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Subject:	Stocktaking on the Council Conclusions on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) – <i>Final Presidency note</i>

Delegations will find attached the final Presidency note about the stocktaking on the Council conclusions of 18 May 2021 on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS).

**STOCKTAKING ON THE COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON THE RECOVERY,
RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS
(CCS)**

I. INTRODUCTION

On 18 May 2021, a bit more than a year after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council approved conclusions on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors (CCS)¹. In its conclusions, the Council recalled the determination to take decisive policy actions promptly in order to support the CCS in times of crisis and beyond.

Furthermore, the Council called on Member States and the Commission to exchange on best practices and to take stock of these conclusions by 2023, as confirmed by the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026², acknowledging that the recovery of the CCS is still ongoing and that the question of the resilience and sustainability of the CCS needs more attention and would benefit from a deeper exchange of best practices and challenges identified.

During the Swedish Presidency, the stocktaking of these Council conclusions focused specifically on the topics of improving knowledge and preparedness for future challenges as well as taking cultural scenes and local communities into account. The first topic highlights the need for in-depth knowledge regarding the CCS, including research, mapping and dialogue as well as sharing of know-how, good practice and information related to the most effective ways to leverage the recovery of the CCS and focus on preparedness. The second topic highlights the importance of dialogue and of taking into account the needs of cultural scenes and local communities when designing cultural policy actions, the importance of innovative, cross-sectoral and bottom-up cooperation for outreach, and the need to stimulate active cultural participation, including by the most marginalised and vulnerable social groups.

¹ OJ C 209, 2.6.2021, p. 3

² OJ C 466, 7.12.2022, p. 1

The stocktaking was structured by a Presidency discussion paper (doc. 7409/2/23 REV 2), with an exchange between Member States and the Commission during a meeting in the Council's Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) on 30 March and written input based on questions by the Presidency. The findings below are based on the Presidency's compilation of Member States' answers to the questions in the Presidency discussion paper (referred to below as 'the Member States' answers') and input provided by the Commission.

II. IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE AND PREPAREDNESS FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Maintaining a dialogue with CCS stakeholders to assess and identify special conditions and needs

Maintaining a dialogue with stakeholders is common practice in the EU's and its Member States' cultural policymaking. With the pandemic, this practice was intensified in many Member States and sometimes widened or modified.

Some Member States stated in their answers that there was a need to distinguish, in dialogues or round-tables, between different art fields or between types of structures, such as self-employed artists, institutions, non-governmental stakeholders, etc. Another feature of special importance during the pandemic was audience characteristics, with differences between having a seated audience, a standing audience or a moving audience.

During the pandemic, Member States also worked with different methods to maintain their dialogue with stakeholders, such as a crisis hotline or website, digital marketplaces for the CCS, webinars on the consequences of the restrictions, as well as ad-hoc working groups or more permanent advisory bodies consisting of sector representatives and officials. In some cases, more participative processes were used in developing crisis strategies.

At European level, the FLIP project (see below), via the European Creative Hubs Network, manages the Creatives Unite platform, which started as a means for sharing information and good practices among the CCS with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic and today it highlights good practice and solutions for other topics as well³.

Some Member States also noted in their answers that the structures built up to address the crisis situation for the CCS in the light of the pandemic have guided dialogue formats on other issues that are important to the CCS as well, such as the energy crisis. Other dialogue topics mentioned include strengthening the competencies in the sector and promoting its exports.

An overarching dialogue structure also exists at European level, the structured dialogue between the Commission and civil society in the field of culture in the form of the Voices of Culture⁴ – results from these dialogues have in several cases fed into the works of Open Method of Coordination (OMC) Groups⁵.

The Commission has also developed other targeted sectoral dialogues on culture, in particular on cultural heritage⁶ and music⁷.

Many Member States emphasised in their answers the importance of representativity and stakeholder diversity for obtaining a good overview of the special conditions and needs of the CCS. This has an impact on stakeholders who are invited to talks, but Ministers have also been travelling around their countries to meet with different stakeholders with different working or production conditions.

