

# ENCATC IN CONTACT



*For this ENCATC in Contact, we interviewed Romina Surace, senior researcher at the Symbola Foundation in Italy. We wanted to learn the foundation's reasons to join ENCATC, a new report it published in 2017 entitled "I am Culture", as well as exciting projects the foundation is working on that could be interesting for ENCATC members and followers.*

## What is the Symbola Foundation?

Symbola, established in 2005, aims to be an attentive observer of the territory and its ferments, a talent scout for the myriad success stories just waiting to be highlighted and extolled as examples to follow. It intends to be a sort of neural network for quality, an agora where you can discuss, ponder and construct new interpretative grids. It wants to bring in all the experiences, enterprises and projects that bank on research, innovation and the land, on human capital, historical-cultural legacies and the landscape. The idea is to combine new technologies with the strengths of the community, with creativity, beauty and social cohesion. Italy is going through hard times at the moment. It is caught between a recession and anxiety over backsliding. The different examples of vivacity and enterprising spirit that dot the peninsula risk being viewed as isolated successes and not as templates for similar development. To keep the leaders in quality from moving in far-flung and separate trajectories, Symbola wants to create a lobby for quality, a network of expertise, relationships and exchanges able to give the country a project for future success.



## Why did you want to join ENCATC?

The Symbola Foundation for Italian quality wanted to join ENCATC for two reasons. The first, was to find out the latest news and research in the field of cultural and creative industries. The second, is to make known at the European level the annual report we produce, "Io Sono Cultura" (I am Culture) realized by Symbola and Unioncamere over the last six years. Our report has defined an innovative approach to measure the Italian creative industries and cultural industries taking into account the specificities of the Italian economy. For

this reason, it would be helpful to use a comparison with other international research institutions.

Symbola is also involved in several projects in the field of culture at the national and international level. For this reason, being part of a prestigious network such as ENCATC will encourage the creation of new and important collaborations.

## What would be your contribution to the network's mission?

Symbola wants to share the results obtained through its research activities

in the cultural and creative field with members of ENCATC. We are confident this comparison will be very useful for members. Culture is not an easy concept to define. Actually, there are many different approaches in the world and in Europe. In regards to this, it should be pointed out that despite the common features and similarities among the methods used to delimit this extremely complex and varied world, many specificities have been taken into account in the numerous reports realised in different countries. As a matter of fact, if we consider the main existing studies on an international label, the NACE codes correspond in only 10% of the cases.

The approach used in our report "I am Culture" derives from a careful and deep analysis of the works developed in the international scene, in order to follow a pattern that is distinctive, like the Italian one (well summarized in the expression made in Italy, used for our best-known productions), and at the same time, consistent with significant experiences. Only the comparison between different national methods can lead to a common European approach.

### Can you tell us more about the report "I am Culture"?

The data collected in the annual Report "I am Culture", realized by Symbola Foundation and Unioncamere (the Union of the Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Agriculture and Craft), show that culture is one of the primary driving forces of Italian economy.

The report, now this year in its seventh edition, is an expected reference to take stock of the role of culture and creativity in Italy. From the first work of 2011, it can be definitely said that the issue of *"it is not possible to live out of culture"* is now overcome, and the attention of the productive world to this articulated system has substantially increased.

To the Cultural and creative Productive System (cultural industries, creative industries, artistic heritage, performing arts and visual arts, creative-driven productions) it is due the 6% of the wealth produced in Italy:



## Io sono cultura - 2017

L'Italia della qualità e della bellezza sfida la crisi

Quaderni di Symbola

89.9 billion euros. This figure is rising 1.8% over the previous year. The SPCC employs 1.5 million people, 6% of total employment in Italy. A figure also rising: +1.5%.

Looking at the dynamics of the sectors, the striking figure is that, unlike the previous five years, all segments have positive budgets, both in terms of added value and employment. The most significant performance remains connected to segments that have been positive in the last five years, such as design (+ 2.5% for added value and + 1.9% for employment), video games (+ 2.5% for Added value and + 1.7% for occupation) and creative driven production (+ 1.7% for added value and

+ 1.5% per occupation); (+ 2.2% for added value and + 1.4% for employment), performing arts (+ 2% for added value and + 2.2% for employment) and heritage (+ 2.1% for added value and employment).

While talent remains the core of all these sectors, we note that the dynamism described has also contributed to the significant increasing of the education levels required for cultural and creative professions. Between 2011 and 2016, the number of people with a degree, working in the Cultural and Creative Production System has risen from 33 to 41%: significantly higher than the rest of the economy, which grew less than 3 percentage points (from 17 to 20%). A





ENCATC members from Symbola and Melting Pro working together on the Mu.SA project this July 2017

sign the sector has also identified in the growth of skills one of the responses to the crisis that has horizontally invested all sectors, particularly those related to Core culture.

In these numbers we can spot the signals of a broad cultural ferment, which affects the whole society and, by osmosis, the economy.

**Do you have any projects you are working on that are interesting for ENCATC members and followers?**

The first, is this project I have mentioned, the annual report "Io sono Cultura" (I am Culture). The other is the European Mu.SA project – Museum Skills Alliance, that involves four countries (Italy, Greece, Portugal, and Belgium). This project aims to address the increasing disconnect between formal education and training in the world of work in the field of museum sector, because of the emergence of new job roles due to the quickening pace of adoption of ICT in the museum sector. A particular focus is to be put on work-based learning, providing learners with the skills required by the labour market. I encourage all ENCATC members to take a look at the project's publication that is available in English and Italian.

**LEARN MORE:**

The Symbola Foundation:  
<http://www.symbola.net/home>

About "Io sono Cultura" (I am Culture) 2017 edition (in Italian):  
<http://www.symbola.net/html/article/iosonocultura17ricerca>

About Mu.SA project – Museum Skills Alliance:  
<http://www.project-musa.eu/>



As a senior researcher, **Romina Surace** managed national projects focused on cultural and creative industries, green economy, local development and social innovation. At the core of the job's mission is to identify, select, promote best practices and to lobby for them among institutions and decision makers. This job has given her the chance to know many innovators who are relentlessly working on the ground in the different economic sectors. In this capacity, she has built, maintained and expanded a wide network of innovative entrepreneurs both at local and national level, in the whole territory of Italy. In particular, she coordinates the report "I am Culture", handles contacts with all the cultural and creative professionals involved and is responsible for the editing. Indeed, she works as Project Manager for Symbola Foundation, in the Mu.SA project – Museum Sector Alliance, supported by the European Union).