

Ms. Henna Virkkunen,
Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty,
Security and Democracy

Mr. Glenn Micallef,
Commissioner for Intergenerational Fairness,
Youth, Culture and Sport

Mr Piotr Serafin,
Commissioner for Budget, Anti-fraud,
Public Administrations
European Commission
Brussels, Belgium

Honourable Vice-president Virkkunen,
Honourable Commissioner Micallef,
Honourable Commissioner Serafin,

We are writing to you to express our strong support for the ongoing efforts of the European Commission in strengthening the cultural and creative sectors across Europe, and to highlight the crucial role of the **Creative Europe Programme** in safeguarding and promoting Europe's cultural diversity, creativity, artistic freedom and freedom of expression.

The Creative Europe Programme has been, and continues to be, an essential instrument for protecting and promoting cultural diversity, cultural heritage and creativity, and nurturing the audiovisual sector in Europe.

As the only European programme specifically designed to support cooperation and content creation among cultural and creative organisations and professionals, it effectively captures the unique essence of the sector. By providing tools for cross-border cooperation between cultural and creative organisations of all sizes, mobility of cultural professionals, and circulation of high-quality cultural content, the programme significantly contributes to the intrinsic value of culture. Culture plays a vital role in safeguarding our community of values, enriching our common European identity, and enhancing social cohesion, while fostering innovation and competitiveness.

The audiovisual sector in Europe is artistically thriving largely due to cooperation, co-productions, content creation, talent exchange, and networking. In terms of content dissemination, cinemas and festivals are important tools for offering cultural and linguistic diversity to European and international audiences. This carefully balanced ecosystem, developed and sustained by the Creative Europe Programme, creates considerable value for various stakeholders and creative talents across and beyond Europe, as well as economic benefits.

In light of the ongoing digital transformation of the industry and the technological innovations, such as artificial intelligence, that are also addressed by many other EU instruments, **we firmly believe that it is crucial to continue supporting cooperation and content creation in the cultural and creative sectors at the EU level. This support should be visible, inclusive, and sustainable, with creativity and cultural diversity at its core.** The need for such cooperation at the EU level has never been more pressing, especially in the context of ongoing digital transformation and ever-changing world.

It is also important to note that the benefits of such cooperation extend well beyond the cultural and audiovisual sectors, strengthening the resilience of our societies against hostile actors. Culture fosters a sense of belonging and civic engagement among citizens, which is essential for upholding our common democratic values.

In conclusion, to ensure that the sector can continue to adapt and thrive in the rapidly evolving global landscape, we, the undersigned Ministers for Culture, strongly call the European Commission to continue prioritizing cultural diversity and artistic freedom. We reaffirm that the cultural and creative sectors, including the audiovisual industry, require effective and sector-tailored EU incentives. These incentives must be both highly visible and strategically designed to support cultural cooperation and content creation. They should ensure that EU strategies and funding priorities are flexible and responsive to the rapidly evolving needs of the sector as well as digital challenges and technological innovations. Without pre-empting EU budgetary negotiations we would like to stress that only with such targeted measures can we safeguard the sector's long-term resilience, competitiveness and vitality of Europe's cultural and creative ecosystem.

We look forward to continuing our joint efforts and to further strengthening Europe's role in fostering cultural diversity, creativity, and innovation.

Mr Werner Kogler
Federal Minister for Arts,
Culture, Civil Service and Sport
Austria

Ms Caroline Gennez*
Flemish Minister for Welfare, Poverty
Reduction, Culture, and Equal
Opportunities
Belgium

**Minister Gennez (Flemish Community) is also signing on behalf of her colleagues - minister Elisabeth Degrise (French Community) and minister Gregor Freches (German-speaking Community)*

Mr Nayden Todorov
Minister of Culture
Bulgaria

Ms Heidi Purga
Minister of Culture
Estonia

Ms Nina Obuljen Koržinek
Minister of Culture and Media
Croatia

Ms Sari Multala
Minister of Science and Culture
Finland

Dr Vasiliki Kassianidou
Deputy Minister of Culture
Cyprus

Ms Rachida Dati
Ministre de la Culture
France

Mr Martin Baxa
Minister of Culture
Czech Republic

Ms Claudia Roth
Minister of State for Culture and the
Media
Germany

Mr Jakob Engel-Schmidt
Minister for Culture
Denmark

Dr Lina Mendoni
Minister of Culture
Greece

Mr Balázs Hankó
Minister of Culture and Innovation
Hungary

Mr Šarūnas Birutis
Minister of Culture
Lithuania

Ms Catherine Martin
Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts,
Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
Ireland

Mr Eric Thill
Minister for Culture
Minister Delegate for Tourism
Luxembourg

Mr Alessandro Giuli
Minister of Culture
Italy

Dr Owen Bonnici
Minister for the National Heritage,
the Arts and Local Government
Malta

Ms Agnese Lāce
Minister of Culture
Latvia

Mr Eppo Bruins
Minister of Education, Culture and
Science
The Netherlands

Ms Hanna Wróblewska*
Minister of Culture and National
Heritage
Poland

Dr Asta Vrečko
Minister of Culture
Slovenia

**Signed on 17 December 2024*

Ms Dalila Rodrigues
Minister of Culture
Portugal

Mr Ernest Urtasun i Domènech
Minister of Culture
Spain

Ms Raluca Turcan
Minister of Culture
Romania

Ms Parisa Liljestrand
Minister for Culture
Sweden

Ms Martina Šimkovičová
Minister of Culture
Slovakia