

# MAGAZINE

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# Culture Works



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### **New Stories, New Values, New Generations**

Culture does not merely respond to the world - it builds it. This issue of ENCATC Magazine explores how culture works as infrastructure, as transformation, and as a practice of care in a time when old systems falter and new ones are emerging. Across continents, mediums, and methods, we see cultural actors reimagining how we live, learn, govern, and grow.

We begin with a special focus on **Bologna**, host city of the **ENCATC Sustainability Academy 2025**. As a city deeply engaged in sustainable cultural development, Bologna offers a powerful example of how local initiatives can catalyse broader change - blending innovation, inclusion, and environmental consciousness into a cohesive cultural vision.

In the section "Takeaways from the ENCATC Study Tour in Korea", we turn our attention to Asia, where the intersections of technology, policy, mobility, and creativity are reshaping cultural practices. Through firsthand observations and dialogue, the study tour offered insights into how South Korea is approaching cultural innovation, Al governance, and the balance between heritage and digital transformation.

We then look ahead in "Towards the ENCATC Congress", as we prepare for our annual gathering—a space where ideas, practices, and research converge to shape the future of cultural management and policy. This year's theme, *The Future is Cultural*, invites us to collectively imagine how education, policy, and practice can align to address the ecological, social, and ethical challenges ahead.

Throughout this issue, readers will discover how **new stories**, **are generating new values**, and how those values are actively shaping the next generation of cultural professionals. From grassroots circular economy initiatives to rethinking cultural measurement frameworks, ENCATC members and partners are contributing to a sector that is not only adaptive - but transformative.

As the European Commission has just unveiled its next Multiannual Financial Framework and the Culture Compass continues to evolve, this edition serves as both a reflection and a proposition. It asks: What does a just, inclusive, and sustainable cultural future look like? What policies are needed not just to preserve culture, but to allow it to flourish as a backbone for societal well-being?

We thank all contributors and partners who, through their work and vision, are building the foundations of a cultural sector that is responsive, collaborative, and forward-thinking.

Together, we are not just reflecting change - we are shaping it.

GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens ENCATC Secretary General

August 2025







Imagine Europe without its theatres, opera houses, cinemas, museums, galleries, cultural centres, arts festivals, without the spaces where citizens gather to question, create, and dream together. What we are imagining is not just cultural poverty, it's democratic collapse.

### The Crisis We Face

We are living in a time marked by a profound crisis: economic inequality, social polarization, post-truth politics, the erosion of public trust, and the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment, structural racism, patriarchal attitudes, revisionism, conservatism, populism, and disinformation. Civil society faces increasing pressure and threats. Public space—both physical and discursive—is shrinking. Throughout Europe, the cultural sector often encounters silenced voices, censorship, and self-censorship, as well as narratives that dismiss the arts as irrelevant, non-essential, or unworthy of public funding, alongside the chilling effects of political and media manipulation.

# What if we consider culture as Europe's democratic infrastructure?

Despite the conventional or conservative instrumentalization of culture for radical exclusion and discrimination, or its neoliberal reduction to the circulation of hegemonic cultural commodities, despite elitism and the paradox of institutional critique, culture still remains one of the most powerful platforms and, perhaps, one of the last authentic arenas for pluralism, critical reflection, and dialogue, for creating new aesthetic relationships with the world. The arts are vital for communities to feel and connect, challenge dominant narratives, and create space where opposing voices can be articulated through a democratic and productive lens.

What if we consider culture as Europe's democratic infrastructure? Just as we invest in roads and broadband, we should also invest in the spaces where citizens practice democracy, encounter different perspectives, and negotiate shared meaning through

arts, culture, and creativity. Culture is neither a luxury nor an industry. It is a public and common good. It forms the foundation of any society that aims to remain democratic, cohesive, and capable of imagining its future.

The ongoing UNESCO initiative to define culture as a global public good emphasizes its crucial role in creating fair and sustainable societies. IFACCA's 2022 report reaffirmed that culture is a public good vital for building just, inclusive, and sustainable communities. This understanding needs to be officially integrated into the Culture Compass. The EU has a unique opportunity to set an example.

From this foundation, ENCATC welcomes the European Commission's ambition to integrate culture across all EU policies. But this must be grounded in a paradigm shift—from competitiveness to care, from instrumentalisation to systemic

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transformation. It also requires increased investment in culture through funding that is open, flexible, and responsive to the diverse needs of artists, cultural institutions and local communities. Crucially, an autonomous funding scheme dedicated solely to culture must be safeguarded, protecting its autonomy, intrinsic value and ensuring the freedom to imagine, question, and transform.

We support an integrated approach to cultural sustainability— one that embraces the economic, social, and ecological dimensions of cultural development and preservation.

### **Sustainability & Regenerative Thinking**

We support an integrated approach to cultural sustainability—one that embraces the economic, social, and ecological dimensions of cultural development and preservation. To translate this vision into concrete action, the following principles should guide our efforts.

### **Justice and Fairness**

Cultural policy must be explicitly redistributive, recognizing structural inequalities and ensuring fair access to funding, infrastructure, and resources. This includes addressing geographic, socioeconomic, and identity-based disparities. The Cultural Compass should promote mechanisms that go beyond mere inclusion and are rooted in principles of social justice, mechanisms that can dismantle structural barriers, guarantee the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, and empower all individuals and communities to actively shape, engage in, participate in, and contribute to cultural life. Frameworks such as the Fair Culture Charter already guide this thinking, encompassing

areas like environmental ethics, fair work, digital equity, and care-based values.

### From Competitiveness to Care

We urge the Commission to reject narratives that reduce culture to its market value. Cultural practices must be recognized for their profound emotional importance in individuals' and communities' lives, influencing thought, reflection, well-being, mental health, social healing, and community resilience—dimensions that are essential and fundamentally connected to the human experience. These are not instrumental values; they are the essence, intrinsic and inner of what culture represents. Valuing critical thinking, meaning-making, imagination, the ability to question and reimagine the world, and caring for human and nature is not a bland alternative to growth—it is the only viable path toward a just and sustainable future.

### **Reforming Funding Models**

Current funding remains fragmented and inaccessible to many. ENCATC advocates switching from short-term, competitive models to trust-based, long-term investments, reducing bureaucratic burdens, and including pooled public-philanthropic funding and mechanisms designed for local communities, grassroots initiatives, independent actors in non-urban and rural areas, and spread across Europe's peripheries.

### **Widening Access to Culture**

Access to culture must be understood broadly, including cognitive, linguistic, physical, digital, and political aspects. This involves integrating arts education throughout all

stages of life and redistributing power in decision-making processes. Emphasizing participatory governance tools will empower voices and knowledge systems that have been historically marginalized. Participation is not just about inclusion; it is about shifting the power to shape the cultural commons and foster a sense of belonging.

### Conclusion

For the Cultural Compass to deliver on its promise of cultural, social, economic, environmental, and international impact and achieve its full transformative potential, it must be rooted in the understanding that culture is a public good, a democratic imperative, and a regenerative force for sustainable and just societies.

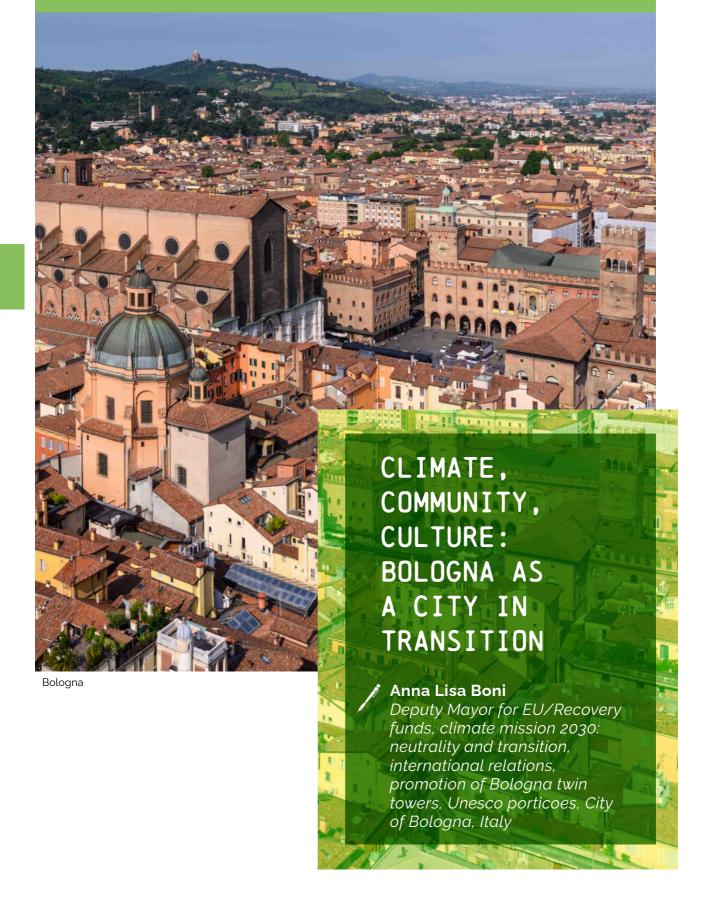
The issue isn't whether we can afford to invest in culture as a public good. It's whether we can afford not to.



# DEA **VIDOVIĆ**

Dea Vidović is a Senior Research Assistant in the Culture and Communication Department of the Institute for Development and International Relations. A former Director (2012-2024) of the Kultura Nova Foundation, a Croatian public foundation dedicated to advancing contemporary arts and culture within civil society. Dea Vidović has a background in Comparative Literature and Indology. She obtained her PhD in the cultural policy field from the University of Zagreb in 2012. She participated as an advisor, researcher, or coordinator of European research projects and published numerous academic papers and professional articles in Croatian and international journals and books. She has extensive experience in teaching cultural policy at the university level, conducting training programs at the local, national, and international levels, and designing and organizing capacity-building programs tailored to the cultural and creative professionals' needs. She has been engaged in the governing of international networks, including Philea Arts & Culture Funders Forum (2020-2024), İzmir Mediterranean Academy (2023-2024), ENCATC European Network on Cultural Management and Policy (2017-2023), and Global Cultural Relations (2022).





Bologna is well known to many people: some for its university, the oldest in the Western world; others for its 62 km of porticoes and the beauty of its cultural heritage; others still for its entrepreneurial vibrancy and business innovation, or for its public services and cultural offerings. Beyond the growing number of tourists, many have chosen and continue to choose Bologna as a place to live because, among Italian cities, it is one of those that overall manages to guarantee a good quality of life.



Piazza del Nettuno, Bologna

Nevertheless, Bologna too is now facing the polycrisis—that set of serious global challenges that manifest, intersect, and intensify at the local level, affecting many Italian cities and those beyond our borders: the housing crisis, urban insecurity, growing poverty, the climate and environmental crisis.

On this last front, the situation is extremely urgent everywhere, as we increasingly experience the impacts of climate change—pollution, heatwaves, floods. Strong policies and interventions must come fast, starting from cities: reducing emissions and consumption, increasing renewable energy production, expanding green

areas, enforcing zero land use, fostering a more ecological mindset among citizens and entrepreneurs, and much more.

Cities, in fact, are responsible for most global emissions of greenhouse gases and energy consumption, but they are also the source of many potential responses and solutions. That is why tackling the climate emergency means acting in cities, in urban and metropolitan areas, alongside all those who live there.

It is precisely from this awareness that the European Union's Mission for 112 smart and climate-neutral cities by 2030 was born—with a goal that is twenty years ahead of the EU's general one (2050).

Bologna has chosen to be part of this group and is undertaking an ambitious path toward zero climate impact, giving life to *Bologna Missione Clima*.

The slogan "Together for a Better Climate" highlights the approach that drives our Mission: first, a continuous process of commitment, involvement, and dialogue with the entire city system, which the municipal administration currently facilitates—but which depends on everyone's participation. Second, it aims to move beyond business-as-usual solutions and implement integrated, systemic responses to

Together for a
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Bologna's
Citizens' Climate
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the climate and environmental crisis, including its links to social justice.

In this context, we have created a City Climate Contract, which is the engine of the Climate Mission. It includes 241 actions to achieve climate neutrality by 2030, with interventions across all activity sectors—buildings, transport, industry, agriculture and land use, waste—and is implemented by the Municipality and 25 public and private partners. The Climate Contract also stands out for its financial dimension, translating the above commitments into concrete investments and results. In addition, 75 other organizations have joined the Mission with actions mainly in education, communication, training, and other behavior-focused initiatives where emission reductions are not currently measurable, but which play an invaluable role in creating an informed and engaged public.



Fontana del Nettuno

We made sure that Bologna Missione Clima and its Climate City Contract had not only a strong federative dimension for stakeholders but also a participatory one for citizens. A cornerstone of this participatory approach was the establishment, in 2022, of the

Citizens' Climate Assembly—a new democratic instrument mainstreamed in the municipal statutes, involving 100 randomly selected residents in shaping municipal policies. Carefully selected through algorithmic criteria to form the most representative group possible (by age, gender, residence, and including city users), the assembly was financially recognized for its commitment and worked extensively in preparation, deliberation, and dialogue with the City Council.

Key recommendations from the Assembly included: energy retrofitting of public and private buildings, promotion of renewable energy communities, improving quality of life through wider urban green and blue spaces, increasing farmers' markets, expanding sustainable mobility, and reducing car traffic. These suggestions reflect the changes imagined in the lives of ideal Bolognese citizens and align perfectly with the measures needed to achieve our Mission.

A cornerstone of our participatory approach, the Citizens' Climate Assembly gives residents a direct role in shaping the city's climate future

Furthermore, the collaborative governance model we chose, which works across different sectors and integrates diverse policies, benefits local welfare. The ongoing transformation of the city results from this cross-sectoral and integrated weaving of policies and projects.

Infrastructure and building improvements, sustainable transport upgrades, increasing local renewable energy production, reorganizing public space with more green areas, climate transition education for citizens, and the creation of innovative public-private partnerships and procurement models are just some of the interventions designed to reduce energy consumption and emissions and improve urban living.

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In this overall complex, ambitious yet very motivating context, culture plays a vital role. It helps in the fight against climate change and in promoting a better relation with nature and the environment.

For instance, the climate shelters that the City of Bologna launched in response to the first heatwaves—following the example of other European cities—are public spaces, freely accessible and open to everyone, providing refuge from extreme summer temperatures while maintaining their normal functions. Some of the first shelters established were public libraries like Sala Borsa and the Archiginnasio, both very used by many people, as well as museums such as MAMbo (Museum of Modern Art) and



the Museum of Music. These spaces, heavily visited by locals and tourists alike, have designated cool zones for those seeking relief, whether they visit regularly or come just for that reason.

Another example is the Serre dei Giardini project, a regenerated space and hybrid cultural center inside Giardini Margherita—the largest park in the city center. Managed by the Kilowatt cooperative, this center aims to activate communities between nature and culture and promotes sustainability, resource protection, balance between humans and nature, and inclusion. The goal is to create opportunities for change that foster sustainable and inclusive wellbeing.

Culture also plays a crucial role in steering the local market toward sustainability. That's why our public funding calls to Bologna's cultural operators include clauses related to environmental responsibility and sustainability. Our city has an incredibly rich cultural offering—take, for example, the Bologna Estate summer program. Including these clauses in such a large, diverse event with so many participants can truly make a difference.

Art, music, theater, and cinema are powerful vehicles for transmitting sustainability values, raising awareness, and guiding action toward environmentally and socially positive development. But most importantly, they help create a new imagination and a space to conceive a different world.

Art, music, theater, and cinema help create a new imagination and a space to conceive a different world.



Basilica di San Luca, Bologna

Our society moves fast; it rarely stops. The challenges we face daily leave us breathless, without the time or energy to imagine new realities—scenarios where environment, nature, solidarity, and economy intertwine in a positive embrace. There are many plays, film festivals, and performances that not only raise awareness but also spark the desire to plant new seeds and ideas for sustainability. Songs about a better world, one that protects the planet and replaces highway toll booths with horses and cows instead of

The transition is not easy, but it is necessary—and deeply rooted in the energy, creativity, and commitment of many Bolognese citizens.

cars—sung during a children's theater performance—are messages that will remain in their imagination, and may one day translate into action.

Bologna's climate journey is not only about policies and infrastructure but about cultivating a collective imagination—one that sees climate neutrality not as a constraint, but as a shared horizon for possibility, equity, and regeneration. It is through this shared vision, built on culture, community, and cooperation, that the city aims to transform not just its emissions profile but its identity as a place of sustainable well-being. The transition will not be easy, but it is necessary—and deeply rooted in the energy, creativity, and commitment of many Bolognese citizens.



# ANNA LISA **BONI**

Deputy Mayor for EU/Recovery funds, climate mission 2030: neutrality and transition, international relations, promotion of Bologna twin towers, Unesco porticoes, City of Bologna, Italy.

Anna Lisa was born in Bologna on June 15, 1969. She has a Master's degree from the University of Bologna in political science, and from the University of Leuven in European studies. She has been secretary general of EUROCITIES for over 7 years, representing the voice of 200 big cities across Europe. She has 30 years of professional experience in EU public affairs in the field of local and regional government and has successfully worked for a stronger recognition of cities' challenges within the European agenda. Her aim is to strengthen Bologna's profile as a European and global city, open to cooperate with and inspire other cities across Europe and the world, and as a key player in the EU arena in terms of accessing EU funds and influencing EU policies affecting cities. Anna Lisa studied political science and worked for the European Parliament. She has been head of EUROCITIES for 8 years. She has 30 years of experience in EU public affairs for local and regional governments. Her aim today is to strengthen Bologna's profile as a European and global city and to make it a climate neutral digital and inclusive city.

# INSIDE GREAT MINDS

### **ANNA LISA BONI**

Deputy Mayor for EU/Recovery funds, climate mission 2030: neutrality and transition, international relations, promotion of Bologna twin towers, Unesco porticoes, City of Bologna, Italy.

Interview by GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens

This interview is part of the ENCATC's exclusive interview series, where we delve into the insights and perspectives of influential figures shaping the cultural landscape.

# What gives you the most pleasure in your day to day work?

I have always loved the idea of contributing to a better quality of life for people and now as a deputy mayor of the city of Bologna even more so. By looking for funding for innovative local projects, by pushing towards sustainable practices, by sharing my knowledge on different things. And I am happy to do this everyday with my teams and colleagues and

being in contact with citizens, enterprises, civil society, and stakeholders. Feeling and being part of a bigger endeavour is the driver behind my daily efforts and gives me pleasure and purpose.

# What do you do to relax?

Spending quality time with family and friends is the best source of relax for me. The same goes if I travel for holidays in far away places so different to my daily environment. I love listening to music and I relax through reading about and listening to inspiring people and ideas.

### Do you want to be liked or respected?

I believe respect comes with being visionary and pragmatic at the same time; it comes if you manage to contribute to change things for people for the better. And it also comes if you authentically care about the people you work with and their well being. If you do that, you can also be liked.

# Are tough decisions best taken by one person or by a group?

If taken by a group, decisions will be more effective and sustainable in time. If the group though cannot decide on a specific matter, then one person needs to propose the way forward and ensure that those against the decision can feel they have been heard.

# Do you read management books?

Yes, I do. I love to read about success stories in management, self development and dealing with complexity.

### What's your background, personally and professionally?

My university education is political science and organisational studies. I have lived abroad most of my life and have worked in European and international contexts for over twenty years. My main field of action has been working in and with the European institutions to connect them with urban and regional policies and communities.

### What's your leadership style?

My leadership style has been evolving during the years and is mainly based on emotional intelligence. I care for the people I work with. I also believe a leader needs to set a clear vision and work with teams and colleagues to translate that into clear objectives and actions. A leader should be inspiring and authentic.

### What's your communication style?

I always try to communicate through stories, including personal ones, and with simplicity and clarity.

