freeTextSearchKeyword=;matchWholeText=true;typeCodes=1

special focus on performing arts and cultural heritage. The '(Re)-Engaging digital audiences – Improving Audience Data' report of June 2022[29] takes stock of the lessons learned from COVID-19-related practices. Furthermore, against the background of the Cultural Heritage Expert Group[30], **digitisation and cultural heritage** have also been discussed, focusing on digital learning from COVID-19. It addressed capacity-building experiences to move exhibitions, education programmes and artefacts online, and the issue of audiences experiencing online cultural fatigue.

- The Commission's **Music Moves Europe** initiative (MME) is another example that supports the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. MME is aimed at strengthening the music sector's best assets: creativity, diversity and competitiveness. Its specific objectives are to promote creativity and innovation, safeguard and expand the diversity of European music, help the sector adapt to digitisation and support its sustainability, especially after the COVID-19 crisis. Under MME, the Commission has been working towards an integrated approach that covers targeted EU funding (under Creative Europe and beyond), policy support, legislation and dialogue on the needs and challenges of Europe's music sector. Several recent calls have focused on sustainability-related actions. As from 2023, MME will promote sustainable music distribution.
- Other sector-specific examples include the **Sustainable Theatres Alliance for Green Environmental Shift** project (STAGES – Sustainable Theatre Alliance) and the **European Theatre Convention Network**, which aim to have a structuring effect on the sector and green its value chain.
- A **tailor-made scheme for artists and professionals to facilitate their cross-border mobility – Culture Moves Europe**[31]. A scheme that awards mobility grants to individuals' projects aimed at international collaboration, professional development, co-production and co-creation, where artists and creators are incentivised to consider the environmental impact of their mobility and choose more sustainable means of transportation. Artistic residencies within the scheme can implement projects in line with the values of the New European Bauhaus.
- The tool **Perform Europe**, launched in 2021 to support innovative, inclusive and sustainable distribution, and touring models in the performing arts sector.
- **Gender equality** in culture[32]; the Commission funded a study on gender gaps in cultural and creative sectors published in September 2020[33]. An OMC Member States' working group on gender equality in the CCS delivered its final report, including several recommendations to policymakers, cultural and educational institutions in June 2021[34]. CCS' representatives met under the 'Voices of Culture' structured dialogue to discuss gender balance in the CCS, publishing their report in February 2020[35].

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29 https://voicesofculture.eu/2022/06/02/brainstorming-report-re-engaging-digital-audiences-challenges-and-opportunites/

30 Expert group on cultural heritage | Culture and Creativity (europa.eu)

31 https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/creative-europe-culture-strand/culture-moves-europe-mobility-for-artists-and-professionals#:~:text=Culture%20Moves%20Europe%20is%20a%20scheme%20that%20supports,It%20is%20part%20of%20Creative%20Europe%E2%80%99s%20Culture%20strand

32 The Commission supports gender equality in culture through Creative Europe (for example the 'Keychange' project and the 'MEWEM' mentoring programme). In addition, the new 2021-2027 Creative Europe programme requires funded projects to adequately address inclusiveness and non-discrimination, with a particular focus on gender equality.

33 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/92d621d1-bb99-11ec-b6f4-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-266388294

34 https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/36e9028b-c73b-11eb-a925-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

35 https://voicesofculture.eu/2019/05/14/gender-balance-in-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors/

In addition, Presidency Conclusions on gender equality in the field of culture[36] were adopted in December 2020.

- Actions in the field of **culture and well-being**, an important and emerging issue, in particular after the COVID-19 crisis. The Commission is implementing a preparatory action from the European Parliament entitled 'Bottom-up policy development for culture and well-being in the EU'. The project, carried out by a consortium of European partners for a period of 1.5 years, focuses on updating research on this topic, mapping the most relevant existing practices, building the capacity of local players to effectively benefit from culture to increase well-being and health, with a special focus on mental health. There has also been a recent study by ESPON on cultural heritage as a source of societal well-being in European regions[37]. The objective is to develop a pan-European methodology and territorial analysis of the impacts of cultural heritage on society, taking into account aspects such as well-being and social inclusion. **Cultural heritage as a key asset in preventing crises and building peace** (SDG 16 Peace, justice and strong institutions). The deliberate destruction of cultural heritage is widely recognised as a possible indicator or precursor of future mass violence, as it is used to eradicate the history and artefacts that are central to a population's culture and identity. When conducted systematically and on a large scale, the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage is also defined in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court as a war crime. The destruction of cultural heritage has played a prominent role in the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Mali. Examples include the 2012 attacks on the shrines and mausoleums of Timbuktu by Islamist groups in the northern regions of Mali. The Council Conclusions on the **EU approach to cultural heritage in conflicts and crises and the dedicated EU concept** provide a clear political and operational framework for a more coherent and visible EU approach to cultural heritage for peace (SDG 16, SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth, SDG 11 Sustainable cities and communities). In concrete terms, the EU commits to a conflict-sensitive, inclusive, equal and non-discriminatory approach. On the current situation in Ukraine, the Commission supports the preservation of Ukrainian cultural heritage by providing emergency protective equipment and supporting the digital documentation of Ukrainian cultural heritage. The Commission also supports Ukrainian artists and cultural professionals. For example, in September 2022, as part of Creative Europe, it launched a call to support artists outside of their country, cultural organisations in Ukraine, and to prepare for the post-war recovery of the Ukrainian cultural sector in the medium term.
- The preparatory action **European Spaces of Culture** (2019-2023), implemented by the EU National Institutes for Culture (EUNIC), is testing innovative collaboration models in international cultural relations (SDG 17 Partnerships for the goals, SDG 10 Reduced inequality) by establishing equal partnerships between European (EUNIC members and EU delegations) and local partners in countries outside the EU around transversal priority topics. These projects connect cultural relations to sustainable development, for instance by advocating climate action in Brazil and Mongolia (SDG 13 Climate action), supporting local cultural sectors recovering from the consequences of the pandemic in Tanzania and Cameroon (SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth), improving access to culture for disabled communities in China and Uruguay (SDG 10 Reduced inequalities) and innovating in digital transformation in Mexico.

Upcoming actions:

- Possible Commission **initiative on an EU strategic framework for culture** (following up on the Council's invitation in the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026[38]);

[36] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13097-2020-INIT/en/pdf
[37] https://www.espon.eu/HERIWELL
[38] Council resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, 29 November 2022; st15381-en22.pdf (europa.eu)

- **EU** s**tudy on greening the Creative Europe programme**, to be published in 2023;
- Annual **report on progress in implementing the Concept on cultural heritage in conflicts and crises**: A component for peace and security in European Union's external action and the dedicated Council Conclusions;
- EU as Guest of Honour at **Guadalajara International Book Fair, 25 November - 3 December 2023,** will feature culture and sustainable development as one thematic focus.
- Training for skills development foreseen for audiovisual professionals to assess and set out green productions. Greening is also a pillar of the Europa Cinemas network which will support innovative projects among mini networks of cinemas to promote sustainability in the exhibition sector.

B. Regional and urban policy

Policy framework and main priorities

EU cohesion policy, in particular through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), has traditionally recognised **cultural investments as key drivers of territorial development and social cohesion**. Europe's rich cultural heritage strengthens European identity, promotes common European values, active citizenship, inclusion and intercultural dialogue. Cultural and creative sectors and industries are a vital asset for regional economic competitiveness and attractiveness, while cultural heritage is a key element in the image and identity of cities and regions and is often the focus of urban tourism.

