



## IMPLEMENTING CULTURE WITHIN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### The role of culture in Agenda 2030

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted in 2015, provide a common global set of objectives, considering social, economic, environmental and governance needs and challenges, based on a foundation of human rights. While included in a limited number of the targets of some of the SDGs (4.7, 8.3, 8.9, 11.4, 12.B, 16.4, 16.10), culture's full capacity to contribute to their achievement is not explicitly laid out in the UN text. **The fundamental right to participation in cultural life** (Article 27.1, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948), which is interrelated and interdependent with several of the SDGs is also lacking. Neither is culture fully embraced in the EU strategy (2016) for achieving the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### **Culture must be integrated in the SDG framework transversally as it contributes to all 17 Goals**

The SDG framework is highly ambitious and requires a truly bold approach to bringing it into life. Now is the time for the EU institutions **to build on the abundant evidence of culture's relevance to diverse policy areas by mainstreaming culture in all 17 SDGs**. Evidence on the transversal role of culture for achieving the SDGs have been collected in the present document, building upon the impact review The Value and Values of Culture by Culture Action Europe and inputs from CAE membership and partners.

The European Parliament in its Report on EU action for Sustainability (2017) stresses that culture is a transversal and cross-cutting concern and constitutes an essential resource for development, that the use of cultural resources is a fundamental way to achieve other future development goals, and that the integration of cultural factors in sustainable development policies and strategies should be done in full compliance with other international commitments, acknowledging the universality and interdependence of human rights.

Moreover, it stresses the need to make culture an integral part of the European action for sustainability, given its role *"in economic development, job creation, promoting democracy, social justice and solidarity, fostering cohesion, fighting social exclusion, poverty and generational and demographic disparities"*.

### **Culture, the fourth pillar of development**

Culture offers exploratory, interrogative and critical approaches to the world and its systems, and nourishes the ability to identify and analyse current and complex challenges that need transversal and multidisciplinary responses to be understood and acted upon.

The sustainability concept is usually based on the three-pillar paradigm: economic, environmental and social. A cultural pillar is necessary for its value in the creation of collective narratives, its ability to consolidate communities and foster diversity as an essential element in sustainability. Indeed, culture has a transformative power crucial for building a sustainable future for all.

**Thus, CAE calls on integrating culture in the sustainable development concept as a fourth pillar in its own right.**

## A European cultural fund for sustainability

The EU must show leadership in the global debate around the 2030 Agenda by ensuring that the fundamental capacities of culture to drive change are firmly enshrined in the SDGs. Therefore, **CAE calls on the EU institutions to integrate culture across all policy domains, which are relevant for implementing the 17 SDGs, to achieve a long-lasting impact throughout the 2030 Agenda.**

CAE supports the European Parliament 2017 recommendation included in its Report on EU action for Sustainability (2017) recognising cultural institutions and organisations as innovators and models in the field of sustainability and with regard to green processes. To this end, CAE builds on the call for the introduction of a green EU funding incentive acting across all SDGs by proposing **a European cultural fund for sustainability** (see §6-7 of the abovementioned report p.47)

Culture is highly relevant for implementing each of the 17 SDGs, as argued and laid down below.

### Goal 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere

**Culture has the potential to play a key role in combating poverty.** Poverty is a complex phenomenon with a strong social dimension, as well as economic component. Cultural participation and cultural expression contribute to personal fulfilment and empowerment, social recognition of isolated groups, resolution of intercultural challenges and the development of the necessary skills to deal with the complexity of the world needed in society and today's professional landscape.

The cultural component in the alleviation of poverty has been recognised by the European Council since 2010 in its Conclusions on the role of culture in combating poverty and social exclusion, stating that *"it is important for a cultural dimension to be incorporated into national and European policies against poverty and social exclusion"*.

#### Action:

- Develop inclusive and participatory approaches to culture to ensure recognition of diverse cultures.
- Foster synergies between education and culture, both in formal and informal settings. The integration of culture, arts and creativity in the education process and in lifelong learning processes enhances knowledge acquisition and development of skills.
- Incorporate the deprivation of access to culture in the EU definition of poverty and promote access to culture as a fundamental right through concrete actions under the European Pillar of Social Rights.
- Ensure fair working conditions to fight the increasing precarisation based on discontinuous work. In particular, to address the increasing economic and social vulnerability of artists and cultural professionals.