### Who is your inspiration?

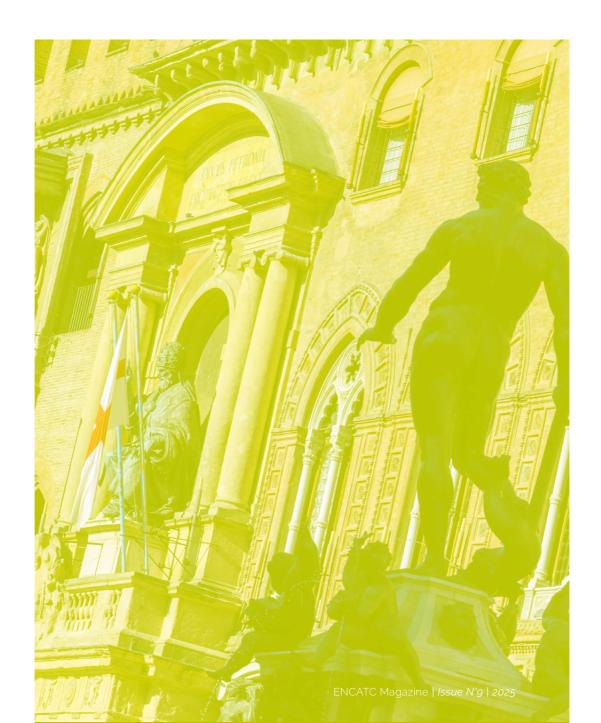
My inspiration are those leaders that achieve goals that concern the greater good. I love authentic and effective communicators. I am inspired by people who have grown thanks to their own drive and strength and that remain accessible even in positions of great power. I value people who are open to change and innovation, even if it means risking and failing.

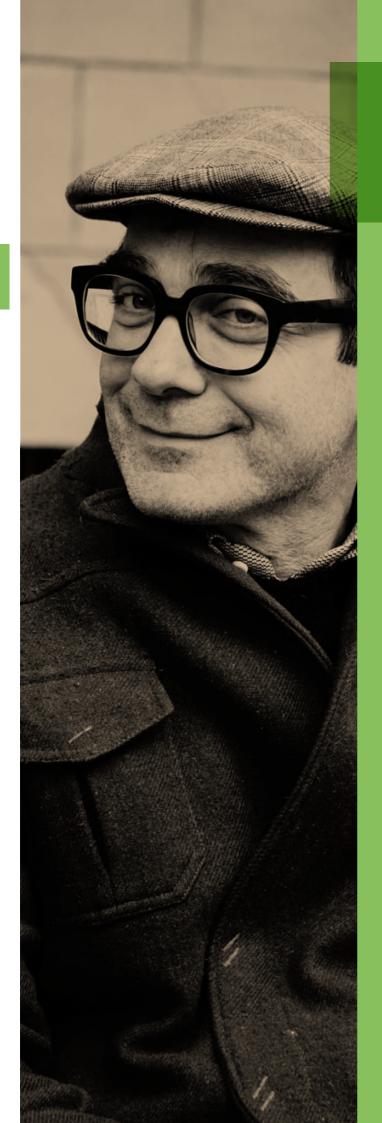
### What does success look like to you?

It is about feeling happy and fulfilled about what you do everyday. It is when people come to you to ask for advice. It is when you see with your own eyes how your action has clearly contributed to improve people's lives.

### What gets you out of bed in the morning?

Sharing and caring for my family, being in motion, feeling useful, learning from and sharing with others, laughing with my team.





# DANIELE **DEL POZZO**

Interview by GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens

For you point of view, what does "sustainable cultural policy" mean for Bologna and how is the city's long-term cultural strategy structured?

To answer this question, I would start with a brief description of the city. Bologna has a resident population of about 393,000, while the Metropolitan City of Bologna, which includes 55 municipalities, has 1,020,000 inhabitants and is the seventh most populous municipality in Italy.

In this specific social, urban and cultural context, our goal as public administration is to make culture as accessible as possible to everyone.

In order to fully and consciously realise this cultural policy on such a large scale, we have necessarily addressed the issue of its sustainability. Indeed, we are aware that cultural activity, like any human activity, has an environmental and social impact. In this sense, and in order to operate responsibly, we have for some years now decided to actively involve the various communities in cultural planning, ensuring that both creators and participants play an active and conscious role in the creation of sustainable cultural practices.

In this sense, the strategy that has long been guiding our actions in the present and in the long term is to return to the original meaning of the word Culture, which derives from the Latin Colere, meaning to cultivate, to care for, to treat with attention. As the Municipality of Bologna, we support a model of culture that takes care of the natural and social environment; a culture that invests in the living beings - trees, animals, and people - and in the relationships that can open up between them.

### Can you share a cultural initiative from Bologna that has succeeded in reducing the ecological footprint or in improving environmental awareness?

For some years now, the Municipality of Bologna has been acting on several fronts, and in a systemic manner, to effectively intervene on the sustainability of cultural events across its territory.

These are all positive actions covering differentiated and integrated strategies: spaces based on sustainable models, sustainable cultural projects and activities, energy efficiency improvements in cultural venues, regulations and guidelines on sustainability for those working in the cultural sector.

On the subject of spaces, I would like to point out the Serre dei Giardini Margherita - abandoned greenhouses in the city centre that have been regenerated thanks to a public-private partnership, with a strong public vocation for greenery and environmental sustainability, capable of saving up to 90% of water resources - and Filla, a multifunctional space dedicated to environmental and cultural education for the new generations.

Among the actions for sustainable cultural projects, I would mention how the Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna, of which the Municipality of Bologna is a founding partner, has adopted offsetting measures to reduce the carbon footprint of its most important event, Il Cinema Ritrovato festival, through reforestation projects. In addition, the new premises for the Cineteca's film and photographic archives were designed in full compliance with the Do Not Significantly Harm (DNSH) principle, with solutions adopted that reduced the consumption of the refrigeration system by 70% thanks to the installation of a solar energy system.

Similarly, EUR 2 million were allocated for energy efficiency and accessibility of five municipal-owned theatres: Arena del Sole, Teatro Testoni Ragazzi, Teatri di Vita, Ateliersi, and Teatro San Leonardo, aimed at promoting eco-efficiency and reducing energy consumption in theatres, through the installation of LED lighting, photovoltaic systems and modern heating solutions.

The Municipality of Bologna has also integrated ecological criteria in the planning of public cultural events through the Urban Waste Management Regulation, which includes waste reduction strategies and the promotion of reusable materials, ensuring that operators of cultural activities are environmentally responsible. In addition, the

Municipality of Bologna has integrated ecological criteria in all its calls for tenders and contracts in order to promote green initiatives and significantly reduce its environmental footbrint.

### How does Bologna's cultural policy contribute to community wellbeing, especially in terms of mental health, social cohesion or inclusion?

The wellbeing of the communities and citizens of Bologna finds a first substantial implementation tool in the proximity of relationships and in the systematic listening to the needs expressed by citizens by the Municipality of Bologna.

The proximity of the Quartieri (neighbourhood districts) and the Case di Quartiere (Neighbourhood Houses), as well as the many co-designing tables and continuous opportunities for meeting and dialogue with citizens, make it possible to intercept and accommodate the needs of the communities, expressed in terms of health, well-being, listening, and participation. This continuous dialogue is based on the principle of the public good and requires much time and constant attention from the technical and political figures working in public administration.

One of the most qualifying and innovative approaches that the Municipality of Bologna has adopted and intends to pursue in the coming years is that of welfare community: considering individual citizens and their social aggregations not only as potential beneficiaries of services but as resources of the local community.

From a more specific point of view, the Municipality of Bologna has always invested resources to guarantee a democratic cultural service, also widespread in terms of proximity. With the system of 18 public libraries and 11 public museums, we offer paths that promote individual and community well-being, to foster social inclusion, employment, and to combat educational poverty. We seek to make cultural and artistic heritage accessible to the entire population, to promote wellbeing and health, and to counter phenomena of exclusion, deprivation, and inequality. We try to make the interventions we propose in the field of cultural welfare increasingly an integral part of the service system.

Since February 2025, the Municipality of Bologna has adhered to the shared Manifesto for Cultural Welfare drawn up by the Emilia-Romagna Region together with the Tuscany Region, with the aim of fostering the recognition of cultural welfare within regulatory instruments and the development of joint actions between the cultural, educational, social, health and training areas.

Reflecting on the path of Bologna's cultural policy, what key advice would you give to other medium-sized European cities trying to build sustainable and socially engaged cultural policies, starting today?

Every city has its own characteristics, with specific criticalities, potentials and resources that constantly change over time. For this reason, I do not believe it is useful to suggest to others models that have been developed and tested, even in an extremely positive way, in the specific context of a city like Bologna. However, from a methodological point of view, I would consider the time devoted to listening to the needs of communities as a valuable form of investment in community welfare. At the same time, the active involvement of citizens in the co-designing of possible concrete responses to the city's needs is, in my opinion, a good practice for conscious cultural action, that is sustainable in the long term for the city, the people, nature, and the living beings who inhabit and constitute it.

### Daniele Del Pozzo

Councilor for Culture, City of Bologna, Italy

Daniele Del Pozzo is the Deputy Mayor for Culture in the Municipality of Bologna. For over 30 years, he has curated cultural projects in contemporary culture and social innovation for public and private organizations, both nationally and internationally. He participated in the British Council's CLI - Cultural Leadership International program (2009-2011). He founded Gender Bender (2003) and Teatro Arcobaleno (2013), an artistic and educational project on diversity for children and adolescents. He was the project leader of Performing Gender (2013-2023), three European cooperation projects awarded by Creative Europe in contemporary dance. He collaborated with DNAppunti coreografici and Rifrazioni, a network for accessibility in live performance. He curated cultural seasons for Bologna (2004-2009) and Ancona (2009-2013). A founder of Link Project, he won the 2018 Ubu Award for best performing arts curator and the 2018 Eolo Award for Teatro Arcobaleno.



Can a dedicated group of friends and some second-hand clothing save the planet? Maybe not, but the experience of a voluntary organisation based in the Italian city of Bologna has proven that they can build inclusive playgrounds, fund the purchase of sophisticated electromedical equipment, support aid projects in third-world countries, and empower people in situations of vulnerability, while helping to offset the devastating impact of the fashion system and textile industry and promoting environmental sustainability.

### Re-Use With Love: the early days

This is the story of Re-Use With Love, a story that starts in 2010 with group of friends who used to swap clothing their children no longer used or needed. Nothing unusual in that, you might say, it happens all the time. But over the course of fifteen years, that group of three mums has snowballed to become an association that numbers some 160 volunteers – almost exclusively women – who have made conscious reuse and recovery and the promotion of social solidarity their mission.

Back in the days when Vinted was still a baby, most people had never heard of the circular economy and wearing second-hand clothes was certainly not commonplace, the association, which is headquartered in the Italian city of Bologna and has a delegation based in nearby Sasso Marconi, realised the potential of collecting, reusing and upcycling second-hand clothing and textiles in order to raise funds for charitable causes, while reducing the environmental impact associated with the fashion system.

Thanks to the generosity of a vast network of generous donors, Re-Use With Love volunteers receive, sort, recover and transform approximately 200,000 items of clothing each year with a creative approach that maximises their potential to generate value.

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### Charity Vintage Markets: proving that fund-raising can be fun



During a RWL Charity Vintage Market Photo credits Silvia Pozzati

The association pursues its objectives in a number of ways. The heart of its operations are the twice-yearly Charity Vintage Markets it stages in Bologna, where visitors can choose from a vast selection of clothing for babies, children, teenagers, adults and sports activities, all arranged on well-organised stalls with a central theme that varies from one edition to the next. These events attract an impressive turnout of generous donors who return year after year and, in addition to bargain-hunting, have the chance to take part in a number of related events, meetings and initiatives. The funds raised through these events is used to support charity projects submitted through a call for applications on the organisation's website, before being meticulously screened and put to the vote during the Re-Use With Love annual general meeting. Over its 15 years

of activity, the Charity Vintage Markets have raised approximately 800,000 euros, and have benefited more than 100 projects organised by almost 60 different charities, ranging from patient advocacy groups to research endeavours and humanitarian associations operating in developing countries.



During a RWL Charity Vintage Market - Photo credits Silvia Pozzati

### Charity Boutiques: benefitting the local community

At the same time, the association's volunteers work in close contact with vulnerable individuals in the local community through Charity Boutiques at its locations in Bologna and Sasso Marconi. The Boutiques are bright and appealing spaces conceived to offer people referred by social services, hospitals and local organisations not only practical help, but also a carefree and enjoyable moment - a 'shopping experience' almost - by allowing them to pick out clothing and other items for themselves and their families, all completely free of charge. Visitors to the boutique can choose from an array of garments in pristine condition, from babywear to clothes and sports apparel for children, teenagers and adults. The Charity Boutiques also provides the volunteers with first-hand experience of the difficulties facing the community's less fortunate, enabling them to

The Boutiques are bright and appealing spaces conceived to offer people referred by social services, hospitals and local organisations not only practical help, but also a carefree and enjoyable moment.

hone their activities to meet the needs of the local population. It is during these occasions that many of the association's members have had their most gratifying experiences. Whether it is helping a new mum pick out items for her baby, finding a young boy a pair of football boots so he can team up with his friends or seeing the joy of a teenage girl who has found the perfect outfit for a party, Re-Use Charity Boutiques bring with them a myriad of little – or maybe not so little – satisfactions. This said, they also generate impressive measurable results, allowing Re-Use With Love to help approximately 1,200 disadvantaged families every year, saving each household an estimated 3,000 euros.



The RWL Charity Boutique in Bologna - Photo credits Silvia Pozzati

### Creativity at the service of philanthropy

Re-Use Lab is the association's creative department. Here, donated clothing and textiles are given a new life as bags, hats, items of clothing and a range of accessories to be sold at the organisation's Charity Vintage Markets. Although Lab activities are based mainly on the talent of Re-Use With Love volunteers, they also offer opportunities for occupational inclusion that mainly address women in vulnerable situations, through partnerships with charitable workshops, women's shelters and projects in favour of female refugees or asylum-seekers.

### **Rent With Love**

One of the organisation's newer initiatives is Rent With Love, which hires out a selection of exclusive garments and statement accessories for parties, ceremonies and other special occasions, available to anyone who makes a small donation, thus encouraging a circular use of the pieces on offer. This project is curated by a dedicated team with a background in fashion who are on hand to offer expert advice.

### Projects for schools and businesses

With a view to raising new generations of socially-conscious individuals, Re-Use With Love partners with local schools through work experience placements and educational workshops dedicated to reuse, waste reduction and environmental sustainability. In addition to making participants eligible for academic credits, these activities provide a fundamental opportunity to raise awareness regarding the value of public engagement and the circular economy among youngsters.

At the same time, the organisation has expanded its endeavours to the world of employment by working with companies to devise bespoke social accountability projects that combine sustainability, philanthropy and active employee engagement, as well as organising company-based campaigns to collect second-hand clothing, so that donated garments can enjoy a second life through the association's charity channels.



 $La\ Centrale\ before\ the\ RWL\ urban\ regeneration\ project\ -\ Photo\ credits\ Luca\ Maria\ Castelli$ 

# From clothing to real estate: the Re-Use concept applied to urban regeneration

The association's reuse-based mission recently took on a new dimension with the opening, in January of this year, of a former power station situated in Bologna's main park. This building, which has been renamed *La Centrale* (The Power Station or Powerhouse), had been abandoned since the 1980s and underwent extensive

refurbishment following a call for applications held by Bologna City Council, according to a design project that preserved its industrial heritage by the well-known firm Mario Cucinella Architects (MCA). Since it reopened, La Centrale has become a hub for cultural and leisure activities and the venue for art exhibitions, markets and other events. Indeed, to inaugurate this new journey, in January this year the location hosted two highly symbolic art exhibitions: Re-Undressed by Bolognese photographer Luca Maria Castelli and Il bambino interiore by street artist Claudiano.jpeg, as well as being involved in JR's international InsideOut Project. With this urban regeneration initiative, which was funded entirely by institutional and corporate sponsors, Re-Use With Love has given back to the community a building that had been disused for decades, located in the heart of a park that is very dear to the city's entire population. To ensure that La Centrale is not merely a venue but also an ongoing, continuously-evolving project, Re-Use With Love has launched a Call For Ideas, an invitation open to anyone who wishes to propose new projects and cultural and social initiatives to be held in this regenerated space.

Starting from an extremely simple concept and with the heart-warming support of the local population, institutions and businesses, Re-Use With Love has succeeded in helping other charitable organisations achieve ambitious milestones.



La Centrale before the RWL urban regeneration project

### The challenges ahead

Starting from an extremely simple concept – reusing and recovering second-hand clothing and textile materials - and with the heart-warming support of the local population, institutions and businesses, Re-Use With Love has succeeded in helping other charitable organisations achieve ambitious milestones through its Charity Vintage Markets and promoted social inclusion through its Charity Boutiques. Always a powerhouse of new ideas, the associations volunteers are at work planning their next Charity Vintage market (to be held in October), as well as developing exciting new ideas for La Centrale. Although the results obtained by the association in its 15 years of operation may be far from single-handedly saving the planet, they have undeniably made a significant contribution to the local community, and provide the organisation's volunteers with the drive to work towards even bigger things for the future.

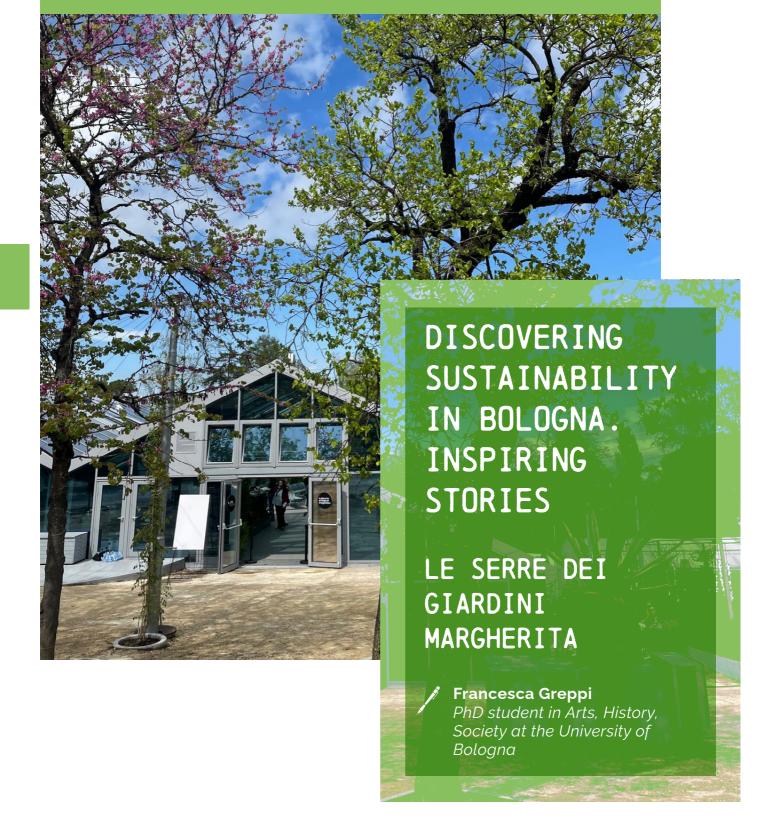


www.reusewithlove.org | #reusewithlove



# **EMMA DREW**

Emma Drew is a long-standing and active member of the voluntary organization Re-Use With Love. Originally from the UK, she chose Bologna as her adoptive home more than 30 years ago following a year studying in the city as part of her bachelor's degree. A freelance translator and medical writer by profession, she dedicates much of her free time to the activities organised by the association to promote conscious reuse and recovery while raising awareness regarding social solidarity.



### From Greenhouses to Cultural Ecosystem

Tucked away in the green heart of Bologna's Giardini Margherita, Le Serre is more than just a beautiful space: it's a living laboratory of sustainability, community, and culture. Once a set of abandoned municipal greenhouses, this 650-square-meter complex has been transformed into a vibrant hub where innovation, art, and ecology come together to reimagine the urban experience. Originally built in the early 20th century to shelter plants during the winter, the site began its transformation in 2014 thanks to the vision and commitment of the cooperative Kilowatt. This ambitious regeneration effort, coordinated by the Municipality of Bologna and supported by the Emilia-Romagna

of community activation between nature and culture, an ecotone that brings together art and innovation to create new, desirable and non-dystopian imaginaries.

(from the Kilowatt manifesto)

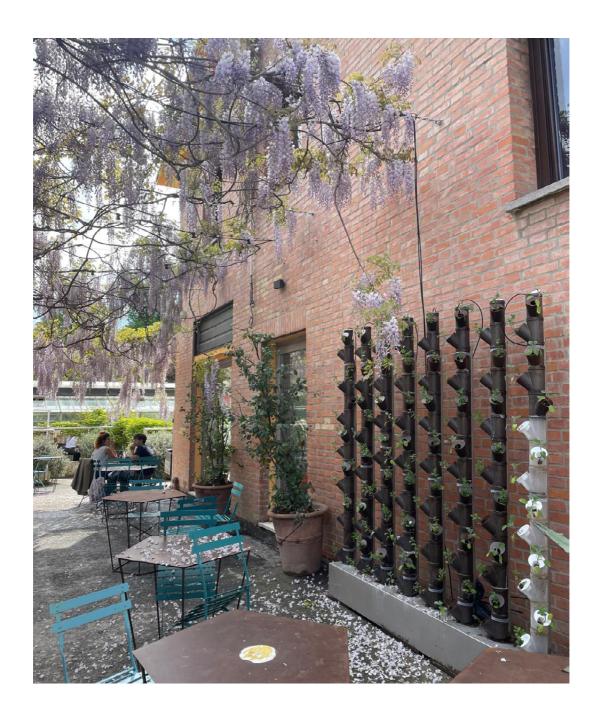
Region and AR-TER, brought new life to the space, turning it into a dynamic cultural centre. Today, it hosts coworking areas, startup incubators, exhibitions, concerts, educational programs, and community initiatives. Kilowatt, a collective of professionals in social innovation, communication, circular economy, and urban regeneration, has invested over €2 million in the project. By combining public support and private initiative, they've created a place where creative energy, sustainability, and social impact meet.