EU cohesion policy allows Member States, regional and local authorities to use culture as a lever for territorial economic and social development, inclusion and innovation, where communities and territories can exploit endogenous domestic cultural assets to increase growth, while reducing inequalities. ERDF support to culture and cultural heritage is based on the idea of place-based and integrated approaches, supporting territorial and urban development, social inclusion and encouraging the public to participate.

For 2021-2027, cohesion policy will **focus on sustainability and the digital enhancement of cultural heritage experiences. It includes the transformation and future resilience of CCS,** as well as the promotion of cultural heritage to the highest standards to integrate social inclusiveness, sustainability and citizen participation through culture. The cultural and creative sectors and industries can benefit from investments under all five Cohesion policy objectives – including through the new ERDF specific objective[39] dedicated to strengthening culture's role in addressing socio-economic challenges or as part of integrated territorial strategies under Policy Objective 5 "A Europe closer to citizens" - within programmes under the "Investment for growth and jobs and growth" and "European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg)" pillar goals. In addition, it is possible to support culture under the Interreg specific objective, in particular 'better cooperation governance'. **Cross-border cooperation around cultural and natural heritage is often beneficial as many natural heritage sites are cross-border by nature.** Collaborating across borders allows for an integrated, sustainable approach to for example pilgrimage routes, sustainable trails through natural heritage sites and much more.

Strategic actions and key examples

Within this framework, the **Cohesion Policy funding scope of support for the cultural dimension of sustainable development includes the following actions:**

[39] As a novelty in the 2021-2027 period, Cohesion Policy has introduced an ERDF specific objective focused on enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation under Policy Objective 4 "A more social and inclusive Europe", which offers a wide scope of support with no disregard towards funding possibilities under other EU cohesion policy Objectives.

- Measures targeting the cultural sector enhancing the role of culture and sustainable tourism in economic development, social inclusion and social innovation, taking into account the need of culture and tourism sectors' digital and green transformation, resilience and long-term environmental, social and financial sustainability.
- Measures on innovation and uptake of new technologies for culture; support the growth and competitiveness of SMEs in the cultural sector; development, testing and piloting of new digital services, products and solutions (e.g. for the digitisation of culture heritage), or the development of skills for smart specialisation (when culture is a sector chosen within the smart specialisation strategy of the region or Member State).
- Measures to support energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste management, circular economy, green infrastructure and climate change adaptation to reduce the environmental and climate footprint of the cultural and creative industries and cultural sites in line with relevant strategic frameworks.
- Support to sustainable transport infrastructure contributing to sustainable tourism and access to culture as part of relevant transport plans.
- Measures that promote culture through territorial and urban development strategies under the responsibility of territorial authorities and with the involvement of local stakeholders and local communities. For cities and functional urban areas, 8% of funding is earmarked for sustainable urban development, where culture can be a main driver.
- The selection of 20 project proposals that will receive assistance and expertise to incubate inspiring place-based transformative New European Bauhaus projects. Projects selected cover different themes such as: regeneration of buildings/public spaces in a spirit of circularity, preserved and transformed cultural heritage, affordable housing solutions and integrated regeneration of urban and rural spaces[40].
- Six innovative actions in the field of culture and cultural heritage selected as part of the 5th call for urban innovative actions[41].
- The European Urban Initiative – Urban Innovative Actions first call that will focus on the New European Bauhaus, including the preservation and transformation of cultural heritage.
- A pilot project for the safeguard and promotion of culture in the EU Outermost regions (OR)[42] as well as the Overseas Countries and Territories: The aim is to promote the rich cultural heritage of these regions and territories through conferences, exchanges, events and exhibitions to disseminate artistic creations and to support cultural exchanges through the mobility of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors.
- Under the intergovernmental work of the **Urban Agenda for the EU**, one of the 14 partnerships is on **culture and cultural heritage**. The Partnership on Culture & Cultural Heritage aims to improve the management of the historic built environment of European cities, promote culture, and preserve the quality of urban landscapes and heritage.
- A new partnership of the Urban Agenda for the EU will focus on the topic of **sustainable tourism**.
- Besides the funding support available under mainstream and cooperation programmes, culture and sustainable development is also well recognised in the **EU macro-regional strategies**. **The EU**

[40] New European Bauhaus local initiatives: https://c.ramboll.com/local-support-new-european-bauhaus?utm_source=direct-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nebop .

[41] https://uia-initiative.eu/en/theme/culture-and-cultural-heritage

[42] The EU counts nine outermost regions, home to 4.8 million citizens: French Guiana, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Mayotte, Reunion Island and Saint-Martin (France), Azores and Madeira (Portugal), and the Canary Islands (Spain). In accordance with Article 349 of the TFEU, specific provisions in EU legislation help these regions address the major challenges they face due to their remoteness, insularity, and small size.

Strategy for the Danube Region; the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region; the **EU Strategy for the Alpine Region;** the **EU Strategy for the Adriatic and Ionian Region.** All these actions and goals are important from the general regional and overall EU policies on culture and sustainable development as they create links and synergies between programmes and initiatives, as well as between stakeholders from EU countries and partner/non-EU countries.

- **Integrating the New European Bauhaus in Member States' cohesion programmes is a priority** during the ongoing 2021-2027 programming negotiations. The initiative is being considered as an **objective in the strategic partnership agreements and relevant operational programmes of each Member State.**

***Upcoming actions**:*

- Launch the **European Urban Initiative – Urban Innovative Action call on the New European Bauhaus** in autumn 2022;
- Continue to support culture and cultural heritage in **European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg)** programmes and macro-regional strategies;
- Launch the **new partnership of the Urban Agenda for the EU**, focusing **on tourism**.

C. Home affairs and internal security

Key priorities and strategic actions

Theft and looting of cultural heritage sites and trafficking cultural objects is a major international business, and a lucrative source of income for organised crime, and sometimes for terrorists and conflict parties. Cultural goods are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in conflict and crisis regions, such as Ukraine and the Middle East. The activity can result in total or partial destruction of the items stolen or looted as well as cultural heritage sites, religious buildings, archaeological sites etc. These have strong value for identity of the local population, since they preserve historical, cultural and social memory, often even in its original place of creation. Well-protected cultural heritage contributes to the development process by creating opportunities for education and jobs, space for dialogue between diverse social groups, and increasing the voice of marginalised communities and their sense of belonging.

The destruction of cultural heritage can thus significantly damage the collective memory of a society, but also take away a community's income source, for example in case of destruction of tourist attractions (cultural heritage sites, museums, etc.),

In line with the EU Security Union Strategy 2020 and the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime 2021–2025, the Commission is currently developing an action plan tackling trafficking in cultural goods. The aim is to tackle cultural goods trafficking and to protect cultural goods from destruction through criminal harm. Against this background, the action plan will address various aspects of the fight against trafficking in cultural goods, including capacity building of law enforcement and judicial authorities to better detect and punish trafficking cases, enhancing traceability of cultural goods, improve the protection of cultural goods from trafficking and looting, and cooperation with third countries where looting takes place, with particular attention for countries in conflicts and crises. Further aspects include awareness raising for the need to protect cultural goods and the harm that cultural goods trafficking can cause to cultural heritage.

***Upcoming actions**:*

- Leveraging social goals and economic added value by combating crime and illicit trade and facilitating sense of ownership by cultural communities.
- Adopting an **Action Plan on tackling the illicit trade in cultural goods, in 2022**, to address the various aspects of the fight against cultural goods trafficking and the protection of cultural goods from criminal harm.

