

Thursday 17 September 2020

P9\_TA(2020)0239

## Cultural recovery of Europe

**European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2020 on the cultural recovery of Europe (2020/2708(RSP))**

(2021/C 385/18)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Preamble and to Articles 2, 3 and 4 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to Articles 6 and 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and Article 3 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in particular Article 19 thereof,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular Article 22 thereof,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 22 May 2018 on ‘Building a Stronger Europe: the role of youth, education and culture policies’ (COM(2018)0268),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 22 May 2018 entitled ‘A New European Agenda for Culture’ (COM(2018)0267),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 14 November 2017 on ‘Strengthening European Identity through Education and Culture’ (COM(2017)0673),
- having regard to its resolution of 13 December 2016 on a coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries <sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences <sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 June 2020 on transport and tourism in 2020 and beyond <sup>(3)</sup>,
- having regard to Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing Decisions No 1718/2006/EC, No 1855/2006/EC and No 1041/2009/EC <sup>(4)</sup> (‘the Regulation’),
- having regard to the European Council conclusions of 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21 July 2020,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 15 November 2018 on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (2018/C 460/10),
- having regard to the Commission staff working document ‘Identifying Europe’s recovery needs’ accompanying the Commission communication of 27 May 2020 on ‘Europe’s moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation’ (COM(2020)0456),
- having regard to the 2015 report on ‘Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe’,
- having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 238, 6.7.2018, p. 28.

<sup>(2)</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0054.

<sup>(3)</sup> Texts adopted, P9\_TA(2020)0169.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 221.

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- A. whereas culture is a strategic sector for the European Union, not only constituting an important part of our economy, but also contributing to democratic, sustainable, free and inclusive societies, and reflecting our European diversity, values, history, freedoms and way of life;
- B. whereas culture and the freedom of the arts contribute significantly to the vibrancy of a society and enable all segments of society to express their identities, contributing to social cohesion and intercultural dialogue paving the way to an ever closer European Union;
- C. whereas culture has an intrinsic value as an expression of humanity, democracy and civic engagement that can be key to advancing sustainable development;
- D. whereas culture strengthens the social capital of societies, facilitates democratic citizenship, fosters creativity, well-being and critical thinking, encourages integration and cohesion and promotes diversity, equality and pluralism;
- E. whereas cultural participation has been recognised as one of the main accelerators of social change and of the construction of inclusive, resilient societies;
- F. whereas culture and the cultural and creative sectors and industries are an important vehicle in the fight against all forms of discrimination, including racism and xenophobia, and are a platform for freedom of expression;
- G. whereas the pandemic has revealed the true social value for European society as well as the economic weight of the cultural and creative sectors and industries; whereas the economic part of culture is a strategic sector for the European Union and its economy, ensuring meaningful jobs for millions of Europeans and sustainable financing for European diversity, while reflecting our European values, history and freedoms;
- H. whereas European cultural and creative actors preserve and promote cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe, and participate in the strengthening of a European identity at all levels; whereas these actors represent an invaluable force for social cohesion and sustainable development and economic growth in the European Union and its Member States, and are an important source of global competitiveness;
- I. whereas the European cultural and creative sectors and industries account for around 4 % of the European gross domestic product, a similar level to ICT and accommodation and food services; whereas, in 2019, there were 7,4 million people in cultural employment across the EU-27, accounting for 3,7 % of total employment across the EU-27; whereas, in 2019, the proportion of people who were self-employed in the field of culture in the EU-27 was more than double the average observed for the economy as a whole <sup>(5)</sup>;
- J. whereas according to the Commission's own estimates, the cultural and creative sectors and industries — which account for EUR 509 billion in value added to GDP — are likely to have lost 80 % of their turnover in the second quarter of 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 crisis and the containment measures;
- K. whereas over 300 000 people in Europe are employed in the cultural heritage sector, while 7,8 million jobs in Europe are indirectly linked to it; whereas the European creative workforce in the cultural and creative sectors and industries is currently underrepresented by statistical systems;
- L. whereas the cultural and creative sectors and industries are closely interconnected and have been proven to benefit other sectors, such as tourism and transport; whereas according to the World Tourism Organization, four out of ten tourists choose their destination based on its cultural offering, and two-thirds of Europeans believe that the presence of cultural heritage has an influence on their choice of holiday destination; whereas Europe remains the most popular cultural tourism destination in the world;
- M. whereas Europe's diverse cultural landscape is suffering severely from the COVID-19 pandemic and many actors in the cultural and creative sectors and industries are facing ruin, without public investment and aid; whereas the shutdown of this sector has had a spill-over effect on other sectors such as transport and tourism and education;