# Reinventing Public Space: Work, Play, and Art at Le Serre

The old caretaker's house now serves as Kilowatt's headquarters, a coworking space, a childcare centre called KwBaby, and VETRO, a bistro that serves plant-based and responsibly sourced food. Outside, former seedbeds have been turned into garden-benches framed by greenery, terracotta pots with LED lights, and soft music playing in the background. The Lion Cage, once home to real lions until the 1980s, has become an art installation featuring

Reno, a sculpture by Michele Liparesi. The Serra Bar and Botanical Bar, nestled under a wisteria-covered portico, offer summer refreshments and live events in a unique setting. The southern area of Le Serre comes alive in the warmer months with concerts, film screenings, talks, and performances. Nearby, Serra Sonora, a restored early-20th-century glass greenhouse, is now a high-fidelity listening room and a gathering space for networking and business events.





The core of the site is Serra Madre, a cultural production centre that fosters ecological imagination through the dialogue between art and science, offering a space where diverse forms of knowledge and creativity converge to shape alternative presents and imagine accessible, desirable futures. Positioned as a transdisciplinary hub open to citizens, researchers, businesses, and institutions, Serra Madre approaches the ecological crisis as a deeply systemic and cultural issue, advocating for an intersectional perspective that transcends human exceptionalism. Embracing all artistic practices and putting them in conversation with scientific research and technological innovation, Serra Madre supports artistic production and critical inquiry through residencies, public programs, educational workshops, exhibitions, and hands-on labs, creating a porous and generative environment that encourages imagination, reflection, and change. It offers immersive experiences and learning opportunities that challenge the dominant anthropocentric worldview and open space for new questions, new rituals, and new relationships capable of transforming perception and fostering ecological awareness.

The vegetable garden, located on the site of the former ornamental nurseries, is a

place of growth, learning, and artistic expression. It serves therapeutic and inclusive educational purposes and has been developed in partnership with social cooperatives and local institutions. Since 2016, Kilowatt has collaborated with the University of Bologna's Department of Agricultural Sciences to explore sustainable food systems and agricultural resilience. Projects like *Semino* and *GREAT Life* promote healthy food access, environmentally responsible farming, and economic sustainability for small producers. In 2019, Le Serre introduced an aquaponics system developed with local startup Aquaponic Design. This urban agriculture technique reduces water use by up to 90 percent, cuts fossil fuel consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, and increases productivity per square meter – thus offering a tangible vision for more resilient and sustainable cities.

Sustainability isn't just a concept at Le Serre, it's a way of life. Since 2018, plastic packaging has been eliminated, and in 2019, single-use items were replaced with reusable glassware. Since 2020, all cleaning products have

Sustainability, protection of resources and the balance between man and nature, inclusion. Kilowatt wants to create opportunities for change that generate sustainable and inclusive well-being.

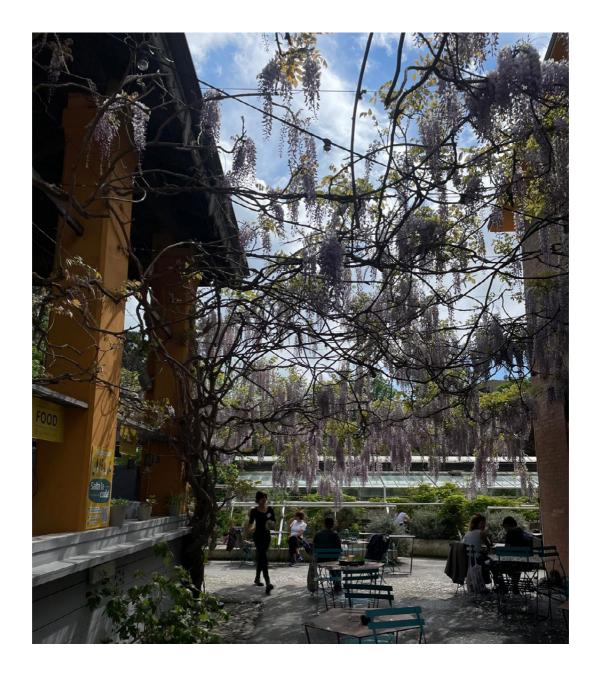
(from the Kilowatt manifesto)



been replaced with Ecolabel-certified alternatives, and a public water fountain helps reduce the need for plastic bottles. The food served across the venue is always plant-based, organic, or environmentally responsible. Car and scooter access is restricted to encourage visitors to cycle, supported by the installation of sixty-three bike racks. These choices are guided by the desire to create a space built on respect, balance, and care for relationships and the environment.

### A collaborative and hybrid Model

The management of *Le Serre dei Giardini* is based on a multi-layered hybrid model that blends public and private sectors, institutional and non-institutional stakeholders, informal groups, profit-generating services, and community-oriented activities. Kilowatt works closely with the Municipality of Bologna and other partners to create a space where a wide variety of actors - from startups and creatives to families and children - can come together. Economic sustainability is ensured by integrating business activities, such as coworking and events, with less profitable but socially impactful projects. In



this way, the space remains accessible to all while promoting innovation and inclusion. It's a balancing act that reflects a broader European trend: the development of new, socially driven entrepreneurial models capable of addressing today's challenges while remaining viable in the market.

### Kilowatt's Impact: Culture, Values, and Vision

According to its 2024 Impact Report, Kilowatt's work revolves around four major goals. First, it creates opportunities for artists, citizens, and marginalized communities by offering spaces and experiences that encourage cultural expression and Mutuality, cooperation, transparency of power structures. Kilowatt believes in the values of cooperation and is committed to nurturing new declinations of the mutualistic exchange on which it is based.

(from the Kilowatt manifesto)

participation. Second, it challenges conventional models of value creation by putting relationships, sustainability, and individuality at the centre of business, education, policymaking, and everyday life. Third, it resists dystopian narratives by fostering a hopeful and actionable vision of the future, where art plays a central role in helping society observe, understand, and respond to contemporary crises. Finally, Kilowatt works to make the quality of work equal to that of leisure, striving to ensure that everyone involved feels valued and connected to a meaningful, collective project.

Le Serre dei Giardini Margherita isn't just a cultural venue, it's a prototype for a new kind of urban life. One where community replaces isolation, sustainability replaces waste, and imagination offers an alternative to resignation. In the heart of Bologna, that future is already taking root.



### **KILOWATT**

Kilowatt is a cooperative that operates in consulting, communication, and education, supporting projects in social innovation and urban regeneration. Its communication agency, K2, delivers services ranging from brand strategy to multimedia content, while its educational initiatives create inclusive responses to evolving social and welfare needs. Kilowatt's modular structure fosters new professional opportunities, collaboration, and social ties. It provides tangible support to freelancers, innovative entrepreneurs, and families, offering a space for exchange between citizens, innovators, businesses, the third sector, and public institutions. As a sustainable public-private partnership, Kilowatt aligns public goals with entrepreneurial energy around projects grounded in community, experimentation, and inclusion. In doing so, it addresses pressing issues such as employment precarity, changing labor markets, and the retreat of public welfare systems.



 $www.kilowatt.bo.it \mid www.leserredeigiardini.it \mid www.serramadre.art$ 



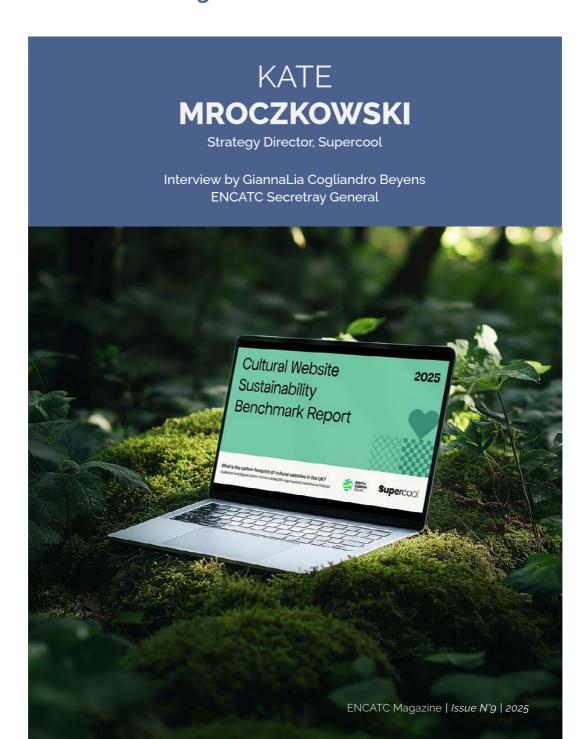
# FRANCESCA GREPPI

Francesca Greppi is a PhD student in Arts, History, Society at the University of Bologna and conducts her research in the field of cultural policies for music, focusing specifically on Emilia-Romagna Regional Law 2/2018 and its impact on the region's music industry. She graduated with honours in Music and Theatre Studies from the University of Bologna, with a thesis on contemporary direction of the Baroque repertoire, and also holds a diploma in Singing (first level academic diploma) and Baroque singing (second level academic diploma). Her research interests also include opera music, and in particular singers, from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

# Beyond Page

### Cultural Website Sustainability Benchmark Report 2025

What is the carbon footprint of cultural websites in the UK? Supercool and Digital Carbon Online tracked 66 organisations' websites to find out



### What was the most surprising or unexpected insight that emerged from the benchmarking data across the 66 cultural organisations?

For me, it was the amount of CO2e produced by just 66 websites over three months. I know that the average website produces 0.5 grams of CO2e, and that websites get thousands of visitors and page views, but I just hadn't realised how quickly it adds up.

The 66 websites we tracked produced the same amount of CO2e as 10 flights from London to New York in just three months. That's 40 flights from London to New York in a year. And with thousands of cultural organisations across the world, our collective carbon footprint is huge!

### How do the carbon footprints of cultural websites compare to other sectors, and what does this say about digital sustainability in the arts?

We compared our data with the data published in Abstrakt's <u>Website Carbon Impact Study</u>. Abstrakt measured the carbon footprint of homepages across multiple sectors. Arts and Cultural organisations sit in the middle. Better than higher education, construction and utilities, but not as good as healthcare, insurance or banks.

There's a lot we can learn from other sectors. Insurance companies and banks are information heavy websites. They aren't trying to sell an experience, so they rely less on imagery and video to sell their product. This is quite different to the cultural sector where webpages are full of images and videos (which tend to increase the carbon footprint). But that doesn't mean we can't learn from these sectors, especially when it comes to user experience and areas of the website where we need to share large amounts of information.

I also think this shows that the sector is doing quite well. Despite the use of images, videos and lots of content on our websites, we're still doing better than a lot of sectors, including eco brands (which do quite badly according to Abstrakt's report).

# From the case studies featured—like the British Museum or National Museums Scotland—what common practices emerged that others can easily adopt?

The organisations that provided case studies all acknowledge that their websites have a carbon footprint, they've spent some time measuring it, and then they've tried to do something about it! It sounds simple, but a lot of organisations don't even realise that the carbon footprint of their website is something to consider. Just acknowledging it goes a long way to making improvements.

British Museum and National Museums Scotland have both worked with partners to improve their websites too. They've both worked with their web developers, and National

Museums Scotland also worked with <u>Digital Carbon Online</u>. There's lots you can do on your own but if you have the option to work with your web agency or a specialist team like Digital Carbon Online, then it's a great way to make progress.



Cultural Website Sustainability Benchmark Report 2025 - cover image

### What are the biggest misconceptions organisations have about website carbon emissions, and how can these be addressed?

I think one of the biggest misconceptions is that the impact of the website isn't enough to worry about. This is understandable, between running buildings, offering catering services, touring whole productions... the website can feel like an insignificant contributor to a company's overall carbon footprint. But it can be significant, as the report shows.

One of the websites we tracked had a few really large images on their homepage, and over the course of the three months their homage alone generated 1,788kg of CO2e, that's the same as 145 hours of driving a medium size car.

Another misconception is that reducing the carbon footprint of a website is hard. That it means rebuilding the website, or removing all the images. That's not the case at all. There are lots of easy things you can do, like moving to green hosting or deleting old content.

One way to address these misconceptions is to add your website to conversations about your organisation's carbon footprint. You don't need to have all the answers, but if you have a sustainability working group, if you're reporting on your carbon footprint or if you're setting targets, add your website to the list. This will start to encourage learning about digital sustainability and help you find space and resources to measure and reduce your website's environmental impact.

### If a cultural organisation could only take one first step after reading this report, what should it be and why?

For those that don't know, email your web agency/hosting partners and ask if your website is hosted on servers that use renewable energy. This is a great place to start in reducing the impact of your website.

For organisations that are already using renewable energy to host their website, run a content audit (XML Site Maps will do this for you) and pick 10 pages that are no longer needed on the website and delete them.

These are two quite easy quick wins. But in the same way that a small amount of carbon per page quickly adds up when there are millions of page views, if every cultural organisation's website was hosted on green servers and each website had 10 less pages, we'd make a huge difference to the sector's overall carbon footprint.

As Scott, CEO at Digital Carbon Online reminded us on <u>LinkedIn</u>, "Great things come as a series of small things coming together". This is something we're especially good at in the cultural sector!



### KATE **MROCZKOWSKI**

Kate Mroczkowski is strategy director at Supercool, a digital design agency building websites for the arts, culture and heritage sector. Kate has over two decades of experience in the culture and technology sectors. Her career spans roles in ticketing and fundraising at theatres and concert halls, strategic consultancy at Spektrix, and an MBA with a digital sustainability focus



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                                  Independent Researcher
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is not just showcasing the future of Algenerated art—it is legislating it in real time.

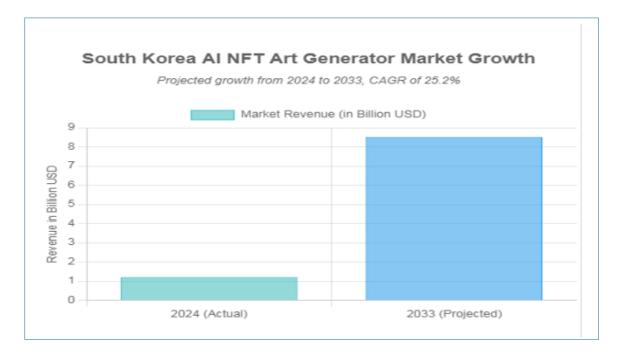
#### Introduction: A Nation at the Nexus

South Korea is not just showcasing the future of AI-generated art—it is legislating it in real time. In 2023, Seoul's <u>Dongdaemun Design Plaza</u> lit up with the world's first major AI art exhibition in the country, signaling the cultural mainstreaming of machine-made creativity. Yet, behind this celebratory façade, policymakers were engaged in a parallel project of caution and control. The AI Basic Act, passed in December 2024, positioned South Korea among the few nations attempting to regulate AI holistically—across ethics, industry, and human rights.

This juxtaposition—the explosive, borderless rise of AI-driven artistic expression and the meticulous crafting of legal frameworks—captures the country's unique position as both a cultural trendsetter and a regulatory laboratory. What unfolds in Korea is not just a national story but a global test case. As AI reshapes who creates, who owns, and who benefits from culture, the "Seoul Algorithm" offers a rare model: one that doesn't pit innovation against governance, but insists on their co-evolution.

#### The Digital Gold Rush: Market Boom and Cultural Embrace

The surge of Al-generated art in South Korea is not a fringe movement; it is a full-blown economic phenomenon, a digital gold rush powered by technological prowess and fervent public interest. The financial scale is staggering. According to one market analysis, the South Korean AI NFT Art Generator market was valued at USD 1.2 billion in 2024. More remarkably, it is projected to skyrocket to USD 8.5 billion by 2033, growing at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25.2% between 2026 and 2033, as reported by Korea Creative Content Agency (KOCCA) Reports (2023-2024). This exponential growth signals a profound shift in how art is created, valued, and traded.



Several powerful forces are driving this expansion. At its core is the convergence of two.

South Korea's AI art boom is not a cultural fluke—it's the outcome of strategic technological convergence and systemic readiness. At the heart of this transformation is the fusion of generative AI and blockchain: the former unlocking new forms of creative expression, the latter resolving the age-old problem of digital authenticity through NFTs. Together, they've built the scaffolding for a scalable creative economy.

This momentum is supercharged by Korea's robust digital infrastructure, global tech leaders, and government-backed innovation policy. The opening of Seoul's Robot & Al Museum (RAIM) in 2024 symbolically and materially grounds this movement, turning speculative futures into public reality. Meanwhile, a network of hyper-specialized cities—Seoul's cultural capital, Busan's trade corridors, Incheon's international gateway,

and Daejeon's deep R&D core—makes South Korea not just a participant in the AI art revolution, but its most comprehensive testbed.

By combining cultural ambition with infrastructural precision, South Korea is engineering a national model for how digital creativity can be cultivated, authenticated, and exported.

### Laying Down the Law: The Pioneering Al Basic Act

As Al-generated art reshapes the global cultural economy, South Korea emerges as a legal and policy innovator, pioneering a governance model that recognizes the interdependence between creativity, technology, and ethics. The Al Basic Act, passed in December 2024, is not just a legal milestone—it is a strategic national response to the complex dilemmas posed by artificial intelligence in society and culture.

At its heart lies a dual mandate: to promote AI innovation while ensuring public trust. This balance—rare among global regulations—signals Korea's ambition to become a leader in both technological competitiveness and AI ethics. By consolidating over 20 disparate AI bills, the Act reflects a deliberate move to provide coherence, clarity, and direction in an otherwise fragmented policy landscape.

Key insights from this approach include:

- » Strategic foresight: The Act mandates three-year national plans for Al development, positioning Korea as a global Al hub through sustained investment in data, talent, and infrastructure—key enablers of generative Al in the arts.
- » Risk-based clarity: Inspired by the EU AI Act but tailored to Korean needs, the framework distinguishes between low- and high-impact AI, ensuring regulatory focus where human rights or biometric integrity are at stake such as avatar-based or emotionally manipulative media art.
- » Global relevance: The law's extraterritorial application extends Korea's digital sovereignty, asserting that any Al-driven content affecting Korean users regardless of where it's made—must respect local transparency norms.
- » Creative economy implications: AI-generated content must be clearly labelled. This transparency clause does more than regulate—it reshapes aesthetic reception, inviting new conversations about authorship, authenticity, and artistic intent in the digital realm.

### A Distinct Path: Comparison with the EU AI Act

To understand the global significance of South Korea's approach, a comparison with the European Union's AI Act is instructive. While both frameworks use a risk-based classification, their underlying philosophies and practical applications differ significantly.

- » Philosophy and Goal: The EU AI Act is primarily a risk-mitigation and fundamental rights protection instrument, employing strict ex-ante (before the fact) compliance checks. In contrast, South Korea's Act is framed around national advancement, integrating industrial promotion directly into the legal text. It is as much about building a globally competitive AI industry as it is about regulating it (Optiv).
- » Scope of Obligations: The EU Act places distinct obligations on different actors in the value chain (providers, deployers, importers, etc.). The Korean law, in its current form, applies more broadly to "AI Business Operators" (developers and providers) without making such fine distinctions, focusing on the service offered rather than the user (ECIPE).
- » Prohibited Practices: A major difference is that the EU AI Act contains a list of outright prohibited AI practices (e.g., social scoring, real-time biometric surveillance in most cases). The South Korean Act contains no such bans, preferring a more flexible approach that allows for future adaptation through decrees.

In essence, South Korea is consciously choosing not to simply replicate the "Brussels effect"—the tendency for global players to adopt EU standards. Instead, it is crafting a bespoke model, a pragmatic balancing act tailored to its strategic goals of becoming a global leader in trustworthy and innovative AI.