### Goal 2 - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

The cultural dimension of the agricultural ecosystem is recognised, for instance, through the 2002 UN Partnership Initiative on Conservation and Adaptive Management of Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS). The foundation for contemporary and future agricultural innovations lies in respecting cultural, ecological and agricultural diversity as the basis for new adaptive processes.

As recognised by the UN initiative, living agricultural systems cannot exist without their associated cultures. Traditions, languages, arts, rituals, and modes of social organisation are intrinsic components of traditional sustainable practices. These can be seen as the soft-infrastructure upon which new agricultural processes, practices and systems can emerge in a way that enable sustainable rural communities.

Food is cultural in essence. Culinary traditions constitute vital grounds of our communities. Awareness actions based on art, culture and creativity can challenge individual food consumption patterns and influence resource usage practices, including key elements of cooking and farming customs. Sustainable consumption and cultivation require a cultural change that intersects with the cultural identities of our communities.

For example, the [SHARECITY](#) project (funded by Horizon 2020) takes into account longstanding cultural relationships with food and food sharing, with the aim of *“assess[ing] the practice and sustainability potential of city-based food sharing economies”*.

### **Action:**

- Recognise cultural practices and traditions as a pillar of sustainable agriculture and integrate them as a priority in food-related innovation, allowing preservation, spreading and building on such knowledge and practices with the goal to avoid the loss of biodiversity.
- Recognise and promote the role of culture in shifting customs and behavioural patterns linked to the consumption and cultivation of food.
- Include the principles of permaculture in the development of agricultural ecosystems intended to be sustainable, responsive and self-sufficient. A permaculture principle, originally understood as "permanent agriculture" and now expanded to "permanent culture", includes a holistic approach of ecosystems and the social aspects as integral to a truly sustainable system.

### **Goal 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

The [World Health Organization](#) defines health as *“a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being”*. Numerous [studies](#) have established the link between cultural participation and well-being, as evidenced by the impact review [“The Value and Values of Culture”](#). A link between psychological wellbeing and participation and engagement in cultural activities has been proven to increase life-satisfaction.

In addition, the [2011 Eurobarometer on Well-being](#) found that EU citizens ranked participation in cultural life and access to cultural heritage as a core component of well-being once basic needs were fulfilled.

The [Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022](#) identify the intersection between culture, cohesion and well-being as a core area to be developed. The document recognises the effect on well-being of culture’s interaction and cooperation with other areas, such as education, social care, healthcare, science and technology.

### **Action:**

- Further develop synergies with different policy areas by including a cultural dimension in various policies and funding programmes related to health and well-being policies of the European Commission.
- Promote culture as one of the fundamental elements of physical, mental and social health and well-being for all at all ages and integrate access to culture as one of the priorities of health and well-being policies.

- Involve different communities of practitioners in the co-creation of cultural programmes and activities to facilitate the sharing of diverse expertise and better shape the aims of their active engagement at all societal levels.

#### **Goal 4 - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

The European Council, in its Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, states that “from an early age, both culture and education promote the development of creative skills and critical thinking”. It also acknowledges the impact of digitalisation on the “new models of access to culture, personal reinterpretation and self-expression, arousing keen interest among young people and engaging them as active audiences”. This requires a more strategic approach related to young people’s participation in culture, fostering their creativity, skills, active citizenship and social inclusion.

CAE laid out the considerable evidence and impacts for the role of culture in education in its impact review, the Value and Values of Culture. Participation in culture allows people to improve their social and creative skills through non-formal and informal learning throughout their lives as well as in traditional learning spaces.

In the light of the rise of automation and development of artificial intelligence and robotics, human skills like critical thinking and creativity, as well as cultural values and ethical principles will be vital resources for the next generation of citizens, both on the labour dimension and in individual development. In addition, non-linear thinking and multidisciplinary, which are closely linked with creativity, lie at the basis of ideas generation and invention. Thus, there is **a growing need to shift from STEM towards STEAM paradigm** (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics), if the EU is to take a leading position in global innovation processes.

