



Culture Action Europe's contribution to the EU 2020 consultation

Culture Action Europe, a European platform of networks, associations and organisations active in the arts and culture fields across Europe and beyond¹, welcomes the European Commission's initiative to launch a public debate on the post-Lisbon strategy. It is crucial for the European Union and its Member States to adopt a new vision and action plan for its economic and social development that takes stock of the lessons of the past, refocuses on European values of equality, solidarity and openness, and paves the way for future societies where quality of life and inclusion prevail.

However, echoing the voices of the Social Platform and some political groups of the European Parliament, Culture Action Europe considers that **the consultation period and general timing of the adoption of the new strategy is not appropriate to allow for a genuine debate with all stakeholders, and especially with the citizens.** The EU 2020 strategy is too important to be discussed and adopted in a hurry. This contribution therefore presents Culture Action Europe's general position on the key ideas put forward by the European Commission in the consultation paper. We hope to have further opportunities to input in the months to come.

Defending the right for each and every citizen to access culture, promoting freedom of artistic expression, and defending cultural diversity and intercultural action, Culture Action Europe believes in the powerful role of arts and culture in personal and societal development. Artistic expression and cultural diversity have always been key motors of European history, and participated greatly in the development of our democratic societies.

The capacity of arts and culture actors to contribute to European social and economic development has also gained increased political recognition in the last years, and has been endorsed by the EU in several declarations and actions². We therefore welcome the importance given to the concept of creativity in the EU 2020 outline, as presented in the consultation paper. We hope that arts and culture actors – who occupy a central position in the 'creativity matrix' – will be given the opportunity to not only participate in the drafting of future European creativity policies, but also be given the means to fully develop their potential in the creative and knowledge based economy the EU is planning to support. Arts and culture need a supportive operating environment for artists and other cultural professionals in the fields of mobility, employment and social protection, intellectual property, funding schemes, and integration in social and economic policies. None of this has been given sufficient attention at the European level.

Recognition of culture as a resource for creativity and innovation should also take place at different levels. Cultural indicators should be integrated into innovation indexes, the role of arts education should be formally recognized and integrated in all education frameworks, and

¹ Culture Action Europe has over 90 members, representing in turn more than 10,000 organisations in more than 14 artistic disciplines. Our members are from all domains - orchestras to writers associations, research institutions to cultural contact points, national theatres to international cultural networks, independent cultural operators to conservatoires, visual arts organisations to voluntary arts organisations.

² See the *European Agenda for Culture* (2007), the Council Conclusions on '*Culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy for growth and jobs*' (2007) or the conclusions of the European Council of 13/14 March 2008 stating that '*a key factor for future growth is the full development of the potential for innovation and creativity of European citizens built on European culture and excellence in science*'.

creative partnerships between culture, education, research and the private sector should be encouraged. It is time to take the risk of valuing imagination, the poetic, the symbolic, and the aesthetic as factors of creativity, innovation and development.

Support to arts and culture at the European level should be framed in a major shift to EU policy. As stated by the *Spring alliance*³, the EU should '*put the economy at the service of its people and the planet and not the other way round*'. The EU must refocus its action around the values underlying its existence, developing policies that go beyond a short-term exit strategy to the current crisis, and beyond GDP as the sole indicator of growth.

The commitment from all partners called for in the EU 2020 consultation paper should also translate into more concrete forms of co-operation of the local, regional, national and European levels, as well as benchmarking and evaluation tools. The EU must take a leadership role in this process by strengthening the governance of EU strategies and of the various Open Method of Coordination processes used in different policy fields, including arts and culture.

The notion of 'EU added value' should integrate all aspects of constructive partnerships sustaining this common vision and shared values the EU stands for. It is about how each of the governance levels contributes to the wider picture as well as their direct specific interest, and how a EU level co-operation and action could productively add value to the shared vision and objectives.

In the field of arts and culture, Europe wide coordination and collaboration is crucial not only to promote creativity and economic growth but also to support arts and culture as a key element in the development of European societies; carrying values of respect, tolerance, and solidarity. Supporting social inclusion, with a special focus on intercultural action with migrants and cultural minorities, the arts contribute to our living together in a culturally diverse Europe.

In this light, Culture Action Europe asks the European Commission to take the following demands into account when preparing its proposal for a EU 2020 strategy:

- **Development of a new paradigm, and of related policies and budget allocation, that puts values and citizens at the heart of the European integration project:** economic growth should be a means and not an end, serving citizens and the planet. Support to arts and culture within the creativity agenda and beyond, should be envisaged as participating in the development of democratic, open and inclusive societies.
- **Integration of culture-based creativity in future innovation policies:** to make sure artists and other cultural professionals are given sufficient means to participate in the development of a creative Europe.
- **A leading role of the European Commission in a deepened European level co-operation and joint action in the fields of arts and culture:** to make sure the role of arts and culture in European societies is fully recognized by all stakeholders and followed by genuine political cooperation, policies, programmes and budget allocation.

³ The Spring Alliance is a network of members from civil society managed by four leading European civil society organisations: the European Environmental Bureau, the European Trade Union Confederation, Social Platform and Concord ; the Spring Alliance steering committee. The Spring Alliance asks the EU to put people and the planet first. To know more and read the manifesto: <http://www.springalliance.eu/>