



VOICES OF CULTURE

Structured Dialogue between the European Commission and the cultural sector

Voices of Culture dialogue 2023 – Call

**Culture and Creative Sectors and Industries driving
Green Transition and facing the Energy Crisis**

I. INTRODUCTION – PURPOSE OF THE CALL

As we absorb the implications of the synthesis and conclusions made in the recent landmark report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)¹, it is evident that human societies face multiple, compounding existential risks on a scale and of a complexity that are barely comprehensible. We are far from prepared to face them nor well progressed in achieving the profound, transformative changes to our ways of living that we need if we are to survive *en masse*.

Europe is now in the throes of war-induced energy crisis accompanied by sharp inflation. The world faces a looming food and clean water crisis caused and intensified by the evident, damaging acceleration of climate change effects, pollution and biodiversity loss. It is imperative that we find ways to change ourselves, individually and collectively, that are effective, cohesive and enduring at an unprecedented speed and scale, and that we find ways to do so in a context of ongoing crisis.²

The 2022 report from the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) group of EU Member States' experts on the cultural dimension of sustainable development³ described these as “stormy times...requiring serious commitment and action” and above all, “the cultural courage for change”. ‘Cultural courage’ is explicitly framed in the report as being the courage to acknowledge and integrate the role of culture and the creative industries into Europe’s sustainable development actions, contributing to a new understanding of sustainability: “culture is needed as a catalyst and accelerator of multifaceted changes today and tomorrow in Europe and beyond. Hence it is high time that we solved the problem of the absurd underuse of cultural power for sustainable development”.⁴

The purpose of this Voices of Culture cycle is to generate project ideas and policy recommendations for the cultural and creative sectors,⁵ for other industrial sectors across Europe,⁶ and for decision-makers in EU Member States, regions, cities and communities as well

¹ <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/sixth-assessment-report-cycle/>

² See recent report from the ESIR group: European Commission, Directorate-General for Research and Innovation, Dixon-Declève, S., Renda, A., Isaksson, D., et al., *Transformation in the poly-crisis age*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/360282>

³ *Stormy Times. Nature and Humans: Cultural courage for change – 11 messages for and from Europe*, OMC report, July 2022, [Stormy times - Publications Office of the EU \(europa.eu\)](https://publications.ec.europa.eu/stormy-times)

⁴ *Stormy Times*, 2022, p.16.

⁵ As defined by the European Commission in the regulations of Creative Europe: “all sectors whose activities are based on cultural values or artistic and other individual or collective creative expressions. The activities may include the development, the creation, the production, the dissemination and the preservation of goods and services which embody cultural, artistic or other creative expressions, as well as related functions such as education or management. They will have a potential to generate innovation and jobs in particular from intellectual property. The sectors include architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts, books and publishing, radio, and visual arts” (European Commission, COM(2018) 366 final 2018/0190 (COD) Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 (2018). See: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-and-creative-sectors/cultural-and-creative-sectors>

⁶ ‘Industry’ in this context is intended in the holistic sense of all five industrial sectors in a ‘post-industrial’ society, from primary (raw materials), secondary (manufacturing and construction), tertiary (service industry), to quaternary (information services) and quinary (human services).

as for the EU institutional level with regard to the **opportunities for accelerating green transition and addressing the energy crisis through culture and the creative industries.**

The output from this Brainstorming session and from the Dialogue meeting with the European Commission will be a catalogue of project ideas, policy recommendations and inspirational examples presented as a report authored by the participants. The report will be disseminated widely, across the EU. **Applicants for this Voices of Culture cycle are sought from a wide range of sectors and stakeholders.**⁷

Discussions should build on and seek to complement the analyses and recommendations presented by the OMC group in 2022, referenced above, and a forthcoming study on greening the Creative Europe programme.⁸ They should also take into account, and not duplicate, the examples and recommendations provided by the EC report on the cultural dimension for sustainable development for EU actions⁹ and by the OMC report on cultural heritage resilience to climate change¹⁰.

II. BACKGROUND - KEY CHALLENGES

Cultural and creative sectors and creative industries (CCSI) are amongst Europe's most prominent, world-leading activities. Unfortunately, they also include some of the highest energy and materials intensive industries and therefore greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and waste producers in the world. They were cruelly affected or transformed by the effects of COVID-19, resulting in notably increased emissions in some cases. On the other hand, culture is a critical determinant of behaviour. Culture and creativity offer a source of innovation for climate change mitigation, hold the key to reshaping behaviours and living practices meaningfully and at scale, and are a source of principles and behaviours for societal resilience in the face of climate change effects. It is indeed time to harness the power of cultural activities and the CCSI in service of human transformation, accelerating the green transition and, in the immediate context, contributing to address the energy crisis and resulting energy poverty.

