

Interparliamentary Committee Meeting Cultural and Creative Sectors in the EU

11 October 2016, Brussels

Purpose

The European Parliament's [Committee on Culture and Education](#) organised an [Interparliamentary Committee Meeting](#) (ICM) to which all the national parliaments of the Member States were invited. The aim was to discuss the Cultural and Creative Sector in the EU, which preserves and promotes cultural and linguistic diversity, strengthens European and regional identity, and contributes substantially to growth, innovation and employment in the EU economy. Twenty-nine national parliamentarians from 17 Member States attended the meeting which was held in the European Parliament in Brussels.

The meeting was organised with the support of the European Parliament's Directorate for Relations with National Parliaments.

Inside

This leaflet provides a summary of the CULT meeting held on 11 October 2016 which was the 2nd Interparliamentary Committee Meeting organised by CULT during the current European Parliament legislature (2014-2019).



Summary of the meeting

The meeting was opened by the Chair of the CULT Committee, **Ms Silvia COSTA**, who referred to some of the major challenges faced by the cultural and creative industries (CCI) and highlighted the various links between CCI and other sectors of the economy, society and politics. Cultural and creative industries not only provide more than 8% of Europe's GDP but they also play a significant part in the implementation of the new [Skills Agenda for Europe](#). Moreover, the role of culture in foreign affairs, as well as in tackling the migration challenge, is increasingly acknowledged. Ms Costa welcomed the fact that the European Commission and the Slovak Presidency of the European Council have both been putting culture and CCI at the centre of their agenda.

Mr Anton SKREKO, Director-General of Media, Audiovisual and Copyright Department at the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic representing the [Council Presidency](#) stressed the importance of culture and creativity in terms of economic growth. CCI can provide effective tools for tackling the economic recession and serve as a catalyst for innovation and prosperity. He also emphasised that it is crucial to synchronise CCI with other parts of the economy and to support the training of high-quality human resources at all levels of education in order to tap into the full potential of the sector. The protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights was also mentioned by Mr Skreko as one of the core issues of CCI.

In her opening remarks, **Ms Martine REICHERTS**, Director-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) at the [European Commission](#) referred to the need for a new approach and to Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's State of the Union address calling artists and creators our crown jewels. She also drew attention to the implications of the [Digital Single Market](#) strategy for the sector and the need for fairer remuneration for artists and creators.

After these introductory remarks, the following thematic panels comprised presentations by invited experts, Members of National Parliaments and MEPs.

Thematic panel 1 "Strategies for Promoting the Cultural and Creative Sectors"

The first thematic panel addressing "Strategies for Promoting the Cultural and Creative Sectors" was opened by **Mr Vincent LEPAGE**, Director of [Creative Wallonia](#). In 2013, only three years after the launch of Creative Wallonia, the region was selected as a European Creative District by the European Commission. As Mr Lepage highlighted, the impact of CCI on the rest of the economy of the region is clearly visible, since 11% of CCI products are used as input in other industries, such as agro-food, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. Creative Wallonia is also a good example of how CCI can be linked to the rest of the economy through spill-overs and indirect impacts and how a multi-level strategy of creative skills, collaboration, access to finance and clusters can foster the prosperity of a whole region.

In the next presentation, **Mr Patrick BLOCHE** (Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs and Education – Assemblée nationale, France) pointed out some specific features of the current state of the cultural and creative sectors in France. He underscored the importance of the diversity of creators, the need for broader access to culture and the right to unemployment benefits for those involved in performing arts. Mr Bloche also stressed the question of proximity, especially in the case of rural areas, where it is crucial that culture and cultural institutions are available at the local level. Finally, he echoed what the European Alliance for Culture and the Arts has frequently advocated – that culture and the arts should be at the heart of EU policies more than ever before.

Ms Edite ESTRELA (Chair of the Committee on Culture, Communication, Youth and Sport – Assembleia da República, Portugal) underscored the dynamic growth of CCI in Portugal. Cultural and creative industries are the third largest contributing sector to the country's GDP, and they also create jobs and positive spill-over into the more traditional sectors of the economy. Therefore, in Ms Estrela's opinion, culture needs to be seen as an investment, not as a cost. She called on the EU to keep actively promoting CCI, to take into account the needs of these sectors in terms of adapting to the digital era and to continue striving to provide access for wider audiences.