D. Employment, social affairs and inclusion

Policy priorities and strategic actions

One of the key framework initiatives is the **Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities**[43]. It aims to achieve further progress in ensuring the full participation of persons with disabilities, including in the area of culture**.** It will guide the action of Member States as well as EU institutions. Accessibility is an enabler of rights and a prerequisite for the full participation of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others. In line with the strategy, **a relevant goal for culture would be to target the accessibility of cultural events and cultural products and promote artwork by persons with disabilities.** The strategy aims to make progress on all areas of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities[44], to which the EU and all EU Member States are parties. This is a legally binding human rights instrument that sets minimum standards for the rights of persons with disabilities.

The Commission has set up a framework to monitor the implementation of the strategy. This will also provide input for the European Semester, the EU Social Scoreboard and the implementation of the SDGs. By 2023, new disability indicators will be developed, supporting the indicators for the Social Scoreboard, the European Semester and SDGs.

As part of the strategy, the Commission promotes and raises visibility of artwork by persons with disabilities. It also strives to make cultural heritage and all cultural activities accessible to persons with disabilities through support from EU funding such as the Creative Europe programme. The Commission also:

- supported a study[45] as part of the large-scale project **Europe Beyond Access**[46], exploring the (lack of) knowledge among mainstreaming cultural managers of a) the work of artists with disabilities, b) how to make their programmes accessible to them, and c) how to make their programmes accessible to persons with disabilities;
- promotes the development of accessible tourism mainly by cities via the European Capital of Smart Tourism Award.

The strategy aims to ensure that persons with disabilities can take part in cultural life on an equal basis with others, in line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Commission calls on Member States to promote and encourage **culture and creative activity as well as arts for persons with disabilities** and raise awareness. This will make them visible through exhibitions and performances, and make more performances, festivals, art collections and museums accessible to persons

[43] Union of equality: Strategy for the rights of persons with disabilities 2021-2030 – Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion – European Commission (europa.eu)

[44] https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html

[45] Time to Act: How lack of knowledge in the cultural sector creates barriers for disabled artists and audiences – Disability Arts International

[46] Europe Beyond Access – Disability Arts International

with disabilities. The EU Disability Card was put in place as a pilot project in 2016-2018 in eight Member States (Belgium, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Italy, Malta, Romania and Slovenia) and even after its end, the Card remains in place and is recognised in these eight countries. **The Study assessing the implementation of the pilot action on the EU Disability Card and associated benefits**[47] identified the potential for a larger scale action and brought evidence that among others, there was a relatively modest increase in cultural, leisure, sport participation, and tourism abroad. The Commission intends to scale up the EU Disability Card.

Furthermore, in the context of the European Pact for Skills, a new partnership to promote skills in cultural and creative industries has been set up in 2022.

Upcoming actions:

- Ongoing Commission campaign[48] **Together for Rights** (until March 2023) to raise awareness on key aspects of the strategy, which includes culture, and is developed in consultation with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations as well as artists.
- Commission's proposal, by the end of 2023, to extend the European Disability Card with a view to be recognised in all Member States, building on the experience of the ongoing EU Disability Card pilot project and upon the European parking card for persons with disabilities.
- Further development and promotion of sectorial partnerships within the Pact for Skills under the European Year of Skills 2023.

E. Justice, consumer rights and gender equality

Policy framework, main priorities and current measures

The Commission adopted the **EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation** in 2020. It sets out a comprehensive three-pillar approach that complements social and economic inclusion with promoting equality and strengthening participation.

This framework includes EU-level objectives and quantitative headline targets on fighting antigypsyism and discrimination, reducing poverty and social exclusion, promoting participation and increasing effective equal access of Roma people to education, employment, health and housing. In the area of culture, it includes the operational objective of **promoting awareness of Roma history, culture, recognition and reconciliation**. Indicators for this objective could be linked to **awareness among the general population of Roma history, literature, arts, culture, music and politics,** participation of the general population in Roma cultural festivals and other public events, knowledge about the Romani language, and awareness about the Roma Holocaust.

Member States have confirmed their commitment to promoting Roma equality and inclusion by unanimously adopting the Council Recommendation on Roma equality, inclusion and participation. It sets out specific measures for them to include in their **national Roma strategic frameworks**. These measures include raising awareness of Roma history and culture among teachers and school staff, promoting social, economic, political, cultural and civic participation of Roma people, and promoting awareness of Roma cultures, language and history in society, including remembering the Roma Holocaust.

[47] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8407&furtherPubs=yes
[48] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1556

The Commission promotes **positive narratives and Roma role models** and is raising awareness of Roma history and culture, including an event to raise awareness about the Romani language as part of the 2022 EU Romani Week hosted by the European Parliament. It also supports relevant activities under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme[49].

More broadly, activities are ongoing to implement the **EU action plan on anti-racism** and in the field of **inter-faith dialogue**, particularly through the EU strategy on combating antisemitism and fostering Jewish life.

Upcoming actions:

- Member States to implement their **national Roma strategic frameworks** by 2030, including measures to promote awareness of Roma art, history and culture;
- Commission to publish its **assessment of the national strategic frameworks** in autumn 2022, take stock of the commitments made by Member States and provide guidance on any improvements needed;
- Continue to support **activities to raise awareness of Roma history and culture, and promote truth and reconciliation** under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme;
- Continue to support **activities to raise awareness of Jewish life and heritage in the light of Holocaust remembrance** under the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme.

F. The New European Bauhaus and its horizontal dimension for culture-driven sustainability

In recent years, the need to tackle the major challenge of climate change together with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic has emerged. The systemic importance of culture and the cultural and creative sectors to respond to potentially disruptive effects of the green and digital transition as positive enactors for sustainable societal transformation has been confirmed.

The **New European Bauhaus** (NEB) is a transversal initiative that aims to deliver on the green transition by addressing global challenges through place-based and innovative solutions. These combine the values of sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics. This triangle ensures that the intended solutions simultaneously address a range of dimensions. These cover not only environmental, affordability and accessibility aspects, but also needs and aspirations beyond functionality in order to ensure quality of experience for all. The innovative potential of the initiative lies within the multi-level, participatory and transdisciplinary approaches that need to be embedded in co-creation and implementation processes. This engages many policy areas, disciplines and actors to jointly develop new ways of working towards the transformation of all aspects of citizens' lives: places on the ground, products, services, ecosystems, mind-sets and behaviours. The communication on the NEB[50] highlights the fundamental role of culture in addressing sustainability challenges and supporting positive societal transformation. Artists and cultural actors play a crucial role in the paradigm shift towards new behaviour and values.

The communication also mentions the intention to create an enabling NEB framework with the SDGs and with relevant EU policies and initiatives. Almost 2 years after its launch, the initiative has been integrated

[49] Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programme | European Commission (europa.eu)
[50] Communication from the Commission on the New European Bauhaus

across EU policies and programmes (Horizon Europe, LIFE, ERDF, Digital Europe, Erasmus+, Creative Europe, European Solidarity Corps and the Single Market programme).

The initiative brings together a diverse, vibrant and constantly growing community of over 500 partners and contributors from network organisations, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), businesses and public authorities. As one of the key instruments established by the New European Bauhaus, the NEB Lab sets the scene as a test bed for innovative collaboration models. The NEB community works together to create tools, frameworks and enabling conditions for the green transition to trigger tangible transformation and innovative solutions on the ground. Since April 2022, eight actions have already been started in the NEB Lab, three of which were launched by the NEB community itself.