#### **Action:**

- Develop a cross-sectoral strategy for education, culture and research at the EU level, reflected both in policy and programmes. The key steps to drive forward these synergies is laid out in the joint position by CAE and Life-long Learning Platform on Synergies between Education and Culture.
- Recognise the equal value of culture and arts education by mainstreaming the STEAM paradigm because of its integral value for the education of the generations of today and tomorrow.
- Facilitate the uptake of “*cultural awareness and expression*” among the EU 8 Key Competences for Lifelong Learning with a focus on the promotion of critical thinking, complexity management, creativity, cultural values, and ethical principles.

#### **Goal 5 - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

While women are strongly represented in the cultural and creative sectors, this is not true in high management positions in cultural organisations, as illustrated by UNESCO’s 2014 Report Gender equality, heritage and creativity. IETM’s Fresh Perspective 5: Of Boxes and Ceilings. Arts and Gender brings specific examples on artistic projects dealing with gender ceilings. This unbalance has a direct impact on the culture created and reported, with the subsequent effects on society and the potential of change.

The European Commission has identified culture in the New European Consensus on Development under the highlight on Gender Equality as “an enabler and an important component of development” that is able to “facilitate social inclusion, freedom of expression, identity building, civil empowerment and conflict prevention while strengthening economic growth” as part of the “universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights”.

Gender mainstreaming is specifically taken into account in the upcoming cycle of the Creative Europe programme (2021-2027), and the European Commission proposes to include “*non-discrimination criteria, including on gender balance*” in the determination of grant awardees.

The European [Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022](#) identify Gender Equality as a pillar of cultural diversity. The document argues that “*culture has a key role to play in challenging stereotypes and promoting societal changes. Yet intersectional gender gaps persist in almost all cultural and creative sectors. Women as artists and cultural professionals have less access to creation and production resources, are generally paid much less than men and are under-represented in leadership and other decision-making positions as well as on the art market*”.

Beyond a classic approach that considers gender equality an issue only related to women and girls it is necessary to start including a policy focus on gender diversity and multiple sexual identities (LGBTQIA+) as they experience discrimination at rates similar to, or higher than, heterosexual women.

### **Action:**

- Incorporate the fundamental right of access to culture in gender equality measures.
- Address the challenges and barriers to particular kinds of positions faced by women and LGBTQIA+ people working in the cultural and creative sectors.
- Develop data systems to help evidence-based policy making on the gender equality matter and exchange of good practices.

## **Goal 6 - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

Water scarcity will become a growing phenomenon across the continent as a result of climate change. Achieving efficient water usage requires a vast and effective awareness-raising strategy to ensure that everyone in all parts of society and the economy recognises the steps they should take to use water responsibly.

Culture is undoubtedly a powerful medium to communicate the urgency of appreciation of water. Furthermore, creativity and critical thinking can be powerful drivers for finding innovative and sustainable solutions in approaching complex issues, including water scarcity and community resource management. Participatory and interdisciplinary approaches, which would break the silos between areas of knowledge, are necessary to find common solutions.

### **Action:**

- Support cultural and artistic actions raising awareness of sustainable water management and sanitation.
- Enhance cross-sectoral collaborations, which would integrate cultural and creative sectors, to secure out-of-the-box solutions for sustainable water management and sanitation.

## **Goal 7 - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

A clear connection has been found between [Energy Poverty and Social Relations](#), according to the EU Energy Poverty Observatoire. Access to culture, through its impact on social empowerment, is therefore a much-needed variable in the EU’s approach to reducing energy poverty. This is encapsulated in the [Little Sun](#) project by artist Olafur Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen.

Art practices and Innovative public art can also double as sources of renewable energy, while at the same time educating their audiences on the topic, as artists of the [Land Art Generator Initiative](#) show. This initiative builds on cross-sectoral capacities, bringing together artists, architects, landscape architects and other creatives along with engineers and scientists to create new artistic sustainable energy infrastructures.