This will require a concerted and coordinated effort¹¹ to achieve decarbonisation, environmental stewardship and circular, regenerative business models in the CCSI themselves, so as to ensure that they are consistent with shaping and making a sustainable future and at same time able to act as role models for transformation. This process will also need to be accompanied by the

⁷ Applications are encouraged for example from representatives of regional and city governments, cultural institutions, community organisations, entrepreneurs and leaders of businesses and SMEs in the creative industries and in other industries.

⁸ The European Commission's study on Greening the Creative Europe programme will be published end of April 2023. It addresses the external dimension of greening for cultural and creative activities that increase awareness and promote green practices within the sectors and the internal dimension of greening for action to minimise the impact of CCSI activities on climate change and the environment.

⁹ *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development in EU actions*, December 2022, COM/2022/709 final; <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2022:709:FIN>

¹⁰ European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, *Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change: where the European Green Deal meets cultural heritage*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/44688>

¹¹ Inspiring recommendations provided by the report of November 2021: Gijs de Vries, *To Make the Siloes Dance : Mainstreaming Culture into EU Policy*, European Cultural Foundation.

integration of CCSI as levers for change across other socio-economic activities, as norm-creating, identity-shaping and habit-forming components of widespread sustainability and increased societal resilience.

The absurd underuse of cultural power for sustainability development

Peter Drucker's famous comment that "culture eats strategy for breakfast" has not really been taken into consideration yet in the shaping of responses to the climate emergency globally or in Europe. Emphasis is still strongly placed with scientific method and authority in identifying climate change as a problem, verifying anthropogenic causality, researching and modelling its potential and probable impacts, and in shaping the solutions to energy and green transition based on science-based targets and evidence-based policies. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) subjects and perspectives dominate education, entrepreneurship, investment and decision-making. As the 'Stormy Times...' OMC report observes, "the current 2030 agenda reporting system seems to reflect an implicit hierarchy of sectors of society and policies. Conventional wisdom has it that most culture-related issues or message from the cultural and creative sector and relevant ministries do not warrant the same high profile as, for examples, issues and messages relating to the economy, the environment or education."

And yet 80% of the environmental impact of a product is locked in at the design phase.¹² Design matters. Culture shapes what we see and perceive, how we make sense, how we understand ourselves in relation to the world and what we value: "The four key bridges linking nature with culture are beliefs and worldviews, livelihoods and practices, knowledge bases, and norms and institutions." (OMC report). Beliefs and worldviews set expectations and demand for lifestyles and choices which are currently far from sustainable. Changing them is not simply a question of providing more and better science to prove the urgency of doing so. We know from neuroscientific research that human decision-making is not rational; it starts with emotionally driven decisions that are then post-rationalised. Culture and the CCSI evoke emotion, stimulate our imaginations, generate images of ourselves and of possible futures and thus shape our brains and therefore hold immense power to influence and to transform what we aspire to, what we expect and what we consider essential in the moment and over time. In the developed world in particular, climate change actions need to focus on reframing and redirecting lifestyles in relation to the environment and therefore demand for energy, resources, materials. We need to leverage the power of culture and creativity to make that both aspirational and possible. How might we harness that power effectively?

Self-preservation = self-isolation: re-integrating arts and science

In the crucible of European urban and rural civilisations, arts, culture and CCSI were an integral part of social, political and economic life. Rulers and communities commissioned works of art, architecture and urban design to express political ideas and to shape civic and economic identity; rhetoric of expression dominated education, political and social discourse; art, power, knowledge and self-determination were entangled in the making and steering of the world. The role of arts and creativity in the 21st century has become very different, often polarised around

¹² See https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/scientific-activities-z/sustainable-product-policy_en

notions of artistic freedom and self-expression, withdrawn or disconnected from commercialised activities, such as advertising, marketing and industrial design. For some, the concept of ‘culture’ is perceived as being caught in a bifurcation of elite access or appreciation, on the one hand, and popular movements, on the other, both severely compromised by the recent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is if arts, culture and creativity were an artificially protected area – like a nature reserve protecting threatened species and ways of life – in a world where science, technology and economics dominate knowledge, visioning, meaning-making and decision-making.

