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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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Subject:	Council conclusions on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors, as approved by the Council (Education, Youth, Culture and Sport) at its meeting on 17-18 May 2021.

Council conclusions on
the recovery, resilience and sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors

The Council of the European Union,

RECALLING

1. The need, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, for unprecedented efforts towards greater resilience and transformation in the EU, as stated in the conclusions adopted by the European Council at the special meeting of 17-21 July 2020¹.
2. The determination to take decisive policy actions promptly in order to support the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) in times of crisis and beyond, as expressed by EU Ministers for Culture, Media and Audiovisual at their three informal videoconferences under the Croatian and German Presidencies.
3. The number of extraordinary measures aimed at supporting the CCS put in place by the European Union and its Member States since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. The importance of the European Pillar of Social Rights in ensuring that no one is left behind either in the recovery process or the digital and green transitions.

¹ EUCO 10/20.

5. The political agreement on the Creative Europe programme for 2021-2027 with an increased budget in the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).
6. The adoption by the European Commission of an action plan to support the recovery and transformation of the media and audiovisual sector.

AWARE OF

7. The crucial role culture plays for European identity and its significant contribution to the vitality, inclusiveness, democratic functioning and prosperity of our societies through its intrinsic value and important social and economic impact.
8. The potential of culture as a source of ideas and a means to create new solutions, address discrimination and reinforce social links, forge new solidarities, enliven spaces, and strengthen our ability to better face current and future challenges.
9. The recognition of the CCS as one of the essential ecosystems of the European economy and of its potential as an economic development driver.
10. The ability of artists, performers and creators to adapt to the challenges brought by the current crisis, finding new and innovative ways, mainly in the digital environment, of providing content to their audiences and attracting new ones.
11. The unprecedented necessity to rebuild and boost cultural and creative ecosystems, making use of lessons learnt from the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

CONSIDERING THAT

12. The current crisis has exposed structural challenges in the CCS and requires an immediate response as well as far-sighted and ambitious action that opens pathways towards enhanced resilience and sustainability of the CCS, especially its artists and professionals.
13. It is essential to strengthen the CCS, in particular the sectors most affected by the current crisis, by addressing their vulnerabilities and promoting fairness and equality for all, giving special attention to the situation of female artists and cultural professionals.

POINTS OUT THAT

14. The CCS have been amongst the sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 crisis because of their unique characteristics, such as direct contact with audiences, and due to the fact that many, albeit not all, cultural venues have been closed and events have been cancelled, resulting in serious economic difficulties.
15. A major proportion of CCS workers, and among them the most fragile, face significant uncertainty, often due to the lack of social protection and unemployment support mechanisms, as cultural work is often characterised by precarious short-term contracts and a high prevalence of self-employed professionals.
16. Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as cultural institutions and organisations (both for-profit and not-for-profit), which make up the bulk of the CCS and contribute to cultural diversity, need tailor-made measures given their vulnerability to the negative effects of crises.

17. Many artists, creators and cultural professionals have quickly resorted to showcasing their work and creative processes online, but are confronted with the challenge of securing sustainable sources of income, while very large online platforms have seen their traffic and revenues increase.
18. Access to culture has proven to be of great importance for the well-being of citizens and the cohesion of societies but may continue to be restricted by health-related concerns.
19. Restrictions adopted to address the pandemic have repercussions on the mobility of cultural professionals and the circulation of cultural works, thus posing challenges to cultural and linguistic diversity, continuation of dialogue, exchange and cross-border value chains.
20. The pandemic has also affected partners from the CCS in third countries, making it important to demonstrate solidarity, and to work with them in their efforts towards sustainable recovery and development, within the framework of the EU's international cultural relations and external action.

