

Interreg
Mediterranean



SOCIAL & CREATIVE

Policy Briefing n. 16
INTERNATIONALIZATION OF CULTURE
DURING COVID-19 CRISIS

SOCIAL AND CREATIVE INNOVATION IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

Project co-financed by the European
Regional Development Fund

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The interruption of cultural life in Europe and beyond caused by Covid-19 related lockdowns has been unprecedented. With its protagonists confined, culture was accessed from home and communication was limited to digital media channels. The pandemic has touched each of the dimensions (economic, symbolic, identity and external projection) that make up the cultural capital of a community. This Policy Brief outlines main issues and policy recommendations when it comes to digitalisation of culture.

The questions guiding this brief are “How can we harness the momentum for change brought on by the pandemic to update (innovate and improve) culture the day after? And above all, how can professionals in the creative field reach their increasingly more international audiences?”

At first, **internationalization actions** aimed at implanting an external image of the country through artistic and cultural content have a preponderant presence. These are long-term and strategic actions that focus on the intrinsic value of cultural expressions. Subsequently, specific policies for the sector's export began to be applied, which defines a market perspective, focused on its economic and commercial value.

Although both perspectives converge in practice, they respond to different objectives. While **internationalization in terms of content focuses on foreign positioning and penetration in international areas, internationalization in market terms focuses specifically on sales abroad**. These distinctions, although in practice they converge and overlap, from the conceptual and strategic point of view they define the two great areas of culture in the foreign field.



CONTEXT

Cultural content has been (and continues to be) the main ingredient to project an external image of a country. The internationalization of content selectively, according to the image to be communicated, is a central element of the foreign action of States. This perspective is based on:

- the construction of an image of the country through values and symbols
- the use of artistic products to transmit these values and symbols with which the country wants to identify itself

It is initially born out of diplomatic or foreign policy interests. They are actions through which a country communicates with the outside world and tries to influence through persuasion and seduction. Thus, they are located in the sphere of diplomacy under the label of **cultural diplomacy**. In these origins, the diffusion of a country image gives special importance to the contents because they are the means to present a specific image, create trust with it in order to shorten cultural distances, overcoming linguistic and / or symbolic barriers and, in this way, generate optimal conditions to influence the behaviour and public opinion of people in other countries or to penetrate their markets successfully. In this sense, cultural content has an intrinsic value linked to its symbolic and representational capacity. Cultural content is the medium and the message.

The very evolution of international relations in recent decades has led to the use of culture for these purposes having to do with a question rather of positioning, of “branding” of a territory¹. Culture provides the singularizing and symbolic element, which allows to represent and build a differentiated identity. In this way, the internationalization of content is



¹ This approach was used by Chebec, co-funded by the Interreg MED Programme: the project intended to tackle the main challenge CCI's face in the Mediterranean area, which is linked to the difficulties in developing a trans-regional market (a perspective without which South Europe is not likely to remain attractive for its own creative enterprises, possibly generating a “brain-drain” effect).



inspired less by the will to persuade and influence outside public opinion and more by the will to position itself and gain international prestige.

As highlighted in the **New European Agenda for Culture**², The European Union is betting on programs where culture appears as the mechanism that opens the doors to strengthening international relations and intercultural dialogue. The external dimension of culture linked to the strengthening of international relations is one of the three dimensions of action of the new agenda. In this, the European network of national institutes of culture (EUNIC) has participated in the implementation of the Platform for Cultural Diplomacy launched by the External Action Service of the European Commission. Furthermore, internally among member countries of the European Union, **culture is highlighted as a mechanism for the generation of internal cohesion and a feeling of European belonging**. For this, the new agenda is committed to facilitating the mobility of artists and cultural professionals at the administrative and fiscal level.

Although in the perspective of the internationalization of contents these acquire special relevance, they are subordinated to the higher objective of building an image of the country on the international scene; hence, for example, the interrelation between the cultural institutes under EUNIC and the European External Action Service. Despite the key importance that content receives due to its intrinsic value, the recipient of internationalization actions from the perspective of content is not directly the cultural sector itself, although it benefits from it as an intermediary for this purpose.

In line with the new interests of international positioning and cooperation, the national cultural institutes have been conceived as the main agents. In general, they carry out their work organizing teaching abroad of their own language and offering programs that serve to project talent and excellence. Thus, considering the case of cultural institutes, it is possible to differentiate two strategies within the content perspective.