Strategic actions and key examples

Among the range of NEB actions that contribute to the delivery of SDGs, the following are worth highlighting:

- Six projects selected under the call for the development of 'lighthouse demonstrators' to deal with topics such as building renovation, circularity, arts, cultural heritage, education, smart cities, urban and rural regeneration and more. As they are spread across Europe, the projects will provide a range of results that can be adapted and replicated in similar activities in Europe and beyond, to help inspire future projects.
- The NEB Lab is a virtual space where the NEB community comes together to propose concrete and tangible projects. NEB Lab projects have two objectives: a) create enabling conditions for the green transition; b) trigger tangible transformation on the ground. The NEB Lab follows a Commission-led agenda, which is currently visible in five Commission-led projects[51]. It also hosts community-led initiatives and is currently supporting the first batch of innovative projects from the NEB community, focusing on concrete changes in specific places.

Upcoming actions:

- Further support the NEB initiative by **mobilising EU funding programmes**;
- Encourage bottom-up initiatives from the **NEB community**, including through the NEB Lab;
- Progressively develop dialogue and cooperation with non-EU countries by **sharing and trialling the NEB concept beyond the EU.**

G. EU international partnership and development policy

Policy framework and main priorities

The Commission's work in the field of international partnerships is guided by the Joint Communication *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*. It identifies three main areas of action:

- promoting intercultural and inter-faith dialogue to improve cultural pluralism and mutual understanding, respect for diversity, equality and human rights;
- supporting CCS that offer opportunities for economic growth and job opportunities;
- facilitating cultural heritage cooperation that brings communities and people together, strengthens their sense of identity and supports sustainable tourism.

[51] The Commission-led projects are: Labelling Strategy; Pilot for joint funding with philanthropy; Crowdfunding and public funding; Regulatory analysis and experimentation; Transformation of Places of Learning.

The Commission has been actively working on projects and actions that have a strong impact on the economic dimension of development.

Strategic actions and key examples

Key examples include:

- **Support to 2030 UNESCO indicators**

The project carries out pilot activities to define and develop a framework of thematic indicators, the UNESCO Culture|2030 indicators. The aim is to measure and monitor the role and contribution of culture to the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda.

The project tests and improves the thematic indicators that will be used by countries and cities wishing to highlight the contribution of culture to sustainable development in their voluntary national reports and voluntary local reviews. The project's results will be shared in international fora to ensure a broad uptake by all stakeholders.

Other ongoing initiatives include, among others:

- **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument** (NDICI) - supports culture and sustainable development initiatives for partners outside the EU at the national, regional, global levels;
- **ACP-EU Culture Programme** supports artists and artworks from countries of the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States;
- **Innovative Financing Initiative for Culture** - supports the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in accessing finance and improving entrepreneurial capacities;
- **Silk Road Heritage Corridors in Afghanistan, Central Asia and Iran – International Dimension of the European Year of Cultural Heritage,** a joint collaboration launched by the EU and UNESCO in October 2018, to strengthen the contribution of culture to sustainable development, through heritage-based tourism development for high-quality visitor experiences along the Silk Roads heritage corridors in the beneficiary countries;
- **Procultura** – **promoting employment and income generation in the cultural sub-sectors of Music, performing arts** and children/youth literature and publishing in lusophone Africa (PALOP countries) and Timor Leste;
- **Identity Building and Sharing Business Initiative** - tackling some of the root causes of fragility and irregular migration by strengthening productive sectors contributing to identity building – like cultural and creative sectors and industries – and by addressing the value chains of lifestyle markets and by sharing the product of their creativity through access to new markets;
- **CreatiFI** supports the cultural and creative industries to access finance, through guarantees and loans, and capacity building for financial intermediaries in the countries from the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States;
- **EU-UNESCO Expert Facility –** the project supports technical assistance and peer-to-peer mechanisms for sharing knowledge and best practices in order to strengthen policies and institutional environments for cultural and creative industries; it aims to provide sustainable systems of governance for culture, helping develop cultural and creative industries that contribute to inclusive social and economic development and poverty reduction.

Upcoming actions:

- Support to cultural policies and institutional environments for cultural and creative industries, gathering evidence for the **development of cultural thematic indicators and policies**;
- Support to **cultural cooperation** between Africa and Europe and to cultural heritage in Sub-Saharan Africa **for sustainable development, peace, jobs and growth**.

H. Neighbourhood and enlargement policy

Policy framework and main priorities

The **New European Agenda for Culture** stresses that the promotion of culture and intercultural dialogue should be used as drivers of cohesion and socio-economic development. In line with the Joint Communication *Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations*, culture and intercultural dialogue play key roles in promoting reconciliation. This translates into diverse policy documents for each of the Neighbourhood regions.

The regional multiannual indicative programme for the Southern Neighbourhood has included – under priority area 1) Human development, good governance, and rule of law – specific objective 4 – ***To support culture as a requirement for human development and better quality of life***. The EU will support culture as an essential element of community life and key component of the community-building process.

Likewise, the New European Agenda for Culture provides that the Commission will promote cultural and creative sectors in the Western Balkans, including by using the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance, as well as develop cultural cooperation strategies at regional level, starting with the Western Balkans.

The communication *A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans* ('Western Balkans strategy') highlights that regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans are essential preconditions for progress on a European accession path and to promote socio-economic development in the region through culture. Boosting cooperation in culture with and within the region is one of the actions in support of flagship initiative 6 of the Western Balkans strategy.

For the Eastern Partnership, in the joint staff working document *Recovery, Resilience and Reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities* published in July 2021, the proposed priority 'Investing in people and knowledge' identifies the following objectives:

- Maximise the **potential of the cultural and creative industries as engines for social economic development**;
- Strengthen **cultural cooperation and intercultural dialogue**, including by increasing participation in Creative Europe, EU4Culture and other initiatives.

Strategic actions and key examples

- **Thaqafa Daayer Maydoor** is a four-year regional programme (2020-2024) that promotes a cultural ecosystem across the Southern Neighbourhood.
- **CREACT4MED** is a four-year regional programme (2020-2024) with the overall objective of strengthening the role of culture and creativity as a vector for employment and resilience. It focuses on young people and women entrepreneurs in the Southern Neighbourhood.
- **Creative Europe Window for the Western Balkans** aims to increase the financial support to Western Balkan cultural organisations by opening a dedicated window for the Western Balkans under

the Creative Europe programme. This was implemented through a specific call for proposals that funded projects in a diversified portfolio of sectors. This included translation and publishing, architecture, video art, painting and drawing, theatre, dance, graphic arts, music, intangible culture, museums or historical sites and buildings.

- The **Regional programme on culture and creativity in the Western Balkans,** with a budget of EUR 8 million and in line with the Western Balkans Strategy, aims to promote intercultural dialogue and strengthen the socio-economic impact of the cultural and creative sector in the Western Balkans.
- The **EU4Culture** project aims to help make culture an engine for growth and social development across the Eastern Partnership region. It supports the cultural sector's increased role of as an engine for economic development. Through its interregional approach, it favours greater intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange across the Eastern Partnership countries and improves local governance in the culture sector.

Upcoming actions:

- Ongoing preparation of a **new cultural programme for the Southern Neighbourhood** for 2023, where the EU will support cultural workers as agents of community building.

I. Education and youth policies

The **Education for Climate Coalition** is a bottom-up, co-created initiative to engage the education community at EU, national and local level. As a flagship initiative of the communication on achieving the European Education Area by 2025, it is a key instrument for effectively capturing and sharing initiatives and projects launched by the educational community to support the transition to climate neutrality. This relates in particular to developing 'green skills' and changes in behaviour and establishing links with other initiatives, such as the Climate Pact or the New European Bauhaus.

