

European Cultural Foundation (ECF) response to:

### **CREATIVE EUROPE proposal by the European Commission**

*ECF shares and connects knowledge across the European cultural sector and advocates for the arts and culture on all levels of political decision-making. ECF has been a developer and carrier of the notion of Europe as a cultural project for almost 60 years. We believe it is our duty to share our response to the Creative Europe proposal, and we also call on civil society, EU Member States and the European Parliament to consider the value of the Creative Europe programme in terms of its contribution to the achievement of Europe's 2020 goals, but also with respect to advancing an open, inclusive and democratic Europe.*

2012 is a crucial year for engaging the governments and citizens of Europe to advocate for a key role for culture and creativity, as pillars of human development, and to make sure that they are integrated effectively into the next EU budgetary period from 2014-2020.

#### **The European Cultural Foundation...**

...calls on EU Member States and the European Parliament to support the *Creative Europe* proposal package with the total budget of 1.8 billion EUR.

We...

1. Welcome the *Creative Europe* proposal, both in terms of content focus and budget perspective.
2. Affirm that **capacity building and audience development** are of key importance for the sustainability and viability of the culture and creative sectors, as well as for better mirroring Europe's cultural and ethnic diversity; they also **lead to new cross-sector partnerships that are beneficial, not only to the culture and creative sectors, but to society at large.**
3. Support the proposed **full eligibility of organisations from the EU Neighbourhood**, in particular independent NGOs from the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Mediterranean, for participation in all programme strands.
4. Reiterate that *Creative Europe* must ensure **full and equal participation of non-profit oriented, small-scale, innovative, grassroots organisations and projects.**
5. Recall the importance of setting culture-specific and S.M.A.R.T criteria **for measuring the economic, social, cultural and educational impact of funded projects.**
6. Recognise the intercultural challenge as a core issue within the EU, and hence call for the *Creative Europe* programme to promote **intercultural engagement** with regard to audience development, social outreach through culture, the development of cultural institutions and structures, and cross-sector partnership building, in particular with sectors concerned with diversity issues.

**In light of the desired long-term effects of *Creative Europe*, we urge Europe's decision-makers to consider:**

#### **Europe 2020 and economic growth**

This framework programme is the only EU instrument that offers strategic investments in culture and creative industries in Europe and its neighbourhood. It meets the EU 2020 strategy goals for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth by enabling the cultural and creative sectors to increase their performance and capacities, as well as their contribution to jobs and growth. It aims to create better

opportunities for cultural and creative enterprises, and particularly to SMEs to develop, by removing operational and knowledge barriers, and by facilitating their access to investment; it looks into the knowhow and capacity building for sustainable and highly skilled sectors and individuals; it embraces a value chain approach to culture and audiovisual areas that will result in fostering innovation, new technologies, diversity of expression, audience building, transnational circulation and new business models. In its totality, *Creative Europe* will strengthen the competitiveness of culture and creative sectors in Europe and broaden their outreach within and beyond the EU.

Whereas the framework programme offers a coherent picture of the economic aspects of culture and creativity, it also needs to address urgently the **following challenges**:

Non-profit making organisations in arts and culture are facing big challenges in the context of the economic crisis: both public and private support for NGOs is being reduced, thus threatening their existence and core activities. National governments are withdrawing funds while no alternatives seem to emerge at an international level. In the mid-term, this will reduce opportunities for younger and up-and-coming generations of artists, cultural operators and entrepreneurs to realise their creative potential and to engage in international collaborations.

Europe is also currently experiencing developments that pose a danger to the European project in its very existence: an increasing number of anti-EU voices jeopardise the notions of solidarity and unity within the EU. They are also challenging the Union's enlargement, which has been among the EU's key successes of the last decade.

Migration and ethnicity have become highly controversial issues in most Member States, although migration to, from and within Europe are centuries-old phenomena. Multiculturalism has been proclaimed as inefficient, thus barricading the way for intercultural dialogue and development towards positive socio-cultural changes.

An urgent call for democracy in the EU's neighbouring countries demands a stronger political and cultural role for the EU in its external relations.

**The inspirational and connecting power of culture has an essential role to play in counterbalancing these challenges and in creating open, inclusive and democratic societies. It is an invaluable pillar of the European project and a guarantee for its future.**

Creativity and innovation flourish when the economy and the state both function in a democratic and open way. *Creative Europe* is thus an important mechanism for demonstrating how the EU can lead to a consensus among its Members about investing the acquired knowledge and skills into their own future.