### The Ghost in the Machine: Copyright, Authorship, and Creative Identity

Beneath the glittering surface of the market boom and the structured logic of the new legislation lies a more profound, almost philosophical, conflict: who is the creator in the age of AI? Can a machine be an author? Who owns the work that emerges from the complex interplay of human prompts and algorithmic processes? In this domain, South Korea has taken a remarkably clear and decisive stance, placing it at the epicentre of the global debate on intellectual property.

The landmark moment came in December 2023, when South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism issued guidelines that categorically denied

As AI-generated art reshapes the global cultural economy, South Korea emerges as a legal and policy innovator, pioneering a governance model that recognizes the interdependence between creativity, technology, and ethics.

copyright registration to content generated solely by AI. The rationale was rooted in a deeply humanistic interpretation of law: copyright exists to protect works that embody "human thoughts and feelings." As Culture Minister stated, the goal was to strike a balance between encouraging AI innovation and "safeguarding human creativity".

Beneath the glittering surface of the market boom and the structured logic of the new legislation lies a more profound, almost philosophical, conflict: who is the creator in the age of AI?

This decision drew a firm line in the sand, asserting that for a work to be protected, a human must be substantially involved in its creation.

This principle was tested and consistently upheld in the high-profile case of DABUS (Device for the Autonomous Bootstrapping of Unified Sentience). As part of the global "Artificial Inventor Project," Dr. Stephen Thaler filed patent applications in numerous countries listing his AI system, DABUS, as the inventor of two creations. In South Korea, the application was systematically rejected at every level. The Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) issued a decision of nullification, arguing that the Patent Act implies an inventor must be a natural person. This was subsequently upheld by the Seoul Administrative Court and the Seoul High Court in May 2024. The courts' reasoning was unambiguous: the term "a person who makes an invention" as stipulated in the law refers exclusively to "a natural person who was actually engaged in the creation activity" (IAM Media). The DABUS saga provided a powerful legal precedent reinforcing the "human-only" stance in Korean IP law.

The ripple effects of this philosophy are being felt across the creative industries. In a move that sent shockwaves through the music world, the Korean Music Copyright Association (KOMCA), the nation's largest music rights collective, announced in March 2025 that it would no longer register songs created with Al. Citing the lack of clear legal standards, KOMCA updated its registration process to require creators

to tick a box guaranteeing that AI was not used in the composition or lyric-writing process (Music Business Worldwide). This proactive measure demonstrates how the core legal principle is being translated into practical policy by industry gatekeepers.

However, this clear stance does not mean an outright rejection of AI in the creative process. The crucial nuance, echoed in global legal discussions, lies in the distinction between AI as an autonomous creator and AI as a sophisticated tool. The US Copyright Office, for example, has opined that while it will not register works with no human authorship, the use of AI as a tool does not disqualify a human from claiming copyright, provided their own creative input is sufficient. This is the critical grey area where the future of AI art will be defined, and it sets the stage for how Korean artists are navigating this new landscape—not by rejecting the machine, but by redefining their relationship with it.

### The Collaborative Canvas: Forging a Future for Human-Al Art

Beyond the binary conflict of "threat or coexistence," a more nuanced and productive reality is taking shape in the studios and on the screens of South Korean artists. Rather than viewing AI as a competitor, many are embracing it as a collaborative

partner, a new medium with unique properties, or a powerful assistant that can augment their own creative vision. This approach reframes the debate from one of replacement to one of collaboration, where human agency remains the central, indispensable element.

The philosophy of AI artist Yoon Seok-kwan, who works under the name Keepkwan, perfectly illustrates this thoughtful engagement. Facing the common question of who the true creator is, he has developed a clear methodology. "I set my own ground rules for working with AI," he explained in an interview, to ensure he does not "get swallowed by it" (The Korea Herald). For Keepkwan, AI is a powerful instrument, but one that must be wielded with intention and a strong authorial voice. His process involves a deep dialogue with the technology, guiding, curating, and refining its outputs until they align with his personal artistic vision. This is not passive generation; it is active direction.



Created in collaboration with AI by KEEPKWAN @thisiskeepkwan

This idea of human-Al partnership is not entirely new. As early as 2019, an exhibition described by art director Songhyun Joo showcased a process where Al generated abstract sketches based on keywords from human artists, who then completed the works by adding their "imagination and creativity." The consensus among the participating

This collaborative model suggests a future where artists can leverage the immense power of AI without relinquishing their authorship or creative identity.

artists was clear: Al art "does not threaten the livelihood of artists or undermine contemporary art. It will be an opportunity to diversify art by establishing new areas" by improving efficiency and expanding creative possibilities (Pulseg Inc. on Medium).

Crucially, these artistic practices offer a pathway to harmony between the law and creative innovation. The active, iterative process of prompting, selecting, editing, and compositing employed by artists like Keepkwan provides precisely the "human creative involvement" that the Ministry of Culture's copyright guidelines demand. The final artwork is not the sole product of the machine but the result of a human's intellectual and aesthetic choices. This collaborative model suggests a future where artists can leverage the immense power of AI without relinquishing their authorship or creative identity.

This nuanced approach resonates with the broader K-culture phenomenon. The global success of Korean film, music (K-pop), and television is often attributed to a unique blend of high-tech production, polished aesthetics, and deeply human storytelling. As Korean contemporary artists continue to gain overdue recognition on the global stage (The Art Newspaper), their engagement with AI is poised to follow a similar trajectory. By fusing technological prowess with a steadfast focus on human creativity, they are not just participating in the AI art movement; they are helping to define its very soul.

### Conclusion: A Blueprint for the AI Era?

As the lines between algorithm and artist continue to blur, Seoul's balancing act reveals a deeper philosophical wager: that humanity can co-author the future with machines without surrendering its soul. The "Seoul Algorithm" isn't just a policy experiment or cultural moment—it's an evolving ethics of coexistence. It teaches us that regulation need not strangle innovation, and that creativity amplified by AI can still be deeply human.

In a world rushing to legislate the unknown or monetize the novel, South Korea offers a rare pause—a reflection in motion. It is drafting a future where artists are not displaced but redefined, where laws are not reactive but visionary. And perhaps most importantly, it is showing us that amid the noise of disruption, there can be harmony. The question is no longer whether AI can create art, but whether societies can create the conditions for such art to be meaningful, just, and truly shared.



### MIKA **NOH**

Mika (Jaeyun) Noh is a cultural policy strategist and digital innovation specialist based in Seoul, with deep experience in legislative affairs, Al art curation, and global cultural cooperation. She previously served as Legislative Director at the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, where she advises on key reforms in cultural and digital governance. And she worked with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism on innovation strategy.

Currently Mika is Chair of the AI Art Forum (AIAF), spearheading global discourse on ethical AI and emerging cultural infrastructure, and directs digital strategy and institutional partnerships at Niio Art. As founder and creative director of Space Ba, she leads cross-sector media art projects that connect urban regeneration, public institutions, and generative technologies. She writes on cultural policy and arttech ecosystems for Artsy. With a Master's in Arts Management from Korea National University of Arts and legal training from Ewha Womans University, she bridges creative industries and government policy to foster innovation and sustainability in the cultural sector.



Since 2019, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) of Korea has been implementing the Statutory Cultural City initiative under Article 15 of the Regional Culture Promotion Act. This national policy seeks to enhance cultural creativity and regional sustainability by utilizing cultural resources unique to each locality. After laying the legal groundwork in 2014 and publishing a strategic roadmap in 2018, the full-scale designation of Cultural Cities began in 2019. The core vision of the Cultural City initiative was "sustainable regional development through culture and the enhancement of everyday cultural life".

Initially, the government aimed to designate 30 cities by 2022. However, as of 2025, 24 cities have officially been designated through four selection rounds (2019–2023). The project was originally developed under what is now referred to as "Cultural City 1.0", a phase that emphasized citizen participation, local governance, and long-term regional cultural transformation.

Designated cities receive up to 10 billion KRW in national funding and up to 10 billion KRW in local matching funds over five years. A defining element is the citizen-centered governance model, which the government has continuously encouraged through the development of Comprehensive Regional Cultural Development Plans. Local governments are expected to establish promotion committees, operating bodies, and citizen councils. These efforts are supported by multi-stakeholder cooperation involving the MCST, the Cultural City Review Committee, intermediary agencies, and local actors

In 2023, Korea launched "Cultural City 2.0", signaling a policy shift in both direction and focus. Unlike the 1.0 model, which highlighted bottom-up cultural democracy and community empowerment, the 2.0 model has emphasized measurable outcomes, urban branding, cultural tourism, and economic revitalization. This marks a transition from cultural sustainability to cultural competitiveness, with growing attention on innovation, entrepreneurship, and visible performance indicators. While the structural process for designation remains similar, the central government now puts greater emphasis on impact assessment, scalability, and alignment with broader national agendas.



In Chuncheon, the City as Urban Salonproject -transformed ordinary venues—cafes, bookstores, and questhouses—into cultural spaces.

As of 2025, cities such as **Chuncheon, Yeongdo, Cheongju, Seogwipo**, and **Wonju** are noted for their innovative and inclusive approaches.

Representative outcomes include:

- 1. Chuncheon introduced citizen-led festivals and creative place-making initiatives, reinforcing its identity as a city of cultural imagination.
- 2. Cheongju and Seogwipo built distinct urban cultural brands such as "Record Culture" and "Noji Culture," respectively.
- 3. Across all 24 Cultural Cities, over 900 cultural spaces have been developed since 2020, dramatically increasing access to everyday culture.

- 4. More than 1.6 million citizens have participated in Cultural City programs, with satisfaction rates averaging 89.4% by 2024.
- 5. Wonju, Wanju, and Yeongdo demonstrated exemplary citizen governance through community deliberation and co-creation.
- 6. Pohang successfully aligned cultural programming with urban regeneration policies, while Gangneung fostered interregional cultural exchange projects.

By 2025, nearly 50% of Korean local governments have participated in the designation process, and over 90 regions have passed ordinances to institutionalize Cultural City-related policies. The Cultural City 1.0 Project's cumulative achievements include the creation of localized urban cultural identities, expanded cultural infrastructure, improved citizen engagement, increased cultural employment, and the mainstreaming of cultural access and values into public life.

#### Resources

UNESCO\_QUADREINNIAL PERIODIC REPORT, Republic of Korea <a href="https://media.unesco.org/sites/default/files/webform/dce002/QPR\_2022\_KR\_c7261d63-bc46-46d8-ga7a-6ac3ac68c330\_22.pdf">https://media.unesco.org/sites/default/files/webform/dce002/QPR\_2022\_KR\_c7261d63-bc46-46d8-ga7a-6ac3ac68c330\_22.pdf</a>

Boyun Choe (2025) Cultural Regeneration in the Cities: A Case of Cultural City Project in Korea, The ENCATC Research Platform. 'Inside Korean Culture: Research Projects, Opportunities, and Methodological Approaches', 2025.06.19.



### **BOYUN CHOE**

Dr. Boyun Choe is a professor in the Department of Culture and Content at Sangji University and serves as an Expert Committee Member of the National Association of Cultural Cities in Korea. She received her PhD in Cultural Policy from the University of Warwick and an MA in Performing Arts Administration from NYU. Her academic and professional background spans arts and cultural policy, arts education, local cultural planning, and disability arts.



## "CULTURE AS EVERYDAY INFRASTRUCTURE"

An Interview with Prof. Boyun Choe onhe Evolution of Korea's Cultural City Project

How did the idea for the Cultural City Development Project originate, and what specific outcomes are you aiming to achieve in terms of "sustainable regional development through culture"?

The idea emerged from a growing realization in Korean cultural policy circles during the 2010s: national-level investments were disproportionately concentrated in metropolitan areas, while small and mid-sized cities struggled to define their own cultural futures. In 2014, the Regional Culture Promotion Act laid the legislative foundation, but it wasn't until the roadmap of 2018 and the first official designations in 2019 that the vision became real. That vision, quite boldly, was to frame **culture** as a core infrastructure for sustainable regional development not merely as content or industry, but as a driver of civic vitality. The outcomes we sought went beyond economic revitalization: we were interested in how culture could restore community relationships, build place-based identities, and foster everyday participation. In that sense, the term 'development' was deliberately expanded—it wasn't about urban expansion or competitiveness alone, but about cultivating a more inclusive, livable, and participatory everyday life through cultural means. The Cultural City project became, in effect, a policy experiment: could culture, when grounded in local life, act as a regenerative force that is democratic, creative, and enduring?

What criteria guided the selection of themes—such as historical traditions, cultural industries, or arts—for each cultural city? Is there a standardized approach or are themes tailored case by case?

Each city proposed a theme rooted in its own cultural identity, and while the process followed a common framework, the content was entirely context-specific. The Ministry provided five broad thematic axeshistory/tradition, art, cultural industries, social culture, and governance but there was no "template" to follow. The power of the initiative lay precisely in that flexibility. For instance, Cheongju's 'record culture' stemmed from its long-standing association with early printing, while Yeongdo's maritime narrative emphasized shipbuilding memories and island ecology. These themes weren't imposed from above; they were cultivated from within. What mattered most in the selection process was how convincingly the city could articulate a vision where that theme could be mobilized across governance, participation, infrastructure, and education. Was it just symbolic, or did it have operational depth? That became a critical evaluation point during the preliminary designation phase. What's striking is how varied the results were-some cities framed their theme around intangible heritage, others around new media or community rituals. This thematic elasticity allowed for diverse pathways to cultural development, and that's one of the reasons the project has drawn international attention.

### Could you describe how citizen-centered governance was implemented in practice, and what structures proved most effective?

Governance, in theory, is one thing—but embedding it into lived practice is another. What we observed in the most effective cities was a deliberate move away from tokenistic participation toward shared cultural authorship. Yes, most cities had a Cultural City Promotion Committee, often institutionalized through local ordinances. But beyond that, cities like Chuncheon or Wonju created ecosystems where citizens weren't just consulted but actually initiated and implemented projects. Microgrants were offered to resident groups, neighborhood councils were empowered to select public art, and storytelling workshops helped map out people's memories of place. This bottom-up energy gave real texture to the city's cultural vision. The success of such structures depended not on how formally they were designed, but on whether the city government trusted its citizens enough to give up control. Importantly, intermediary organizations—often cultural foundations or support centers—played a crucial role in mediating between civil society and government, especially in the early stages. They helped ensure that the governance model didn't collapse into bureaucratic overload or elite capture. Ultimately, governance worked best when it was porous and iterative, rather than rigid or checklist-driven.

The UNESCO report mentions 685 cultural spaces and over one million citizen engagements with 86.7% satisfaction. How are these figures captured, and what methodologies are used to evaluate both quantitative and qualitative impact?

The numbers are helpful, but they only tell half the story. Yes, each city is required to submit quantitative data-attendance, program hours, space usage—and those feed into annual monitoring reports. But from early on, we realized that what we needed to capture was not just how many people came, but how culture was reshaping daily life. That's why qualitative methods became essential. Some cities conducted ethnographies of project sites; others ran citizen journals or held 'reflection forums' where participants articulated what changed for them. For example, an elderly participant in Yeongdo's oral history project spoke of finally feeling "visible" in the city's narrative. That kind of impact can't be graphed, but it's arguably more transformative. Satisfaction surveys were standardized across cities, asking not just whether events were enjoyable, but whether people felt belonging, agency, and value. Evaluation thus became a multi-modal process, combining indicators, stories, and field observation. This methodology allowed us to assess not only scale but also *depth*—which is crucial when you're working with a concept of a socially embedded 'culture'.

As per the UNESCO report, cities like Cheongju, Pohang, and Seogwipo have been rated excellent. What common success factors and replicable strategies have emerged from their experience?

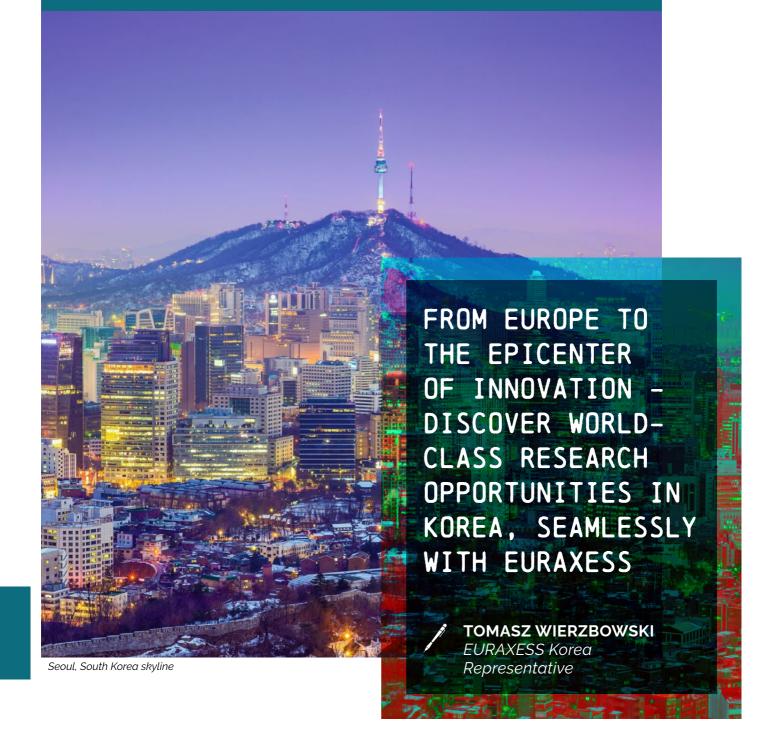
What unites them is not a formula, but a shared **commitment to cultural authenticity and civic imagination**. These cities didn't treat their designation as a branding campaign—they treated it as a long-term process of community building. **Chuncheon**, for example, opened up everyday spaces—cafés, bookstores, alleyways—as "urban salons", creating forums for dialogue, art-making, and social gathering. **Yeongdo** reframed its post-industrial decline as a cultural resource, inviting locals to narrate their own histories. These cities had **adaptive leadership**: they embraced trial and error, listened deeply to citizens' feedback, and were willing to shift course. Replicating this requires not copying projects but **internalizing principles**: rootedness, responsiveness, and respect for local knowledge. These are slow values—but they yield enduring outcomes.

Given the five-year funding window for cultural cities, what measures are in place to ensure long-term sustainability of the initiatives, cultural spaces, and citizen-led governance models beyond the project's lifespan?

From the outset, the policy intended for cities to take full ownership after five years—financially, administratively, and conceptually. Encouragingly, many cities passed local ordinances to embed the cultural city model into their governance systems. This legal institutionalization is a major achievement. But we must also be honest: sustainability is not just about legal frameworks—it's about capacity, and not all cities have equal resources. Maintaining cultural personnel, running programs, and managing spaces requires continuous investment. For some smaller or rural cities, the end of central government support poses real risks of rollback. Five years of matched funding is a substantial launchpad, but not always enough to secure deep-rooted cultural infrastructure. I believe what's needed is a layered approach to support: cities should be weaned into autonomy, but a form of ongoing strategic, perhaps lighter-touch, support from the central level should remain. We must not think of cultural cities as projects with an "exit strategy," but rather as **processes of continuous learning and care**, which require long-term scaffolding.

Now that we are in the phase of 'Korea Cultural City' (Cultural City 2.0) launched in 2023, what changes or policy recalibrations do you think are necessary?

Cultural City 2.0 represents a significant shift—toward metropolitan-scale ambition, economic performance metrics, and global branding. This evolution brings new possibilities but also **new tensions**. The emphasis on outputs—tourist numbers, content production, job creation—is understandable, but it risks narrowing the cultural field to what can be counted. What we risk losing is the **philosophical grounding of Cultural City 1.0**, where culture was defined broadly: as relation, as imagination, as everyday practice. I believe we urgently need to restore that foundation. Economic impact should be part of the equation, but not the whole. Policies must accommodate **slower**, **qualitative**, **process-driven transformations**. Moreover, we must ensure that as the scale grows, the **governance remains participatory**—otherwise, we revert to top-down cultural delivery systems. The next chapter of the project should be about **synthesizing the ethics of 1.0 with the scale of 2.0**. That's a delicate but necessary task.



Nestled between futuristic skyscrapers and centuries-old palaces, Korea is becoming a magnet for researchers from Europe seeking groundbreaking opportunities. Amidst this vibrant blend of tradition and innovation<sup>1</sup>, European scholars are finding fertile ground for academic collaboration, career advancement, and cultural exchange.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> According to the report by the EU Commission – the <u>European Innovation Scoreboard 2025</u> (<u>European Innovation Scoreboard 2025 - Publications Office of the EU)</u>; Korea in 2025 Korea was the most innovative country in the world for the 12th consecutive year (<u>Korea tops European innovation index for 12th straight year</u>: Korea.net: The official website of the Republic of Korea)

### Unlocking Opportunities: How Korean Institutions Empower Global Researchers

Institutions like the Korea Foundation (KF²), the National Research Foundation of Korea (NRF³), and numerous prestigious Korean universities play vital roles in creating these opportunities. The Korea Foundation, for instance, actively promotes international academic exchanges through grants and fellowship programs that facilitate research stays and cultural exchanges, helping European scholars integrate seamlessly into Korean academic life. Similarly, the National Research Foundation of Korea supports international researchers by providing extensive funding programs and collaborative research initiatives. These initiatives cover a wide range of disciplines including science, technology, social sciences, and humanities, fostering interdisciplinary and international research collaborations.