The **EU Youth Strategy** is the framework for EU youth policy cooperation for 2019-2027, based on the Council Resolution of 26 November 2018. Through its 11 youth goals and its three pillars (Engage, Connect, Empower), the strategy's aim is the meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people. It supports the development of creativity among young people as well as their access to culture and creative tools. It also aims to make new technologies available to empower young people's creativity and innovation, and boost interest in culture, the arts and science.

The Commission supports these objectives through its funding programmes, policies and studies:

- Erasmus+ supports creativity and innovation in cooperation projects;
- European Solidarity Corps supports European cultural heritage through volunteering projects;
- Council Conclusions on access of young people to culture (November 2010);
- Council Conclusions on fostering the creative and innovative potential of young people (May 2012).

In addition, 2022 is the **European Year of Youth**, shining a light on the importance of European youth to build a better future – greener, more inclusive and digital. It gives young people opportunities to learn, share their visions, meet people and engage in activities all over Europe. It contains nine policy areas, including 'culture', with for example implementation of the flagship initiative 'Youth discovers culture thanks to DiscoverEU in 2022'.

Strategic actions and key examples

- In close collaboration with the NEB, in February 2022 the Education for Climate Coalition launched a joint call for expressions of interest for educational and knowledge venues to develop their own NEB projects, bringing together design, sustainability and new teaching approaches.
- Promote cultural heritage to young DiscoverEU travellers (Erasmus+), including DiscoverEU meet-ups across Europe.
- Adoption by the Council of the Commission's proposal for a Council Recommendation on learning for environmental sustainability, in May 2022[52]. This encourages countries to establish learning for the green transition and sustainable development as one of the priority areas in education and training policies and programmes.
- Strong focus on the green transition as part of the strategic priorities of the European Education Area[53] and promotion, in the EU education transformation agenda, of the STEAM approach: integrating science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields with the arts[54].

Upcoming actions:

- Ensure **follow-up to the European Year of Youth 2022**;
- Continue the **support through Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes** towards culture, creativity and innovation, as well as facilitating learning about EU values and heritage;
- Further promote the flagship initiative **Discover EU**;
- Increase **synergies between Education for Climate coalition and other relevant policies** and initiatives for sustainability and climate action.

J. Single market and industrial policies

Policy framework and priorities

The European industrial strategy and its update[55] identify 14 industrial ecosystems, of which cultural and creative industries is one. The approach for the industrial ecosystems – which encompasses all public and private players operating in a value chain (from the smallest start-ups to the largest companies, from academia to research, service providers to suppliers) – aims to help cultural and creative industries recover and scale, while taking advantage of the green and digital transition[56].

Strategic actions and key examples

The **WORTH Partnership Project**[57] is particularly relevant as it is committed to the **development of smarter, more sustainable and inclusive growth through design solutions** by helping SMEs in lifestyle industries find green and inclusive solutions to improve their business processes, products and services. SMEs make up 99% of all companies in the EU and have created around 85% of new jobs in the

[52] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9242-2022-INIT/en/pdf

[53] EUR-Lex - 52020DC0625 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu): COM/2020/625 final.

[54] In this context, 'arts' has a broad meaning, covering the creative arts, culture and languages but also humanities and social sciences. The idea is to boost interdisciplinarity and to highlight the relevance of STEM to environmental, cultural, economic and social challenges through real-world learning and teaching.

[55] https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-industrial-strategy_en and COM(2021) 350 final https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-industrial-strategy-update-2020_en.pdf.

[56] Annual Single Market Report 2021, pp. 98-104: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/swd-annual-single-market-report-2021_en.pdf

[57] WORTH Partnership Project (europa.eu)

last few decades. They often struggle to find green, digital and more inclusive solutions and to remain competitive. WORTH therefore provides dedicated SME support in the form of an incubation programme[58] to business partnerships between designers, manufacturers/craftsmen and tech providers to help develop new business ideas. It focuses on lifestyle industries, including textile and clothing, footwear, leather and fur, furniture, and home decoration, jewellery and accessories. **The business partnerships have to address challenges in line with SDGs such as circular/green economy or social innovation**. Since 2017, the Worth Partnership Project has already supported 217 transnational partnerships and around 135 new partnerships will be supported by 2025.

Besides, the Commission supports cultural and creative industries, in particular creative companies and entrepreneurs, through cross-sectorial business support networks: Enterprise Europe Network (EEN)[59] and Cluster Collaboration Platform[60] (supporting SMEs, networking, internationalisation, B2B matchmaking etc.). Specific actions boost skills, professionalisation and job-training through:

- Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs[61] (facilitating the exchange of entrepreneurial and management experience, supporting professionalisation, skills and on-the-job training);
- Mobilising stakeholders to set-up a large-scale skills partnership for the cultural and creative industries ecosystem, launched on 28 April 2022 under the Pact for Skills[62], involving over 100 members committed to up-skilling workforce and attracting talent to cultural and creative industries.

Upcoming actions:

Under the **WORTH Partnership Project**:

- Implement the mentoring programme for the selected 65 transnational partnerships (2022);
- Launch calls for expressions of interest to select new partnerships in 2023;
- Boost skills for the competitive and sustainable development of cultural and creative industries in digital environments and for the green transition.

K. Research and innovation

Policy framework and main priorities

The EU's Horizon 2020 framework programme (2014-2020) made available EUR 77 billion in funding for research and innovation actions around its three priorities: Excellent science, Industrial leadership and Societal challenges; culture came primarily under the umbrella of 'Societal challenges'. The 2021-2027 Horizon Europe framework programme includes a dedicated research cluster on **Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society.** Cluster 2 has a total budget of EUR 2.28 billion, with EUR 400 million available from 2021-2022, and is focused on 3 intervention areas, all relevant to SDGs: democracy and governance, cultural heritage and the cultural and creative industries, and social and economic transformations. It gives special attention to 'supporting the emergence of new forms of cultural expression'.

[58] The incubation programme includes a) financial support; b) coaching on business strategy and technology development; c) legal advice on intellectual property rights and protection; d) participation in exhibitions and tradeshows; e) networking and professional links; f) advice on financial/funding opportunities.

[59] Enterprise Europe Network | Enterprise Europe Network (europa.eu)

[60] Homepage | European Cluster Collaboration Platform

[61] https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/supporting-entrepreneurship/erasmus-young-entrepreneurs_en

[62] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1534&langId=en and https://pact-for-skills.ec.europa.eu/index_en

Strategic actions and key examples

Destination 2 on **Cultural heritage and the cultural and creative industries** invested more than EUR 100 million in the 2021-2022 calls through three main pillars: green, digital and innovation actions, where culture is a driver of SDGs in different ways: addressing economic competitiveness and innovation, social cohesion and inclusion, environmental sustainability and climate action. Research and innovation activities under this destination aim to better protect, preserve and restore European cultural heritage, promote arts and increase the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative industries by using greener and digitalised/cutting-edge technologies.

The first 2021-2022 work programme included research actions where cultural and creative industries are drivers of innovation and where active involvement and engagement with them in multidisciplinary and cross-sectoral research collaborations is required. Key topics included:

- green technologies and materials for cultural heritage;
- participatory management and sustainable financing of museums and cultural institutions;
- cultural and creative industries as a driver of innovation and competitiveness;
- preserving & enhancing cultural heritage with advanced digital technologies;
- traditional crafts for the future;
- a competitive, fair and sustainable European music ecosystem;
- international competitiveness of the European film-making industry;
- effects of climate change and natural hazards on cultural heritage;
- games and culture shaping our society;
- the New European Bauhaus – shaping a greener and fairer way of life in creative and inclusive societies through architecture, design and arts.