³ <http://www.creativesunite.eu/>

⁴ <https://voicesofculture.eu/>

⁵ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/cultural-policy-cooperation-at-the-eu-level>

⁶ Cultural Heritage Expert Group, <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/eu-policy-for-cultural-heritage/expert-group-on-cultural-heritage>

⁷ Music Moves Europe – strengthened dialogue, <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/the-european-commission-strengthens-the-dialogue-with-the-music-sector>

Some Member States stated in their answers to have experienced challenges regarding dialogue with CCS stakeholders regarding how to involve other ministries (see below on cross-sectoral partnerships) as well as how to address the high fragmentation of the CCS, sometimes lacking established representative structures and with differing degrees of seasonality, self-employment and precariousness of working conditions.

Other ways to get insight and in-depth knowledge of the specific needs, characteristics, and vulnerabilities of the CCS

Member States cited in their answers many different sources for insights, such as studies by international organisations, education and research institutions, non-state actors and individual experts. Some ministries do studies themselves, some task public agencies with carrying out studies and there are also cases of ministries subsidising data-collection and mapping.

Regarding the pandemic specifically, there have also been cases of pilot projects for reopening after pandemic restrictions and following the effects and solutions implied.

Several Commission-led studies have been carried out to better understand, for example, the working conditions of artists⁸, gender gaps in the CCS⁹ and the importance of citizen participation in culture for civic engagement and democracy¹⁰. The Voices of Culture format has also led to several reports where sector representatives have been able to offer insights into their respective sectors and more horizontal issues for the CCS¹¹. The Pilot Project Measuring CCS in Europe was finalised end of 2022 to help build resilience in and through culture by elaborating a new statistical framework that would enable regular statistical analysis of the economic, cultural and social potential of the CCS in Europe.¹² Other EU-wide studies and projects are ongoing or in the pipeline to raise understanding on specific challenges of/in the CCS and specific needs of subsectors, and to identify possible future solutions and suitable support measures at the appropriate levels.

⁸ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/study-on-artists-working-conditions-published>

⁹ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/92d621d1-bb99-11ec-b6f4-01aa75ed71a1>

¹⁰ Planned to be published in June 2023

¹¹ <https://voicesofculture.eu/previous-themes/>

¹² <https://www.measuring-ccs.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/The-Measuring-CCS-Consortium-publishes-the-Final-Report-Measuring-the-Cultural-and-Creative-Sectors-in-the-EU.pdf>

The importance of improving cultural statistics and longitudinal research (including possible comparisons between the Member States) on the needs, characteristics and vulnerabilities of the CCS (taking into account the fact that, for example, there are fewer statistics on the non-profit part of the CCS) was highlighted in the answers received.

Measures regarding the CCS' preparedness for unexpected and uncertain phenomena

The pandemic has in many cases led to greater focus on risk preparedness for the CCS at large.

Some Member States stated in their answers that support initiatives designed in response to the pandemic have turned into permanent support addressing other kinds of contingencies.

Many Member States stated that they have also prepared guidelines for the CCS in the light of the pandemic, differentiating between different parts of the CCS, such as cinemas, live events and museums. But in some cases, similar guidelines have gone also beyond the risks connected with the COVID-19 pandemic specifically, with, for example, guidelines on preventive measures addressing health issues in light of the CCS special working conditions as well as guidelines with an even broader scope, including holistic crisis management plans for cultural institutions in response to disasters, incidents or potential malicious acts and setting out roles and responsibilities with regard to prevention, reaction and recovery¹³.

¹³ See also the Communication of the Commission on EU guidelines for the safe resumption of activities in the cultural and creative sectors - COVID-19, <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/document/communication-on-eu-guidelines-for-the-safe-resumption-of-activities-in-the-cultural-and-creative-sectors-covid-19>

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)¹⁴ and the Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)¹⁵ facilitate the coordination of the delivery of assistance such as relief items, expertise, civil protection teams and specialised equipment in response to requests from countries affected by disasters which overwhelm their national capacities. The UCPM has, for example, funded the ProCultHer project 2019–2021¹⁶ on developing and improving technical and operational capacities for safeguarding cultural heritage at risk of disaster.