² <https://chebec-internationalizationtool.art-er.it/>

Market outlook

The cultural sector, especially due to the evolution to the constitution of a broad sector that includes related and functional industries, has acquired importance from an economic perspective. From this market perspective, the objective is not to create an external image of the country and international positioning and prestige, but to export and trade abroad. More than a selection of content for its own cultural value, the strategy is to contribute to the support of companies and professionals in the sector to favour the economic development of the country by opening markets abroad. If this is a global dynamic, in the case of countries with a small internal market, this strategy is required to gain positioning.

In the European Union, the creative and cultural sector is considered a sector with great potential for economic development and with very attractive qualities. The 2020 European Strategy aims to relaunch growth and employment based on “smart, sustainable and inclusive growth”, in which the cultural and creative sector is recognized as:

- **intelligent**, due to its component based on knowledge and innovation
- **sustainable**, due to the nature of creativity as a raw material
- **inclusive**, because of the role that companies in the sector can play in generating jobs (the main mechanism of social integration in European societies).

In this way, cultural and creative agents are considered important for the development of a creative economy, so that actions aimed at facilitating and increasing CCI exports are a way to support the path to a more imaginative, ecological and cohesive future.

The New European Agenda for Culture strengthens this commitment. One of its three dimensions of action is constituted from the economic asset that is the cultural and creative sector. In order to enable the sector's contribution to economic development, the new agenda specifies the need to:

- foster artistic, cultural and creative thinking in education
- foster ecosystems favourable to CCI through the recognition and implementation of resources
- foster the necessary traditional, digital, business and specialized skills

Characterization of the external cultural field

In the external cultural field- or, more specifically, in what has been conceptually institutionalized as Exterior Cultural Action (ECA)- there is a basic tension between the promotion of an external image (which selectively uses cultural content to contribute to this) and the promotion of the sector in terms of exports.

In addition to the entire public framework, there are private agents in the foreign cultural field: transnational companies that generate an external image of the country, ICCs that export, and artists and cultural creators with international mobility. In this area, neither should civil society be forgotten, as highlighted by the New European Agenda for Culture as an agent with which to maintain a structured dialogue.

In fact, the challenge of internationalization from a cultural point of view is that the set of actions in the field of foreign cultural action, taking into account its diversity of agents and visions, must be strategically integrated and planned with a global perspective.

POLICY ALTERNATIVES

A basic aspect of analysis has to do with how internationalization is organized:

- the departments of culture place a special emphasis on promoting the cultural sector and, therefore, are also committed to its internationalization;
- in the same area, cultural institutes play a key role in the construction of an external image through language and artistic and cultural content;
- from another area, the States have an important network of foreign affairs diplomats who are in charge of weaving international relations and carrying out actions abroad that also generate an external image of the country and make use of the use of culture for this;
- in addition, the evolution to a much more globalized economy in recent decades has led to an increasingly important presence of national private agents abroad and departments that support their internationalization as a way to boost growth in the face of the new challenges posed by this globalized environment;
- finally, the increase in relationship opportunities that new technologies have brought with them also places not only public administrations but also civil society as relevant agents;
- there is the need to aid the “producers of culture” in circulating their artistic and creative outputs through tailor-made support- i.e. internationalization support path developed by public authorities or intermediaries- which should take into account that there are major differences among CCIs subsectors, e.g. distributing a theatre play abroad has specific dynamics differing completely from, for instance, to approaches adopted by the publishing industry. Also, intermediaries should support the negotiating power of CCI professionals and organizations in accessing digital channels, i.e. platforms, so as to ensure their economic sustainability and a diversified and plural cultural offer.

The challenge posed by the diversity of agents and visions is to

understand that it responds understand that it responds to a complex and inevitable reality, and therefore, what is necessary is to find organizational forms that contribute to establishing a unity of action not through standardization, but of integration and cooperation to preserve their own action spaces but also meeting spaces for shared objectives.

At the level of the foreign cultural field, public leadership stands out for its ability to plan with a global vision. In addition, cultural institutes stand out from a content perspective, while different agents stand out from a market perspective, pointing to the need to reflect on the need for coordination.