#### **Beyond Borders: Korea's Entry into Horizon Europe**

Horizon Europe is the European Union's flagship research and innovation programme, running from 2021 to 2027 with a budget of €95.5 billion. Designed to address global challenges and drive sustainable growth, it builds upon the success of its predecessor, Horizon 2020, while introducing a more ambitious agenda for strategic autonomy, digital leadership, and climate resilience. Structured around three pillars—Excellent Science, Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness, and Innovative Europe—it funds cutting-edge research, cross-border collaboration, and breakthrough technologies. Central to its mission is the integration of international partners, recognizing that complex problems require global solutions.

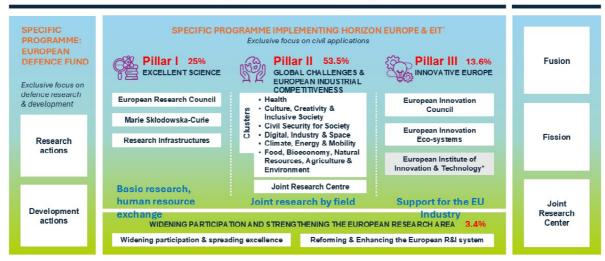
The programme supports individual researchers through the prestigious European Research Council (ERC4) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA5), while also enabling universities, companies, and research institutions to form multinational consortia tackling everything from cancer to Al. Horizon Europe promotes openness, excellence, and impact, offering researchers worldwide a platform to contribute to Europe's green and digital transitions. Its international dimension is further strengthened by associating non-EU countries, making it one of the most inclusive research frameworks globally.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> www.kf.or.kr

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>www.nrf.re.kr

<sup>4</sup> https://erc.europa.eu/homepage

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/



<sup>\*</sup> The European Institute of Innovation & Technology (EIT) is not part of the Specific Programme

Picture 1: The Structure of Horizon Europe Programme

### Korea Becomes the First Asian Nation to Officially Join Horizon Europe

On 17 July 2025, the Republic of Korea formally signed the Association Agreement to join Horizon Europe, becoming the first Asian country to gain fully associated status with the EU's flagship research and innovation programme.

#### What This Means

- » Korean institutions and researchers now enjoy equal access to the Horizon Europe programme, especially Pillar II—the EU's largest collaborative segment, focusing on global challenges like climate, energy, digital transformation, and health (€52.4 billion out of €93.5 billion total budget for 2021–2027)
- » They may lead or join consortia, receive direct funding, and engage in highimpact European research projects as full beneficiaries—not just partners
- » In addition to Pillar II, Korean entities remain eligible for other pillars, including Excellent Science, Innovative Europe, and Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions covering doctoral education and postdoctoral mobility

### From Europe to Korea - MSCA Global Fellowship: A Launchpad for International Research Careers

Among the most prestigious opportunities for European researchers seeking to work in Korea is the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowship,

specifically the Global Fellowship track. Designed to support the mobility of experienced researchers beyond Europe, this fellowship offers the chance to conduct high-impact research in a host institution outside the EU — including Korea — for one to two years. A return phase of one year in a European host institution is required, ensuring that the knowledge gained abroad is reintegrated into the European research landscape.

What sets the MSCA Global Fellowship apart is its comprehensive support: it covers the researcher's salary, mobility and family allowances, and research costs. Moreover, it provides personalized career development opportunities, from skill-building in grant writing and teaching to networking with international research partners. By supporting tailored, collaborative research projects, the Global Fellowship accelerates both the researcher's career and the internationalization of research institutions.<sup>6</sup>

### **EURAXESS – Your Gateway to International Collaboration**

"EURAXESS - Researchers in Motion" is a pan-European initiative backed by the European Commission that aims to support the development of the European Research Area (ERA) by addressing barriers to the mobility of researchers, and to enhance scientific collaboration between Europe and the world. EURAXESS is supported by 47 participating countries across Europe (EU member states and countries within the Horizon Europe Associated Countries list). Designed as a comprehensive toolset, it provides researchers with a complete range of information and support services that are structured around four areas: the network of services for researchers, the European portal7, the national portals<sup>8</sup> and EURAXESS Worldwide<sup>9</sup>. The European portal provides a single access point for career development resources and a database of jobs, funding and hosting opportunities in Europe. It is complemented by 42 national portals with country-specific information on the conditions of living and working in European countries as a researcher. The EURAXESS network also provides personalised assistance to incoming and outgoing researchers through more than 600 Service Centres in Europe. The international arm of the EURAXESS initiative, EURAXESS Worldwide bridges Europe to the rest of the world through its 9 hubs outside of Europe (Africa, Australia and New Zealand, ASEAN, China, India, Japan, Latin American and Caribbean States, North America and Korea).

### **EURAXESS** value proposition for researchers and institutions

The EURAXESS toolset provides services to researchers and Research Performing Institutions (RPOs) independently of their origin, country of affiliation, research domain – including humanities and social sciences, institution area (private R&D, public research institutes, universities and higher education institutions, etc.), or career level – from PhD

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/actions/postdoctoral-fellowships

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Living & Working in Europe | EURAXESS

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> European National Portals | EURAXESS

<sup>9</sup> Explore EURAXESS Worldwide | EURAXESS

candidate level to senior profiles. These services are supported by the EURAXESS portal, with the following elements:

- The Jobs and Funding section provides, via a fully open online platform<sup>10</sup>, access to the largest European job portal for research-related jobs that also includes PhD positions. Korean or Korea-based individual researchers can not only look for jobs in Europe, but also create their profiles and CVs online with the aim to be spotted by potential employers. Korean research institutions may register to the portal so as to be able to post job offers, which is a free service. This section also provides access to a funding database fed by research and innovation institutions all around Europe where researchers can browse for international cooperation or mobility funding programmes. It includes travel grants and fellowships. In addition, researchers can find hosting offers on EURAXESS Expressions of Interest from research institutions in support of applications to the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions Individual Fellowships calls, as well as offers from institutions with available research infrastructures.
- The Information and Assistance section<sup>11</sup> provides, in complementarity with 47 national portals<sup>12</sup> a full range of useful information to researchers looking to relocate in Europe, comprising 18 topics (in alphabetical order): access to the culture of the host country & language courses; accommodation; banking; career development; day care, schooling & family related issues; departure conditions & formalities; dual career; entry conditions & visas; funding opportunities; health insurance; intellectual property rights; medical care; pension for researchers; recognition of diplomas; taxation & salaries; unemployment; and work permit. In addition to the online information services, more than 1,500 EURAXESS members in more than 600 centres and contact points in the 47 countries participating in EURAXESS respond to over 450,000 researchers' requests via phone or personally.
- » The Partnering section<sup>13</sup> provides an online networking tool to researchers and RPOs who have created a profile on the EURAXESS portal, which they can use to connect to other individuals or institutions to find talents or research collaboration.
- The Career Development section<sup>14</sup> on the portal includes resources for both researchers, via training material, orientation tools and manuals, and research supporting organisations looking to establish career development services within their own institution.
- » The **Worldwide section**<sup>15</sup> provides information and networking services to researchers from specific regions or countries outside of Europe, supported by an active team animating communities of researchers in the 8 different hubs.

<sup>10</sup> Jobs and opportunities | EURAXESS

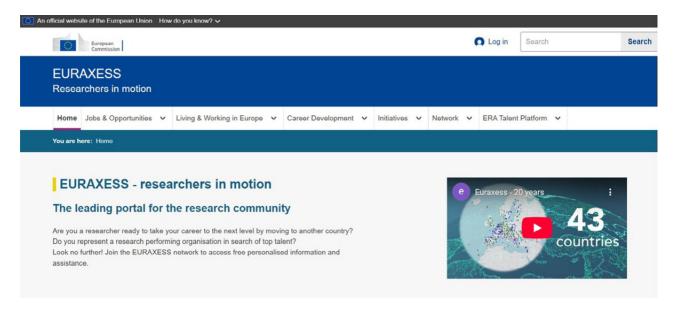
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/information

<sup>12</sup> https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/choose-your-country

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/partnering

<sup>14</sup> https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/career-development

<sup>15</sup> https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide



Picture 2: EURAXESS Portal

#### What is EURAXESS Korea

EURAXESS Worldwide, the international arm of EURAXESS, launched the Korea hub, in May 2018. It aims at increasing and improving researcher mobility and research cooperation between Korea and Europe by actively promoting funding opportunities under Horizon Europe. Its objectives are:

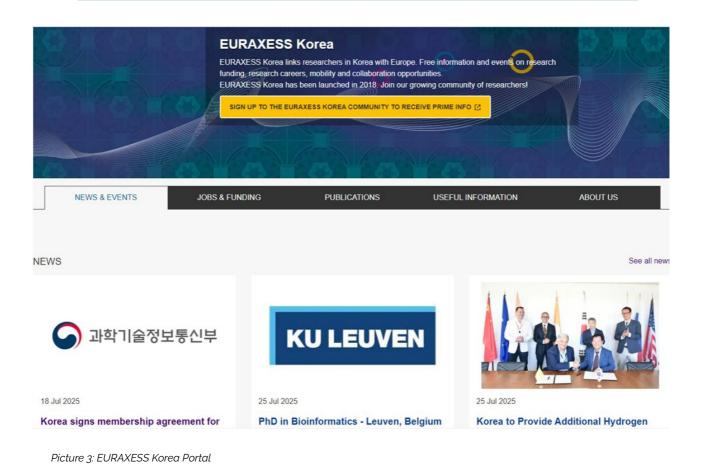
- » To promote ERA from the angle of mobility and research funding opportunities and programmes available.
- » To provide tailored and relevant information to Korea-based researchers: from PhD candidate level to professor level, all disciplines, in academia and industry.
- » To create opportunities for networking for researchers;
- » To grow a community of international-minded researchers.



### **EURAXESS** Korea's services to Korea-based researchers and institutions

EURAXESS Korea mainly provides three services:

- » Information services<sup>16</sup>, through its website and social media (X: @EURAXESS\_ Korea) where funding, job opportunities, policy developments, events and networking opportunities of interest to Korean researchers and Korean RPOs are provided in the form of a curated newsfeed, both in English and Korean languages.
- Events and informative and seminars, where detailed explanation of EURAXESS services, and also European funding programmes such as Horizon Europe, European Research Council grants or Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions grants is provided directly to students, researchers and research administrators. Also, the EURAXESS Korea Tour serves as a platform for European researchers and Korean institutions to stimulate and train their participation in mobility or research cooperation programmes with Europe.
- » Community building activities aim at better information exchange between Korea-based researchers so as to increase Korea-Europe research exchanges.



<sup>16</sup> https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/worldwide/south-korea



European EURAXESS is a European Commission's Direct for Research and Innovation initiative

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### TOMASZ WIERZBOWSKI

Dr. Tomasz Wierzbowski has been actively engaged in various academic as well as business activities regarding the European Union and Korea. He is currently a EURAXESS Korea Representative - EURAXESS is a European Commission initiative supporting researcher mobility and career development while enhancing scientific collaboration between Europe and the world. Before joining the EURAXESS team he worked in one of the EU Member States' embassies in Seoul and had led innovation and future technologies section in the European Chamber of Commerce in Korea.

Tomasz holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and MA in International Politics obtained at Sungkyunkwan University.



#### Introduction

In April 2025, the Culture Summit Abu Dhabi featured a participatory public-consultation workshop Rethinking Cultural Measurement (CS 2025). Organized by UNESCO and its Institute for Statistics in collaboration with the Department of Culture and Tourism – Abu Dhabi, the session addressed the urgent need to discuss cultural data practices, amplified by the global momentum to establish culture as a stand-alone goal in the post-2030 development agenda and the launch of UNESCO's 2025 Framework for Culture Statistics (UNESCO 2025).

One of the key themes of the workshop was the profound impact of digitization on cultural measurement. Bringing together 19 participants from different countries, the workshop sub-group on digitization discussed how digital transformations reshape cultural statistics aggregation and analysis practices. The session was critical for identifying three key challenges in cultural statistics mechanisms. First, participants stressed the Expanding Scope and Scale of Cultural Data, that create both opportunities and obstacles. Second, the Persistent Digital Divides has exacerbated inequalities in data privacy, resource allocation, and infrastructure maturity. Finally, the public consultation revealed the Limits of Dataism in "Measuring the Unmeasurable" with quantitative metrics often failing to capture the intangible dimensions of culture. This article expands on these themes through the lens of UNESCO's working group discussions, arguing for a more equitable, nuanced approach for the future of cultural statistics to better shape up the cultural policy and decision making.

Workshop
participants
emphasized how
the exponential
growth of digital
cultural data has
created significant
methodological
challenges due to
fragmented data
ecosystems

#### **Data Collection**

- ➤ Expanded Data Sources
- ➤ Real-time & Continuous Data
- ➤ Automated Data Collection
- ➤ Challenges in Standardization

### Measurement & Analysis

- ➤ New Metrics & Indicators
- ➤ Visualization & Interpretation
- ➤ Al-Powered Insights
- ➤ Human-Al Collaboration

### Evolving Cultural Landscape

- ➤ Tracking Digital Cultural Consumption
- ➤ Measuring the Impact of Digital Culture
- > Addressing Digital Divides

The "Impact of Digitalization" on Cultural Statistics Framework for Discussion. © Natalia Grincheva.

### **Expanding Scope and Scale of Cultural Data**

The digital era has generated an unprecedented volume of cultural data opening new possibilities for aggregating all soft of new data informing cultural statistics. However, while vast datasets can offer new unprecedented insights into cultural consumption and circulation trends and patterns, cultural partitioners often grapple with information overload, fragmented datasets, and a lack of standardized methodologies to compare data across platforms and borders.

### Navigating information overload and the role of APIs

Workshop participants emphasized how the exponential growth of digital cultural data has created significant methodological challenges due to fragmented data ecosystems. Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) from platforms such as Spotify, YouTube, and

Google Arts & Culture have become essential tools for accessing large-scale datasets. However, inconsistencies in API reliability, data formats, and access restrictions hinder robust comparative analyses (Lee 2019). Recent studies in cultural evolution have demonstrated the potential of digital platforms to amplify cultural research by applying computational models to large historical and ethnographic datasets (Slingerland et al. 2020). Yet, the progress remains constrained by unresolved challenges in data interoperability, sampling biases, and reproducibility. As Slingerland et al. (2020) emphasize, advancing cultural research requires improved standards for data collection, coding reliability, and database sustainability.

### The Imperative for Standardized Indicators and Methodologies

The lack of harmonized metrics emerged as a recurring theme in workshop discussions, with cultural professionals from diverse global contexts reporting how divergent measurement approaches impede their work. The lack of harmonized metrics for digital cultural engagement remains a critical barrier to cross-national and cross-institutional research. Recognizing this gap, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) has spearheaded efforts to revise the 2009 Framework for Culture Statistics, with a new 2025 version designed to standardize cultural measurement globally. The updated framework introduces a modular approach, enabling countries to adapt methodologies to their specific cultural contexts while maintaining comparability through unified definitions and classifications (UNESCO 2025). This initiative aligns with broader goals of measuring culture's socio-economic impact as a public good, supporting evidence-based policies for sustainable development and more productive and coherent international collaborations.

### **Persistent Digital Divides**

The digital transformation of cultural sectors has revealed profound inequalities in access, representation, and participation. Workshop participants from diverse

The lack of harmonized metrics for digital cultural engagement remains a critical barrier to crossnational and cross-institutional research.

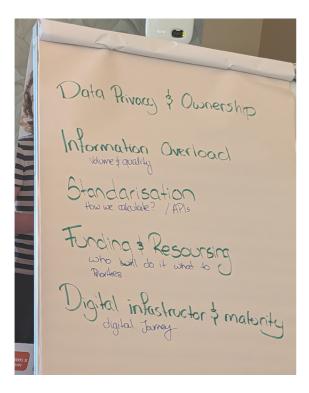
global contexts highlighted how existing disparities in connectivity, resources, and institutional power shape who benefits from digital cultural infrastructure. Their insights, supported by recent research, demonstrate that digital divides are not merely technical gaps but manifestations of deeper structural inequities that require comprehensive policy responses. The ITU's (2024) findings, for instance, reveal that while 93% of populations in high-income countries have internet access, only 27% in low-income countries enjoy similar connectivity. This divide has direct consequences for cultural institutions that must rely on analogue systems while their counterparts in technologically advanced regions deploy cutting-edge digital tools for cultural analytics aggregation and analysis.



The "Impact of Digitalization" working group participants at the Rethinking Cultural Measurement Workshop at 2025 Culture Summit – Abu Dhabi. © Natalia Grincheva.

### Structural Barriers to Digital Maturity

The funding disparities described by participants reflect systemic biases in cultural data ecosystems that recent research has documented. Rosenstein et al. (2024) demonstrate



The "Impact of Digitalization" working group's key discussion points. © Natalia Grincheva.

metrics overwhelmingly how current favour large, well-resourced institutions, with financial data dominating impact assessments while grassroots organizations struggle to document their contributions. This creates a "visibility paradox" - underfunded institutions lack the resources to generate the data that could demonstrate their value and secure financial support. The regional inequalities in digital infostructure also remain persistent. The African Digital Heritage initiative exemplifies this challenge, having achieved significant digitization milestones while facing persistent funding instability that threatens long-term sustainability (ADH 2023). Disparities in funding, infrastructure, and legal protections create a significant digital divide, determining the quality and representation of cultural statistics frameworks across developing and developed countries.

### Data Sovereignty and Cultural Rights

Furthermore, these inequalities lead to asymmetries in cultural data control and access. Workshop participants emphasized the need for ethical frameworks and robust regulations to govern the collection, storage, and use of cultural data. The complexities of balancing open access with the rights of creators and communities, especially indigenous and minority groups, were underscored. In the academic scholarship the McDaniel's (2023) analysis of Caribbean data systems contextualizes these tensions as colonial legacies, where international standards often override local needs and priorities. In Jamaica, for instance, the majority of cultural data collection serves external reporting requirements rather than community benefit, reflecting what participants identified as a systemic imbalance in cultural data representation. These dynamics highlight the growing movement toward "data sovereignty" - the right of communities to govern their cultural data, especially under the growing threat of platformization and data imperialism spearheaded by large transnational media corporations who monopolize data aggregation and control (Grincheva and Stainforth 2024).

### Dataism: "Measuring the Unmeasurable"

Interestingly, the workshop participants stressed that the pervasive impact of digitization has accelerated the prioritization of quantification in cultural research, often overshadowing qualitative approaches that capture the nuanced dimensions of meaning, value, and lived experience. This shift reflects the ascendancy of dataism an ideological framework that privileges numerical metrics as the primary lens for understanding social and cultural phenomena (Harari 2017). This paradigm reduces human agencies and cultural structures to data flows, pressuring cultural institutions to prioritize measurable outputs over deeper engagement. The result is data excess, wherein institutions may amass vast quantities of digital data without the capacity to

meaningfully analyze or apply it for community or institutional

benefit (Grincheva 2024).

This quantification imperative poses a fundamental challenge: culture is not easily reducible to datasets. Social scientists emphasize the need to systematically study how people construct meaning—a process that eludes purely quantitative methods (Mohr et al., 2020). While big data analytics reveal broad behavioral trends, qualitative methodologies—such as ethnographic interviews, participatory observation, and audience surveys—are critical for uncovering motivations, interpretations, and contextual significance (Grincheva 2018). Hybrid approaches, blending computational analysis with qualitative and digital ethnographic inquiry, offer a more holistic framework for cultural research. The tension between data-driven efficiency and qualitative depth underscores a growing epistemological divide. Without deliberate

**Existing** disparities in connectivity, resources, and institutional power shape who benefits from digital cultural infrastructure

integration of both approaches, cultural statistics risks reinforcing a reductive paradigm in which only the measurable is valued.