The UCPM has also been used to deliver equipment for cultural heritage protection to Ukraine in light of the Russian military aggression. In addition, the Commission will be leading a group of experts that will help the Commission put together a set of recommendations based on recovery processes for the prevention, preparedness and recovery of cultural heritage in Ukraine.¹⁷ These recommendations and lessons learned could also guide relevant projects and initiatives in the future.

In addition to looking at how to support the CCS in the light of future challenges and threats, Member States also highlighted the importance of acknowledging culture's own transformative power.

The Creative FLIP preparatory action, co-funded by the EU and project partners, has the overall goal of building stronger resilience in the CCS and acknowledges this transformative power of culture. In February 2023, FLIP launched its Policy Paper 'From Reaction to Action – Collaborative Transformation Policies in Culture and Beyond for Future-Oriented Policy-Making and Action'¹⁸, which provides insights into major future transformation scenarios and their impact on the CCS and cultural policy.

¹⁴ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/eu-civil-protection-mechanism_en

¹⁵ https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre-ercc_en

¹⁶ <https://www.proculther.eu/>

¹⁷ For more information on EU support to Ukrainian artists and cultural professionals as well as Ukrainian cultural heritage, please visit <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/bg/news/eu-supports-ukraine-through-culture> and <https://creativesunite.eu/article/supporting-ukraine-on-the-cultural-front>

¹⁸ <https://creativeflip.creativehubs.net/2023/02/02/creative-flip-launches-policy-paper-from-reaction-to-action-collaborative-transformation-policies-in-culture-and-beyond-for-future-oriented-policy-making-and-action/>

Strengthening the CCS in general will also strengthen their preparedness for future challenges and threats. Some Member States have adopted – or are preparing to adopt – a specific artists’ status, setting standards for the working conditions, or addressing fair contractual relationships in the sector. There are also cases of basic income schemes for artists, established as research projects to inform future policy, and in some cases special focus on the conditions for artists with disabilities.

The issue of fair, viable and future-proof business models (not least regarding digitalisation with its possibilities and challenges, for example the role of platforms and artificial intelligence, including copyright for rights holders and for performers) was brought up by several Member States in their answers as an important challenge for the future, alongside with the green transition, circular economy, internationalisation and how to involve younger generations and achieve gender equality in the CCS.

To address these challenges, the importance of knowledge-building and the possibilities offered by the Recovery and Resilience Facility were raised among the answers, together with the need for EU emergency grants and preferential loans. Beneficial access to credit for small and medium-sized cultural actors was also something some Member States were looking into at national level, as well as how to attract foreign investment.

III. TAKE CULTURAL SCENES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES INTO ACCOUNT

Measures to place cultural policymaking closer to citizens and local communities

Member States identified in their answers several challenges regarding placing cultural policymaking closer to citizens and local communities – how to ensure larger and wider involvement in decision-making and the democratisation of decisions affecting the CCS at local level. These challenges include how to spread information about new possibilities on the one hand and how to manage expectations on the other. With greater public and local involvement come challenges such as managing the diversity of local communities and mediating between different interests, where some could feel they haven't been heard as much as others, but also committing enough time and resources to set inclusive governance structures and build mutual trust – and ensuring long-term support. Another challenge mentioned in the answers was ensuring reliable cultural participation statistics and how to measure the actual impact of inclusive initiatives targeting local communities, where there may be a need for alternative measuring models.

The European Capitals of Culture¹⁹ was mentioned in the answers as a model that highlights the potential for genuine citizen commitment and fostering a sense of cultural ownership. There were also cases mentioned where citizens themselves curated exhibitions in heritage institutions, upgrading the value of the locals' knowledge about the area.

Member States also brought up in their answers initiatives where participation in youth panels or even direct involvement in the design of cultural meeting places raise the cultural confidence of the younger generations.