Planning and public leadership

The public administration has the ability to legislate and manage resources according to its interests. The economic effort is a clear way of leading the development of internationalization, but it is not the only one nor the one that generates the best results.

Public leadership is materialized in joint planning, coordinating different agents under the same objectives, balancing the weight of the different perspectives for common objectives.

The strategic frameworks are linked from a diplomatic perspective to the projection of a country's identity, an external image as a brand and "branding" of territories. From this philosophy, culture plays an essential role as a singularizing element for an external image that facilitates political relevance and economic attraction and projection. These initiatives are not only from States, but also include the cases of Flanders, Quebec, Ireland or Catalonia.

Role of cultural institutes

A review of the main national institutes of culture shows that, in general, two very clear lines mark its course:

- teaching the language abroad
- internationalization of creation based on artistic talent and excellence in the fields of the creative hard core, especially literature, visual arts, audio-visual arts (cinema), performing arts and music.

At this point, it is interesting to highlight the initiative of the Institut Ramon Llull in Catalonia to offer a program that is not based on taking artists abroad but on bringing foreign cultural professionals to discover Catalan talent and works (a mission of editors).

Although in the case of cultural institutes such as the Etxepare



Institute in the Basque Country or the Ramon Llull they have much more to do with international projection and visibility, cultural institutes are treated by the States and by the European Union as agents of cultural action exterior of the so-called "soft power." They are a reflection of the country abroad and serve as a support to national interests.

Two trends are worth highlighting:

- a specialization based on a potentiality or self-interest in terms of work areas abroad, such as highlighting the language in the cases of France and Germany, education and mutuality in the British case or the exhibition of cultural diversity in the case of Canada;

- a “shy” opening towards creative sectors, not only cultural ones, such as architecture, gastronomy, fashion, ... “Shy” considering that sometimes there are no programs that support them, although the institutes advertise them between outstanding fields of national culture.

Coordination of agents

In the case of the market perspective, with the complexity of the cultural field itself on the economic plane, the usual effort refers to planning and the creation of resources through internationalization programs in which agencies, platforms or foundations of support to the sector. In relation to CCIs, a report from the European Union highlights four public strategies in this dimension:

- countries with a strategy specifically dedicated to ICC exports;
- countries with an internationalization strategy broadly focused on culture;
- countries with a general export strategy, which include CCIs;
- countries without a strategy dedicated to the export of CCIs, but with various tools to support the export of CCIs through a sectoral approach to the plans.

Specific approaches for CCIs are mostly found around specific sectors, as in the case of **Flanders. Flanders Investment & Trade** prioritizes certain sectors, highlighting audio-visuals and software/games with a specific policy or structuring a broad program of Creative media in Flanders. Thus, general attention to the creative sector is reconciled with special attention to strategic sectors and a consolidation of projects is allowed. To set priorities, the writing of position papers on the state of the cultural and creative sector itself (or more specific ones) and recommendations for action are a first basic tool for promotion, as Creative Industries in Flanders shows.

An approach developed by the **Emilia-Romagna Region**, within its **Service “Cultural promotion abroad”**, is a tailor-made support for CCIs organizations (e.g. theatre companies, etc.) that want to access new markets: through direct assistance, regional employees guide these enterprises among the opportunities available to internationalize, showing them with the possibilities offered by different players and opening up contacts (e.g. with Italian cultural institutes).

It is also interesting to note the strategy of the **Government of Wales** to establish, among other initiatives, a group of five business experts with reputations within the creative industries sector. Its function, given the lack of knowledge and the complexity of the field, is to advise ministers and managers in detecting opportunities and needs and in developing and implementing policies in the most appropriate way. In addition, they also provide assistance to companies that access support, which is organized through funding, international advice with a large pool of available mentors and outside missions.

In **Canada**, the music industry has the public-private collaboration of **FACTOR**, a financing program aimed at generating and consolidating musical talent through its internationalization, funded in part by the Canadian Department of Heritage (PCH) and entities private broadcasting companies. The formula is based on stimulating creation and production taking into account that there are interested private distributors and exhibitors, in a way that is intertwined with the public interest and the formula is born from this intersection. Exploring these confluences of interests to carry out joint initiatives with private agents, giving support to certain sectors and agents of the cultural value chain, is a strategy to consider.

