Implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU Strategy for International Cultural Relations

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The European Parliament adopted by 455 votes to 114, with 44 abstentions, a resolution on the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and the EU strategy for international cultural relations.

Members acknowledged the overall satisfactory implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture and of the joint communication entitled ‘Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations’. Nonetheless, they noted that the assessment of the implementation of the New European Agenda for Culture has highlighted shortcomings, mainly in terms of priorities. Even though the two documents have withstood the challenges posed by unforeseen crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, their **strategic framework needs to be updated** to set out the overarching goals of the EU’s cultural policy, as well as the practical tools to be used to implement them.

Implementation priorities

According to Members, the **Council's work plan for culture** 2023-2026 should focus on the following priorities:

- recovery and resilience of the CCSI, by further strengthening their ability to respond to future shocks;

- culture and sustainability, by featuring culture as a driver of sustainable development, well-being and social justice;

- status, working and social conditions of cultural and creative professionals;

- protection and promotion of cultural heritage;

- strengthening and ensuring the effective development and implementation of international cultural relations strategies.

Member States are invited to (i) fully exploit the potential of EU funding, programmes and policies devoted to culture; (ii) fully apply the principle enshrined in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recognise the right to cultural, artistic and scientific life and related cultural rights as human rights for all.

Social dimension

The resolution invited the Member States to promote existing cultural and artistic activities and provide further opportunities for active participation of individuals, in order to increase the capacity to reach new audiences through an inclusive approach.

The Commission and the Member States are asked to:

- **ensure the inclusion of the most marginalised and under-represented groups** in cultural activities and initiatives, not only as passive recipients but also as active creators of these activities, fostering a sense of common belonging and a shared future among all people;

- **strengthen their efforts to provide quality information** on mobility and exchange programmes for artists and other cultural professionals and practitioners, as well as material support to tackle all kinds of obstacles to mobility in the CCSI, including administrative, financial and linguistic obstacles, as well as obstacles linked to disability.

Parliament encouraged Member States to recognise the role of arts and culture in promoting healthy lifestyles, mental health and individual and societal well-being. It asked the Commission, building on the success of the DiscoverEU initiative, to consider creating an action under the Erasmus+ programme that would allow young Europeans to benefit from a travel voucher to discover European cultural routes.

Economic dimension

Workers in the cultural and creative sectors and industries, having been seriously hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, should benefit from a genuine and targeted European recovery. Members called on the Member States to **dedicate 2 % of their budgets to culture**, as Parliament has requested on many occasions. In addition to the measures supporting the economic recovery of the CCSI, the support from the Recovery and Resilience Facility should be used in particular to improve the working conditions, training and up- and reskilling of professionals in the CCSI in order to keep up with the ongoing structural changes in these sectors.

Parliament has also repeated its call for a **European Status of the Artist** to be proposed, which would set out a common framework for adequate, fair and transparent working conditions and minimum standards common to all EU countries. Members call for the procedures to apply for EU funding, including those for the Creative Europe programme, to be simplified as they are often still too burdensome and create unnecessarily obstacles for all potential beneficiaries.

Parliament pointed out that special attention should be paid to **sustainability issues** during the restoration of cultural heritage and traditional buildings. It recognised the potential of the New European Bauhaus in contributing to the protection and restoration of cities and their cultural heritage in the event of disasters caused by natural and human-induced hazards.

External dimension and international cultural relations

Members consider that culture and **intercultural dialogue** make a key contribution to fostering mutual understanding within a society and between different societies, and to restoring communication beyond linguistic boundaries on the international stage in challenging global contexts.

Parliament condemned the use of culture by authoritarian governments in particular, which attempt to redefine international rules and values by questioning their universality and to exert their political influence by violating artistic and academic freedom. The resolution highlighted the potential of the EU's international cultural relations to **counter disinformation in third countries** and foreign interference towards the EU, and the hostile narratives against the EU in illiberal and authoritarian regimes.

Deploring the lack of a clear and coherent EU strategy on international cultural relations, Members encouraged the Commission and the EEAS to regularly exchange practices and lessons learned and to develop coherent strategies based on a common understanding of what constitutes international cultural relations.

Lastly, Parliament called on the Commission to strongly condemn the **destruction of historical, artistic and cultural heritage in recent conflicts**, as well as the systematic and politically or ideologically targeted destruction of historical, artistic and cultural heritage, and the eradication of the identities and cultures of sovereign states, peoples or minorities. It recalled that the destruction of cultural heritage can constitute a war crime and a violation of human rights.