#### Conclusion

The digitization of cultural data presents unprecedented opportunities for research, policy-making, and creative industry development. However, as the Impact of Digitization

Working Group discussions reveal, significant challenges remain in ensuring ethical data practices, methodological standardization, equitable resource distribution, and the integration of qualitative depth into quantitative analyses. Addressing these issues requires interdisciplinary collaboration, policy innovation, and a commitment to inclusive digital cultural governance. By rethinking cultural measurements in the digital age, cultural stakeholders can foster a more equitable and nuanced understanding of global cultural dynamics. This article underscores the necessity of ongoing dialogue and action to navigate the complexities of digital cultural data, ensuring that advancements in technology serve diverse cultural communities rather than exacerbate existing inequalities.

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### NATALIA GRINCHEVA

Dr Natalia Grincheva is a Program Leader in Arts Management at LASALLE, University of Arts Singapore, and Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne. She is an internationally recognized expert in innovative forms and global trends in contemporary museology, digital diplomacy and international cultural relations. She is the author of three monographs Geopolitics of Digital Heritage (Cambridge University Press: 2024), Museum Diplomacy in the Digital Age (Routledge: 2020) and Global Trends in Museum Diplomacy (Routledge: 2019). Now she is working on a new monograph, Digital Soft Power of Heritage Media, forthcoming with Cambridge University Press. She is also a conceptual designer of the Data To Power application, developed for academic inductive research to facilitate the exploration of complex global phenomena through data visualization, mapping, and interactive data storytelling. Dr Grincheva's professional engagements include her dedicated work for the International Fund for Cultural Diversity at UNESCO (2011) and International Federation of Coalitions for Cultural Diversity (2011–2015), her research placement at ACMI X at the Australian Center for the Moving Image (2017–2019) as well as service for the Cultural Research Network (CRN) (2018–2020) and the International Cultural Relations Research Alliance (since 2020).



It's the social capital, the constellation of friendships that we build on.

Cemeti, Yogyakarta

What does it take to move cultural diplomacy from aspiration to action — especially in times marked by structural inequality, language hierarchies, and unequal access to mobility? The third edition of **ASEF LinkUp – Asia-Europe Cultural Diplomacy Lab**, held in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, from 18 to 21 June 2025, took up this challenge.

Building on insights from previous iterations in Singapore (2023) and Prague (2024), this year's Lab brought together 16 cultural practitioners, artists, academics, and policymakers to critically reimagine the future of international cultural cooperation. Hosted in a city where tradition and experimentation coexist, the Lab embraced the **Indonesian ethos of** *gotong royong* — **mutual aid and collective responsibility** — not as an abstract concept, but as a lived practice.

#### Why Yogyakarta? Grounding the Lab in Local Ethos

Yogyakarta, a city known for its deep cultural traditions and vibrant civic arts ecosystem, proved to be a powerful host for the 2025 Lab. The local principle of *gotong royong* served not only as a thematic inspiration but as a methodology in action: one that prioritises **reciprocity**, **responsibility**, **and care within and across communities**.

While working in closed-door sessions to envision a better future for cultural diplomacy, participants also engaged in several visits to local arts organisations and heritage sites, offering direct encounters with the ways cultural practices are sustained and adapted in everyday life in Indonesia. These field visits — jointly organised by Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Culture — offered real-time insight into how cultural practices in Indonesia are supported through community resilience, adaptive approaches, and institutional collaboration.

These encounters brought to light a key lesson: resilience in the cultural field often flourishes in response to the lack of robust infrastructure, creating fragile yet deeply supportive ecosystems —where trust, friendships, and informal networks fill the gaps left by limited resources. In Yogyakarta, participants witnessed a dynamic cultural scene that thrives on informality, relationality, and a sense of mutual responsibility.

This grounding helped reframe cultural diplomacy not as a fixed policy tool, but as a flexible, adaptive process rooted in ongoing negotiation and care.

#### **Cultural Diplomacy as a Living Process of Care and Negotiation**

One transformative shift at ASEF LinkUp 2025 was recognising cultural diplomacy not as a product or protocol, but as a **living process** — an evolving set of practices grounded in **trust, care, and negotiation**.

The closed-door sessions began by collectively reframing the concept of **collective responsibility** — not as a moral imperative alone, but as an everyday practice essential to cross-border cooperation. Through case clinics, facilitated dialogue, and provocations,

participants articulated a shared understanding of the values that should shape international cultural relations:

- » Shared accountability across roles and sectors: Distributing the responsibility among institutions, artists, civil society, and governments — regardless of hierarchy.
- » Care and mutual support: Committing to care for others while trusting that care will be reciprocated, especially in fragile or under-resourced contexts.
- » **Equity and Inclusion**: Amplifying underrepresented voices and ensuring fair access to resources, space, and decision-making power.
- » Cross-sectoral collaboration for the common good: Bringing together diverse stakeholders to co-create solutions rooted in public interest and cultural stewardship.
- » Decolonising and Decentralising: Creating space for grassroots and nondominant perspectives to lead and shape agendas, rather than being folded into existing frameworks.
- » **Courageous, ongoing action**: Showing up consistently through microgestures or big shifts and committing to long-term change.

As one participant aptly described it, "This is a collaborative effort to harness the power of culture to build a global understanding, peace and mutual respect. It is about promoting shared human values and recognising cultural rights as universal human rights amidst our diversity."

#### **Embracing Conflict in Cultural Collaboration**

From its inception, ASEF LinkUp was designed to bridge gaps between cultural practitioners and government institutions, creating space for productive tensions to be addressed. At the 2025 edition, these tensions surfaced clearly in a constructive way. Rather than aiming for smooth consensus, the Lab invited participants to sit with the idea of conflict and engage it as a **generative force**. This shift marked a move from the idea of *shared purpose* to the deeper, and more honest, acknowledgment of **shared, but unequally held, responsibilities**. Inclusion was no longer approached as tokenistic representation or symbolic visibility, but as **structural access and shared accountability** — a recognition of who defines the agenda, who holds decision-making power, and who is left performing the invisible labour that enables collaborations to happen at all.

Participants were invited not to resolve contradictions, but to hold space for them — and from this openness, powerful provocations emerged:

» Can a symbol harm? Participants examined how symbolic gestures — flags, festivals, branding — can sometimes mask inequality or sideline grassroots realities. Collaboration, they noted, must go beyond optics to achieve genuine impact.

- » Art is never free. Participants discussed how art exists within systems of funding, influence, and institutional expectations — and how these conditions shape not only the work itself, but also the opportunities to create it.
- » Culture is always useful. While culture's intangible value is hard to measure, it nonetheless plays a vital role in community resilience and identity. Its sustainability depends as much on imagination and lived practice as it does on funding.
- » Step outside your bubble. True solidarity requires more than sharing space. It demands that individuals step outside of their worldviews, listen across differences, and co-create new systems of value and meaning.

By embracing these provocations, ASEF LinkUp 2025 reframed cultural diplomacy as **a space of negotiation, not neutrality**—a practice grounded in its very tensions, where thought-provoking dialogue challenges familiar assumptions and values. Rather than striving for consensus, the Lab embraced the complexity, tension, and uneven terrain that define international cooperation.

#### **Tensions Raised and Realities Exposed**

Participants engaged deeply with the lived realities of structural imbalance. Amongst the most urgent tensions raised were:

- » **Unequal mobility:** Visa regimes and travel support remain disproportionately available to artists from the Global North rather than the Global South.
- » **Language dominance:** The widespread reliance on English and French reinforces cultural hierarchies and limits diverse forms of expression.
- » Bureaucratic exclusion: For displaced, exiled, or stateless practitioners, administrative systems often function as mechanisms of exclusion and indignity.
- » Market and capitalistic influence on cultural practices: Market-driven frameworks often shape what is produced, funded, and valued—undermining independent and community-based artistic agendas.
- Exoticism and framing bias: decontextualised representations and forms of cultural appropriation showcased primarily for external consumption instead of being engaged through genuine exchange.

In response, participants formulated concrete calls to action — urgent, experience-driven proposals aimed at addressing structural imbalances within cultural diplomacy:

» Redefine the role of the state — shifting from gatekeeper to facilitator, enabling rather than controlling cultural exchange.

- » **Simplify mobility procedures** especially for artists navigating displacement, crisis, or post-conflict conditions.
- » Recognise cultural practitioners as experts and knowledge holders not merely as service providers delivering programmed outcomes.
- » Affirm the dignity and rights of artists ensuring fair treatment, ethical standards, and protection across all forms of cultural cooperation.

A key takeaway was the urgent need for transparency and long-term commitment from cultural institutions and governments— not only in providing funding mechanisms, but also in building relationships with artists and communities. The call was clear: move beyond transactional engagement toward sustained, equitable collaborations rooted in mutual understanding. Participants emphasised the importance of direct, ongoing dialogue between the cultural sector and public authorities. This includes finding ways to translate policy language into terms meaningful to artists — and translating artists' needs into actionable policy recommendations. Practical suggestions included regular site visits by government officials to cultural spaces, and town hall-style meetings — as seen in contexts like Singapore — to foster trust, visibility, and shared responsibility in shaping cultural policy.

Far from abstract ideas, these reflections were rooted in the participants concrete experiences. The Lab became a rare space where discomfort was openly held, honestly shared, and transformed **into a collective impetus for meaningful change**.

#### **Building Communities of Practice**

What emerged most powerfully from the Lab was not a set of recommendations or a toolkit — but the **consolidation of a Community of Practice**, a vision seeded in earlier editions and increasingly firming up with this year's edition. Participants co-imagined a **sustainable**, **transnational knowledge-sharing network** grounded in **horizontal governance**, **voluntary participation**, **and enduring friendships**. This community is not bound by institutional formality but thrives on trust, reciprocity, and informal exchanges that build capacity across borders.

Participants emphasised the importance of **peer-to-peer exchanges**, the **circulation of relevant opportunities**, and the **strategic innovation of project design** — particularly in aligning with funders' priorities without compromising artistic integrity. Knowledge-sharing, they agreed, is most powerful when it is not just about content, but about **creating systems of support** that enable artists and cultural professionals to navigate an increasingly complex and unequal landscape together.

As one participant reflected simply but profoundly, "We are not alone."

In reaffirming its original purpose, ASEF LinkUp positioned itself not only as a laboratory for rethinking cultural diplomacy, but as a **relational space for co-creating where mutual support and cross-cultural solidarity can truly thrive.** 

#### **Conclusion: Reimagining, Together**

As the Lab looks toward its next edition, it leaves behind a **shift in language and priorities**. It reminds us that diplomacy is not the exclusive domain of nation-states, but a **shared practice**, co-constructed by artists, institutions, and communities across borders.

In the face of complexity, perhaps the most radical act is **to listen deeply, act collectively, and continue to "show up"** with the conviction that cultural cooperation, held in both care and tension, can transform not only relationships but entire ecosystems.

A powerful proposition: to reimagine, together.



#### GIULIA POLI

Giulia Poli is an Italian cultural manager and curator with over 17 years of experience in the arts and culture sector. She joined the Culture Department of the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in 2022, where, among other activities, she curates and manages the Asia-Europe Cultural Festival, a travelling multidisciplinary festival aimed at strengthening cultural dialogue between Asia and Europe.

With a Master's degree in Arts Management, Giulia began her career in London in the field of visual arts before expanding her practice to include new media, performing arts, and interdisciplinary work. Her professional expertise spans international cultural cooperation, cross-cultural programming, and cultural diplomacy, with a focus on commissioning new works, co-productions, and facilitating meaningful cultural exchanges.

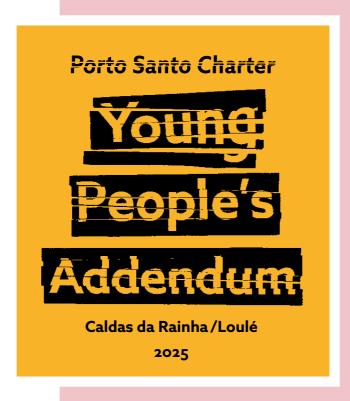
Before joining ASEF in Singapore, she held key positions in leading cultural institutions across Europe and Asia, including Head of Performing Arts Programming at Centro per l'Arte Contemporanea Luigi Pecci, consultant for UNESCO, and Guest Programmer at CROSS Festival.

Giulia has collaborated with countless international artists from all art sectors and numerous international organisations, developing innovative platforms and projects for artistic expression and cultural dialogue.

She is deeply invested in fostering connectivity and engagement across cultures through collaborations and dialogues among artists and cultural professionals. Through her work she reinforces exchanges between Asia and Europe with the objective of deepening mutual understanding between cultural communities in the two regions.



Published in June 2025, The Young People's Addendum to the Porto Santo Charter (YPAPSC) builds on the principles of the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education. It extends the vision of the 2021 Porto Santo Charter. The Charter, promoted by Portugal's National Plan for the Arts, was presented by UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture Ernesto Ottone during the Conference "From Democratisation to Cultural Democracy: Rethinking Institutions and Practices", held under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 27–28 April 2021.



The Porto Santo Charter culture emphasises how can reinforce democracy by promoting European cultural citizenship, integrating cultural participation into democratic processes, and empowering all citizens to contribute to shaping their cultural environments. Announced by the Vice-President of the European Commission, Margaritis Mr Schinas, the Charter recognises culture as a democratic resource and reaffirms cultural participation as both a civic right and a pillar of European democracy.

Finalised in 2025, the YPAPSC builds on this foundation

through a strategic, youth-led and youth-centred approach. It is the result of a co-creative process involving over 350 participants — primarily young people — from 10 European countries, supported by 53 institutions. The initiative was coordinated by the National Plan for the Arts — Portugal, in close collaboration with the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Culture Management, Cities and Creativity and the Organisation of Ibero-American States (OEI).

This inclusive process ensured that the Addendum reflects the lived experiences, aspirations, and expertise of young cultural participants and practitioners across Europe.

The YPAPSC is closely aligned with the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education and the European Union's strategic priorities, particularly in the areas of intergenerational equity, cultural and civic rights, youth participation in democratic life, and the intersection of culture, education, and innovation. Its core themes are both urgent and actionable, providing a roadmap for cultural policies grounded in democratic values: Cultural participation and citizenship – Increasing youth engagement in cultural governance—inequalities in access to culture – Bridging gaps in cultural accessibility. Inclusion vs. Hierarchies and Elitism – Challenging exclusionary cultural structures. Digital culture and ethical challenges

- Building digital literacy and promoting ethical

This inclusive process ensured that the Addendum reflects the lived experiences, aspirations, and expertise of young cultural participants and practitioners across Europe.

frameworks within cultural spaces. **Working conditions for cultural workers** – Advocating for fair labour standards in the cultural sector. **Culture and Arts Education** – Strengthening collaboration between educational institutions and the cultural sector.

The YPAPSC is more than just a policy proposal; it functions as a civic and political tool to prompt action, providing concrete recommendations that are co-created with, by, and for young people. It draws on empirical evidence collected through multi-stakeholder consultations, conferences, a think-tank residency, and participatory events. Through this process, the Addendum ensures that cultural policies embody pluralistic, inclusive, and forward-looking values, while recognising the vital role of young people in shaping Europe's cultural and democratic future.

To give an extensive global dissemination to this document providing concrete recommendations that are co-created with, by, and for young people, in July 2025 we have conducted an interview with professors Sara Brighenti of the National Plan for the Arts (PNA - Portugal) and Lígia Afonso from the UNESCO Chair in Arts and Cultural Management, Cities and Creativity (Leiria Polytechnic University and with Karolina ROŻEK and Inês de Carvalho Costa, two voices among the 350 students who have drafted these recommendations.

GiannaLia: Sara and Lígia, The Addendum, finalised in 2025, reflects extensive consultation involving over 350 young participants from diverse geographic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds. Its aim is to propose practical, actionable recommendations for integrating youth voices into cultural policy and governance, addressing urgent contemporary issues such as digital literacy, cultural accessibility, and equitable working conditions.

I truly am impressed by this work you have done with your students. To inspire other professors, can you walk us through the participatory methodology used to draft the Addendum? How were voices from diverse youth backgrounds (both urban and rural) included during the consultation and draft phases?

**Sara and Lígia:** From late 2023 to early 2025, we undertook a 22-month process that included an international conference (Caldas da Rainha, Nov 2023), the **Tell Those in Charge** consultation method, regionally designed workshops across Europe, and a think-tank residency in Loulé (Nov 2024).

At the Youth-Action-Culture: Towards Cultural Democracy Conference in Caldas da Rainha (November 13–14, 2023), we coordinated a programme of plenaries, discussion sessions, and youth-led showcases. Over 950 attendees, including young people, artists, policymakers, educators, and cultural agents from across Europe, were in attendance. Crucially, young people—both urban and rural—submitted proposals, shared projects, and participated in co-design sessions that contributed to subsequent drafting.

We then commissioned a transdisciplinary method that combines social sciences, popular education, and global citizenship pedagogy—"Tell Those in Charge" (or "Mandar a quem manda" in Portuguese). This involved locally facilitated workshops across urban and rural regions in countries including Portugal, Austria, Estonia, Spain,

Belgium, the Netherlands, Latvia, Scotland and Sweden, ensuring representation from both metropolitan and peri-urban/rural young people. Participants came from diverse socioeconomic, geographic, and cultural contexts, enabling more varied and inclusive input.

A residency in Loulé (3–6 November 2024) brought together about ten young representatives from different backgrounds and countries, working alongside experts and observers to craft the text and compile inputs into a draft report. This residency was deliberately designed so that youth voices authored the content, rather than merely commenting on it. The final drafting team included eight European young co-authors, alongside eight experts and representatives from partner organisations, ensuring a balance between youth perspectives and institutional expertise.

## GiannaLia: How effective was the "residency + public consultation" model across different countries (Portugal, Slovenia, Poland/Ukraine, etc.)? Were there notable differences in engagement levels or outcomes in each context?

**Sara and Lígia:** The workshops brought together young people from ten countries, including Portugal, Poland, Slovenia, Ukraine, Germany, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Croatia, and, outside Europe, Brazil. This diversity allowed the intersection of different realities, greatly enriching the participatory process. The transnational approach was essential in recognising both common challenges, such as unequal access to digital culture, and regional specificities, like censorship or structural inequality.

The symbolic method was central to transforming these lived experiences into a common language. Through artistic creation and visual or narrative metaphors, participants expressed complex issues—from digital invisibility to exclusion based on gender or origin—in accessible and impactful ways. More than a methodology, it became a poetic and critical tool for translating across worlds.

This cross-cultural exchange not only improved the final recommendations but also nurtured a strong sense of collective belonging and transnational solidarity—something urgently needed in debates around digital rights and cultural access.

Our most comprehensive and well-organised experience occurred in Portugal, where the process was designed and managed. This naturally enabled deeper engagement and more solid outcomes. In other countries—particularly Poland, which included a group of Ukrainian participants, and Slovenia—there was also very active involvement, especially during the public consultation phase.

Although the *Tell Those in Charge* report does not yet provide a detailed breakdown of results by country—something we are contemplating for future editions—the participation of these young people was crucial in ensuring a genuinely transnational perspective. This intersection of contexts and experiences was essential for producing a set of recommendations that are both diverse and rooted in practical insight and cultural richness.



**GiannaLia:** The Addendum is structured around six key themes. Which theme—whether cultural participation, digital culture, inequalities, or working conditions—sparked the most debate or innovation among contributors, and why?

**Inês de Carvalho Costa:** All themes were equally discussed because they are similarly relevant to those who drafted the Addendum. Considering the current geopolitical climate, it's easy to understand how cultural participation and inequalities are significant, given the increasing threats to equality, diversity, and inclusion policies worldwide. From a European perspective, the working conditions of cultural workers remain an important topic; however, it has gained momentum since the Covid-19 pandemic and partly due to young people's demands regarding labour rights. Finally, given the current rise of AI – its potential and risks for the cultural sector, its professionals, and artists – the topic of digital culture is undoubtedly relevant. In summary, the Addendum is a well-founded document that addresses some of the most urgent contemporary challenges while demonstrating that young people have both the knowledge and the will to work towards a better future.

GiannaLia: Under "Inequalities in Access to Culture," several case studies are mentioned (like "Habitar el Palacio," "Rural Hackers," "MON para Todos"). Which one resonated most with the group, and how did it influence your recommendations for cultural policy?

Karolina ROŻEK: I find it difficult to single out one case study that resonated most with

our group, as we deliberately aimed to include diverse initiatives from different parts of Europe, without favouring any particular example. The cases we selected were either personally known by someone in our group or discovered through our own research online. Our goal was to present a broad and balanced overview rather than highlight a specific project.

