
Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)15 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the role of culture, cultural heritage and landscape in helping to address global challenges

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 May 2022
at the 132nd Session of the Committee of Ministers)*

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe (ETS No. 1),

Considering that one of the aims of the Council of Europe is to achieve greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles, founded upon respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which are their common heritage;

Emphasising the need to recognise culture's contribution to a democratic society and the importance of culture, cultural heritage and landscape to the three dimensions of sustainable development goals for economic, social and environmental development of societies, as well as their essential role in the creative economy and the attractiveness of territories;

Recalling that culture is an element of civilisation that acts as a guardian of memories, values, traditions, in close interaction with heritage and landscape, but whose creative dimension (through the transformative power of art, stories and aesthetics) at the same time brings about political, social and technological transformations;

Recalling, as highlighted in the Declaration on the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine adopted by the 11th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers of Culture (Strasbourg, France, 1 April 2022) that, in the context of an armed conflict, culture is often a deliberate target and that erasing cultural traces of the past equates to destroying people's memory, causing a permanent damage to peoples' identity;

Recognising that the emancipatory potential of culture and creativity, awakening the imagination and critical thinking and encouraging freedom of expression, can strengthen democratic participation and social cohesion, foster recognition and mutual trust, encourage social interactions and empathy, stimulate public debate and intercultural dialogue and thus contribute to changing behaviour, creating peace and promoting democracy and human rights;

Considering its capacity to encourage social interaction, emotion, empathy, international collaboration and intercultural dialogue, the cultural world can significantly contribute to define collective goals and trigger collaboration to achieve them;

Recalling the power of culture and creativity to spark lateral and critical thinking, encourage freedom of expression, raise awareness, stimulate public debate and hence contribute to supporting a collective ambition at addressing global challenges and global co-operation, engaging young people, changing behaviour and thus furthering democracy and human rights;

Emphasising the value and potential of culture, cultural heritage and landscape in helping to address global challenges (democratic, economic, health, climate and technological challenges and those due to the loss of biodiversity and to social inequality) and enhance the quality of life in a constantly evolving society that is marked, among other things, by the accelerating impact of digital technologies, and in particular artificial intelligence (AI), in all sectors;

Considering that cultural policy can help now, more than ever, to address these challenges by ensuring that the arts and humanities play a vital role in shaping the future of societies and that empathy, imagination and appreciation of beauty are mobilised in parallel with the driving force that culture can play to reduce social, health-related and economic inequalities;

Considering that unsustainable human activities threaten life on earth and that transformative changes are required to address the global challenges, prominently those brought about by the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution;

Aware that cultural resources are intrinsically interlinked and form – together with natural resources – the environment in which people live, face common challenges and strive to find solutions to these challenges;

Recalling that artists as well as cultural workers, organisations and institutions play an important role in generating the collective will and solidarity required to address global challenges;

Recalling that, in general, little progress has been made in fundamentally changing everyday behaviour to stop pressure due to human activities that cause climate change and loss of biodiversity;

Recalling the positive contributions made by the cultural, cultural heritage and landscape sectors to public health, and especially physical and psychological well-being, as demonstrated in particular during the Covid-19 pandemic;

Considering that the pandemic has exposed the differences between member States regarding the legal status of, and support systems and social benefits for, artists and cultural professionals and the importance of sustainable conditions in this field in order for creators and cultural professionals to contribute their full potential to cultural development;

Considering the ability of digital technologies to affect cultural and creative production and distribution models, as well as access to cultural services and media, together with the potential for artificial intelligence and data curation to influence accessibility to media and content that could be misused to the detriment of democratic values and cultural diversity;

Considering that cultural and ethical dimensions should be taken into account in the design of technological innovations, in a spirit of freedom of expression and democratic principles;

Recalling the essential role of public cultural institutions such as museums, libraries, cultural and film centres, live performance venues and public media services in reaching out to the general public, including young people, and in enhancing cultural participation and cultural activities, regardless of levels of income and education;

Underlining the pioneering role played by the Council of Europe as regards policies on culture, cultural heritage and landscape, and the development of legal frameworks reflecting the above-mentioned ideas in Council of Europe conventions and programmes;

Recalling the European Cultural Convention (ETS No. 18, 1954), the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (ETS No. 121, Granada, 1985), the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised, ETS No. 143, Valletta, 1992), the Council of Europe Landscape Convention (ETS No. 176, Florence, 2000), the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, Faro, 2005), the Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production (revised, CETS No. 220, Rotterdam, 2017) and the Council of Europe Convention on Offences relating to Cultural Property (CETS No. 221, Nicosia, 2017) and Resolution CM/Res(2013)66 confirming the establishment of the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes (EPA);

Recalling the common aim to protect and promote the cultural, cultural heritage and landscape resources of the continent and encourage intergovernmental exchange, dialogue and co-operation around this aim, which led to recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in the area of culture, cultural heritage and landscape, such as Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)2 on the Internet of citizens, Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)8 on Big Data for culture, literacy and democracy, Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)10 on culture's contribution to strengthening the internet as an emancipatory force, Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)1 on the European Cultural Heritage Strategy for the 21st century, Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)3 on cultural heritage facing climate change: increasing resilience and promoting adaptation, Recommendation CM/Rec(2020)7 on promoting the continuous prevention of risks in the day-to-day management of cultural heritage: co-operation with States, specialists and citizens, Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)7 with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape integration in policies relating to rural territories in agricultural and forestry, energy and demographic transition, Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)8 with a view to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe – Landscape and democracy: public participation, Recommendation CM/Rec(2018)9 on contributing to the implementation of the European Landscape Convention of the Council of Europe: creation of public funds for landscape and Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)8 on the implementation of Article 9 of the European Landscape Convention on Transfrontier Landscapes;