¹⁹ Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing a Union action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC (OJ L 132, 3.5.2014, p. 1)

But of course, funding also plays a role. The Recovery and Resilience Facility²⁰ and the European Regional Development Fund²¹ were highlighted in some answers as a possible source of funding. In some Member States there are, for example, microgrants for developing cultural initiatives in communities or support to multicultural cultural and social facilities as well as participative creative place-making projects involving local communities.

One answer brought up a more systemic issue, addressing a shift from the model of cultural consumption to a model of cultural commitment and a more open form of leadership as ways to increase cultural participation.

In the Member States' answers, the wish was expressed to learn from each other when it comes to these types of initiatives. Also joining forces to create a methodological framework to measure impact in a way adapted to these initiatives was raised in one answer as a possibility. One answer contained hopes for the EU to have specific support calls on anchoring participation formats with children and young people and to promote voluntary cultural work, with low application thresholds.

Cross-sectoral partnerships on the benefits of culture for well-being and sustainability

Several Member States brought up established partnerships between the CCS and the education sector in their answers, regarding the benefits of cultural involvement. This includes media literacy and promoting reading (both pre-school reading and reading in school) as well as programmes where children can access cultural expressions through school that they would not otherwise encounter.

²⁰ https://commission.europa.eu/business-economy-euro/economic-recovery/recovery-and-resilience-facility_en

²¹ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funding/erdf_en

As for physical and mental well-being, examples were brought up regarding prescribing free passes to cultural institutions for people above 65 years with mild anxiety or depression symptoms as well as promoting the role of culture in lifestyle guidance, with a shift towards health problem prevention, and culture itself as being part of well-being. Also the importance of culture, including museums, for mental health was mentioned. A report by the preparatory action CultureForHealth²², implemented through a consortium led by Culture Action Europe, illustrates that art interventions can be used for disease prevention as well as the management and complementary treatment of mental health conditions.

²² <https://www.cultureforhealth.eu/>

The Commission report on the cultural dimension of sustainable development in EU actions²³ describes several current and forthcoming EU policies, programmes and initiatives where culture is driving the achievement of the sustainable development goals. The New European Agenda for Culture²⁴ guides synergies across policies and EU funding programmes which include Horizon Europe's cluster 2 on Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society²⁵, the new Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) for Cultural and Creative Sectors and Industries of the European Institute of Technology (EIT)²⁶, and other programmes that have a relevant component dedicated to culture, such as the Digital Europe programme²⁷, the LIFE programme²⁸, InvestEU²⁹, NDICI³⁰, the Single Market Programme³¹ and Erasmus+³². The New European Bauhaus (NEB)³³ serves to inspire other Commission initiatives and to integrate its values and principles in EU policymaking. This is done partly through funding within the above EU programmes, as well as through dedicated calls and contributing calls.

²³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:709:FIN>

²⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2018:267:FIN>

²⁵ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-2-culture-creativity-and-inclusive-society_en

²⁶ <https://eit.europa.eu/eit-community/eit-culture-creativity>

²⁷ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/digital-programme>

²⁸ https://cinea.ec.europa.eu/programmes/life_en

²⁹ https://investeu.europa.eu/index_en

³⁰ https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-technical-assistance/neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument-global-europe-ndici-global-europe_en

³¹ https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/single-market-programme/overview_en

³² <https://erasmus-plus.ec.europa.eu/>

³³ https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

In addition, the main EU culture programme, Creative Europe³⁴, can foster cross-sectoral partnerships involving culture and these partnerships will also be promoted in several actions of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026.

Other examples of cross-sectoral partnerships brought up by Member States pertain to culture for climate awareness, rural development, social inclusion and cohesion and there are examples of innovative cooperation models funded by the European Regional Development Fund.

Challenges to cross-sectoral cooperation that were brought up by Member States include lack of communication between different parts of the administration and the fact that funding structures are not always flexible enough to fund cross-sectoral partnerships. In addition, it was emphasised in one answer that spending on culture is often less mandatory for local authorities than other areas, making it difficult to commit to funding, and that there is a lack of data showing the impact of including cultural perspectives in other fields.