Inês de Carvalho Costa: I agree with Karolina; however, one common aspect of those three initiatives is that they are based on more empathetic, collaborative, and community-engaging approaches. We are not only discussing accessibility from a passive perspective but also referring to initiatives where individuals and groups are beneficiaries, as well as cultural producers and decision-makers. Additionally, these examples have led to the creation of new cultural spaces—both physical and digital—that facilitate the exercise of cultural rights. These case studies also show how it is possible to reduce the divide between the international and local, the rural and urban, and to alleviate the challenges certain groups face in exercising their rights, not only from a cultural angle but also in terms of equity with the rest of the population.

# GiannaLia: In what ways do you see this Youth Addendum influencing EU-level cultural policies, especially the EU Culture Work Plan 2023–2026? Are there specific principles or measures you hope policymakers will adopt?

Inês de Carvalho Costa: We should begin by recognising that the current geopolitical climate poses challenges not only to EU values but also to international achievements, such as those in human rights. In that sense, the Addendum and the Culture Work Plan encourage us to prioritise culture in decision-making (looking out), while also examining some of the sector's vulnerabilities (looking in). These documents share concerns, for example, regarding conflicts, digitalisation, working conditions, climate change, and the economic impacts of COVID-19. However, they also emphasise culture's transformative potential, its role in shaping sustainability policies, bilateral cooperation agreements, and in fostering fairer societies. I believe the Addendum can serve as a source of inspiration not only through its principles and the real-world examples supporting them but also because of the participative methods used in its development.

# GiannaLia: The Addendum emphasises decentralisation and interterritorial connections. How can cultural managers foster meaningful cooperation between urban, peri-urban, and rural regions, beyond simply setting up digital tools?

**Muriel Lima**: Indeed, decentralisation and the idea of inter-territorial connections are some of the most emphasised issues in the Addendum. So emphasised that the very name of *The Young People's Addendum to the Porto Santo Charter — Caldas da Rainha/Loulé* and of *The Porto Santo Charter* highlights the territorial dimension, referencing the places where they were conceived - locations further from the capital of the country, which we usually associate with being *THE* cultural hub and main centre for artistic production. The digital world, as we know, has enabled the connection

between people, information, and experiences, transcending physical barriers. We recognise that digital realities are one of many ways to live democratically, but above all, a genuinely accessible, diverse, and equitable life also requires experiences with the physical environment. We need to see, touch, feel, converse face to face, hear others' voices, laugh, sing, cry, and embrace new realities. Above all, we need to live through the cities and cultural territories. It is vital that we feel the territory belongs to us all, and this can only be achieved socially by focusing on accessibility. Making spaces accessible isn't just about adapting environments for all types of bodies or ensuring that those with lower purchasing power can access them; it also involves creating efficient public transport, disseminating initiatives from across the country and internationally, and moving towards breaking down the idea of cultural poles. This can be achieved in various ways by cultural managers, through attention-grabbing efforts, promoting emerging territories in the arts scene, or providing funding. However, the importance of good, efficient transport that allows citizens to explore and experience both their own country and others should not be underestimated. No matter how many funds are established or how many artistic events are organised, if citizens don't know they exist or cannot access them and participate, then a truly democratic and artistic society remains out of reach.

Alex Martínez: When we discuss culture, we risk viewing it through a perspective shaped by cities and political and intellectual elites. Traditionally, cultural policies have focused on cultural consumption, industries, and institutions. While recognising the value of these approaches without dismissing the concept of culture, it's worthwhile to explore and learn from alternative viewpoints. What lessons can traditional culture offer to cultural management and mediation? Is the role of cultural mediation so different from that of traditional culture? Concepts like collective learning, horizontality, participation, networking, and mutual support can apply to both mediation and traditional culture. Instead of solely seeing culture as a way to educate and empower, we can also view it as a relational practice that centres people and fosters personal connections. Villages often lack classical cultural institutions like museums; instead, they usually have a multipurpose cultural space used by the community. In these settings, people don't just visit exhibitions, cinemas, or theatres; they engage in cultural activities—like participating in the festival committee, managing common resources, or organising local events. Ultimately, culture involves active participation and decisionmaking, which reinforce communities and nurture a sense of belonging. To avoid binary distinctions between urban and rural, we can observe that city neighbourhoods can resemble villages, and building neighbourhood councils might function like communal assemblies. Historically, city-led cultural policies have often highlighted the supposed lack of culture in rural areas, deeming it necessary to promote access and education in these regions. While these policies are valuable, they do not address the long-standing disconnection between city and countryside. Connections between territories are built through infrastructure, transport, facilities, and resources, but also through symbols. This is where culture, cultural management, and mediation can play a crucial role—not by simply transplanting city-based policies and projects into rural areas, but by recognising the diverse ways of doing and understanding culture in rural and peri-urban spaces. If we genuinely embrace cultural diversity, we must abandon city-centred prejudices and self-absorption, opening ourselves to difference, others, the unfamiliar, and the queer.



GiannaLia: The original Charter highlights institutional advisory councils (points 19–26) involving youth. How does the Addendum expand on this idea, and what mechanisms do you propose for youth to maintain decision-making power in institutions?

**Clara Passarinho:** The Addendum to the original Charter significantly expands the idea of institutional advisory councils involving youth (points 19–26), moving beyond symbolic consultation toward meaningful power-sharing. It urges institutions to "eliminate barriers and invest in a future that fully integrates youth, values their diversity, and positions them at the heart of decision-making", through authentic representation and ongoing dialogue.

However, to translate intention into tangible impact, it is crucial to avoid the pitfalls of tokenism. Many institutional youth councils — though well-meaning — end up perpetuating existing inequalities by only engaging a narrow group of privileged young people. Genuine representation requires recognising that different youth face distinct barriers to participation, influenced by factors such as class, race, gender identity, disability, geographic location, and immigration status. Without targeted strategies to include those most often excluded, institutions risk reinforcing the very marginalisation they aim to address.

To ensure that youth councils and participatory mechanisms are genuinely inclusive and transformative, the Addendum proposes a series of structural changes:

**Revise the approaches:** Traditional participation methods often fail to include the full range of youth. Institutions must adopt new models of engagement and dialogue that consider young people not as visitors, but as co-creators of cultural life. These

methods should embrace dissent, risk-taking, and the redefinition of norms as part of collective learning.

A seat at the table: Including youth in decision-making roles, such as programming and curatorial development, fosters long-term commitment and visibility. Crucially, participation must be accessible to youth from diverse social, economic, and cultural backgrounds, not just those already well-positioned to participate.

Off the radar: Institutions must be open to recognising and funding cultural expressions that exist outside traditional or institutional formats, often where many marginalised youths are most active. Supporting these emergent practices helps bridge the gap between institutional and everyday cultural life.

**Cultural mediators as bridges:** Young cultural mediators can serve as crucial connectors between institutions and diverse communities, helping reshape content and methods to be more relevant, accessible, and engaging. Creating paid opportunities for these roles is vital to foster long-term inclusion.

**Sustainable funding and governance:** Youth engagement must be integrated into institutional strategy, with dedicated and transparent funding mechanisms that ensure continuity, especially for those working in under-resourced or structurally disadvantaged areas.

These principles are already being implemented in inspiring ways:

#### a) Blikopeners, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The Blikopeners are a group of young people aged 15 to 19 employed by the Stedelijk Museum. Fully integrated into the institution, they act as cultural mediators, lead tours that highlight youth perspectives, run the museum's TikTok, manage their own social media team, and co-organise events. Importantly, they are not volunteers but paid participants, with autonomy and visibility. More: <a href="https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/museum/blikopeners">https://www.stedelijk.nl/en/museum/blikopeners</a>.

## b) Youth Advisory Council (Conselho Consultivo Jovem - CCJ), CAM, Gulbenkian, Portugal

The CCJ collaborates with the Centro de Arte Moderna to ensure that youth perspectives shape the institution's strategy, programming, and educational efforts. Through regular meetings and collaborative processes, young people influence curatorial choices and public engagement approaches. The initiative aims to foster meaningful, long-term dialogue with younger audiences, though ongoing reflection on equity and access remains essential to maintain genuine 89. More: <a href="https://gulbenkian.pt/cam/projetos/imaginative/conselho-consultivo-jovem-23-24/8uj">https://gulbenkian.pt/cam/projetos/imaginative/conselho-consultivo-jovem-23-24/8uj</a>

In conclusion, the Addendum encourages institutions to view youth participation not as a mere checkbox or PR stunt, but as a fundamental shift in power, governance, and cultural creation. Avoiding tokenism involves investing in outreach, inclusion, and long-term support for diverse youth voices — particularly those from marginalised backgrounds. By adopting more democratic, experimental, and sustainable models — and learning from initiatives like Blikopeners.



## **GiannaLia**: "How did the drafting team manage to unite in a "single voice" different visions and perspectives?

**Addendum:** We recognised that youth are diverse, not monolithic. The drafting process was rooted in intersectionality and co-creation, engaging young people from different backgrounds — including racialised youth, LGBTQIA+ individuals, youth with disabilities, and those from rural or marginalised communities. By creating inclusive, multilingual, and participatory spaces, we ensured that a wide range of identities and experiences were reflected in the final document.

#### GiannaLia: With "Digital Culture and Ethical Challenges" as a theme, what concrete strategies or platforms did youth contributors suggest to ensure digital inclusion doesn't reinforce existing hierarchies or barriers?

**Carolina Franco:** First, it is essential to recognise that youth is not a homogenous group and each young person has their own economic and social background, experiences, and relationship with technology. Although young people from the younger generations are born into a highly technological environment, not everyone is on equal footing - both in terms of access to technology and the tools needed to engage with the digital world (not everyone has access to a computer, a phone, or even the internet), and in terms of knowing how to navigate and understand the codes of digital culture. The world we live in requires us to equip young people (and not just them) with ethical awareness and a critical mindset.

In an era filled with discussions about Artificial Intelligence, social networks, and algorithmic culture, it is crucial to train young people to critically engage with technology, regardless of which platform is currently popular. This involves understanding how Artificial Intelligence functions beyond simply knowing how to use Chatgpt. They should be aware of biases, the lack of transparency in the decisions made by the companies that own these tools, the spread of misinformation, the proliferation of deepfakes created daily (and how to identify them), the energy consumption involved, and the working conditions of those who keep everything running. It is more important to understand how web browsers work than just how to search on Google. Youth need to learn that search results differ depending on location, that results do not appear randomly, and other such insights. Essentially, the goal is to bring young people closer to the *behind-the-scenes workings* so they can become more critically minded.

The most obvious approach is to consider this work within an educational setting, particularly in schools. However, recognising the challenges that schools also encounter, public libraries serve as vital cultural hubs for fostering digital citizenship. Moreover, the educational programmes of museums and cultural institutions can be ideal spaces for building bridges between the digital realm and other domains. A variety of activities can be organised, such as hosting a *hackathon* at the museum to create or enhance *Wikipedia* pages related to the artists in the collection, thereby highlighting the significance of open-source technology, cross-referencing, and digital media use; exploring Artificial Intelligence through an exhibition — examining what AI cannot do and the mistakes it might make when generating visual works; and designing supplementary programmes for young people, including debates and workshops centred on these themes.

**Pedro Colaço:** As my colleague said, it is essential to educate users on how to navigate the internet safely and to promote a healthy impact on the digital space. It is just as easy to be wronged as it is to do wrong if awareness and ethics are not actively promoted.

Suppose we want to promote digital inclusion that does not reinforce existing hierarchies or barriers, and ensure that the internet remains a genuinely democratic space. In that case, we must put in place measures that prevent the despotic control and manipulation of algorithms by established or powerful entities. These entities may seek to dominate

the digital sphere for financial gain—for instance, the difficulties independent creators face when trying to gain visibility in feeds that prioritise paid adverts or verified content, thereby maintaining a skewed power dynamic.

A personal example is how music labels have regained control over access to music on platforms by influencing algorithms, changing how consumers discover and perceive new music. It was easier for artists to build fan bases before the industry found new ways to dominate the market.

Even worse, perhaps, is the use of digital tools to perpetuate or deepen existing power dynamics. Digital awareness is, therefore, of utmost importance. Diversity should not be "shadow-banned" or suppressed—it should be accessible to everyone who wants to explore it and, above all, to those who wish to express it.

Racist, sexist, political, and other oppressive agendas should be subject to legislation to ensure that narratives historically pushed by dominant social or ethnic groups are not perpetuated in digital media. The digital space must remain democratic and free from dogmatic or even imperialist perspectives.

Solutions? It is increasingly complex to challenge capital and hegemonic powers when it is so easy to "mute" or "block" lives and stories, distorting perception by making some things seem trivial and others disproportionately important. While legislation is one option, those who make laws often benefit from the current narratives and dynamics of digital spaces. That is why awareness and education are our best tools. We must be ready to analyse the content we consume critically—especially with the rise of Al—and make deliberate choices about what we engage with, to avoid falling into propaganda or being force-fed content by the system. This is even more crucial as many "systems" reveal themselves to be less and less democratic.

About the Charter <a href="https://portosantocharter.eu/">https://portosantocharter.eu/</a>



About the consultation report <a href="https://www.pna.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2024\_TELL\_THOSE\_IN\_CHARGE\_.pdf">https://www.pna.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2024\_TELL\_THOSE\_IN\_CHARGE\_.pdf</a>

The Charter and the Addendum <a href="https://www.pna.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/VF\_ING\_CPS\_AD.pdf">https://www.pna.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/VF\_ING\_CPS\_AD.pdf</a>



#### CLARA **PASSARINHO**

Clara Passarinho (2001) is a director, co-creator and performer from Portugal with a degree in Theatre - Acting - from the Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema and in Directing, and a postgraduate degree in Performance and Digital Technology from the Barcelona Theatre Institute. In 2023, she won the competition for young directors organised by Baal17. She has collaborated with the Yokohama Theatre Group

and carried out research on Rakugo in Tokyo, with the support of the Orient Foundation. She is a member of Culture Action Europe and has been involved in various European projects, having written and participated in more than 10 mobility programmes. She is co-founder of Associação da Minha Rua (Association of My Street), a youth association based in Caldas da Rainha, and created the creative organisation A Rafeira with the aim of promoting artistic creation, reflection on the sector and its sustainability, cultural exchange and democracy in access to cultural enjoyment.



#### KAROLINA **ROŻEK**

Karolina Rosek (2001) is a sociologist currently conducting research on how students engage with artificial intelligence. For years, she has been actively involved in initiatives supporting local communities, with a particular focus on education, culture, and civic participation. She is passionate about art and culture in a broad sense, as well as a dedicated enthusiast of DIY.



## INÊS **DE CARVALHO COSTA**

Inês de Carvalho Costa (1995) is a PhD Candidate in Heritage Studies, specialising in Art History (CITCEM-FLUP, Portugal). Her project, Cultural Heritage and Human Rights: Iberian American Examples (2000s), is funded by FCT and supported by LAPA/UFJF (Brazil).

Inês is also one of the co-founders of the informal and international Network of Emerging Heritage Professionals, the Heritageeks, a group of individuals who met in 2021 during the ILUCIDARE Summer School in Krakow (Poland) and who joined forces to advocate for heritage preservation and the labour rights of cultural workers. Beyond her academic and cultural background, Costa has training in the performing arts, specifically in theatre and acting.



## PEDRO MANUEL COLAÇO

Pedro Colaço (2005) is an emerging Portuguese artist, rapper and producer, studying languages, literatures and cultures in Lisbon.

https://open.spotify.com



#### CAROLINA FRANCO

Carolina Franco (1998) has written about culture, youth and human rights. She increasingly believes that everything is connected. Carolina is a collaborating journalist in the media literacy project PÚBLICO na Escola, and director for the independent magazine Shifter. She studied Communication Sciences

in Porto, has a postgraduate degree in Art Curation and a masters in Anthropology - Visual Cultures with a thesis on the importance of trans\* representation in audiovisuals. Her work can also be read in Gerador, Setenta e Quatro, MIL Magazine, Flan Zine, Público.



#### ALEX **MARTÍNEZ**

Alex Martínez (1998) is an art mediator and cultural manager based between rural and urban areas of Spain. His paractice focuses on dance and body democratization, queer ruralities and cultural policies from cultural rights. Artistic Co-coordinator in Plataforma BajoTeja, an art mediation collective specialized in diversity, situated

projects and the right to culture. As mediator, he has collaborated with cultural institutions like Condeduque, CA2M, Sala de Arte Joven de Madrid, CCCC, IVAM, Matadero Madrid, La Red de Teatros... and has worked with organizations like Carasso Foundation, AMECUM, Hablar en arte, Pedagogías Invisibles or La Liminal.



#### **MURIEL LIMA**

Muriel Lima (2003) has a degree in General Studies - Comparative Arts and Cultures and Literary Studies. She has colaborated in several projects: Sete Anos Sete Escolas, a cultural, artistic, and pedagogical initiative designed for public schools; the Projeto Caïel, dedicated to highlighting and reclaiming

the literary, journalistic, and essayistic work of the Portuguese feminist writer, educator, journalist, and translator Alice Pestana; and the theatre show *Ré. Medéia*, that features a team composed of people with disabilities, trans individuals, Afro-descendants, members of the Fulni-Ô community, and descendants of the Kiri'ri Pankararu and Potiguara/Kaeté peoples. She also partipated in the *Youth-Action-Culture: Towards Cultural Democracy* conference which led to the *Youth Addendum to Porto Santo Charter*. Outside of work and studies, she loves being around living creatures and can often be found enjoying a good book, pleasant music, and excellent company.



It has been almost three and a half years since the full-scale, unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine began. In these times of struggle, Ukrainian culture and cultural heritage have become powerful expressions of the nation's independence. Heritage is not merely an artifact of the past but a force for the future, a tool of soft power, and an instrument of resistance.

The Russian aggressor seeks to erase Ukrainian identity and break the transmission of knowledge, traditions, and customs to future generations. Despite these threats, Ukrainians and their international partners stand united in safeguarding culture. Below, we highlight several developments and projects that demonstrate resilience, solidarity, and the central role of heritage in national security.

Heritage is not merely an artifact of the past, but a force for the future.



Heritage Ukraine, logo

The destruction of heritage is a deliberate attack on the essence of the nation. It was underlined by the research community during the international conference "Challenges of EU Heritage Diplomacy", organised as part of the project HER-UKR: Challenges and Opportunities for EU Heritage Diplomacy in Ukraine. The project addresses the evolving role of

cultural heritage in EU external action. A consortium of 15 universities, led by KU Leuven, brings together interdisciplinary expertise on EU foreign policy, heritage diplomacy, Ukrainian and Eastern European memory politics, and cultural practices. The project is co-funded by the EU under the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet Policy Debate initiative. The project's research focuses on the EU strategy for international cultural relations, conflict prevention (with an emphasis on contested heritage and disinformation), and the future reconstruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine.

According to the World Bank's Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment, USD 161 million in damage has affected movable cultural heritage, such as museum collections, as mentioned in one of the outputs of HER-UKR is the <a href="Economic Assessment">Economic Assessment</a> of the Cultural Heritage Sector in Ukraine, authored by Yevhen Anhel (IER, Kyiv). The

# Culture as a component of national security.

report offers a comprehensive analysis of the economic role of cultural heritage in Ukraine. It explores public demand for heritage, the functions of libraries, museums, and archives, and how the sector fits into national strategic policy frameworks. It also analyses government expenditure trends, budget allocations, and funding mechanisms.

This work aligns with recent national developments, notably the <u>Strategy</u> <u>for Culture Development of Ukraine until 2030</u>. This long-awaited national vision now officially recognises culture as a component of national

security. Under wartime conditions, Russia's actions toward Ukrainian heritage amount to cultural erasure, appropriation, and genocide. Russia continues to systematically and massively violate international humanitarian law on the protection of cultural property. As of December 2024, 1,255 cultural heritage sites were reported damaged. Moreover, 90 museums remain in temporarily occupied territories, including 31 in Crimea. Looting is widespread - 34,872 museum items have been stolen.

Among Ukraine's cultural policy priorities are the integration of culture and heritage into the national security system; the systematic use of culture as soft power in education



Re-created mosaics, 2025, Rozetka

and social cohesion; and the development of human capital through modernised professional training in the cultural sector. Protection, preservation, and enhancement of cultural heritage are foundational to this strategy.

The international community is also stepping up its efforts. A recent publication, "Case Studies on Cultural Heritage Funds in Europe", offers a comparative look at funding models and governance strategies that can inform future efforts in Ukraine: this study, presented by Commissioner Micallef to Ukraine's Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications, is intended to support Ukraine's future Ukraine Heritage Fund. It explores:

As of December 2024, 1,255 cultural heritage sites were reported damaged.