### **Action:**

- Support cultural projects that reach out to the socially-excluded as a way of reinforcing and sustaining the social relations that are critical to reducing energy poverty.
- Promote artistic research and innovation as a means to develop new approaches to energy education, production and consumption.

## **Goal 8 - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

[Eurostat](#) set out in 2017 that employment in the cultural and creative sectors amounts to **8.7 million people across the EU (3.8% of total employment)**. This includes 1.6 million young people (aged 15-29), namely 18% of the sectors. 33% of cultural operators are self-employed, versus 15% in the economy at large, but among artists and writers this percentage is considerably higher, at 48%.

With cultural operators less likely to hold full-time, salaried positions, they are at the **forefront of precarious work**, which is being seen increasingly across society as a whole.

Despite difficult conditions, the cultural and creative sectors make a substantial contribution to the economy. [Eurostat](#) recorded in 2016 that there were **1.2 million cultural enterprises in the EU generating €193 billion of value added** (almost equal to the manufacture of food products at €194 billion). The total turnover was €466 billion. Beyond this, the cultural ecosystem as a whole (including market- and non-market-oriented sectors) has a **significant spillover effect into other sectors**, owing to its inherent strengths in terms of research, creation and innovation.

### **Action:**

- Enhance the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors to promote inclusive, fair and sustainable economic development, including through supporting artistic research, skills development and mobility programmes.
- Develop protection systems at European level that take into account intermittent work across countries, which is the nature of a considerable segment of the cultural and creative sector.

## **Goal 9 - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

Access to culture is in part, reliant on having cultural infrastructure within the spatial range of citizen's day to day life. Infrastructure is understood here as cultural spaces, ranging from grassroots community centres, to museums or concert halls. However, investment in infrastructure should only be considered once a comprehensive plan for cultural content is developed in order to avoid the 'empty shell' phenomenon.

Resilient cultural infrastructures are spaces that go beyond material containers. In order to be sustainable, cultural infrastructure must be seen as devices in open dialogue with citizenship, capable to address the conflicts and challenges of the present, including all SDGs, and contribute to the complex understanding of the world. This approach has for example informed the [proposed new ICOM's definition](#)

of Museum as spaces “aiming to contribute to human dignity and social justice, global equality and planetary wellbeing”.

Innovation has been naturalized in what it is called knowledge economy, cognitive capitalism or technocapitalism. From the perspective that the cultural context is favourable for the production of knowledge, many artists and cultural practitioners rehearse new areas of work directly conceived as knowledge creation, or as experimentation of new methodologies in dialogue with other research disciplines. Those practices overflow the disciplinary and sectoral boundaries, and improve critical thinking and out-of-the box perspectives.

In a world of widely distributed sources of knowledge, open innovation approaches enables the greatest return in social and economic terms, maximising coverage and service to the CCS. The “Science, Research and Innovation Performance of the EU 2018” notes a lack of open innovation in the EU and recommends to improve the conditions for speeding up knowledge creation and diffusion by opening up science and innovation systems. This opening should include the acceptance of ‘research’ as a side of cultural work that unleashes forms of emerging innovation processes.

#### **Action:**

- Support the development of hard and soft infrastructure to assure access to culture for all.
- Ensure viability and sustainability of cultural infrastructure and cultural industries as a precondition for investment.
- Approach infrastructure as an open concept, including flexible, grass-roots, community-led spaces.
- Promote participatory and transparent governance protocols for cultural infrastructures.
- Enable artistic R+D+i to work crossing disciplinary and sectoral silos to endure an effective outbound open innovation.
- Promote specific cross-sectoral policies that brings the cultural sector closer to other knowledge producers (such as universities or research centres).

#### **Goal 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries**

The New European Consensus on Development states that “*tackling discriminations and inequalities and leaving no-one behind are at the heart of EU development cooperation policy*” and outlines that there is a cultural aspect that runs through this expansive issue.

