

Political Statement on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the Rome Treaties

Culture at the heart of a sustainable Europe

30 January 2017

60 years ago, the treaties of Rome prepared the ground for the European Union. When celebrating their 60th anniversary in March this year, Member States will have the opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to fundamental European values whilst creating a new understanding of a sustainable European project, deeply grounded in the European societies.

This is essential in times of deep societal changes, when European citizens feel disconnected to the Union. It is vital in a time, when Europe faces major political challenges and needs to redefine its global positioning.

Culture and the arts can help to strengthen the European project; therefore, the 33 signatories of this statement call on European institutions and Member States to include culture and the arts in the strategic goals of the Union.

Culture and the arts are the basis of the European project and moreover the essence of every civilizational development. They are substantially important to our identity, give meaning to human existence and reflect our shared history.

European culture and the arts refer to 3000 years of shared cultural heritage while bringing contemporary relevance to people's lives today. Flourishing in dialogue with other cultures, they reflect our "living together", interconnect people in society, and transmit knowledge and values.

Culture and the arts engage with the concerns of all citizens. They create a feeling of belonging and are the response to the cultural, social, economic and religious tensions existing inside societies, within the EU and outside European borders.

Culture and the arts constitute a vital lever for developing the Union's future project.

Culture and the arts as part of EU priorities

European values and human rights: Day to day, artists and art professionals defend the values addressed in the Charter of fundamental rights. Access to and participation in cultural life has been recognised as being a fundamental right for individuals, helping to create individual and collective fulfilment in societies.

Economic benefits and growth: The cultural sector is an excellent vector for economy and sustainable growth. As an example, in France, it brings an added value of \in 57,8 bn to the economy, which is 3,2% of the sum of all added values. This "cultural GDP" is twice as high as the one for the telecommunication sector and 7 times larger than the equivalent of the automobile industry.

Education: Participation in structured art activities increase cognitive abilities and studies prove that students from low income families who take part in arts activities at school are three times more likely to get a degree than children with the same background who do not engage in arts activities in school.

Social cohesion: Participation in cultural activities is an essential tool for individuals and communities to communicate, to define and develop their own identity, to distinguish themselves from others. It allows isolated or marginalised people to acquire skills, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Migration and citizenship: Culture and the arts teach individuals about complexity and contribute to the constructive experience of "otherness". They reflect our "living together", they stimulate us to celebrate differences and discover affinities. At local level artists and arts professionals are committed and get involved to tackle new societal challenges.

Innovation: New technological platforms are used to give access to culture to the global audience and vulnerable groups in society.

Health and wellbeing: People who attend cultural events are more likely to report good health and research has evidenced that a higher frequency of engagement with culture and the arts is generally associated with a higher level of wellbeing.

Regional and urban development: Culture is a powerful tool for urban regeneration, development and social cohesion. The presence of cultural activities is a major factor of the attractiveness of regions and cities – high-human-capital employees are keen to settle and they in turn stimulate regional growth.

External relations and neighbourhood policy: Cultural diplomacy strengthens the bilateral relations between European and third countries and builds bridges between societies – as it is a tool to exchange ideas and thereby fostering better mutual understanding. Cultural exchange creates an open environment within which political and social issues as well as liberal values can more easily be addressed.

International cooperation and development: The cultural dimension is a key element of any development strategy. In general, culture and the arts enable a sustainable social, economic and human development. They also facilitate the dialogue between cultures which appears to be an essential condition of peaceful coexistence.

Editor's note:

The European Alliance for Culture and the Arts is a network of 33 European associations from cultural sectors and beyond, supported by more than 200 organisations working at national level. We urge the European institutions as well as Member States of the European Union to re-think their approach and put culture and the arts at the heart of the European project.

Why does culture matters? Find the response in concrete examples on our websites:

https://allianceforculture.com/

European Alliance for Culture and the Arts

































