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<sup>(5)</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Culture\\_statistics\\_-\\_cultural\\_employment#Self-employment](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Culture_statistics_-_cultural_employment#Self-employment)

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- N. whereas the cultural and creative sectors and industries are an atypical sector, based on their specific economic model, needs and sizes, but are mainly composed of small structures (SMEs, micro-organisations and the self-employed) with no or little access to financial markets and often with irregular and mixed incomes coming from different sources, such as public subsidies, private sponsoring, audience-based revenue or copyright;
- O. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has also highlighted the pre-existing vulnerabilities of the cultural and creative sectors and industries, including the precarious livelihoods of artists and cultural workers, as well as the tight budgets of many cultural institutions;
- P. whereas the full consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural and creative sectors and industries are just becoming apparent, with the overall medium and long-term impact still unknown; whereas this affects the social rights of artists and cultural professionals, who have the right to be fairly financially compensated for their work, and the protection of a diversity of cultural expressions;
- Q. whereas the COVID-19 crisis has already and will continue to have a lasting negative effect on cultural and creative production, diffusion and income, and therefore on European cultural diversity;
- R. whereas theatres, opera houses, cinemas, concert halls, museums, heritage sites and other artistic venues were among the first to close due to containment measures, and are among the last to reopen; whereas many cultural and artistic events such as fairs, festivals, concerts and performances have been cancelled or postponed for a long time; whereas the health and safety measures imposed to prevent a new outbreak do not allow venues to operate at full capacity for the foreseeable future;
- S. whereas, during the pandemic, as many Europeans found themselves in a situation of confinement, the sharing of cultural and creative content became a support for many citizens; whereas the opportunities to access online cultural content have multiplied and made cultural content more accessible, and often free of charge thanks to the authors, artist, performers and other creators; whereas this further reduces the creators incomes; whereas the availability of cultural content online did not translate into increased income for rights holders and performers;
- T. whereas inequalities in access to digital infrastructures have curtailed the fundamental rights of access to culture, the right of participating in culture and the right to express art;
- U. whereas the successive budget proposals for the Creative Europe programme under the next multiannual financial framework (MFF) even prior to the COVID-19 crisis clearly live up to neither the sector's nor Parliament's expectations, and the latter has called for the level of funding to be doubled compared to that allocated in the 2014-2020 MFF;
- V. whereas the Commission's revised MFF proposal presents a 20 % cut to the European Solidarity Corps, a 13 % cut to Creative Europe and a 7 % cut to Erasmus+, compared with the Commission's 2018 MFF proposal; whereas the European Council position as formulated on 17 July 2020 only matches the Commission's 2018 proposal; whereas Creative Europe is the only EU programme that provides direct support to the cultural and creative sectors and industries across Europe; whereas neither the initiatives that Creative Europe is supposed to cover nor its budget provide the support required by an already oversubscribed and underfunded programme;
- W. whereas the pandemic represents an opportunity to rethink the future of culture, and whereas the creation of a more resilient cultural ecosystem requires a broader reflection on the future of the planet and the urgency of responding to the climate crisis;
- X. whereas the cultural and creative sectors and industries are vital in achieving environmental sustainability; whereas they will need to remain properly funded and identified as a safe investment in order to be ready for the transition towards a carbon-neutral economy, in line with the European Green Deal and the Sustainable Development Goals;