Funding of culture through the ERDF is effective according to the majority of stakeholders, as shown in the European Commission’s ‘Culture and Tourism Final Report’ on the 2007-2013 framework. Benefits are seen in terms of infrastructure and services, leading to greater numbers of visitors, jobs, income, demand for cultural products and development of new products. These far-ranging results make a clear case for culture’s capacity to reduce inequalities between Member States.

In addition, a comprehensive approach to inequality should consider the value and recognition of cultural diversity and contested heritage, as they can actively support the emergence of inclusive and cohesive societies by keeping in mind the relationship and interaction between active citizenship, people at risk and minorities.

#### **Action:**

- Embed culture in the EU Cohesion policies and funds, ensuring that it is understood in a comprehensive manner – integrating culture, cultural heritage and the arts, including their tangible and intangible dimensions.

- Strengthen the application of the European Pillar of Social Rights in a cultural dimension and reinforce culture's capacity to empower those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to promote intercultural dialogue and to bring down barriers between different social groups.
- Ensure equal access to culture, knowledge exchange and horizontal collaboration to preserve, maintain or (co)create a common cultural basis.

## Goal 11 - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Culture and cultural heritage are the glue binding human settlements together. Culture is a complex notion, including engagement, identity, well-being, memory and projection, enquiry and learning, recreation and creativity. It is central in the life of citizens and thus, cities. The European Council, in its 2019-2022 *Work plan for culture*, highlights that *"special attention should be paid to the role of culture at local level, to the quality of architecture and the living environment and to culture-led social innovations contributing to the development of cities and regions across the EU"* when designing policies aiming at strengthening cohesion and well-being.

The European Urban Agenda includes culture in its scope of action. However, while promoting a multilevel approach to governance, it offers a minimal role to civil society participation. New approaches to culture in cities and rural settlements are built through participatory processes, allowing for a collaborative co-design of responses to the needs of the different communities.

### Action:

- Promote and enhance cultural participation in recognition of its role in fostering social inclusion and invigorating local communities, including through the provision of cultural spaces.
- Incorporate cultural dimension in urban and rural development policies.
- Support hard and soft cultural infrastructure and cultural heritage by means of multilevel approaches to cultural access.

## Goal 12 - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Sustainable consumption and production require **greater awareness** of the impact of current practices along with the **development and promotion of more sustainable alternatives**. Public bodies should explore forms of investment, which take into account present and past cultural realities and the new areas that they open up. More sustainable production and consumption models can arise from rethinking the investment in new infrastructures and focusing more on making use of latent, existing resources.

Favouring an investment in Research, Development and Innovation (R+D+I) works as the driving force also behind socio-cultural sustainable models, including but going beyond, the production and distribution of works.

In addition, the cultural and creative sector will need to review their production practices to ensure its contribution to sustainable development. The shift to digital content and streaming services in the cultural arena has not been sufficiently explored in relation to its environmental impact. The global nature of these services, platforms and modes of production require a supranational approach and shared procedures and regulations.

For example, *Tow with the Flow* by Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen, is an art project that was developed with this SDG in mind, along with Goals 4, 8 and 10. It highlights the systemic sustainability issues of the globalised textile industry. The project works with young people across the world from different



backgrounds with the aim of “creating awareness about alternative modes of consumption for a more sustainable future”.

Lastly, touring is at the core of many cultural and creative sectors. This is recognised and supported by the European Commission. Developing sustainable approaches to mobility of cultural workers and works must be seen as an integral component of mobility funding programmes.

### **Action:**

- Support the emergence of digitally sustainable protocols and standards in the cultural and creative sector.
- Promote, underpin and subsidise sustainable mobility for cultural workers and works.
- Unleash the potential of cultural practices and innovation in advancing alternative techniques and approaches to sustainable practices of consumption, production and dissemination.
- Support cultural projects creating awareness of the issues around sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Support cultural projects developed within a community mindset and enabling the development of the “commons”, as they affect the inheritance of humanity as a whole and are to be shared together.
- Foster the emergence of cultural projects with a goal on social sustainability, exploring for example the sharing of scarce resources. For example, by enabling the use of existing infrastructures and spaces, or by facilitating the access to the re-use of materials.