Given that the CCSI are uniquely equipped to address the human dimension of sustainability, this condition of separation or self-isolation has to change and Europe is well placed to make that happen.¹³ In a context of the current poly-crisis world,¹⁴ what is needed now is the re-integration of arts, culture and CCSI across the whole spectrum of socio-economic activities (a re-integration of arts and science as Helga Nowotny called for in 2008)¹⁵ recognising the interconnections between culture and the CCSI, social inclusion, cohesion and the transformation of society to ensure sustainable development.¹⁶ The 2030 agenda (‘Transforming Our World’) demands a shift from siloed approaches to ‘navigating multi-dimensional, interconnected and increasingly universal predicaments’¹⁷ which was understood to require an evolution in mindsets and governance. It is time to thread culture and the CCSI back throughout the texture of our productive activity and physical-digital lives to provide self-reflection, enabling constraints, design principles, learning, meaning-making and self-transformation mechanisms for governance, policy making, decision making, incentives, education, employment, social inclusion and resource allocation. This shift should also acknowledge the cultural dimension of sustainability in local and regional communities and orient a different relationship between humans and nature and between humans themselves. How might we accelerate in Europe an integrated approach to **culture as sustainability development** across public policy areas, European businesses and SMEs?¹⁸ And in the current context, how can culture and the CCSI specifically address the energy question: sources, qualities and directions?

The greening challenge: overcoming fragmentation and lack of visibility

¹³ See the analysis and recommendations in Gijs de Vries excellent 2021 report, *To Make the Siloes Dance : Mainstreaming Culture into EU Policy*, European Cultural Foundation, November 2021.

¹⁴ A global poly-crisis occurs when crises in multiple global systems become causally entangled in ways that significantly degrade humanity’s prospects. These interacting crises produce harms greater than the sum of those the crises would produce in isolation, were their host systems not so deeply interconnected. See: Homer-Dixon, T.; Renn, O.; Rockström, J.; Donges, J.F.; Scott J. (2022): “A call for an international research program on the risk of a global polycrisis.” 2022-3, version 2.0. Cascade Institute. <https://cascadeinstitute.org/technical-paper/a-call-for-an-international-research-program-on-the-risk-of-a-global-polycrisis/>; and: “What is a polycrisis and how is it different from a systemic risk?” *Discussion Paper, Cascade Institute 10/2022*.

¹⁵ Helga Nowotny, *Insatiable Curiosity: Innovation in a Fragile Future*, MIT, 2008

¹⁶ This vision is central to the New European Bauhaus initiative, launched by President von der Leyen in 2020 as a European cultural project to reimagine sustainable living in Europe and beyond. See https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

¹⁷ UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), *Human Development Report 2020 – The next frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene*, New York, 2020

¹⁸ See the recommendations made in the report of the Voices of Culture EU stakeholder dialogue on February 2021, *Culture and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Challenges and opportunities*, (Voices of Culture, 2021, pp. 87-91

Although cultural professionals, notably actors and musicians, and creative leaders have been at the forefront of environmental campaigns and calls for climate action, the CCSI contribute daily to the problem of sustainability. In addition to significant impacts in terms of pollution and waste, notably in fashion and textiles,¹⁹ the CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent) emissions of CCSI are remarkably high and growing.²⁰ Film and cinema, music, museums, theatres, libraries and other creative spaces and activities all contribute to pollution, waste and warming. Digital entertainment – in particular TV and video streaming, gaming and digital content – are estimated to amount to 3.7% of global GHG emissions (equivalent to the emissions of the airline industry) and predicted to double by 2025 with significant variability depending on the device used.²¹ If cloud gaming, run on a streaming service, were to go mainstream, emissions are predicted to grow 30% each year from 2030 based on current video resolutions of 720p and 1080p and, "if streaming at 4K resolution becomes widespread, then it may well be game over" since offsets or technology improvements are not compensated by exponential throughput.²²

The challenge of damaging GHG emissions associated with the CCSI is that they are complex, poorly understood, with relatively low or variable transparency and awareness; and efforts to abate are silo-based with very little in the way of unified data, common standards or shared tools and good practices across different industries, notwithstanding actions being taken by many. In part, this has to do with the diversity and extreme fragmentation of the CCSI, dominated by small companies and organisations; in part it is also related to the economic fragility of many of those organisations. Above all, it has to do with the systemic complexity of working on emissions as they relate to the full spectrum of direct and indirect incentives, choices and behaviours. Addressing the carbon footprint of the CCSI means working across entire value chains, encompassing origination and design, operation, production or manufacture, distribution and retail, advertising and marketing, use, consumption or experience of the outputs of these sectors / industries and end of life treatment or downstream effects. In many cases, these value chains can be extremely complex, far-reaching and opaque.