Recalling the inspiration, results and recommendations derived from ministerial conferences (culture, Moscow, 2013; cultural heritage, Namur, 2015; culture, Strasbourg, 2022) in line with Committee of Ministers' decisions on Council of Europe activities;

Noting the conclusions of recent relevant events held and texts issued by the Council of Europe (Council of Europe High-level Conference – Environmental Protection and Human Rights, held under the Georgian Presidency of the Committee of Ministers, 27 February 2020, Strasbourg; the High-level International Conference on Human Rights and Environmental Protection: "Human rights for the Planet", held under the Greek Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers, 5 October 2020, Strasbourg; work by the Steering Committee for Human Rights to update its Manual on human rights and the environment (3rd edition) and to draft a Committee of Ministers' recommendation on human rights and the environment), the European Union (New European Bauhaus), UNESCO-IPCC-ICOMOS, ICOMOS (Climate Change and Cultural Heritage Working Group, "The Future of Our Pasts: Engaging Cultural Heritage in Climate Action", 1 July 2019, Paris), the OECD, the G20 (Rome Declaration of the G20 Ministers of Culture) and Europa Nostra (European Cultural Heritage Green Paper),

I. Recommends that the governments of member States:

1. take forward actions at governmental level aiming at further development of a new understanding of cultural, cultural heritage and landscape resources – and hence new policies – as strategic elements to help address global challenges and as drivers of social transformation, with the aim of creating an open and diverse cultural space and a safe and sustainable environment, accessible to all, as a basis for democratic societies;
2. acknowledge the importance of developing cultural empathy, engaging in dialogue and building mutual understanding and solidarity to ensure that cultural and environmental diversity are considered as essential common values and further develop collaboration between people and institutions as part of a comprehensive response;
3. assist Ukraine as necessary in dealing with the threats to its cultural heritage and its urgent preservation by using all possibilities offered by the Council of Europe's conventions and legal and technical framework in the area of culture and cultural heritage, as well as in future action plans for Ukraine;
4. call upon the creative skills of artists and cultural workers to encourage the behavioural changes required to address global challenges and to encourage relevant stakeholders, institutions and organisations to support sustainable development goals. This involves adopting a new perspective on human beings' relationship with nature to ensure the latter's conservation and sustainability;
5. promote the importance of cultural, cultural heritage and landscape resources, and the use of traditional knowledge and practices, with a view to contributing to the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the goals of the Paris Agreement, and map the threats posed by climate change to these resources;

6. orient sustainable development policies, whether at financial or regulatory levels, to:

Mobilise actors in the fields of culture, heritage and landscape:

- by promoting the use of artistic and creative skills to contribute to innovations that respect sustainable development goals;
- by prioritising public and private investment in cultural, cultural heritage and landscape projects in order to achieve sustainable development goals;
- by developing incentives to encourage owners to make heritage buildings more energy efficient;
- by addressing unfair practices by dominant global businesses and encourage the latter to contribute to the development and dissemination of local culture in all its diversity;

Engage with local communities:

- by stimulating participatory activities and democratic governance for cultural institutions and organisations to connect with local communities and encourage civic dialogue and engagement, notably with socially and economically disadvantaged groups;
- by promoting projects that are participatory and supportive of cultural coexistence and inclusion, raise awareness of how to address societal challenges and encourage collective action to work towards sustainable development and peace;
- by adapting conservation standards and guidelines for heritage and landscape and engage communities in preserving them;

Encourage new partnerships:

- by establishing partnerships between stakeholders in culture, heritage and landscape and environmental actors;
- by encouraging international collaboration, co-production and distribution in cultural and creative sectors;

Make the best of digital technologies and in particular artificial intelligence:

- by considering the cultural dimension when addressing the impact of digital technology, in particular AI;
- by embracing an ethical framework regarding the use of digital technologies, and in particular AI, that protects human values and supports cultural diversity;
- by fostering collaboration and exchanges between professional and institutional actors (at local, national and European levels) to make better use of digital technologies, in particular AI, in the cultural and creative sectors through joint projects, training and awareness-raising activities, and to promote digital and AI-based services and content, notably in the audiovisual and cultural heritage sectors, also in support of plurilingualism;

7. support initiatives and projects that work to eliminate gender disparities in the cultural and creative sectors;

8. acknowledge the global dimension and relevance of the cultural and creative sectors in promoting diversity, freedom of expression and mutual understanding;

9. consider culture, heritage and landscape as basic necessities to generate the greatest possible benefits from their multidimensional impact and avoid further precarity in these sectors by including them in relevant post-Covid-19 recovery and resilience funding schemes;

10. address the working conditions of artists and cultural professionals by considering, as appropriate, a framework for their legal status and working conditions and minimum standards that will foster collaboration, entrepreneurial skills and mobility across the continent;

11. promote the widest possible digital access to and participation in cultural, cultural heritage and landscape resources through the digitalisation of related content, enhanced by media and information literacy;

12. seek to reinforce the capacities of, and facilitate training and awareness raising for, relevant stakeholders in the areas of culture, cultural heritage and landscape, as agents of change, and promote the inclusion of learning related to culture, cultural heritage and landscape in formal and informal educational settings when working to address global challenges;

13. further strengthen international co-operation and the sharing of knowledge, including the dissemination of good practices that illustrate the multidimensional impact of cultural, cultural heritage and landscape resources in helping to address global challenges and value the importance of cultural research and statistics as indispensable elements in defining cultural policies;

II. Invites the Council of Europe to contribute to the implementation of this recommendation by means of all the tools at its disposal within the framework of its conventions and non-binding standards, projects and programmes – including the collection of good practices – through stepping up co-operation on this subject with relevant organisations.