### **Goal 13 - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

Culture enables **creative responses to climate change** and is a powerful medium for awareness-raising. Artists, collectives and cultural institutions are increasingly introducing climate-related messages in their projects and knowledge in their work and joining grass-roots campaigns to amplify their messages.

The shift has also taken place in well-established institutional settings. For example, raising awareness of climate change was the aim of the winning contribution to the Venice Art Biennale 2019, “Sun & Sea (Marina)”. Won by the Lithuanian pavilion, the opera performance is situated on an artificial beach, with performers singing warnings of ecological disaster.

Culture can drive people to action by encouraging critical thinking, avoiding in this way the possible backlash of some top-down measures. A good example is the award-winning exhibition ‘Climate Control’ of the Manchester Museum, developed in 2016 as a contribution to Manchester’s European City of Science. The exhibition focused on how each visitor could take small steps to combat climate issues. The exhibition reached 98,000 visits during the four months duration of the programme and approximately 500,000 people have visited elements of the exhibition since that time.

In its 2019-2022 Work plan for culture, the European Council includes the need to take action to foster adaptation to climate change in cultural heritage within the scope of the UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 and the Paris Agreement (2015). With a view to maximise all efforts in combating climate change, the scope of action should be expanded to all cultural sectors in the future ahead.

**There is a need to better understand the impact of cultural production and services on the planet and the hardware and software required for production, particularly in the digital sphere and their carbon footprint.** Thus, a determinate research agenda is necessary to ground the cultural policy of the future.

### Action:

- Promote a coherent policy approach to culture and climate change by including all cultural sectors, sub-sectors, as well as cultural practices when addressing climate action.
- Foster education and awareness-raising on climate change through cultural initiatives.
- Recognise and use the potential of cultural practices to strengthen the adaptive capacity to climate change-related challenges in strategies and planning.
- Promote artistic R+D programmes to foster artistic experimentation aimed at the development of sustainable digital tools.
- Facilitate human-centred innovation by involving artists and their transversal competencies and unconventional approaches to problem solving.

## Goal 14 - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Taking into account the communities' cultural relationships with the ocean and other marine resources, an effective coherent approach is necessary for the sustainable development of the marine environment. Such an approach should not forget the human impact on the seas, including water heating caused by undersea giant server farms.

The UN General Assembly Resolution of July 2017 [Our Ocean, our future: a call to action](#) highlights the need to “develop comprehensive strategies to raise awareness of the natural and cultural significance of the ocean and stresses the importance of enhancing understanding of the health and role of our ocean and the stressors on its ecosystems [...] based on science and on traditional knowledge systems”.

In this vein, the [Skrei Convention](#), an initiative co-funded by Creative Europe, builds on people’s stories, traditions, museum collections and knowledge of ancient European trade routes of stockfish within its social, economic, political and historical context, while considering ways to ensure its sustainable future.

### Action:

- Recognise cultural traditions and emerging cultural practices in relation to the sustainable preservation of life below water, integrating support for cultural sustainable practices into fisheries policy.
- Support cultural projects raising awareness of human impact on the oceans.

## Goal 15 - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

In 2017 the Commission released an [Action Plan for nature, people and the economy](#) that included one action on **improving the link between cultural and natural heritage**. Here, cultural landscapes are considered in the context of Natura 2000 sites.

The UNESCO’s [Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention](#) defines cultural landscapes as cultural properties that represent the “combined works of nature and of man”. Cultural landscapes should be viewed, however, from a broad cultural angle. They are not confined to history, and often play “an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life”. Contemporary creation building on traditional practices in the cultural landscape should be recognised and incorporated in addressing this objective.

Cultural landscapes go far beyond those that are inscribed on the World Heritage List. The Council of Europe Landscape Convention requires its signatories to recognise in law that landscapes are “an

*essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity" and to "integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies". The sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems is inseparable from the cultural landscape, which ought to be clearly and consistently reflected in the policies affecting this objective.*

The rural dimension is both a physical and cultural space enabling diverse ways of life, which often promote sustainable terrestrial ecosystems, and based on the feelings of ownership and care. Sustainable co-governance system, and a new approach to rural cultural practices acting on the natural resources management is a powerful way to build communities around those resources to be protected or restored.

