

Interreg
Mediterranean



SOCIAL & CREATIVE

Policy Briefing n. 13

CULTURE AND CREATIVITY IN THE POST COVID-19 WORLD:
REACHING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA GOALS

Project co-financed by the European
Regional Development Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cultural and creative sectors are comprised of all sectors whose activities are based on cultural values, or other artistic individual or collective creative expressions and are defined in the legal basis of the **Creative Europe Programme**. Cultural and creative industries, on the other hand, entail a focus on the further stages of the value chain- including the production and dissemination stages of industrial and manufacturing operations. Cultural and creative sectors are important for ensuring the continued development of societies and are at the heart of the creative economy.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis has played a critical role for cultural and creative sectors which have seen a sudden loss of revenue. Professionals working in the sector as freelancers as well as small and micro firms have been among those most affected.

Nevertheless, new interesting opportunities are also emerging for the Cultural & Creative Sectors:

- **Digital access is quickly escalating and will be key part of the “new normal”**. Furthermore, this massive digitalization of the cultural and creative economy could create new forms of experience and dissemination with market potential. Emerging technologies, such as augmented reality, are becoming more prominent and there could be stronger integration between cultural and creative industries as well as cultural institutions.
- On the other hand, the Covid-19 crisis has revealed the **crucial role of culture in promoting social cohesion and psychological wellbeing**. This is giving cultural producers new possibilities to explore culture’s potential for social (and health) impact that could result in new market opportunities and define new professional needs.

- Culture and creativity can be used to **achieve the goals for the United Nations Agenda 2030 and contribute to the European Green Deal**. The latter is the European Union’s new growth strategy, aiming to “transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use”. The European Green Deal complies with the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It aims to put sustainability and the wellbeing of citizens at the centre of economic policy, and the SDGs at the heart of the EU’s policymaking and action.



Today, more than ever, the importance of culture and creativity for society is clear. Cultural aspects, including active participation in cultural life, the development of individual and collective cultural freedoms, the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and the protection and promotion of various cultural expressions, are central components in human development. They can also have positive effects in other areas of sustainable development. The preamble to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states: "We recognize the natural and cultural diversity of the world, and also that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to sustainable development and play a crucial role in facilitating it".



CONTEXT OR SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM

While none of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focus exclusively on culture, the Global Agenda on Sustainable Development 2030 includes several explicit references to cultural aspects. The following can be highlighted:

- **Target 4.7** refers to the objective of ensuring that all students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development, including through education for global citizenship and the appreciation of cultural diversity and the contribution of culture to sustainable development.
- **Target 8.3** addresses the promotion of development-oriented policies that support productive activities, as well as creativity and innovation, among others.
- **Targets 8.9** and **12.b** refer to promoting sustainable tourism, also through culture and local products and the need to develop adequate instruments for this purpose.
- **Target 11.4** highlights the need to redouble efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Culture and creativity can be applied to goal 16, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, responsible and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Why is culture important for reaching goal 16?

- Because citizens must be able to participate in the co-design, implementation and evaluation of cultural policies and programs.

- Because cultural facilities, particularly libraries and knowledge centres, should promote access to information on initiatives for sustainable development.
- Because strategies that aim to reduce violence and promote peace derived from the stresses of sustainable development must include a cultural component.





There is a need for policy action to emphasize the importance of culture through the exchange of policies, research projects and best practices focused on the importance of culture in the achievement of the Agenda 2030 and to reach the European Green Deal targets.

Among these new opportunities for the cultural and creative sector we find examples to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity in countries, incorporating measures into all policies and strategies, and improve education, awareness-raising and capacity.

An example from InterregMED Programme is a pilot project **Chebec** which tackles challenge of cultural and creative industries in the Mediterranean region. The project supports these industries by helping them access new markets while keeping their own identity. Already before the pandemic hit the Mediterranean region, Chebec has provided **training activities and advisory services** in different regions with the aim of offering opportunities to local cultural and creative industries to create foreign markets. In addition, the project has created **“innovation vouchers”** as additional support for development of joint initiatives and internationalization.

More information on the project and innovation vouchers:
<https://chebec.interreg-med.eu/news-events/news/detail/actualites/innovation-vouchers/>

Another example of “Baie Saint Paul: City of art and heritage” shows the possibility to integrate cultural factors related to the preservation of terrestrial ecosystems, including relevant local and traditional knowledge, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies and programs. The city has adopted an agenda 21 that brings together the four pillars of sustainable development, including understanding the links between cultural vitality and environmental preservation.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

What territories can do:

- Place cultural rights at the centre of local policies, so that they are part of the design, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, services, etc.
- Take into account and recognize the potential of culture in prevention and resolution strategies for local conflicts resulting from climate change.
- Ensure access to free and varied information, including through local and international media.
- Commit to protect and promote freedom of artistic expression, both locally and internationally, for example by hosting artists and cultural professionals who are threatened by climate change.
- Establish public forums on cultural policy (for example, local cultural councils), in which public, private and civil society entities participate together with citizens, to debate local cultural policy, set its priorities and ensure compliance.
- Ensure that cultural institutions that receive public support are transparent, accountable, and evaluate the public services they provide. Recognize the important role that civil society organizations and networks play as part of a plural governance of culture, and guarantee the existence of an environment that enables its development.
- National associations of municipalities and individual cities should ask their respective national governments to create a “cultural policy” chapter that includes a “cultural impact assessment” process in national programs with the aim of implementing the SDGs in general. and those of climate change in particular.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish an international cultural policy forum on the European Green Deal, in which public, private and civil society entities could participate together with citizens, to discuss local cultural policy, set its priorities and ensure its compliance.
- Recognize the important role that cultural organizations and civil society networks play as part of the Agenda 2030.
- Create a chapter of "cultural policy for the European Green Deal and COVID-19" that includes a process of "evaluation of cultural impact" in national programs with the aim of implementing the SDGs.



CONSULTED OR RECOMMENDED SOURCES

- <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sectors/cultural-and-creative-sectors>
- <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/culture-webinars.htm>
- <https://www.interregeurope.eu/policylearning/news/8381/the-european-green-deal-and-covid-19-implications-for-research-and-innovation/>
- <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

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