MEP **Mr Luigi MORGANO**, Rapporteur of the own-initiative report on "Coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries", highlighted a few key points from his report. Cultural and creative industries can serve as instruments to preserve European cultural and linguistic identity. Furthermore, these industries are fundamental in stimulating growth and fighting unemployment, especially youth unemployment. As Mr Morgano stressed, CCI employ 7.5% of European citizens, and significantly more people work in these sectors than in other industries, such as the automotive, chemical or banking industry. He also underlined that it is important to note, when developing policies for the cultural and creative industries, that the sector is composed mainly of micro and small enterprises, or more precisely, fewer than 9 people work in each enterprise in 90% of the sector.

After a debate with Members of National Parliaments and MEPs, the panel continued with the second round of presentations. **Mr Bogdan WENTA**, MEP and Rapporteur of the CULT INI Report on "European film in the digital era", emphasised that the economy and the world of politics have not recognised the full potential of the cultural and creative industries yet. Similarly, creativity as a free and renewable source of energy is not yet being fully exploited in Europe. He also underscored that it is important to establish a close partnership and regular consultations with cultural and creative industries in order to monitor the development of the sector. Finally, he referred to the pressing question of the digital revolution, new forms of distribution and copyright issues.

In her presentation, **Ms Heidi PURGA** (Member of the Committee on Culture and Education – Riigikogu, Estonia) gave an overview of the current state of CCI in Estonia and pinpointed the most crucial challenges the sector is facing in her opinion. CCI have expanded considerably in Estonia since 2004 and the development of design thinking has also been significant in traditional industries, such as wood or machinery. Ms Purga stressed that developing creativity does not follow the start-up logic; on the contrary, it requires long-term systematic development and stable investment. The steady support from the Estonian state has softened the impact of the economic crisis on the sector but cooperation with the private sector should be increased too. As one of the major challenges faced by CCI, Ms Purga emphasised the changed nature of consumption, namely the tendency for consumers to look for products which carry values and emotions, and which also embody the personal philosophy and social status of the given consumer. In other words, one could say that consumption is not mainly about satisfying basic needs anymore but it is more of a cultural statement.

Mr Florin-Alexandru ALEXE (Member of the Committee on Culture, Art and Mass Media – Camera Deputatilor, Romania) focused his presentation on Romania's George Enescu festival as an example of a very successful cultural event. The biennial festival, named after the famous Romanian composer, lasted for 22 days, comprised 58 concerts and closed with over 50 thousand sold tickets in 2015. The majority of the funding for the festival comes from the government, based on a law adopted in 2012, but the event is produced and organised in cooperation with other stakeholders like the national television and radio and the Romanian cultural institute. Mr Alexe stressed the festival's important role in the overall image of Romania abroad.

Ms Herlind GUNDELACH (Vice-Chair of the Committee on Culture and Media – Bundestag, Germany) first summarised the German federal government's recent efforts to promote CCI. She named Hamburg as a city which leads the way in Germany in terms of the number of people employed in the cultural and creative industries. Moreover, an institution was set up in Hamburg as an initial contact point for links with the sector that covers a wide range of activities, for instance, providing funding information and databases, support systems and services for students and graduates. Ms Gundelach also referred to certain key challenges for the sector, among others things the promotion of smaller initiatives and independent artists, securing sufficient funding, and the difficulty of adopting uniform measures given the diverse nature of businesses in the sector. To close the first panel, her presentation was followed by a discussion with Members of National Parliaments and MEPs.

Thematic panel 2 “Fostering Citizens’ Engagement in Culture”

The second thematic panel, entitled “Fostering Citizens’ Engagement in Culture”, was opened by **Ms Cristina Da MILANO**, expert from the European Centre for Cultural Organisation and Management (**ECCOM**). She presented the preliminary findings of an **ongoing research** project, entitled “Study on audience development – How to place audiences at the centre of cultural organisations”. The study, developed in the framework of the Creative Europe programme, is a combination of desk research and carefully selected case studies, and aims to provide successful approaches and methods in the area of audience development for European cultural organisations. Although the analysis is not finished yet, the already identified main trends include a change in terminology, from the concept of ‘access to culture’ to the term of ‘audience development’, links to social inclusion and active participation, organisational implications, and findings connected to the digital shift. Ms Da Milano also stressed that the contribution of educational institutions and the empowerment of life learning processes are crucial in order to achieve the full potential of the sector. She concluded with the idea of considering culture as the fourth pillar of sustainability besides economic, environmental and social sustainability.