The current energy crisis constitutes an imperative and an opportunity for the CCSI to help accelerate efforts to decarbonise, with a particular focus on energy sources and infrastructure (distribution of production and consumption of energy). The European Green Deal (EGD), including the Horizon Europe missions that intend to achieve 100+ climate neutral and smart cities in Europe by 2030 and 300+ climate resilient regions by 2030 amongst other ambitions, offers a high-profile policy framework and implementation platforms to develop integrated decarbonisation solutions for cultural activities and the CCSI, and to address the need for

¹⁹ The fashion industry produces about 10 percent of annual global carbon emissions, more than all maritime shipping and international flights combined and are projected to grow by more than 50 percent by 2030. See:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2019/09/23/costo-moda-medio-ambiente>

²⁰ ARUP's calculation of average emissions associated with production of a film with a budget over US\$70mln (most blockbusters) points to circa 3,000 tonnes of CO₂e emissions generated from transport, electricity, heating and diesel generators: ARUP, *A Screen New Deal: a route map to sustainable film production* (2020). The annual global footprint of the visual arts is estimated at 70mln CO₂e: Julie's Bicycle, *The Art of Zero* (2021), <https://juliesbicycle.com/news/the-art-of-zero-report/> Pre-COVID-19, the festival industry in the UK generated 100,000 of CO₂e and 23,000 tons of waste: Powerful Thinking, *The Show Must Go On Report* (2015).

²¹ See <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200305-why-your-internet-habits-are-not-as-clean-as-you-think> and <https://theshiftproject.org/en/article/unsustainable-use-online-video/>

²² See <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-53838645> and <https://greengaming.lbl.gov/cloud-gaming>

resiliency in the face of climate change effects and consequent threats to infrastructure. Europe's position on climate action locally, regionally, nationally and globally provides a fertile context also for culture and the CCSI when it comes to coordination and mutual learning for community involvement practices, demonstration spaces or lighthouses and inspirational storytelling to catalyse social and behavioural tipping points for positive change.²³

III. AREAS OF DISCUSSION – KEY QUESTIONS

Against this backdrop, the Brainstorming meeting will engage with experts across a broad set of perspectives, disciplines, social and economic sectors on the topic of **how to address three major challenges in the context of European policy and practice:**

- A. How to **power up the role of culture and the creative sectors and industries (CCSI) across European actions (such as the European Green Deal) to address the climate emergency**, unlocking the fundamental asset of culture to enable innovation for a thriving, inclusive, resilient, sustainable and environmentally responsible future.
- B. How to better **integrate the power of culture and the CCSI into other socio-economic activities and industries across Europe to address and contain climate change**, through emissions reductions (decarbonisation), resilience in the face of climate change effects (adaptation), biodiversity and environmental restoration, greater social cohesion.
- C. How to **enable and accelerate the greening of cultural activities and the CCSI**, comprehensive of the scope 1, 2, 3, 4, and scope x emissions associated with each.²⁴

Each topic is introduced and followed by a selection of questions.

A. **How to power up the role of culture and the creative industries (CCSI) across European actions to address the climate emergency?**

The European Union aims to make Europe climate neutral by 2050 and to lead global efforts to limit global warming to 1.5° Celsius, while ensuring just transition and societal resilience in face of climate change effects. This is an all-encompassing, systemic transformation that requires the whole of society to deliver and by far the most difficult challenge is to change public understanding, attitudes and habits.

²³ See for example, initiative taken in France led by TheShift project: <https://theshiftproject.org/article/decarboner-culture-rapport-2021/> and a recent manifesto published by Live Performance Europe to help cultural managers make better use of the European Green Deal to achieve climate neutral events: <https://www.pearle.eu/publication/the-ultimate-cookbook-for-cultural-managers-the-eu-green-deal-and-live-performance-organisations>.

