Dear President von der Leyen,
Vice-President Schinas,
Commissioners Hahn, Gabriel, Breton,

Culture has always been a vibrant social resource, able to heal wounds in times of crisis. Culture carries tremendous intrinsic value and contributes significantly to the economy, with 4.2% of the EU GDP and 7.4 million jobs created. Culture is a vital component of the European integration and solidarity. It unites the European multitude of mentalities and histories in all their diversity, and shapes a common space for Europeans to develop a shared identity.

As our societies are going through an unprecedented turmoil, we call on the EU and its Member States to make sure that culture is placed at the core of each and every recovery plan, which aims at a sustainable, inclusive and future-looking revival of our social and economic life.

Cultural and creative sectors (CCSs) themselves are among the most seriously damaged by the pandemic. Cultural activities are being halted, millions of jobs are frozen or wiped out, micro and small businesses are on the brink of bankruptcy and many talents are forced to leave the sector altogether.

On top of that, we are at the beginning of a second wave in Europe that will undoubtedly increase the impact of the pandemic crisis on the CCSs.

This unprecedented uncertainty prevents the CCSs from bouncing back, devising viable short and medium-term plans and imagining a different future. There is a risk that citizens will not find their vibrant cultural life back in the post-pandemic world. This would be a huge loss in terms of social cohesion, communities' empowerment, individual well-being, and the economic revival of the EU.

While it has started addressing these concerns with some concrete measures in the past months, the European Commission also clearly included culture as one of the 14 priority ecosystems to repair, when presenting the recovery package for Europe, back in May. However, we regret that the European Commission has not integrated clear and strong references to culture in the “Guidance to Member States Recovery and Resilience Plans.” Now that the dialogue with the Member States on the design of their national recovery and resilience plans has kicked off, it is crucial that CCSs are fully included in the attainment of the main RRF objectives.

Therefore, we, the pan-European community of 110 networks and associations, call on the European Commission to encourage Member States to fully integrate culture in their national recovery and resilience plans, allocating at the very least 2‰ of the RRF budgets to the CCSs, as called for by the European Parliament in its recent resolution on the “Cultural Recovery of Europe”.

This should be monitored and stimulated, inter alia, through the Commission’s assessment of the national recovery and resilience plans.

It is our common duty to preserve culture in these challenging times, and we hope you will do everything possible to safeguard the diversity, vibrancy and richness of Europe.
SIGNATORIES:
