

Declaration

by the Ministers of Culture and Media of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden on culture in times of COVID – 19 crisis

Following the videoconference on 8 April 2020 of European Union Ministers of Culture and Media, and also the European Commission, on how to respond to the unprecedented human and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, Ministers of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden have issued this declaration.

We, Ministers of Culture and Media of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden and our representatives, having met digitally for the first time in history due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to have an informal exchange of views and find solutions together:

WELCOME the measures taken by Member States and the European Commission, especially those taken to support the cultural and creative sectors, including the audiovisual and media sector, to help businesses and individuals who are particularly affected and to safeguard the well-being of our citizens by making cultural content accessible to them online.

STRESS that culture is a reflection of unity in diversity, societal values and identity, tradition and innovation, contemporaneity and forward thinking; it builds bridges and fosters resilience, understanding and connection, and will be a key resource in the aftermath of the crisis and the recovery from it. Artists are the backbone of our culture and specific attention must be granted to them.

RECALL that the cultural and creative sectors, including the audiovisual and media sector, are essential to the European economy but are among the sectors most

dramatically hit by the pandemic, and that rarely has such solidarity been more evident than in this moment of crisis, when all EU Member States have mobilised at once to help those hard-hit sectors navigate these challenging times.

UNDERLINE the vital role of the media and more particularly of journalists, whose timely and credible reporting and dedication to combatting disinformation and fake news have never been more essential; these are the values that we need to encourage and hold in high regard.

AGREE, under these exceptional circumstances, that an immediate, ambitious, and sustainable policy response is needed and jointly **COMMIT** to acting and responding swiftly and flexibly to developments as they unfold.

HAVE therefore **PUT TOGETHER** a first set of national and European measures as a basis for further action to support the recovery of the sectors.

NOTE that during our deliberations the following measures were proposed: to regularly make an informed assessment of the situation in order to act appropriately, to put forward solutions whereby EU-level effort will supplement the national measures today and in a multiannual perspective, with special attention to the flexibility and digital initiatives within the Creative Europe programme, and to ensure that the aid provided by EU funds and programmes reaches the cultural and creative sectors and contributes to their recovery.

REAFFIRM that we are determined to take further decisive policy action in order to support the cultural and creative sectors in times of crisis and beyond.