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1. Expresses its sincere solidarity with performers, artists, creators, authors, publishers, their companies and all other cultural creators and workers, including amateur creators, who all have been severely affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, and pays tribute to their actions and solidarity during the difficult times experienced by millions of Europeans;
2. Underlines that the post-pandemic recovery and revitalisation of European cultural policy are strictly connected to the other challenges that the European Union and the world are facing, starting with the climate crisis; is convinced that the future culture policy has to be deeply interconnected with social challenges as well as with the Green and digital transitions;
3. Considers it fundamental to earmark for the cultural and creative sectors and industries a significant part of the economic recovery measures planned by the European institutions and to combine this with wide-ranging and swift actions in favour of Europe's cultural and creative forces, enabling them to continue their work in the upcoming months and to survive these times of crisis, and creating resilience in the sector; calls on the Member States and the Commission to coordinate their action in their support for the cultural and creative sectors and industries;
4. Welcomes the efforts of the Commission and the European Council in drawing up the 'Next Generation EU' recovery plan; is alarmed, however, by the fact that no specific amount has been clearly earmarked to directly benefit the cultural and creative sectors and industries; insists, in this context, that cultural and creative actors should be a clear focus of the Member States' targeted actions and should benefit widely and quickly from all recovery funds;
5. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to earmark for the cultural and creative sectors and industries, according to their specific needs, at least 2 % of the Recovery and Resilience Facility dedicated to the recovery; highlights that this percentage should reflect the importance of the cultural and creative sectors and industries to the EU's GDP, considering that they account for 7,8 million jobs and 4 % of GDP; reiterates the need for precise programming and financial plans designed to ensure business continuity in the cultural and creative sectors and industries and to offer predictability to the people active in the field;
6. Welcomes the creation of REACT-EU as a direct action plan with the aim of providing additional funding to much affected regions and economic sectors; welcomes the fact that culture has been identified as an important and affected sector; is worried, however, that no measures were taken to ensure that the cultural and creative sectors and industries benefit from this initiative; urges the Member States to consider the cultural and creative sectors and industries as strategic sectors and a priority under the EU's Recovery Plan and to identify a clear budget associated with swift and concrete actions dedicated to the recovery of these actors, which should benefit all stakeholders, including independent artists, and aimed not only at their economic recovery but also at the improvement of the working conditions of the people working in the cultural and creative sectors and industries;
7. Criticises the fact that Creative Europe did not receive any additional funding from the Next Generation EU fund and calls for the overall budget of Creative EU to be increased to EUR 2,8 billion;
8. Asks the Member States to ensure that specific domestic social, fiscal and economic rules usually applied to cultural and creative players can be extended during and after the crisis; requests that the Member States include SMES operating in the cultural and creative sectors and industries in the specific SME recovery plans that they have already implemented; requests that the Member States consider offering financial support to cultural venues and events as they implement new health and safety measures;
9. Calls for more coordination in order to identify best practices and concrete solutions that can support the cultural and creative sectors and industries during the current situation and any future relaunch; welcomes the sector's #saveEUculture and #double4culture campaigns, as well as the Commission's effort to promote the cultural and creative sectors and industries with the #CreativeEuropeAtHome campaign;
10. Notes with concern that social safety nets were often inaccessible to creative professionals in non-standard forms of employment; calls on the Member States to ensure access to social benefits for all creative professionals, including those in non-standard forms of employment;
11. Calls on the Commission to introduce a European framework for working conditions in the cultural and creative sectors and industries at EU level, which would reflect the specificities of the sector and would introduce guidelines and principles with a view to improving working conditions, paying particular attention to transnational employment;

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12. Notes that travel restrictions continue to hinder European cultural cooperation and have seriously impacted international mobility and touring, which represents a major source of revenue for cultural actors; notes that funding for international cooperation, touring and co-production has often been cut and diverted towards hardship funds related to the pandemic; is concerned by the detrimental effect of these measures on European cultural collaboration; calls on the Member States to limit unwarranted Schengen restrictions, and calls on the Commission to develop guidelines for Member States for safe cross-border touring, live cultural events and cultural activities;

13. Calls on the Commission to support artists' mobility so that they can exchange practices and techniques, and to significantly promote their integration into the labour market; strongly supports the concomitant mutual recognition of artistic competences;

14. Welcomes the creation of the EU's instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency (SURE), which is intended to support the short-time working measures put in place by the Member States, in particular those concerning SMEs and the self-employed; considers that this instrument, by covering as many cultural actors as possible, including freelance authors, performers, artists and other creators, might enable cultural and creative actors to remain in their field of activity while compensating for their loss of income and ensuring that expertise is not lost; calls, in this context, on the Member States to provide adequate guarantees so that SURE can be rapidly operational and available for all legal entities, including non-formal entities in the cultural and creative sectors and industries;

