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Socialists and Democrats, we stand for culture in Europe!

Our rich and diverse cultural landscape is a central component of our European societies, and the cultural and creative sectors are vital drivers of social cohesion, well-being and economic growth. They empower us to express our ideas freely, foster democratic debate and rethink our place in the world around us. Without adequate support, vast sections of our cultural landscape may not survive this crisis.

Decisions that were taken at the start of the pandemic to protect lives have impacted culture more than most other sectors: bookshops and museums, cinemas and film sets, concert halls and festivals were shut to prevent the spread of the virus. Even as these restrictions begin to be lifted across Europe, the cultural and creative sectors, their workers and performers face a very different reality to that of less than three months ago.

We cannot afford to let these sectors suffer. It contributes approximately half a trillion euros annually to the EU's economy, and employs 7.5% of the workforce. This is not just a question of numbers. European culture has an intrinsic value, and an ability to inspire citizens both at home and beyond our borders. In these difficult times, many have turned to culture and art.

This is why we, Socialist and Democratic Ministers of Culture, in line with the Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament, call on the European Commission and European Council to place our cultural and creative sectors at the heart of the recovery:

- Firstly, and most urgently, we believe culture should be central to the emergency economic measures. We call for adequate funding to be dedicated to the cultural and creative sectors in the "Next Generation EU" Recovery Fund.
- Secondly, we are deeply concerned by the proposed cuts to the Creative Europe programme for the next seven-year budget. The long-term flourishing of European culture cannot be achieved without sufficient support, which is why we call for an increase in Creative Europe funding in the next Multiannual Financial Framework.



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- Thirdly, the present crisis has made even clearer the potential of digital means of creating, performing, exploring, sharing and experiencing culture. A European Cultural Platform would make our rich and diverse European cultural landscape more accessible to a greater number of our citizens, while reducing our reliance on foreign providers.

We are resolved to take these proposals forward in the coming months. As members of the PES socialist and democratic family, we will fight for a progressive, vibrant and sustainable future for culture.

Dario Franceschini, Minister for Cultural Assets and Activities and Tourism, Italy
Chair of the PES Culture Ministerial Network

Lubomír Zaorálek, Minister for Culture, Czech Republic

José Herrera, Minister for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government, Malta

Graça Fonseca, Minister of Culture, Portugal

José Manuel Rodríguez Uribe, Minister of Culture and Sports, Spain

Pedro Marques MEP, S&D and PES Coordinator for the implementation of our progressive Commission Work Programme

Petra Kammerevert MEP, S&D Group coordinator for the European Parliament Committee on Culture and Education