

We are building today the cultural diversity of tomorrow

Press release

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THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT'S RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS: WHAT PLACE FOR CULTURE?

Yesterday, the Members of the European Parliament adopted a resolution aiming at assessing the impact of the COVID19 crisis in the European Union and to set out recommendations to Member States and the European Commission.

No doubt Members of the Parliament want to show solidarity and support Member States and the Commission in their action to manage the crisis. However, in the first and un-amended version of their statement no reference was made to the dramatic impact of the crisis on the arts and cultural sectors in our society and creatives' efforts to help citizens during the lockdown.

Fortunately, amendments in this respect were tabled by the European Peoples Party, the Socialists and Democrats, the Greens and the European Conservatives and Reformists and were largely adopted.

With the adoption of this resolution, the European Parliament has openly assessed the difficulties for artists, the creative workers, and the cultural and creative industries and institutions thus recognising the crucial role of the cultural and creative sectors in our society and economy.

The European Coalitions for Cultural Diversity would like to reiterate, as per their statement sent to the Member States and the Commission at end of March, that the cultural sectors were the very first to be hit by the lockdown measures as a consequence of the COVID 19 crisis. Theatres, cinemas, museum, art galleries, books shops, venues and festivals have been shut or cancelled since the beginning of March and until an unknown date. They will be the very last to be re-opened because they invariably depend on a large gathering of people together in close proximity.

However, given the length of the crisis, many cultural actors and venues may simply not survive. Some cultural endeavours will simply not be able to rebuild without significant help and support.

Not only are these sectors crucial for local economies and the jobs they provide -European cultural & creative sectors account for 4,4% of EU GDP and 12 million full-time jobs -, but also are they

essential during and after this crisis to build and maintain social cohesion, to support local recovery and development, to inform, to educate and to connect EU citizens with one another from children to the oldest in our society.

The European Coalitions would like also to recall that before the crisis, the average expenditure on culture in the European Union was just 0.45% of GDP.

The ambition of the Member States during and after this crisis needs to be much higher.

All EU decision makers have the responsibility and the duty to protect the EU cultural diversity and to make sure this core value that is at the heart of the European identity doesn't disappear because of the crisis.

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