Furthermore, the European Institute for Technology and Innovation (EIT) designated a **Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors and industries (EIT Culture and Creativity)** on 22 June 2022. It will bring key players in higher education, research and business together to exploit the innovation potential of the relevant sectors. The KIC will also facilitate the digital, green and social transition.

In addition to the above-mentioned cluster and actions that target the cultural and creative sectors and industries under Horizon Europe, there are also interconnections between culture and sustainability research goals under **Cluster 5 on Climate, Energy and Mobility**. There are specific topics and dedicated actions to apply energy efficiency renovation strategies to historical buildings particularly under **Destination 4** of this cluster. This focuses on ***Buildings and industrial facilities in energy transition*** and aims to achieve a more efficient and sustainable building stock through the renovation and modernisation of buildings. Furthermore, under Destination 4, the co-programmed partnership **Built4people** is intended to fund research and innovation projects for a 'people-centric sustainable built environment', bringing together public and private stakeholders to create research and innovation pathways towards sustainability and better living. This approach, together with the focus on sustainability, brings a social and cultural dimension to the activities and topics funded under this partnership, very much in line with the NEB principles in the built environment (for example in relation to cultural heritage and quality of experience). Among the main expected impacts of Destination 4, there is the intention to achieve a higher quality, more affordable and inclusive built environment, mitigating climate change and preserving the environment, safeguarding cultural heritage, taking sustainability, circularity and aesthetics into consideration, while ensuring better living conditions. Furthermore, relevant initiatives related to

'Cultural cities'[63], grounded in Horizon 2020 clustered projects, have created the basis for several collaborative and community-led actions. These play a key role in transforming historic urban areas and promoting solutions to regenerate urban areas in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the Commission coordinated the work of a Horizon 2020 expert group on 'the human-centred city: opportunities for citizens through research and innovation', delivered in 2020[64], and mapped all urban initiatives, including those addressing culture in the Yearly Mapping Report: EU research & innovation for and with cities (June 2021)[65].

Upcoming actions:

Cluster 2 of Horizon Europe *(Destination 2 on 'Cultural heritage, cultural and creative industries')*

- Further support the **three areas of green, digital and innovative actions, with a view to the UN SDGs**, in particular by **expanding the opportunities for digital collaboration and co-creation** meeting the needs of European cultural heritage professionals and researchers by developing, from 2023 onwards, a European Collaborative Cultural Heritage Cloud (ECCCH), **under European jurisdiction**;
- Restore and preserve cultural heritage will trigger the development of **new environmentally friendly technologies and methods to make Europe a leader in the sustainable management of cultural heritage**;
- Publish calls for proposals with topics on **cultural and creative industries as drivers of an inclusive climate transition, while integrating the core NEB values** of sustainability, inclusion and aesthetics, as well as topics relating to cultural tourism to **support the sustainable development of rural and remote areas**;
- **Develop a framework for a holistic approach to research and innovation contributing to the environmental, social and cultural sustainability** of cultural heritage on a scale that no Member State or the European Commission could achieve alone.

Cluster 5 of Horizon Europe

- Destination 4 will include a topic on future-proofing **historical buildings for the clean energy transition in the upcoming work programme**.

EIT – KIC on cultural and creative sectors and industries

- 2023: EIT KIC Culture and Creativity start-up year[66].

L. Digital economy and society

On 10 November 2021, the Commission published a recommendation on a **common European data space for cultural heritage**. It aims to pave the way for a common European data space for cultural heritage, helping cultural heritage institutions accelerate their digitisation and preservation efforts, and to seize the opportunities created by the digital transformation. The objective is to boost the reuse of

[63] Cf. the Horizon 2020 Manifesto of European Cities.

[64] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5b85a079-2255-11ea-af81-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-search

[65] EU research & innovation for and with cities - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu) https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1a11dc10-edba-11eb-a71c-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF

[66] https://eit.europa.eu/eit-community/eit-culture-creativity

digitised cultural heritage assets, notably in 3D, in various key domains such as education, sustainable tourism and cultural and creative sectors, with a positive impact on economic growth. The common European data space for cultural heritage will build on the European Digital Service Infrastructure and expand its current functionalities.

Cultural heritage assets digitised in 3D can be a source of relevant knowledge on climate-related impact and adaptation (for example, 3D allows non-destructive analysis of assets, visualisation of damage and information for restoration, conservation, etc.). Likewise, cultural heritage assets in 3D may be of key importance in increasing resilience to climate change and supporting preventive conservation of cultural heritage monuments, buildings and sites.

The data space for cultural heritage will also contribute to SDG 4 (Quality Education) as digital cultural heritage assets in the data space will also provide multiple perspectives on historical, scientific and cultural developments across Europe and beyond.

Digitisation of cultural heritage assets and their reuse can generate new jobs not only in the cultural heritage sector but also in other cultural and creative sectors (for example gaming and film industries), thereby contributing to SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). The data space for cultural heritage will strengthen collaborations, partnerships and engagement with the network of data partners (for example museums, galleries, libraries, archives across Europe), aggregators and experts working in the field of digital cultural heritage, leading to economic growth.

In addition, the data space for cultural heritage will contribute to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure) as it will strengthen innovation and the creation of new services and applications through the use and reuse of the digitised cultural heritage assets in various key domains (for example education, smart cities and environmental modelling, sustainable tourism – alongside the data space for tourism – and cultural creative sectors). High-quality digitised cultural assets open up new ways of digitally engaging with and enjoying cultural content through co-curation, co-design and crowdsourcing, empowering public participation.

In the field of audiovisual policy, the Media and Audiovisual Action Plan adopted in December 2020[67] has launched **a tool for a common methodology on CO_2 calculators for audiovisual productions across the European audiovisual industry** (action 6 on greening in 2023). It has also supported an **awareness campaign to promote diversity behind the camera in the audiovisual industry**, helping it adapt to societal changes (action 8 in diversity).

Upcoming actions:

- Deploy the **data space for cultural heritage**;
- Further implement the **Media and Audiovisual Action Plan**.

M. Climate action and environmental policy

Policy framework and key priorities

The Commission launched the **European Climate Pact** in 2020 as part of the European Green Deal. It aims to acknowledge the importance of bottom-up action, involving citizens from all generations and local communities in the transition to a resilient and climate-neutral society. Through its activities, the initiative aims to support bottom-up initiatives by providing information on the climate transition, developing spaces for stakeholders and citizens to work together, and helping start new initiatives.

[67] IMMC.COM%282020%29784%20final.ENG.xhtml.1_EN_ACT_part1_v8.docx (europa.eu)

Through the Climate Pact, citizens and communities can showcase their climate actions and make pledges to climate mitigation and adaptation via the 'Count Us In' platform.

The aim of these tools is to engage with citizens to co-create local climate narratives, taking into consideration cultural heritage, background, and to prototype action together in the local community. The Climate Pact supports co-creative innovative processes for local communities, such as policymakers' engagement with citizens to empower them by taking on a facilitator role for discussions on climate change and environmental protection in cities. The value added of the Climate Pact is to foster collaboration between different parties (for example artists, cultural centres, NGOs, local governments and businesses), to achieve common goals.

Artists, influencers, mayors and any citizen committed to climate action can become a **Climate Pact Ambassador** to support the work already underway in their communities. Becoming an ambassador is a complementary avenue to inform, inspire and support climate action in local communities and networks.