15. Is of the opinion that the current pandemic and its impact on our economies should not be used as an argument to further decrease national or European public spending on culture; stresses the crucial role of the Creative Europe programme and its MEDIA, Culture and cross-sectoral strands in ensuring European cooperation and a fair degree of stability in the sector through access to European funding by enabling projects to develop long-term partnerships; calls on the Commission to mainstream the cultural and creative sectors and industries throughout the MFF; recalls, in this context, that Parliament has asked for a necessary doubling of the budget allocated to the Creative Europe programme for the next MFF and strongly reaffirms its position in supporting the cultural and creative sectors and industries and their workers; considers it of the utmost importance that the programmes are finalised and adopted as soon as possible in order to ensure a smooth transition from their predecessors; stresses that, if the start of the new financing period is delayed, the Commission must ensure a transition to bridge the gap between the current Creative Europe programme and the new one;

16. Calls on the Commission to identify and communicate clearly on a wide range of mixed funding sources that can benefit the cultural and creative sectors and industries; insists that the future Knowledge and Innovation Community dedicated to the cultural and creative industries within the European Institute of Innovation and Technology should play a leading role in this context; calls on the Commission to include Horizon Europe funding for cultural and creative actors active in cultural experimentation, innovation and artistic research; reiterates the need for growing synergies at European level while at the same time promoting new innovative and digital solutions that can help the sector in the current times and beyond;

17. Recognises the importance of digitalisation in the creation, production, dissemination and accessibility of cultural and creative works and calls on the Commission to further identify funding for the digitalisation of European cultural works and to facilitate the access of SMEs and organisations to digital skills and infrastructure;

18. Notes that the majority of support measures designed so far have been debt-based, an option that is not sustainable for all stakeholders in the cultural ecosystems; calls for sizeable and primary grant-based support for cultural and creative sectors and industries in order ensure the livelihoods of local communities;

19. Welcomes the new support measures under the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility (CCS GF), which set out to improve access to affordable debt financing for SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors and industries; underlines the need for it to be made available more widely, seeking to cover all Member States and regions and SMEs of all sizes; calls for the enforced deployment of the CCS GF under InvestEU, offering more flexibility for the cultural and creative sectors and industries;

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20. Calls on the Commission to ensure that cultural and creative SMEs will benefit from increased support in terms of debt financing via the future guarantee facility instruments under the 2021-2027 InvestEU Programme;

21. Regrets that no further development occurred to enable access to financial resources for NGOs and smaller organisations; asks the Member States and the Commission therefore to review their current criteria and policies in terms of guarantee, especially for those SMEs that have higher risk profiles with low or no access to financial markets and that generate intangible assets;

22. Calls on the Commission to take action to mitigate the ever-increasing impact of the crisis on the cultural and creative sectors and industries, at a time when the continued cancellation of festivals and cultural events is having disastrous financial consequences, particularly for the music and performing arts sector and for independent artists; believes that European digital platforms dedicated to performing arts should be established in order to share as much European cultural content and creative products as possible; asks that such platforms be designed with the fair remuneration of artists, creators and companies in mind; asks to be more strongly involved in identifying together with relevant actors solutions for supporting the activities and especially the artists and creators affected by the cancellation of major festivals and cultural events;

23. Calls on the Commission to identify whether the national financial distribution methods for cultural funding are accessible to all creators, and whether the allocation is independent, free and fair; calls on the Commission to work on better quantitative and qualitative indicators in order to provide a reliable and steady flow of data relating to the cultural and creative sectors and industries;

24. Reminds the Member States that other measures can be used to help the cultural and creative sectors and industries recover from the crisis, such as reduced VAT rates for all cultural goods and services, better valuation of intangible assets and tax credits for cultural production;

25. Points out that tourism accounts for 10,3 % of the European Union's GDP, more 40 % of which is linked to the cultural offer; considers that the gradual recovery of tourism is an opportunity to actively promote European culture and heritage while laying the foundations for sustainable European tourism; calls, in this regard, for the launch of an annual European cultural and heritage value creation programme that reflects European cultural diversity; asks that the structural funds include, as much as possible, cultural preservation and artistic creation in the projects they support; underlines the important added value of historical and cultural tourism; calls on the Commission and the Member States to establish an integrated policy in order to support the revival of this sector;