**The *Creative Europe* programme must become an example for EU Member States, for candidate countries and for the EU's immediate neighbours, of how the value of culture and the power of creativity can be fostered and promoted in a sustainable way.**

### **Balancing economic and cultural values**

Cultural content conveys meaning and values. This is what distinguishes the cultural sector's production from the rest of the economy. The real impact of culture is in the quality and intensity of its message. Cultural content production is supplied by both non-profit and market-based agents. The *Creative Europe* programme, therefore, should provide tailor-made tools that are appropriate to both non-profit based and business entities, for ensuring fair competition and equal access to programme strands by both types of agents.

The programme assessment mechanisms should therefore be adjusted to the realities of the culture sector. Cultural NGOs proved to be carriers of the highest cultural values, experimenters with new media and communications technologies, and key drivers of international collaboration. Creative entrepreneurs bring new business models and innovative market solutions.

*Creative Europe* should invest in high-quality cultural products and creative value chains, tackling respectively content creation, production, distribution and consumption. It must enable sustainable creative partnerships to take place, including inter-sector partnerships.

We fully endorse that capacity building is at the core of the *Creative Europe* proposal. We expect that, in the Programme Guide, this will be translated not only into the development of much-needed entrepreneurial skills and audience development, but also into peer-to-peer exchanges, expert guidance and professional networking that are crucial for preparatory project work for international collaboration. The importance of capacity building is even greater for EU Neighbourhood and candidate countries.

### **Social and regional impact**

Investments in culture catalyse social and territorial cohesion and economic growth. Alongside the economic importance of cultural and creative industries, investments in social cohesion, integration and cross-sector collaborations are necessary to redress the inequalities in Europe.

Culture plays a crucial role in regional development and contributes to shaping new visions for regions and cities. Culture is key to the inclusion of underprivileged groups and overall societal integration. Prosperous regions can provide better lifestyles for their citizens by offering them better choices for life, education and work. *Creative Europe* should multiply the possibilities for cultural operators to carry out their activities, to access content and resources, and to develop their knowledge and capacities in order to maximise their positive impact on their socio-economic, cultural and natural environments.

The sustainable economic, social, cultural and educational impacts of the supported culture and creative actions should be assessed with a **set of appropriate quantitative and qualitative indicators**, considering the direct and indirect impacts, induced effects, as well as longer term structural effects on society.

The European Commission should ensure tight coherence and synergy between the *Creative Europe* programme and the Common Strategic Framework for the next EU Cohesion policy (2014-2020).

### The EU Neighbourhood

We welcome the fact that *Creative Europe* envisages equal participation of the EU Neighbourhood countries in the future programme activities. We reiterate that involving **civil society organisations from the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Mediterranean** in exchange, capacity building, production and co-production among operators in culture, audiovisual and creative industries is of utmost importance for building democratic societies and developing viable independent sectors.

*Creative Europe* should be the best place for people from other countries to get to know Europe via involvement in joint activities. It should be the unique leading tool in this area, complementing the relevant EU external relations' instruments and in particular the European Neighbourhood Partnership Instruments (ENPI).

### Intercultural Dialogue

Intercultural dialogue has been a broad, and somewhat elusive, objective on the EU agenda. However, it is possible to define this objective more sharply, also for the purposes of the *Creative Europe* programme. Intercultural Dialogue happens in cultural projects that promote understanding and interaction between socially and ethnically different people. The diversity of cultural expression and the range of cultural works can be a hook for such intercultural dialogue. In themselves, however, they are only a matter for cultural professionals and for dialogue between cosmopolitan elites. The *Creative Europe* programme should, therefore, promote intercultural dialogue as a way of enhancing social cohesion through culture, not as a feature of international cultural production as such. Individual and institutional capacity building for intercultural engagement – the development of intercultural skills and intercultural policies – must play a key role in this respect.

**Intercultural dialogue, exchange and communication are best advanced by initiatives that increase democratic access, inclusive participation and cultural awareness.** Dialogue can be encouraged through audience development and outreach programmes but not exclusively. The *Creative Europe* programme needs to allow creativity and innovation, also with respect to measures promoting intercultural engagement and community-building within the EU, with its neighbours and between continents.

Amsterdam, April 2012