When it comes to environmental policies, the transformational change in our societies and economies, needed to deliver the Green Deal, cannot happen without the buy-in of society as a whole. This requires a change in social norms, values and perceptions, namely a change of culture, as acknowledged by the Green Deal priorities. Likewise, biodiversity awareness-raising work promotes nature literacy, empathy, solidarity and caring for nature, as well as interdisciplinary approaches to help people understand the interconnectedness of economic, social and natural systems.

The EU landscape features, biodiversity and protected nature areas (Natura 2000) form its intangible heritage and are the foundation for our future. The latest Eurobarometer 'Attitudes of Europeans towards Biodiversity' reaffirmed that Europeans care deeply about nature and biodiversity and they expect the EU to act in order to safeguard them. In particular, the actions most mentioned as important involve restoring nature and biodiversity to compensate for damage, and better informing citizens about the importance of nature and biodiversity. The same survey also shows that few citizens are aware of the Natura 2000 network and the EU's and its Member States' efforts to protect them.

This is why the **EU biodiversity strategy for 2030** underlines the importance of increasing awareness of biodiversity knowledge and integrating biodiversity and ecosystems into school, higher education and professional training In the international negotiations for the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, the Commission insists on mentioning the importance of cultural sectors and the involvement of actors in education, media and the arts and cultural sector.

Strategic actions and key examples

- **The European Green Capital** (for bigger cities) **and Green Leaf Awards** (for cities below 100 000 inhabitants) and their focus on citizen engagement and involvement gives ample space for cultural and educational activities with the topic of sustainability. Financed under the LIFE Programme, the awards support the implementation of the Green Deal on the ground at urban level. Winning cities are at the forefront of the green transition and have the potential to be a role model for others. Green Capital winners (one per year) receive EUR 600 000 and Green Leaf winners (max. two per year) EUR 200 000. The title supports and encourages winning cities to organise a wide range of actions and projects during the year. These usually include educational support in schools or for young people, art and sustainability projects for citizens, art shows that interpret art and environment protection, etc.[68] The award ceremonies usually include cultural events and presentations. Cities report that the title brings many benefits, including increased international media coverage, greater

[68] For example, a camping project in the mountains to make young people aware of climate change: Une expérience inédite: bivouaquer à la Bastille! - J'agis - Je rêve (greengrenoble2022.eu).

momentum in the city to continue to improve environmental sustainability or increased attractiveness as a tourist destination.

- **Cooperation with natural history and science museums, botanical gardens, zoos and aquariums via the global coalition 'United for Biodiversity'.** Coordinated by the Commission since March 2020, the coalition brings together these institutions and organisations, and is also open to research centres and universities, natural reserves and protected areas worldwide, and museums of any category, such as art, architecture or history museums. It invites them to join forces and raise their voice about the nature crisis, showing the importance of nature for humanity. The coalition now covers 51 countries and territories, creating a community of 323 organisations, national parks and protected areas, aquariums, botanic gardens, zoos, museums (including art museums), research centres and universities to support the political momentum, in tandem with other global political coalitions for nature.
- **Education toolkit on nature protection**: As part of a broader project to raise awareness of the need for nature protection, this toolkit for educators helps them engage with teenagers on nature protection in Europe. It offers a range of activities, either indoor or outdoor, grouped around four modules: (i) how do we relate to nature; (ii) exploring Europe's nature; (iii) how we protect nature in Europe; and (iv) engaging in nature protection. Many activities are supported by data and information available from the European Education Area databases and viewers. The toolkit is available in all EU languages[69]. Expected results include: raising awareness among the teenage population; helping understand EU nature protection policies, nature directives and Natura 2000, and encouraging young people to engage in nature protection.
- **Synergies between the protection of Natura 2000 sites and cultural heritage**: As one of the outputs of the EU action plan for nature, people and the economy and also as a follow-up to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, the Commission published the report *Natural and cultural heritage in Europe: Working together within the Natura 2000 network*[70]. The report explores the spatial overlaps between natural and cultural sites, discusses their common threats and challenges, and the opportunities available under different EU funds to kick-start joint nature and culture initiatives. It also sets out recommendations on how the challenges can be overcome and how to promote integrated management and associated socio-economic benefits.

  The Commission has published a story map that allows users to explore how Natura 2000 and World Heritage sites overlap[71]. A series of case studies has also been collected to show practical examples of different facets of successful integrated management of natural and cultural heritage in Natura 2000 sites[72]. One of the main outcomes of such integration could be increased capacity of cultural and natural heritage sites to attract visitors. This can in turn have a cascading effect on the local economy through new opportunities for sustainable tourism, business and development around the sites. This can lead to a better acceptance of limitations linked to natural and cultural heritage site protection.

Upcoming actions:

- **Launch the awareness-raising campaign on sustainable textiles** in the light of the EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles to pioneer the EU role in addressing challenges of creative sectors (design, textiles and fashion) as well as the importance of making textiles and fashion in the EU circular;

[69] https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e33a1119-8fa2-11ec-8c40-01aa75ed71a1/language-en
[70] Natural_and_Cultural_Heritage_report_2019_WEB.pdf (europa.eu).
[71] Explore Natura 2000 (arcgis.com).
[72] Europe's cultural and natural heritage in Natura 2000 - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu)

- **Emphasise** the environmental, economic and health-related benefits of the strategy as well as its contribution to increasing EU resource independence and resilience and offer practical solutions at all life cycle stages of textiles, and to individual consumers, that will help achieve the EU textiles strategy vision;
- **Ensure involvement of** youth, including young designers, influencers and artists, in the communication campaign to make fast fashion 'out of fashion' in Europe;
- **Develop a map viewer to help reduce the impact of flooding on cultural heritage sites**: when carrying out preliminary flood risk assessments under the Floods Directive, Member States do not always consider cultural heritage sites at risk. This may be because assessments need refining. The Commission will soon provide a map viewer that will juxtapose flood areas with, among others, cultural heritage.

N. Agricultural policy

Policy framework and key examples

The **common agricultural policy (CAP) strategic plans (2023-2027)[73] of the Member States can include specific investments that focus on culture**: this also includes the development of the EU geographical indications (GI) systems[74] for agricultural products and foodstuffs, wines and spirit drinks. The CAP supports agriculture and farmers through income support, market measures and rural development. Rural development in particular strengthens the socio-economic, socio-cultural and environmental sustainability of rural areas and has a strong impact on the broad cultural sector.

Measures to boost the registration of GIs and traditional specialities guaranteed diversification, cooperation and LEADER (local development method) can also support in the 2023-2027 period sustainability of local food (production, labelling and preservation of local built and cultural heritages).

Food mapping, labelling and food heritage as well as protecting how food is produced can also be considered cultural activities. Infrastructure and sustainability (environmental, cultural, socio-economic) are therefore key to benefiting the cultural, creative and heritage sectors.

O. Defence industry and space policies

The Union Earth observation and monitoring Programme Copernicus provides support to the Cultural and Natural Heritage community to facilitate mapping, monitoring and management of cultural heritage daily.

The Union Space Programme Regulation[75] explicitly mentions (art. 49(3)) the "preservation of cultural heritage" as a key policy to be supported through Copernicus.

Strategic actions and key examples

For some years Copernicus has been tackling the Cultural and Natural Heritage domain supporting the cultural heritage community with its data, products and services. The main goal in this field is to monitor and assess the potential impacts of climate change, natural and anthropogenic disasters, humanitarian crises and cultural and natural heritage conflicts to strengthen prevention and management and support sustainable development.