26. Considers that we should seize this opportunity to promote European cultural content worldwide by encouraging European production and developing European broadcasting networks; calls on the Commission to cooperate with the Member States so that the relevant legislation can be transposed as smoothly as possible, such as the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive <sup>(6)</sup>, the Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market <sup>(7)</sup> and the Satellite and Cable Directive <sup>(8)</sup>; underlines the potential of the film and video industry and calls for a pan-European partnership designed to support European creators in the field; stresses that the implementation of those directives and forthcoming legislative proposals must preserve and promote collective mechanisms to ensure adequate protection of individual creators;

27. Acknowledges the weakened state of the media ecosystem and the dire state of local and regional news media as well as those operating in smaller markets; considers that as free, independent and sufficiently funded media is also an antidote to the spread and effectiveness of disinformation, the Commission should present medium- and long-term strategies in this regard, including specific initiatives to support local and regional media and those operating in small markets; believes that consideration should be given to the establishment of a news media fund based on an arm's length principle; supports the Commission's forthcoming proposals for a Digital Services Act package, especially its new and revised rules on online platforms and online advertising; is of the view that attention should be paid to the concentration of media ownership, which often reduces the plurality and diversity of news and can also have a negative impact on the information market; supports the planned Media and Audiovisual Action Plan and its stated objectives of increasing competitiveness and helping the sector's digital transformation;

<sup>(6)</sup> OJ L 303, 28.11.2018, p. 69.

<sup>(7)</sup> OJ L 130, 17.5.2019, p. 92.

<sup>(8)</sup> OJ L 248, 6.10.1993, p. 15.



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28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to support and promote freedom of artistic expression, which is vital for cultivating democracy and a healthy recovery of societies from the unprecedented crisis; underlines the importance of European funding for the promotion and maintenance of cultural and media freedoms and diversity; considers that the cultural and creative sectors and industries are among the most dynamic sectors of the economy, that they should promote gender equality and that they could act as a strong catalyst for sustainable development and just transition;
29. Underlines the potential of cultural diversity in the global outreach of European cultural and creative sectors and industries, and calls for a balanced approach integrating a wide range of actors from different regions and of different sizes; calls in this regard on the Commission for a proper evaluation of existing programmes and EU actions such as the European Heritage Label, and for it to integrate a financial evaluation to enable better communication on heritage and cultural routes, so that citizens may have access to a better understanding of EU actions; further calls on the Commission to propose an ambitious and inclusive communication and promotion policy for culture in Europe, which would enable European cultural content, events and venues to enjoy a truly European and global reach;
30. Is of the opinion that the measures taken by the Member States and the Commission to assist cultural and creative actors in Europe should support players and initiatives that reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe, including minority languages and small languages;
31. Calls on the Commission to work together with the European Capitals of Culture in identifying practical solutions and to help them to limit, as much as possible, the disruption caused by the pandemic, in particular with those cities holding the title in 2020 and 2021, through an in-depth dialogue with the organisers; highlights the importance of more support mechanisms and financial solutions made available to them; reiterates the fact that due to current circumstances changes have been made to the calendar of European Capitals of Culture, and calls on decision makers to evaluate the possibility of prolonging the period for the upcoming organising cities;
32. Calls for increased efforts to build on the momentum of the European Year of Cultural Heritage in order to develop it into a durable policy legacy; urges the Commission to adopt a more integrated approach to cultural heritage, treating tangible, intangible, natural and digital heritage as interconnected and inseparable; stresses the need to establish a permanent platform, with organised civil society at its core, for cooperation and coordination on cultural heritage policies at EU level; calls also for a comprehensive framework for digital cultural heritage, focusing in particular on digitising efforts of existing heritage and widespread accessibility of digitised cultural material; notes in this regard the importance of interoperability and standards; calls for a thorough revision of the Commission Recommendation of 27 October 2011 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation<sup>(9)</sup>;
33. Underlines that during the lockdown many cultural heritage sites were left without supervision and without proper maintenance, thus leading to damage to these sites, which are already vulnerable to environmental degradation, natural disasters and climate change, as well as being illegally excavated or illicitly trafficked; stresses the need to protect employment in the cultural heritage sector, to support restoration professionals and heritage experts, and to give them the tools they need to protect European heritage sites;
34. Considers that the cultural dimension needs to form part of the dialogue with citizens, in particular during the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe;
35. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, and the governments and parliaments of the Member States.
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<sup>(9)</sup> OJ L 283, 29.10.2011, p. 39.