Taking into account the diversity of agents, it is also interesting to highlight how different agents of the same public administration are organized. In the **Netherlands**, for example, the **Cultural Industries Internationalization Program** is developed under the Creative Industries Fund NL, a public body commissioned by the Ministry of

Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Under the program, different ministries make contributions according to their nature and position in the network: The Ministry of Labor and the Economy guarantees support for exports in trade fair initiatives; The Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not help financially but makes its network of embassies and consulates and its contacts available to organize visits to ICC initiatives.

The organization through foundations and platforms to support the sector is a common strategy. They do not have to suffer from multidimensional tensions (culture, foreign action, economic development...), but rather focus on generating shared programs where each agent, each ministry in this case, contributes resources of its own nature and character. Integration under the same program/objective without the need to dilute or act for reasons other than those that are "natural" to the agents, can contribute to a more favourable climate for work in coordination and collaboration in the same direction.

To foster internationalization, it is also recommended to facilitate **cross-country collaborations through mutual activities and coordination**, especially among those regions that have similar characteristics and markets. This can be done by identifying intermediaries with a strong background in CCIs support that can act as enablers or contact points for all those cultural and creative organizations that want to access new markets.

CCIs internationalization capacities can be stimulated by integrated programmes that could mix both regional initiatives (e.g. training and consultancy) and transregional actions (e.g. mobility actions and international plans) for professionals and organizations operating in various cultural and creative fields. This approach does not need to be necessarily focused on specific subsectors (i.e. music, performing arts, etc.), but indeed will gain in effectiveness if integrated in a consolidated system of relations belonging to the same subsector. A dynamic that could be easily be replicated in other territories if two elements are maintained:

the identification of pivotal players that can implement such a programme (e.g. chambers of commerce, business support organizations, trade associations, etc.) and the policy instruments that could include mainstream this type of action, whether it be from regional or European funds.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The instruments for internationalizing the language and its contents in order to create an external image of the country are more developed and have more established structures than the support for exports from the cultural sector and the development of international cultural markets. As has been stated, from the content perspective there are two clear projection strategies (one based on language and the other on artistic excellence) that have a well-established agent: the national institutes of culture.

The existence of a cultural and creative sector highlighted as being of special interest due to its economic and social potential is still a very recent phenomenon. It is a sector that has nothing to do with the traditional manufacturing industry and therefore has a difficult fit in generalist strategies.

The instruments for a cultural and creative sector will necessarily have to be different from the usual ones, adapted to the characteristics of the sector. Therefore, a first reflection has to do with obtaining data that allow us to approximate the reality of the sector. Although there are no standardized and long-standing statistics, specialized reports highlight that there are a large number of small and medium-sized companies and micro-companies in the creative core of the sector, and that the size of the companies increases as the value chain advances towards distribution and marketing. Thus, the intermediation between creators and large distributors is considered a key structural characteristic, problematic, for the development of the sector.

From another perspective, the nature of the cultural and creative sector, the existence of a creative nucleus within it and a set of

related and functional creative industries, calls for a combination of different policies or agents: both more located in a content perspective, and more located in a market; both departments or ministries of culture and economy.

The “**Good Practice Report On The Cultural And Creative Sectors’ Export And Internationalization Support Strategies**” report points to other characteristics that mark the challenges in terms of support instruments:

- **the intangibility of goods**, which makes it difficult to access financing to promote exports
- **lack of knowledge about the markets** to which it can be exported (consumer preferences, distributors, ...) **and international trends**;
- **lack of focus on the part of the public administration** in providing appropriate and coordinated measures to support exports, since only a national dimension is foreseen;
- the **individuality and isolation** due to the lack of structuring of the cultural and creative sector and its subsectors;
- the sector's own **training programs do not emphasize exports and internationalization**;
- there is **ignorance of the value** that the sector can contribute to other sectors;
- **language barriers** that fragment markets.

RECOMMENDATIONS STEAMING FROM CHEBEC PROJECT READINESS WEBTOOL

A first overview of the strengths and weaknesses of a CCI organization that intends to access foreign markets could be carried out by digital instruments providing the possibility to fill in a self-evaluation questionnaire, such as the **Internationalization Readiness webtool** developed within the **Chebec project**. The tool tackles 5 different macro-areas deemed important when aiming at expanding abroad:

- **strategy**, consisting of business model and planning and organizational mindset;
- **offering**, tackling matters related to audience development, services/products and market demand;
- **competencies**, focusing on soft and hard skills as well as international know-how;
- **means**, entailing the resources needed from a commercial, financial, technological and productive perspective;
- **ecosystem**, regarding the network and partnerships that are useful to implement internationalization plans.