MEP **Mr Mircea DIACONU**, Rapporteur of the legislative report on the “European Year of Cultural Heritage”, drew the audience’s attention to the main targets of the European Year of Cultural Heritage taking place in 2018. The central idea behind organising this year is to make our shared European culture, history and cultural heritage more visible for every citizen. He also emphasised that, in order to make the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 a real success, a broad cooperation of all actors will be necessary and civil society, national parliaments and local and regional authorities will need to come together and focus on what unites us.

Mr Dragan MATIĆ (Chair of the Culture Committee – Državni zbor, Slovenia) took the floor for the next presentation and highlighted the main features of the cultural and creative industries in Slovenia. In a country where national identity has been built on common values instead of the classic nation state model, citizens are traditionally culturally oriented and regular and active participants in cultural events. Therefore, in Slovenia’s case, the question is how to increase the already high rates of participation and engagement. According to Mr Matić’s suggestions, culture should be expanded to areas such as social affairs or the environment, where it has not been given a visible role yet, and cultural-political systems should become more responsive vis-à-vis new challenges and opportunities. Furthermore, he recommended adopting measures at the EU level targeting specific population groups, especially younger age groups.

Ms Flavia PICCOLI NARDELLI (Chair of the Culture Committee – Camera dei deputati, Italy) gave an overview of the current state of CCI in Italy and underscored certain measures adopted in the last few years aiming to foster citizens’ engagement in these sectors. The amount of available funding has been significantly increased, high amounts have been invested in encouraging new projects connecting innovation, culture and education, and income tax relief has been introduced to promote cultural goods. Ms Piccoli Nardelli also presented some specific measures designed to foster young people’s involvement in the cultural and creative domains. She noted the importance of the digital economy for cultural and creative goods, and named digitalisation of our heritage as one of the crucial tasks for the coming years in the context of the European digital single market.

Mr Georgică SEVERIN (Chair of the Committee on Culture and Media - Senat, Romania) first underlined the major challenges and structural problems faced by the cultural and creative industries in Romania. Insufficient infrastructure, shortcomings in education and professional training and the lack of funding are a few examples. Mr Severin stressed that access to culture needs to be improved and the sector should attract more citizens in terms of the production side as well as considering the audiences. However, he warned against industrialising and commercialising the sector too much because, in his opinion, it might end up turning cultural products into mere commodities, eroding standards and losing some of our cultural diversity and individual genius.

Mr Jiří ŠESTÁK (Vice-Chair of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions - Senát, Czech Republic) drew the audience’s attention to particular problems of former communist countries. Authoritarian regimes created a number of problems in these countries by cutting continuity in education and culture for decades. Most of these issues are more prevalent in small cities and the countryside, where the suppression of cultural institutions by the regime led to the lack of traditions and cultural roots amongst the youth. One of the other pressing problems is the depopulation of the countryside, with the majority of young creative people moving to large cities where they have more opportunities to realise their potential. Furthermore, a significant portion of the original population was forcefully displaced during and after the World Wars. These population groups constituted an inherent part of the culture of the given country, and therefore, this kind of disruption of culture has marked entire regions and is still clearly visible today. Mr Šesták urged people not to forget these scars and reminded Parliamentarians of the complexity of these issues.

After a final round of debate with Members of National Parliaments and MEPs, the meeting ended with Ms Costa’s concluding remarks. She reminded the audience that culture should not be considered purely as an economic good, but as a benefit in its own right. The right to culture is a fundamental human right, and every citizen’s right to artistic and creative expression should be respected. Ms Costa also stressed that the democratisation of culture should not only imply extending access as broadly as possible but also encouraging people to be proactive and truly involved. She also mentioned the development of education and training as a crucial element in terms of exploiting the vast talent of Europeans to the fullest extent. Finally, she welcomed the already fruitful cooperation between National Parliaments and the European Parliament and advocated developing an even more regular information exchange.



Participating Members from National Parliaments

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Mr Jos LANTMEETERS

Bulgaria

National Assembly
Mr Borislav MILANOV
Mr Ivan IVANOV

Czech Republic

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Mr Jiří ŠESTÁK
Ms Zuzana BAUDYŠOVÁ

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BUNDESTAG
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Greece

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Mr Florin-Alexandru ALEXE
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Mr Daniel Cristian FLORIAN

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