

To:

Charles Michel, President of the European Council

Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain, President-in-exercise of the Council of the EU

Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission

Margaritis Schinas, Vice-President of the European Commission

National Ministers of Finance

National Ministers of Culture

Brussels, 1 September 2023

Letter of concern regarding the 2024 Creative Europe budget cuts

Dear Presidents,
Dear Prime Minister,
Dear Ministers,

We are writing as a group of 70 networks and organisations from across the Culture and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSIs) because we are deeply concerned by the proposed budget cuts of €40 million to the Creative Europe work programme 2024.

The Culture and Creative Sectors and Industries (CCSIs) are vital for people's well-being in Europe. Culture is what brings us together. CCSIs contribute to democratic development, togetherness and social cohesion, as they are essential for vibrant and thriving societies. The CCSIs are important drivers of the European economy, with a turnover of €643 billion and a total added value of €253 billion. In 2019, the core activities of the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) represented 4.4% of EU GDP in terms of total turnover¹. For 2022, Eurostat estimates there are 7.7 million cultural workers in the EU with a yearly growth of 4.5% and the smallest gender employment gap ever, with 3.9 million men and 3.8 million women working in the sector².

As you will recall, cultural and creative sectors and industries have been identified among the ones most affected by the pandemic restrictions. And yet, while the health emergency is nearly over, these sectors are still in the midst of recovering from the pandemic. CCSIs are in need of continuous and reliable support to overcome the aftermath of COVID-19 as well as the ongoing cost of living crisis which has been heightened by the economic consequences of the Russian invasion of Ukraine and skyrocketing energy prices.

The importance of culture has been widely recognised across the political spectrum and across the world - now is not the time, however, to let the cultural sector down. We encourage you to remember that artists, creators, cultural workers, and the whole cultural

¹ [Rebuilding Europe: The cultural and creative economy before and after the COVID-19 crisis.](#)

² [Eurostat. Culture Statistics - Cultural Employment](#)

ecosystem are important social and economic players and that it is crucial to equip them with the necessary financial means.

The Creative Europe programme makes up only 0,198% of the overall MFF - and despite its very small amount compared to the overall budget, it has an enormous impact and expands the projects and programmes that it funds. While being among the smallest financial envelopes of the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), Creative Europe is the only EU programme specifically dedicated to transnational cultural cooperation, and an inestimable opportunity for cultural operators to act beyond borders and to make Europe's culture thrive.

A cut of €40 million in Creative Europe will have barely any impact on the EU's budget savings, but will significantly weaken the Creative Europe programme and cause damage to the CCSIs.

We would like to remind you that the Creative Europe budget was frontloaded as a reaction to the needs of the CCSIs coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic. The nature of the front-loaded budget is that the annual budgets would start to decrease already as of 2024. Against this backdrop, imposing further cuts to an already decreasing budget will severely jeopardise the recovery efforts undertaken in the past years up until now.

We therefore strongly support the recent vote of the European Parliament's Committee on Culture and Education (CULT) to increase the Creative Europe budget 2024 by €43 million and request that you align to this position to increase the budget of the programme instead of reducing it. In this light we would also like to draw your attention to the [letter](#) written by the Cultural Creators Friendship Group (CCFG) of the European Parliament which we fully endorse.

We very much hope that you will reconsider the current budget cut and call on you to strengthen the Creative Europe programme for the year 2024 and in the future. In light of multiple challenges it faces, Europe needs strong funding for culture, and a programme such as Creative Europe, which has shown how vital it is for European creativity, diversity and togetherness.

With kind regards,

1. Culture Action Europe (CAE)
2. European Music Council (EMC)
3. AEPO-ARTIS
4. Aktionstheater PAN.OPTIKUM gGMBH
5. Architects' Council of Europe (ACE)
6. Artists' Association of Finland
7. Association des Centres culturels de rencontre (ACCR)
8. Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Académies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC)
9. Association of European Radios (AER)
10. Autor - danish composers and songwriters
11. BJCEM
12. BOZAR

13. CEATL (Conseil Européen des Associations de Traducteurs Littéraires)
14. Centre Européen de Musique (CEM)
15. CEPI - European Audiovisual Production Association
16. CEPIC
17. CineRegio AISBL (European Association of Regional Film & AV Funds)
18. Circostrada
19. DE CONCERT !
20. EDN - European Dancehouse Network
21. EFFORTS Europe
22. ELIA - Globally connected European network of art universities
23. ENCC - European Network of Cultural Centres
24. EUNIC - European Union National Institutes for Culture
25. Eurocinema - Association de producteurs de cinéma et de télévision
26. Europa Cinémas
27. Europa Distribution
28. Europavox
29. European and International Booksellers Federation (EIBF)
30. European Arenas Association
31. European Choral Association (ECA)
32. European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity
33. European Concert Hall Organisation (ECHO)
34. European Cultural Foundation
35. European Federation of Journalists (EFJ)
36. European Federation of National Youth Orchestras (EFNYO)
37. European Festivals Association (EFA)
38. European Magazine Media Association (EMMA)
39. European Music School Union
40. European Network on cultural management and policy (ENCATC)
41. European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA)
42. European Orchestra Federation EOFed
43. European Theatre Convention
44. European Union of Music Competitions for Youth
45. European Writers' Council (EWC)
46. Europeana Foundation
47. Eurozine
48. FEDEC - international network for professional circus education
49. Federation of European Publishers (FEP)
50. Federation of European Screen Directors (FERA)
51. Federation of Screenwriters in Europe
52. IAA Europe
53. IAO (International Artist Organisation)
54. ICMP - The International Confederation of Music Publishers
55. IETM - International network for contemporary performing arts
56. IFRRO
57. IMPALA - Independent Music Companies Association
58. International Music Council
59. International Union of Cinemas
60. Jeunesses Musicales International

61. Live DMA
62. Liveurope, the live music platform for new European talent
63. Michael Culture Association (MCA)
64. Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO)
65. On the Move
66. Opera Europa
67. Polish Music Council
68. Tenso Network Europe
69. Trans Europe Halles
70. YOUROPE - The European Festival Association