The output page of the questionnaire shows users a radar chart to immediately understand strengths and weaknesses in relation to their internationalization readiness and a result for each area of investigation together with feedback and recommendations.

Below are summarized the most relevant fields of action and the guidelines necessary to face the peculiarities of the sector.

Promotion abroad: Talent and excellence

Talent and excellence provide the element of uniqueness from which to present and differentiate itself. Own culture is a differentiating element.

Mobility and talent attraction programs are a common formula. In this sense, the mobility of young artists and cultural professionals (in residencies, festivals, live tours, exhibitions or international literary events) is essential for strengthening the sector by improving skills and allowing the development of experiences, motivations and opportunities.

In relation to **mobility** as talent development, there are significant obstacles as there is no regulation adapted to the reality of the cultural sector (regarding visas, the tax and social regime, difficulties of knowledge and access to information and other legal aspects). It is an area in which work is being done (by a group of experts as part of the European Agenda for Culture and by the Member States in application of Directive 2006/123/EC on services in the internal market).

Promotion abroad: physical spaces of relationship

A crucial element for experimentation and innovation, apart from talent, has to do with **creating an environment that encourages experimentation and innovation**. Although it is not a proper measure of internationalization, it reflects briefly on its role because it encourages the professional development of artists and projects, which is a prerequisite. Both placing ourselves in a content and market perspective, a common strategy for this is through common spaces. Furthermore, there is a key interrelation starting from the point that CCIs (market perspective) are usually articulated in the environment of a nucleus of competent artists and/or elements of cultural heritage.

The meeting spaces between artists and creators from different disciplines and sectors, and even the presence of mediators, is a way of promoting experimentation and innovation. In this sense, workspaces such as co-working are created or, in a much more ambitious way, clusters of companies and cultural and creative districts that in the same geographical area facilitate the



settlement of artists and cultural and creative companies, generating hubs or industrial poles. In this sense, its scope may be at the regional level, as in the case of Flanders, which is considered as a creative district (Flanders DC). A good strategy to generate these groups of artists and ICCs is to rely on a functional group that allows intense collaboration.

At a lower level, it also highlights the strategy of placing artists, creators, ICCs and related institutions in the same physical environment, specifically targeting the environments of design schools, art, museums or other cultural facilities that may be a stimulating resource.

Covid-19³ definitely challenged the idea of fostering both personal and business relations generally developing through contact, spaces and physical interactions. On the other hand, technology helped maintain these connections, both among artists themselves and with their communities.

Accessing new markets through networking events, fairs, festivals, etc., is of the essence to keep innovating. Mixing cultures, adopting a co-creation type of approach, sharing experience and places are important elements for the creative class to be able to open up to new opportunities. It goes without saying that the possibilities that can arise through face-to face initiatives- whether it be training or B2Bs- are preferred. However, while waiting for the crisis to be over, it is pivotal to make the most out of technological solutions, for they can open the door to new experiences, new business models and new creative languages. The digital sphere can support cultural and creative organizations during contingencies, but what CCIs have learned in this period is also the fact that technology can be an ally to be exploited throughout the entire life-cycle.

³ The report "Analysis of Covid-19 impacts in Chebec project" explores the effect of the pandemic on CCIs organizations that have accessed Chebec services

Promotion abroad: virtual spaces of relationship

The deployment of networks and platforms and their empowerment is a basic element in the development of artists, professionals and ICCs, especially in the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic; also, internationally. It is a way of opening up to collaboration with other members of the network in internationalization projects, either with intrinsically artistic and cultural or economic and commercial objectives, depending on the case.

The detection of networks in areas of specific interest and the support to agents of the territory to participate in them offers a way to support internationalization by placing agents in the international orbit, opening development opportunities and favouring ambition.

The effective participation of cultural organizations in international networks (and, even more so, their involvement in their governance) is affected by the need for an executive level of English, the availability of material resources, a strategic planning of presence international organization that marks this priority and, in the case of small organizations, a weak professionalization and organizational limitations.