²⁴ ²⁴ According to the leading GHG Protocol corporate standard a company's greenhouse gas emissions are classified into three scopes. Scope 1 emissions are direct emissions from company-owned and controlled resources i.e. emissions released into the atmosphere as a direct result of a set of activities, at a firm level. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy, from a utility provider, e.g. from the consumption of purchased electricity, steam, heat and cooling. Scope 3 emissions are all indirect emissions - not included in scope 2 - that occur in the value chain of a company, including both upstream and downstream emissions, linked to the company's operations. 'Scope 4' emissions can be defined as emissions that occur outside of a product's life cycle or value chain, but as a result of the use of that product. Scope X emissions refers to the climate impact of companies' climate advertising, lobbying and advocacy. See https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards_supporting/FAQ.pdf

Key question 1: How might European policy and programming, in dialogue with the CCSI, mobilise their capacity to raise awareness and empower people to restore biodiversity and create a sustainable world?

Auxiliary questions:

- How might the European Union fully harness the power of CCSI in the European Green Deal?
- How can culture and the CCSI raise awareness around the risks, implications and opportunities associated with climate change effects, biodiversity loss, and adaptation to them?
- How to build understanding and produce evidence of ways in which the activities of the creative industries influence consumer decisions and behaviours, beliefs and worldviews with regards to emissions and to the environment?
- How might culture and the CCSI shape investment to become more socially responsible at scale?
- How could the CCSI play an active role to reduce inequalities to achieve a just transition, e.g. between European regions and EU Member States, rural and urban areas, gender, class, access to education, innovation capacity?

B. How to better integrate culture and the CCSI into other socio-economic activities and industries across Europe to address and contain climate change and response to the energy crisis with long-term sustainability?

Culture and creativity tends to be treated mostly as a sectoral concern and is rarely integrated into flagship policies or in industrial and business strategies and policy, including at the EU level. This is a missed opportunity, no longer affordable in the current context in which every possible lever for transformation needs to be harnessed to full effect. Instigating a transversal approach to culture as a driver for sustainability – and in the current context for sustainable responses to the energy crisis – could enhance inter-sectoral learning, closer co-operation and mutual reinforcement for transformative actions.

Key question 2: How might EU policy approaches and strategies with relevance for Europe's industry, businesses and SMEs, mainstream a strategic approach to culture and creativity as a driver of sustainability in industry and business in accordance with the integrated approach envisaged by the SDGs?

Auxiliary questions:

- What could encourage and support businesses and SMEs across Europe to work with the CCSI to accelerate transition to long-term sustainability and climate resilience?
- What reflections from the experience of CCSI could be leveraged for a cross-sectoral approach to decarbonisation, acceleration of energy transition and climate adaptation (from performing arts/theatre/music for example)?

- How might culture and the CCSI raise awareness of ‘advertised emissions’²⁵ and actively intervene to reduce them in partnership with other industries?
- How could culture and the CCSI facilitate clustering, co-location and shortened supply chains across other industries in order to reduce transportation emissions, supply chain fragility and enhanced visibility and controls over manufacturing across borders – i.e. green creative economies?
- How could the European Union integrate greening of the CCSI and culturally-induced greening of other industries into EU external actions and cultural relations?

C. How to accelerate the greening of cultural activities and the CCSI

Like all other sectors in Europe, creative industries and the arts, culture and heritage sectors need re-examine and transform their practices to lower their own carbon footprint to net-zero and address the unintended consequences of new technologies, new materials and digital consumption habits. This is an issue of credibility needed to harness the sectors’ social impact and linked to the broader requirement for Europeans to change their cultural habits.

Key question 3: What are the more important types of support and tools to accelerate, upscale and make decarbonisation of cultural activities and the CCSI effective, affordable, sustainable and in line with Europe’s 2030 and 2050 objectives?

Auxiliary questions:

- How might the European Union enable the cultural sector and the CCSI to embrace circular economy principles and make innovative use of them for decarbonisation, environmental regeneration and climate adaptation?
- What are the ‘wins’ that should be supported for the sectors to have successful greening strategies? How might the new EIT Knowledge Innovation Community (KIC) on CCSI, launched in 2022, play a role in developing new solutions and business models?²⁶
- How to facilitate collaboration across the CCSI towards shared tools, aggregated data and monitoring, common language and standards and shared learning to enable and accelerate decarbonisation? What complementary methods of assessment/evaluation of greening strategies would be useful?²⁷
- What kind of training is needed, e.g. environmental issues embedded in continuous professional development and ongoing skills provision for the CCSI? How should training be provided / at what level would it be most efficient? How to achieve full participation of all stakeholders?
- What are the needs of the CCSI in terms of expectations and perspectives towards funding for sustainability and support from the EU and other public and private funders to the same end?
- What shape could a Green charter take and how would be it be relevant/useful?

²⁶ <https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/>

²⁷ The forthcoming Greening Creative Europe study can be used as a reference base.