[73] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/common-agricultural-policy/cap-overview/new-cap-2023-27_en

[74] https://agriculture.ec.europa.eu/farming/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes/geographical-indications-and-quality-schemes-explained_en

[75] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0696&from=EN

Most of the Copernicus services contribute in different ways to the monitoring, risk assessment and damage prevention of cultural heritage sites. For example:

- Service in Support to External Action, assessing potential damage to cultural heritage sites over areas of conflict inaccessible to the international community;
- Climate Change Service, using some indicators to assess fire danger;
- Land Monitoring Service, with natural and human-induced geo-hazard risk assessment, Geodesy, urban and rural planning, flood risk;
- Atmosphere Monitoring Service, checking the air quality and subsequent possible damage to monuments and buildings;
- Emergency Management Service, supporting especially through on-demand mapping products (in rapid and risk and recovery mode activations) prevention, preparedness, response and recovery actions, by analysing, assessing and monitoring the degree of damage and potential associated risk(s).

A Copernicus Cultural Heritage Task Force[76] was also created to analyse the status of the cultural heritage activities with Copernicus data and services. Once the user requirements were identified, it verified that '*the majority of the current products satisfy the identified requirements'*. In addition, capacity building activities can also be considered, including support for skills development and training for professionals, as well as dedicated academic courses.

Other activities include:

- A specific proof of concept dedicated to digital tourism and cultural heritage, part of Copernicus Demonstrators (procurement) and expected to be implemented in 2023/2024.
- As part of the EUSpace4Ukraine initiative, a hackathon was held (29 June – 1 July 2022) that included applications related to the protection of cultural heritage.
- User Consultation Platform 2023 will address user needs and requirements for commercial users.

Furthermore, an analysis to identify possible ways to improve and customise Copernicus products is already ongoing, in combination with national activities and international actions (see for example UNESCO's GEO Urban Heritage Climate Observatory Community Activity).

Upcoming actions

- Copernicus services will continue to contribute to the **mapping, monitoring and management of cultural heritage**;
- Support Copernicus uptake in the downstream market related to cultural heritage monitoring and fruition through the **analysis of user needs and the implementation of proof of concepts**;
- Introduce a **unique access point to data, with information from across Copernicus components and useful to cultural heritage users** to be evaluated, taking into account available resources, priorities and ongoing national and international initiatives.

P. Union Civil Protection Mechanism

Policy framework and key examples

[76] https://www.copernicus.eu/sites/default/files/2020-10/CC-2020-37_Copernicus-Cultural-Heritage-Task-Force-Report_0.pdf

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism[77] (UCPM) aims to protect "primarily people, but also the environment and property, *including cultural heritage*, against all kinds of natural and man-made disasters (…)" (Art 1.2). The UCPM coordinates the delivery of assistance such as relief items, expertise, civil protection teams and specialised equipment in response to disaster-stricken countries, upon their request when their national resources are overwhelmed.

Strategic actions and key examples

The UCPM covers the whole disaster risk management cycle and supports prevention, preparedness and response actions. The UCPM supports, among others, efforts in the field of risk assessment, early warning and monitoring systems. Through the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network, it organises and coordinates trainings, exercises, exchange of experts and advisory missions. The UCPM fosters a cross-sectoral approach and supports the exchange of good practices.

The UCPM also finances projects in the field of cultural heritage in disasters. For example, the ProCultHer project[78] (2019-2021) developed a European methodology[79] to address the protection of cultural heritage during emergencies and facilitate the establishment of a new UCPM capacity in the field.

When responding to requests of assistance in the area of cultural heritage, the UCPM can facilitate delivery of in-kind assistance (for example protection equipment) as well as expertise, including in form of advisory missions. Recently, in response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the Commission is coordinating its largest ever operation under the UCPM[80], which includes also assistance in the field of the protection of cultural heritage, such as sandbags, packing material for preservation of cultural artefacts, and cultural assets protection kits.

Upcoming actions

- **Increasing the capacity to deploy teams of experts in the field of cultural heritage and civil protection**: the adoption of amending Commission Implementing Decision 2014/762/EU on new quality requirements for increased UCPM capacities is planned for 2023.
- **Increasing the profile of cultural heritage protection in disaster response operations:** the project ProCultHer-Net[81] will further strengthen cultural heritage protection capacities of civil protection authorities in Europe by connecting civil protection and cultural heritage experts throughout Europe.

4. CONCLUSIONS: THE WAY AHEAD

Cultural measures play a key role in the design of policy priorities and actions for sustainability, including in a variety of EU policies and programmes. However, to fully unlock the potential of cultural measures in, for and as sustainable development and the role of the cultural sectors, the scattered distribution of cultural measures that target sustainable development across many different policy areas should be addressed.

77 https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dec/2013/1313/oj/eng

78 https://www.proculther.eu

79 https://www.proculther.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/PROCULTHER-Methodology.pdf

80 All 27 EU countries, plus Norway, Türkiye, North Macedonia and Iceland, have offered in-kind assistance ranging from medical supplies to vehicles and energy equipment as well as supplies in the field of the protection of cultural heritage. The items are being delivered to Ukrainian authorities as single or pooling operations through the UCPM logistical hubs established in Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.

81 Further information on the project can be found on the Union Civil Protection Knowledge Network Online Platform https://civil-protection-knowledge-network.europa.eu/union-civil-protection-mechanism-projects.

The report by the OMC group on the cultural dimension of sustainable development, published on 20 September 2022, stressed that in these 'stormy times' – where the relationship between nature and humans is constantly threatened by increasing imbalances and inequalities – a 'cultural courage for change' is the best possible answer from policymakers. The EU has an enormous opportunity and responsibility to steer this process of better harnessing the (underused) potential of culture. This report contributes to the reflection process by providing evidence on the existing interplay between culture and sustainable development and on the need to reinforce it in the future.

As stated in the Final Declaration adopted at MONDIACULT 2022, where key EU actions on culture and SDGs were shared, a combined approach to culture and sustainability and greater policy coherence between cultural policies and sustainable development strategies can be beneficial to different levels of policymaking in Europe. '*We advocate for a systemic anchoring of culture in public policies, through the adaptation of development strategies and frameworks, at the international, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels, as well as within policies of other relevant UN funds and programmes, as an enabler and driver of resilience, social inclusion and economic growth (…)'* reads the Declaration[82].

It is therefore vital to translate the horizontal approach to sustainable development into a fully visible engagement with culture and creativity as engines of development. Collective efforts to tackle global challenges such as mitigation of climate change risks or European Green Deal and Agenda 2030 goals should rely heavily on culture to leverage new human behaviours, promote gender equality through cultural participation, and facilitate access to cultural opportunities through innovative and multi-stakeholder practices or processes.

Combining culture-led innovation with sustainability-driven investments and adaptive responses to breakthrough transformations of society in times of crisis should be at the heart of new policy frameworks for rethinking cultural policymaking in more strategic, coherent and effective ways.

A new approach to strengthen the EU strategic framework for culture, as suggested in the Commission's Report on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 and included as an initiative in the new EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026, can be a first step in this direction. A new EU strategic framework could provide more policy coherence and consistency and include among its overarching principles the commitment to deliver on Agenda 2030, thereby reflecting the ambitions expressed in the MONDIACULT 2022 Declaration for Culture, which calls for strengthened public policies and international cooperation in culture.

[82] https://www.unesco.org/sites/default/files/medias/fichiers/2022/10/6.MONDIACULT_EN_DRAFT%20FINAL%20DECLARATION_FINAL_1.pdf