IDENTIFIES, WITH DUE REGARD FOR THE PRINCIPLES OF SUBSIDIARITY AND PROPORTIONALITY, THE RESPECTIVE SPHERES OF COMPETENCE OF MEMBER STATES AND THE ROLE AND AUTONOMY OF SOCIAL PARTNERS, THE FOLLOWING SIX PRIORITIES WITH A VIEW TO PROMOTING THE RECOVERY OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS TOWARDS GREATER RESILIENCE AND SUSTAINABILITY:

I. IMPROVE ACCESS TO AVAILABLE FUNDING

Invites the Member States and the Commission to:

21. Take advantage of the Recovery and Resilience Facility to enable recovery from the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to make the CCS more resilient to future crises by addressing the structural challenges faced by the CCS and, where relevant, implementing appropriate and efficient support schemes.
22. Promote synergies between EU programmes relevant to the CCS, such as Creative Europe, Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, InvestEU, Digital Europe, the Cohesion Policy Funds and the European Union Recovery Instrument.
23. Simplify application processes and reduce the bureaucracy of funding programmes as much as possible.
24. Strive to ensure that no one is left behind and that funding mechanisms are responsive to the specific needs and capacities of the self-employed, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, and institutions and organisations (both for-profit and not-for-profit) in the cultural field.

25. Share tailor-made information on funding and co-funding opportunities available for the CCS via structures in Member States supporting the CCS, as well as via relevant EU programmes' desks, agencies or contact points, and strengthen the dialogue between these actors in order to ensure that the CCS receive timely information and advice.

Invites the Commission to:

26. Provide a common 'one-stop shop' tool for relevant, regularly updated, easy-to-understand, easily accessible and tailored information in all official EU languages on funding opportunities for the CCS, thus allowing all cultural players to swiftly access information on relevant EU funding programmes.
27. Evaluate the application of state aid rules for the CCS, with a view to considering the need for adaptation.
28. Continue to work closely with stakeholders when implementing support measures and EU funding programmes in order to ensure that the available funding meets the needs of the sector, particularly during unforeseen circumstances.

II. ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF CCS PROFESSIONALS

Invites the Member States to:

29. Promote, within the appropriate frameworks, the further development of a fair and sustainable labour market, including social protection for CCS professionals, that takes into account the characteristics of cultural and creative activities, in close dialogue with the sectors².
30. Promote an ongoing dialogue and exchange with CCS professionals, encouraging them to notify problems at an early stage and share solutions found.

Invites the Member States and the Commission to:

31. Promote the further development of new business models by the CCS, for example by harnessing the potential of data, that respond to economic, digital, societal and environmental challenges.
32. Promote training opportunities that build capacity in entrepreneurial, digital, financial and management skills, intellectual property, as well as the overall resilience of CCS professionals.
33. Encourage the exploration of new ways and means of securing artists' income, discussing the status of artists and exchanging ideas on working conditions in the cultural and creative sectors and industries in Europe through the group on the status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals, due to be set up under the open method of coordination.
34. Promote efforts to further protect the CCS against piracy.

² Council Recommendation of 8 November 2019 on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed, *OJ C 387, 15.11.2019, p. 1*.

III. FURTHER STRENGTHEN MOBILITY AND COOPERATION

Invites the Member States and the Commission to:

35. Take appropriate steps to further encourage cooperation, including with third countries, and to facilitate the free movement of artists and CCS professionals, promoting exchanges, collaboration and artistic freedom by taking into account the general principles of free movement of persons and services.
36. Further explore solutions for addressing mobility issues, making it easier for artists and CCS professionals to navigate the different administrative practices of cross-border mobility.
37. Promote collaboration across artistic disciplines and simplify related rules, wherever relevant.
38. Promote the necessary flexibility to allow European mobility funds to be redirected to meet the most pressing needs of the sector when travel restrictions are in place.

IV. EXPEDITE THE DIGITAL AND GREEN TRANSITIONS

Invites the Member States and the Commission to:

39. Encourage the upskilling of CCS professionals to enable them to effectively access, make use of, profit from and compete in the digital arena, taking into account the role played by very large online platforms.
40. Seize the opportunities offered by the revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive³ and the Copyright Directive⁴ to facilitate CCS recovery.
41. Promote interdisciplinary cooperation between the CCS and the environment and technology sectors, fostering innovation in both culture and industry, and taking full advantage of language technologies and digital technologies, e.g. artificial intelligence.
42. Promote, where appropriate, cultural education for all generations as a means of creating a more informed consumer attitude towards a broader diversity of cultural productions.
43. Highlight the important transformative role the CCS play as a driver of sustainability, and provide, when possible, favourable conditions for all cultural actors to maximise their potential to combat climate change, including by reducing the environmental impact of their activities.