### **Action:**

- Incorporate the concept of 'cultural landscapes' into the policy on ensuring sustainable environments for life on land, uniting natural and cultural aspects of development.
- Build on traditional cultural knowledge for sustainable land management and support the recognition of ancient communal practices as a source of inspiration for the development of new cultural practices in this field.
- Support cultural projects that raise awareness of the impact of human actions in terrestrial ecosystems and promote sustainable patterns of behaviour.

### **Goal 16 - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

Peaceful, inclusive and just societies celebrate freedom of expression, including freedom of artistic expression. This has become a mounting issue both internationally and within Europe, with Freemuse's [The State of Artistic Freedom 2019](#) reporting that a "global culture of silencing others" is in development, "by states and non-state actors including religious bodies, fundamentalist groups, social media, and individuals... enabled by questionable laws, policy measures and law enforcement".

The European Commission's legislative proposal for the regulation on Creative Europe 2021-2027 (30 May 2018) notes that "Artistic freedom and diverse and free media environment are central to conveying diverging opinions and perspectives. They contribute to pluralistic societies where citizens are able to make informed choices, including in the context of political elections". However, the actions foreseen in the proposal are limited to media freedom. Expanding its remit to the broader cultural sector is a necessary step to guarantee freedom of expression in Europe in the current political climate.

Cultural participation is also a determining factor in truly democratic participation. Cultural participation has a multidimensional role: on the one hand, promoting access to culture for people of all backgrounds, which also provides a space for intercultural dialogue as a core element of peaceful and inclusive societies. On the other hand, it fosters active citizenship and co-responsibility (horizontal subsidiarity); enabling equal and democratic participation to knowledge and creativity; supports mediation, intercultural hybridization and the capacity of creating culture.

Cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue furthermore play an important role in the promotion of **human rights, tolerance, and non-discrimination across the world**, as it is emphasised in the EU's Strategic Approach to International Cultural Relations (2019).

### **Action:**

- Protect freedom of artistic expression as part of guaranteeing fundamental human rights by expanding current actions under Creative Europe to all cultural and creative sectors;
- Develop a European handbook containing a comparative report on the diverse legal framework regulating aspects related to freedom of artistic expression and the necessary indicators for monitoring freedom of artistic expression in the EU.
- Foster citizens' interest and engagement in democratic processes through fostering access to cultural participation in its wider sense;
- Promote access to free, plural and accurate information and protect and enhance critical thinking;
- Further integrate a cultural dimension in external relations strategies, notably for the promotion of peace and intercultural dialogue.

### **Goal 17 - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development**

SDG 17 states that a *“successful sustainable development agenda requires partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society”*. The implementation of the Agenda 2030 requires action at all levels. Civil society, from local to global levels, has a key role to play in efforts to reach the sustainable development goals, and engagement with civil society in the development of policy and actions on sustainable development at an early stage, will result not just in more informed policymaking, but also in a more effective implementation. A multi-level collaboration and dialogue, and silo-free thinking requires a cultural shift, mind-shift and innovative approaches.

### **Action:**

- Commit to a cultural dimension in all sustainable development policies, recognising culture as a bearer of shared principles and values and as an essential contributor to all SDGs, therefore meriting a transversal approach across sustainable development policies.
- Engage with civil society in the development of sustainable development policies, recognising that effective, accountable and inclusive institutions benefit from the specific knowledge and experience of civil society.

## **ABOUT CULTURE ACTION EUROPE:**

Culture Action Europe (CAE) is the major European network of cultural networks, organisations, artists, activists, academics and policymakers. CAE is the first port of call for informed opinion and debate about arts and cultural policy in the EU. As the only intersectoral network, it brings together all practices in culture, from the performing arts to literature, the visual arts, design and cross-arts initiatives, to community centres and activist groups.

CAE believes in the value and values of culture and its contribution to the development of sustainable and inclusive societies.

**[www.cultureactioneurope.org](http://www.cultureactioneurope.org)**