A support strategy for participation in international networks should be directed, then, to correct these limitations through, for instance, trainings or capacity building actions directed to CCI to increase their capacities of accessing EU projects, participate in events, or overcome barriers as language or lack of technological competences in order to avoid limited participation or non-participation.

In addition, it is necessary to bear in mind that it is not only interesting to participate in international networks and platforms.

Promoting the organization of sector agents within their own territorial limits is a basic tool to facilitate the leap abroad.

Economic resources and financing

Export also depends on access to finance and available economic resources. From the perspective of content, non-commercial artistic creation and non-industrial products, subsidies in a competitive competition regime are the most common instrument of economic aid, as has been seen, with mechanisms for selecting projects through low competition.

On the other hand, in the commercial dimension of the market perspective, the need to adapt to a reality composed above all by entrepreneurs, micro companies or small and medium-sized companies becomes palpable, since they run into fundamental barriers to accessing finance. If from the content perspective it has to do above all with promoting talent and excellence, in this case it has to do with fostering, through creativity, experimentation and innovation in business. Thus, difficulties are detected in estimating the intangible value of these companies, the lack of information about the relevant sources of financing and their understanding and the lack of entrepreneurial skills. The experimentation and innovation that characterize the cultural and creative sector does not correspond to any standard R&D concept, so the intangible value of companies is not reflected in balance sheets or to justify investments.

In addition to the intangible nature of the largest asset in the sector, investors and banks, including internationalization agencies, are largely unaware of the value and economic potential of CCIs and it is necessary to take measures both to inform and to provide mechanisms that facilitate financing such as the venture capital, specialized guarantee funds for CCIs or other instruments that share risk.



The question of financing has centred a good part of the first public efforts at European level to give impulse to CCIs. The European Commission's “Innovative instruments to facilitate Access to finance for the cultural and creative sector (CCS) Good practice report” is the best example.

Accessibility to resources and markets: training

A basic element to boost the sector is to **know and develop the skills** it needs. Not only for the sake of internationalization, but also for its development, which is a prior condition.

The cultural and creative sector is in a segment of new jobs that on many occasions do not have their own training or adequate to their needs because they are positions that need to combine different skills, and among them the technological, business and professional ones are usually little present.

To facilitate the acquisition of competencies, a specific **training strategy** for initiatives with a smaller scope is that of a program based on the idea of mentoring among peers (or peers or colleagues). In this, two pairs who are in a similar situation and face similar problems share mistakes, successes and resources with the aim of improving skills and processes. This method can serve both to find better opportunities and to improve technological skills or social capital, facilitating in all cases the adaptation of CCIs to changing realities. In addition, it can be a way of building dyadic networks, of pairs of closely related nodes, which can be national or international.

A good way to encourage this better knowledge of the necessary training competencies are the **business incubators** located within or near schools and university centres of art and design in order to strengthen collaboration between them and companies and offer more complete learning opportunities.

Training (and information) is also necessary for the financial sector, in charge of offering the resources. One of the barriers to access has to do with ignorance not by the cultural agent but by the financier, who is unaware of the particularities of the sector and the benefits of investing in it. Thus, actions aimed at promoting information among investors and changing their perceptions about the risk of investing in the sector are also necessary.

In this sense, the lack of indicators on the statistics of economic development, investment, and the impact of investments in the sector represent a brake on a more informed and motivated financial environment towards the sector.

Advice and consulting

In parallel to training and in order to obtain more individualized results, advice and consultancy are basic tools to promote internationalization. **Advice and consultancy** are necessary in the same areas as training. There are two ways to meet the same needs of the sector; in one case by endowing the agents themselves with the competencies and in the other by resorting to other agents to give their support with that competence.

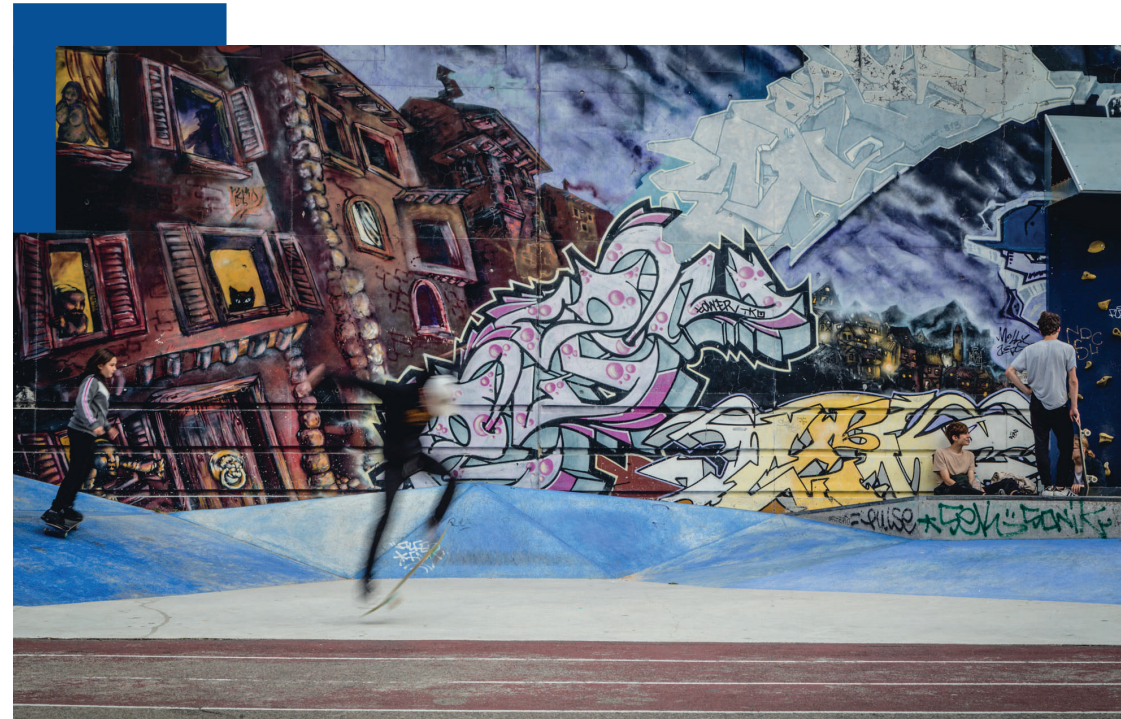
Due to their peculiarities, advice and consulting through programs specifically oriented to the sector are undoubtedly much more useful. Advice is particularly important in the case of intellectual property. Much of the sector has its value in intellectual property rights, which are different from the usual patents of more recognizable value, which are little recognized by investors. Not only by investors, but also by the creative sector itself, which lacks the knowledge to recognize business opportunities linked to the protection of intellectual property.

Example from InterregMED community: CHEBEC project

Within the Chebec project, a new programme for CCIs internationalization was tested, including different kinds of services and tools deemed important to foster the development of an entrepreneurial mindset and internationalization capacities. The support path consisted of various phases:

- **local action with training and consultancy services for CCIs organization:** training aimed at teaching business-related subjects (business modelling, negotiation, fundraising, etc.), consultancy services concentrated on the specific objectives that each SME intended to improve;
- **mobility actions entailed networking events and B2Bs abroad** to meet other CCIs organizations and potentially start new collaborations or partnerships;
- the **innovation voucher scheme** was the chance for CCIs organizations to access small funds to develop international activities.

This could be considered a good practice for CCI support since it foresees incremental actions that are also integrated: by starting with training, beneficiaries can acquire a common knowledge that can be used to improve business performance during networking events. Matchmaking opportunities can lead to the development of partnerships through which implement international projects by using innovation vouchers.



CONSULTED OR RECOMMENDED SOURCES

- From Nation State to Brand State. The Role of Public Diplomacy and Country Branding in the New Stage of the International Relations | Revista de Estudios Sociales (uniandes.edu.co)
- <http://bit.ly/new-european-agenda-for-culture>
- https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/support-strategies_en.pdf
- https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/reports/eac-omc-report-ccs-strategies_en.pdf
- <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f433d9df-deaf-11e5-8fea-01aa75ed71a1>
- <https://chebec.interreg-med.eu/>
- <https://chebec-internationalizationtool.art-er.it/>

CREDITS

Special thanks to Sveva Ruggiero and Francesca Imparato- ART-ER, Chebec project for the contribution to this policy brief.

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EUROPEAN UNION



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