³ Directive 2010/13/EU as amended by Directive (EU) 2018/1808.

⁴ Directive (EU) 2019/790.

V. IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE AND PREPAREDNESS FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

Invites the Member States and the Commission to:

44. Promote a thorough and in-depth knowledge of the specific needs, characteristics and vulnerabilities of each cultural and creative sector all along the value chain, through, for example, research, mapping and ongoing and close dialogue with stakeholders, including local communities.
45. Facilitate the sharing of know-how, best practices and information related to the most effective ways to leverage the recovery of the CCS (e.g. measures of the recovery plan), and to focus on preparedness for unexpected and uncertain phenomena that may disrupt these sectors in the future.
46. Enhance the safeguarding of cultural heritage by focusing on sustainability and disaster resilience as an integral part of cultural heritage management.

VI. TAKE CULTURAL SCENES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES INTO ACCOUNT

Invites the Member States and the Commission to:

47. Include the needs and views of cultural scenes and local communities as a source of guidance for establishing priorities on cultural policies, strategies and programmes, thus maximising the social impact of activities and ideas that emanate from the cultural sphere.
48. Further encourage partnerships between the CCS and other policy sectors (e.g. health, education, youth, science, research and innovation, environment, employment, social affairs, tourism), in order to take advantage of the benefits of culture for well-being and sustainability by making full use of existing structures and programmes where relevant.

Invites the Member States to:

49. Encourage, where possible, links between cultural scenes, local communities, authorities and CCS professionals, recognising the strongly bottom-up nature of culture and creative ecosystems.
- ~~50.~~ Promote social connectedness through culture as a valuable response to the effects of social distancing and digital interactions.
51. Promote cultural awareness in societies by stimulating active cultural participation and equal access to culture for all social groups, including the most marginalised and vulnerable ones.
52. Encourage cultural institutions to develop innovative approaches and methods to attract diverse audiences.

CALLS ON MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO EXCHANGE ON BEST PRACTICES AND TO TAKE STOCK OF THESE CONCLUSIONS BY 2023.

Relevant policy documents

European Council

European Council conclusions adopted at the Special meeting of 17-21 July 2020 (EUCO 10/20)

A New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 (adopted by the European Council on 20 June 2019)

European Council conclusions of 14 December 2017 (EUCO 19/1/17 REV 1)

Ministerial Declarations

Declaration on culture in times of COVID-19 crisis (April 2020)

The Bucharest Declaration of the Ministers of Culture and their representatives on the role of culture in building Europe's future (April 2019)

Council of the European Union

Council conclusions amending the Work Plan for Culture (2019-2022) (OJ C 193, 9.6.2020, p. 20)

Council conclusions on risk management in the area of cultural heritage (OJ C 186, 5.6.2020, p. 1)

Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development (OJ C 410, 6.12.2019, p. 1)

Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action (OJ C 192, 7.6.2019, p. 6)

Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (OJ C 460, 21.12.2018, p. 12)

Council conclusions on promoting access to culture via digital means with a focus on audience development (OJ C 425, 12.12.2017, p. 4)

Council conclusions on cultural and creative crossovers to stimulate innovation, economic sustainability and social inclusion (OJ C 172, 27.5.2015, p. 13)

Council conclusions on mobility information services for artists and for culture professionals (OJ C 175, 15.6.2011, p. 5)

European Commission

Europe's Media in the Digital Decade: An Action Plan to Support Recovery and Transformation (COM(2020) 784 final)

Making the most of the EU's innovative potential. An intellectual property action plan to support the EU's recovery and resilience (COM(2020) 760 final)

Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation (COM(2020) 456 final)

The European Green Deal (COM(2019) 640 final)

A New European Agenda for Culture (COM(2018) 267 final)

European Parliament

Resolution of 17 September 2020 on the cultural recovery of Europe (2020/2708(RSP))

Resolution of 7 June 2007 on the social status of artists (2006/2249(INI))

Report of 25 February 1999 on the situation and role of artists in the European Union (A4-0103/99)

UNESCO

Culture in Crisis: Policy guide for a resilient creative sector (2020)

Culture & working conditions for artists: implementing the 1980 Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (2019)

Recommendation concerning the Status of the Artist (1980)