Some Member States, in their responses, expressed a welcoming stance towards recommendations at the European level that emphasise the importance of preventive measures for health issues that use culture. There were also hopes for exchanges of good practice and a European methodology to measure the impact of cultural perspectives and a larger openness – and simplified procedures – to include the cultural dimension in different funding streams.

³⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 (OJ L 189, 28.5.2021, p. 34–60)

Public policies to stimulate cultural participation and equal access to culture for the most vulnerable and marginalised groups

Between 2017 and 2019, an OMC group produced guidelines for policy makers and cultural institutions on the theme ‘From social inclusion to social cohesion: the role of culture policy’³⁵. Several of the Member States’ answers were in line with these guidelines, and special target groups mentioned, with which initiatives and funding opportunities should resonate, include national and other minorities, disadvantaged young persons, as well as persons with disabilities or dementia, and in prisons, hospices or unemployment.

Member States emphasised in their answers the importance of holistic views on inclusion, for example addressing not only target groups but also the staff level and the artists, looking at the accessibility of application procedures of cultural institutions and anti-discrimination measures.

Different ways of opening up institutions, lowering barriers and increasing understanding of diversity that were raised in the answers include promoting different kinds of solidarity schemes or promoting increased involvement of citizens and non-professional cultural actors. Cases of codes which cultural stakeholders are encouraged to adhere to, that can also affect funding, such as diversity and inclusion codes, were also mentioned.

One Member State also mentioned a project including a virtual library for anyone having difficulties reading standard print.

On the financial side, examples raised by Member States include different kinds of cultural participation passes or vouchers, targeting young people or people on a low income in non-stigmatising ways. Another example was financial support for touring and other forms of outreach, through which also more rural communities could be reached.

³⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/e1b88304-f3b0-11e9-8c1f-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

One of the Creative Europe Programme's key performance indicators for following up on the programme's results focuses on the number of projects supported that address socially marginalised groups, and one of the priorities of the programme's cooperation projects is social inclusion. The programme also opened a special call to support displaced Ukrainians and the Ukrainian cultural and creative sectors in 2022³⁶, one of the objectives being to help Ukrainian displaced people, and in particular children, by using culture to facilitate their integration in their new communities.

The EU Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021-2027³⁷ highlights the importance of culture for opportunities for encounters and exchanges between migrants, EU citizens with a migrant background and local communities. The Commission-funded study 'Promoting the Inclusion of Europe's Migrants and Minorities in Arts and Culture' addresses barriers, practices and solutions regarding migrants' and minorities' inclusion in arts and culture³⁸.

Challenges raised in Member States' answers as regards stimulating equal access to culture include a lack of data and follow-up to initiatives, the need for structural changes in order to be able to reach out, a lack of resources or staff with the mandate to work with outreach, and difficulties with achieving physical accessibility in cultural institutions and protected heritage sites. Regarding cultural heritage, the Faro Convention³⁹ was mentioned as an important instrument highlighting local heritage also outside of city centres.

³⁶ <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/news/creative-europe-commission-publishes-special-call-to-support-ukrainian-artists>

³⁷ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/migration-and-asylum/legal-migration-and-integration/integration/action-plan-integration-and-inclusion_en

³⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/promoting-inclusion-europes-migrants-and-minorities-arts-and-culture_en

³⁹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/faro-convention>

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Member States and the Commission have taken many measures since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic to assist the CCS in their recovery and resilience and to accompany the CCS in future transformations. In some cases, new structures were built up due to the pandemic, in others, existing structures could be adapted. A dialogue with the CCS is key to understanding current and future needs and different formats for this dialogue have been explored. But it is clear that there is a need for more in-depth knowledge, both horizontal and sector-specific. And there is a wish for an exchange on the issue at European level.

The same can be said when it comes to taking cultural scenes and local communities into account, to bring cultural policymaking closer to the citizens and encourage cross-sectoral partnerships on the benefits of culture for well-being and sustainability. Several actions in the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 will contribute to this and the exchange at European level will continue, also with regard to measures in the light of the Council conclusions on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the CCS.