- » Institutional and Sustained Heritage Governance
  - e.g. Polish National Heritage Institute, UK National Lottery Heritage Fund
- » Incentive-Based Heritage Support e.g. Fondation de France, Art Bonus Italy
- » Emergency Heritage Response Mechanisms e.g. Notre Dame Public Establishment

The report was developed by the **European Expert Network on Culture** (Culture Solutions, Panteia and KEA European Affairs).

Beyond institutions, civil society and the business sector are also responding. One example is the recreation of *Boryviter*, one of Ukrainian artist Alla Horska's most iconic mosaics, originally created in Mariupol in 1967 and deliberately destroyed by Russian

forces in 2022. Thanks to national business support and grassroots fundraising, fifteen monumental artists came together to recreate a <u>symbolic version of the mosaic</u>, using over 700 kilograms of smalt and tiles.

Back in December 2024, we featured Alla Horska in the ENCATC newsletter, along with other important voices in Ukraine's avant-garde art history. Thank you to everyone who continues to care about Ukraine-its culture and its people. When you have a moment, listen to Melody in A minor by Myroslav Skoryk, or to the podcast on the world-known Ukrainian Kazymyr Malevych.

Supporting culture is not only about preserving monuments and artifacts; it is about protecting people - their identity, dignity, and connection to both past and future. The preservation and promotion of cultural heritage are vital not only to Ukraine's identity, but also to its sovereign future as a European state.



#### DARYNA **ZHYVOHLIADOVA**

Daryna Zhyvohliadova's is a cultural professional and academic from Ukraine with expertise in management and knowledge exchange practices for international cultural cooperation, as well as in strategies for safeguarding cultural heritage. She is currently the Academic Project Coordinator at KU Leuven for the HERitage UKRaine project within the Faculty of Arts, MoSa - History of Modernity and Society, Belgium. In 2023, she was awarded the Youth Cultural Protection Professional Award by the International Arts and Antiquities Forum, UK.

Dr Zhyvohliadova has delivered guest lectures at universities worldwide, including the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (Ukraine), University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), University of Maribor (Slovenia) and University of Technology Sydney (Australia). She has served as consultant to the ALIPH Foundation, Europa Nostra and the Cultural Relations Platform; led the Creative Europe Desk; and coordinated the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) humanitarian response for youth as well as international cooperation at Ukrainian Cultural Foundation. As an individual member of ENCATC, she is a committed youth advocate and promotes culture as a cornerstone of sustainable development.



#### BEYOND OUR WALLS



From June 17 to 20, ENCATC General Secretary GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens was in Paris to attend the 5th Civil Society Forum and the celebrations of the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens drafted this article to share with our audience some highlights from the discussions. These notes are also designed to inform further reflections within our cultural management and policy community, nurturing further actions and policy development.

On June 17, 2025, the 5th Civil Society Forum convened in Paris, bringing together around 60 representatives of

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), both in person and virtually. This event marked a significant milestone, as comprehensive "pre-recommendations" from civil society were shared with UNESCO and the Parties for the first time prior to the Conference of Parties. A dedicated group of 13 volunteer CSOs, representing a range of global perspectives and networks, worked tirelessly and without financial support to ensure the success of this initiative.

As the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions approaches its 20th anniversary, these organisations have raised concerns about the increasing threats to the Convention's core principles of diversity, inclusion, and equity. These values are facing heightened global challenges, worsened by cuts

in cultural funding and pressures on the non-profit and social-impact cultural sectors. Additionally, the digital landscape has amplified these threats, particularly due to rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), which pose risks to artistic freedom, cultural rights, and intellectual property.



The Forum highlighted several key challenges that require immediate attention and action:

- 1. Systematic Framework and Recognition for CSOs: Currently, CSOs lack formal recognition and a systematic framework to mobilise their extensive expertise. There is an urgent need for a structured platform for peer learning, resource sharing, and strategic involvement in policymaking.
- 2. Funding Sustainability: Funding models for cultural organisations, especially for small and independent entities, are increasingly unstable. Public funding cuts and shifting donor priorities necessitate urgent revisions to funding models. The Forum emphasised the need to simplify administrative procedures and to promote hybrid funding strategies that combine grants with entrepreneurial activities.
- 3. Long-term CSO Engagement: It is crucial to sustain voluntary contributions and secure financial and technical support for CSO observers in governance bodies. Monitoring systems should track Parties' financial support to facilitate broad and equitable CSO participation, particularly from developing countries.
- 4. Enhanced International Cooperation: The Forum advocates for stronger integration of the Convention into international policymaking and interagency collaboration. It suggests the inclusion of organizations such as WIPO, ILO, and ITU as permanent observers to strengthen inclusive, rights-based cultural policy.

- 5. Cultural Education and Mobility: There is a need for closer alignment with UNESCO's Framework for Culture and Arts Education and national policies that promote cultural mobility. This includes addressing barriers to mobility and fostering intercultural skills that are vital for community wellbeing.
- 6. Impact Measurement: Improved indicators are necessary to accurately measure culture's contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly within the digital realm, utilising tools like UNESCO's ROAM X universality indicators. Attending the devoted session where this topic was discussed with experts from different world regions, the ENCATC General Secretary took the floor to present the newly created working group on Cultural Observatories and rethinking measurements and its agenda for the next years.
- 7. Al and Digital Regulation: Given Al's significant impact on cultural sectors, the Forum urges immediate international collaboration to protect artistic freedoms, enhance transparency, and ensure fair compensation for creators. It proposes an Additional Protocol to the Convention to better regulate digital markets and safeguard cultural diversity.
- **8. Balanced Priorities:** Parties are encouraged to balance digital-related challenges with grassroots cultural needs. Ensuring inclusive participation and protecting independent cultural actors is essential for achieving the Convention's goals.
- **9. Support for Multidisciplinary Infrastructure:** Strengthening multidisciplinary support networks for artists and cultural communities will enhance cultural rights, inclusion, and resilience, requiring targeted support mechanisms.
- 10. Protection in Conflict Zones: The Forum expressed deep concern for artists and cultural workers in conflict zones, highlighting the urgent need for new monitoring mechanisms, equitable support, and long-term protection, extending beyond initial international attention.

On June 17, 2025, the 5th Civil Society Forum convened in Paris, bringing together around 60 representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), both in person and virtually. This event marked a significant milestone, as comprehensive "pre-recommendations" from civil society were shared with UNESCO and the Parties for the first time prior to the Conference of Parties. A dedicated group of 13 volunteer CSOs, representing a range of global perspectives and networks, worked tirelessly and without financial support to ensure the success of this initiative.

As the Convention marks its 20th anniversary, civil society representatives strongly urged Parties and UNESCO to intensify their efforts to protect and sustain the diversity of cultural expressions worldwide. The future of our collective culture depends on immediate, inclusive, and sustained international action.

### TOWARDS THE ENCATC CONGRESS 2025



# THE FUTURE IS CULTURAL: POLICY, PRACTICE AND EDUCATION

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In early 2025, confidence in the European Union reached record levels. In a time of accelerating change, taking a moment to reflect on recent shifts in cultural policy can help us navigate what lies ahead with greater clarity and purpose.

In early 2025, confidence in the European Union reached record levels. According to Eurobarometer, 74% of citizens believe their country benefits from EU membership—the highest figure in over four decades. Optimism about the EU's future, trust in its institutions, and support for the euro are also at multi-decade highs. This trust comes at a time of heightened external pressure and internal challenges: geopolitical instability, climate

emergencies, digital disruption, and threats to democratic values. The EU's cultural and creative sectors (CCS) are not immune to these shifts. They face structural fragmentation, rising precarity, and new imperatives for transformation.

Against this backdrop, the European Commission is shaping the **next Multiannual Financial Framework** (MFF) for 2028–2034. The proposals include the doubling the EU's culture budget through the new **AgoraEU programme**, designed to consolidate support for culture, media, and democratic values. At the same time, the Commission is developing a **Culture Compass for Europe**—a strategic tool to guide the integration of culture across EU policy. These initiatives signal more than budgetary reform. They reflect a broader **repositioning of culture as a driver of societal resilience and transformation**.

Culture must not be seen merely as a sector to support, but as a vital force for societal transformation.

And this has direct relevance for the ENCATC community: educators, researchers, cultural managers, and policy actors operating at the intersection of knowledge and practice.

This evolving context invites reflection—not only on the proposals themselves but also on the shifting role of culture within the broader European project. For those of us engaged in cultural policy, management, and education, these developments prompt key questions: How can we respond strategically? Where do we position ourselves within this emerging policy landscape? And how might we work together to ensure culture is recognised not merely as a sector to support, but as a vital force for societal transformation? The sections that follow explore current proposals, ENCATC's recent contributions, and the work ahead.

#### From Programme Silos to Strategic Synergies

**AgoraEU** proposes to merge **Creative Europe** (Culture and Media+), and **Citizens**, **Equality**, **Rights and Values (CERV)** into one streamlined programme, structured around the three thematic strands - Culture, Media+, CERV - and thus preserving culture as an autonomous policy area. The objectives of the programme are:

"to promote cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage, to increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the media and audiovisual industries, to safeguard artistic and media freedom, and to protect and promote equality, active citizenship, rights and values as enshrined in the Treaties and in the Charter, thereby enhancing democratic participation and societal resilience within the Union."

While the original identities of each three areas remain visible (see full details <a href="here">here</a>), the programme promises to support cross-cutting and horizontal activities to maximise impact and enhance synergies.

The legislative proposal also recognises culture and the CCS as public goods:

"They serve as a public good, generating meaning and embodying the values of the Union. They are also a great asset for the Union and its regions, attracting sustainable tourism and projecting the image of a dynamic continent on the world stage."

# The approach encompasses four dimensions of cultural value: intrinsic, social, economic, and international.

The approach encompasses four dimensions of cultural value: intrinsic, social, economic, and international. This aligns with longstanding ENCATC commitments to fostering holistic understandings of cultural management and policy.

Notably, the proposal also highlights **challenges** that many ENCATC members experience in their day-to-day work: underfunding, fragmented markets, digital precarity, threats to artistic freedom, and limited cross-border mobility. AgoraEU's emphasis on **cooperation**, **skills development**, **resilience**, **and shared standards** echoes the needs articulated by cultural educators and institutions across Europe.

However, we note that this is just the initial proposal presented by the Commission. A process of negotiation ensues leading to the MFF adoption by unanimity by the 27 EU member states by the end of 2027. **ENCATC members can** thus focus their efforts in joining relevant national advocacy campaigns, while actively working together through ENCATC on foresight and interventions to **make a difference**.

## ENCATC and the EU Culture Compass – A Member-Informed Perspective

In early 2025, ENCATC led a coordinated response to the European Commission's Culture Compass consultation (read about the process in the Call for Evidence <a href="here">here</a> and how it fits in the wider context <a href="here">here</a>). Drawing on internal focus groups and experts, live Member Talks, and written feedback, we articulated a collective vision for embedding culture in Europe's future-facing strategies.

Our position paper called for:

- » Horizontal integration of culture across environmental, social, educational, digital, and foreign policy domains;
- » Sustained investment in cultural and arts education, to foster regenerative thinking and digital preparedness;
- » Stronger international cooperation frameworks grounded in mutuality, equity, and sustainability.

Read the full paper here

This vision was shaped by diverse member contributions. Many highlighted that EU cultural policy must move beyond visibility and advocacy to achieve meaningful integration into the broader European project. Others emphasised that education—particularly cultural education—should be recognised as a fundamental enabler of inclusive, cohesive, and imaginative societies. Several members called for a stronger focus on those working in the field, underscoring that Europe's cultural future must be co-shaped not only in institutions of governance but by those who teach, create, and manage culture every day.

In our response, we also reiterated ENCATC's value as a social learning space and policy interlocutor—a platform where researchers, practitioners, and policymakers reflect together, share grounded insights, and collaborate

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on shaping forward-looking frameworks. And as a side note, I encourage you to join ENCATC's recently created <u>LinkedIn group ENCATC Research Forum!</u>

#### **ENCATC Congress 2025 and the Road to MONDIACULT**

This reflection comes as ENCATC prepares for a landmark event: the **ENCATC Congress 2025**, taking place in Barcelona from 15–17 September. Themed The Future Is Cultural: Policy, Practice and Education, the Congress also serves as a precursor to **MONDIACULT 2025**. UNESCO's global conference on cultural policy and sustainable development.

Beyond the formal sessions, the Congress offers space to connect ideas with action, and people with purpose. Its intent is to explore how cultural policy, practice, and education

can form the **foundations of regenerative futures** – which in <u>my</u> <u>view</u> is done by cultivating **care**, **equity**, **and planetary wellbeing**.

The ENCATC
Congress
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One highlight of the Congress will be the concluding stage and presentation of ENCATC's MONDIACULT Focus Groups work. At the Congress, we can have final discussions around the 6 themes (cultural rights; economy of culture; culture and education; digital technologies; culture and climate action; culture, heritage and crisis) and we will bring together the different outputs to form one position paper. This will feed into the co-created MONDIACULT Side Event which ENCATC will moderate at MONDIACULT 2025, titled "Culture and Education as a Key Tool for a World in Crisis". Co-created with partners from Colombia, Korea, Spain, and Latin America, the event at MONDIACULT will explore how cultural and educational initiatives empower communities to face crises—environmental, social, and geopolitical—while protecting cultural rights and promoting inclusive futures. As convenors, ENCATC and its partners will share concrete examples and policy insights, building bridges across continents and sectors.

The ENCATC Congress is not just a gathering. It is a nurturing hub, a launchpad—a space to discuss ideas, build momentum

and forge shared agendas in the run-up to MONDIACULT and the new MFF. It is a unique opportunity to meet in person and together discuss the evolving landscape of global and European cultural policy and where, as a network and as individual members, we stand in it, and what work can we do together, and with others. Whether your work lies in policy, education, research, or practice, Barcelona is the place to engage, contribute, and lead.

As educators and practitioners, we're not just preparing people for jobs—we're cultivating the skills and mindsets needed to cocreate just, inclusive, and regenerative societies.

#### **Social Learning for Regenerative Futures**

Beyond the mechanics of programmes and papers, what matters is how we learn together. In my professional approach I have long embraced the idea of social learning spaces —spaces where individuals and institutions co-create meaning and develop shared capabilities. And thus, also in my work as strategic policy advisor for ENCATC, I draw on the approaches of Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, and understand social learning as an active, generative process that supports agency, trust, and transformation. In a time of rapid change and uncertainty, these qualities are vital. As educators and practitioners, we're not just preparing people for jobs—we're cultivating the skills and mindsets needed to co-create just, inclusive, and regenerative societies.

Our Congress will shine a spotlight on these practices. But this is just one step. Personally, I remain committed in advancing social learning as a tool for systems change, and regenerative cultural policy as a lever for the futures we want. But **shaping the future is the sort of work that can only be done with others**: I hope to see you in Barcelona!

"In the end, some will get the future they 'want' and thus thrive, while others will find themselves in a less favourable future—but will have hopefully come prepared."— Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies

ENCATC is getting ready. We hope you'll join us.

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#### CARLA **FIGUEIRA**

Carla Figueira (Lic, MA, PhD, SFHEA, FRSA) is a consultant, researcher, and lecturer in cultural policy and management and international cultural relations. She has expertise in social learning, systems convening, and collaborative visual methods.

Carla currently holds a portfolio of roles in policy advising and lecturing, including as Strategic Policy Advisor for ENCATC, the European network on Cultural Management and Cultural Policy education, and a Visiting Research and Knowledge Exchange Fellow attached to the Institute for Creative and Cultural Entrepreneurship, Goldsmiths, University of London. At ICCE she convened for a decade the MA in Cultural Policy, Relations and Diplomacy and the MA in Tourism and Cultural Policy.

Carla is an International Relations graduate from Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas da Universidade de Lisboa (Portugal) and she moved to London after a career in arts management in the Department of Culture of Lisbon's Local Authority. In the UK, she gained an MA in Arts Management (City University, Chevening Scholar) and a PhD in Cultural Policy and Management (City University, Praxis XXI Scholar).

She is a founding member of ICRRA, the International Cultural Relations Research Alliance, hosted by Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen and the British Council. She is a Leadership Fellow at the Sesimbra Social Learning Lab, Portugal, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, UK and a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, UK.



#### What is the rationale of your working group?

Culture plays a critical role in fostering inclusive, cohesive, and sustainable societies. However, to fully acknowledge its contribution, there is a growing need to better observe, understand, and measure cultural phenomena across local, national, and international contexts.

This Working group, developed within the ENCATC Think Tank, aims to provide a renewed and expanded platform for collaborative dialogue and practical action around two interrelated challenges: the strengthening of cultural observatories as essential infrastructures for the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of cultural data, with the capacity to support decision-making at multiple levels of governance; the rethinking of cultural measurement, including the methodologies, frameworks, and indicators used to assess the impact, relevance, and value of culture in contemporary societies.

The group responds to a dual need: on the one hand, to revitalize the network of observatories originally supported by ENCATC and connect them with emerging ones; on the other, to engage proactively with global debates on data-driven cultural policies, the impact of digitization, and the positioning of culture within international agendas such as the SDGs, the New European Bauhaus, and the UNESCO Culture|2030 Indicators.

To fully acknowledge culture's contribution, we must better observe, understand, and measure its impact across all levels of society.

#### What are the objectives?

A core aim is to contribute to cultural policy development by creating a platform that consolidates evidence and practices to inform more inclusive, sustainable, and resilient strategies. The Working group will also foster synergies between cultural observatories and the 40+ cultural networks engaged in the ENCATC Think Tank, identifying ways in which both communities can collaborate on research and indicator of production.

#### On which areas will your activities focus?

The Working group will operate through two lines of work. The first line of work is dedicated to Cultural Observatories and focuses on supporting the development, visibility, and collaboration of cultural observatories at regional, national, and international levels. Observatories are essential for generating structured data and insights that inform cultural ecosystems and policymaking. Strengthening their capacities, methodologies, and networks is particularly important in an era of rapid cultural and technological transformation.

The themes addressed by this group will include mapping of existing and emerging cultural observatories, sharing good practices, methodologies, and sustainability models, fostering dialogue between established and new observatories, enhancing data usability for cultural managers and policymakers, exploring the role of Artificial Intelligence in enablement strategies for observatories, strengthening links between observatories and cultural networks, creating and empowering international spaces for observatories to collaborate, drive broader change and thrive.

In an era of rapid cultural and technological transformation, observatories are essential infrastructures for generating insights that inform cultural ecosystems and policymaking.

The other line of work, Rethinking Cultural Measurement, will address the challenges facing cultural measurement and explore ways to improve data collection in the sector. As culture sectors worldwide evolve in response to shifting social, economic, and technological realities, the ways we measure their impact must also change. This interactive session, led by Dr. Elena Raevskikh, explores emerging frameworks for capturing the value of culture beyond traditional metrics. Drawing on their respective expertise and practical experiences, participants will discuss innovative models for measuring cultural participation, heritage transmission, the contribution of culture to the economy and social well-being, artistic innovation, and other key metrics through a practice-oriented lens. Participants will engage in a collaborative design lab to co-create context-sensitive indicators that reflect communities' needs and policies' goals, in Europe and beyond. The session will conclude by linking these new approaches to global frameworks such as UNESCO's "Culture|2030 Indicators" framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offering a roadmap for future-ready cultural measurement.



#### Who will be members of your working group?

Each of the areas of work described above will have a dedicated chair, an initial team of

members, and clearly defined thematic priorities. The chair for the working line on Cultural Observatories will be Dr. Cristina Ortega (3Walks / ENCATC member), while Dr. Elena Raevskikh (Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi / ENCATC Member) will lead the *Rethinking Cultural Measurement* activities. The whole working group will meet at least twice a year and will engage in ongoing collaborative activities, including events, publications, and policy-oriented actions.

As culture evolves, so too must the ways we measure its value—beyond traditional metrics, toward indicators rooted in communities and impact.



#### What is the rationale of your working group? What are the objectives?

This Working group is part of the ENCATC Work Plan 2025–2028 and results from the merger of two previous advocacy-focused groups: one on the development of artists' status and the other on the fight against illicit trafficking in cultural goods recognizing the interconnectedness of these themes within the broader ecosystem of art and cultural goods markets, this unified group aims to tackle the challenges and opportunities of contemporary art markets across both primary and secondary sectors. By taking a holistic approach, this Working group seeks to better to understand the roles and responsibilities of market actors, ensure ethical standards, and promote the sector's sustainable development.

The Working group on Art Markets and Cultural Goods Integrity (AMCGI) is committed to advancing a holistic understanding of the art markets as dynamic ecosystems at the intersection of culture, economy, heritage, and society. It will promote interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to address issues ranging from artist status and market structure to the prevention of illicit trafficking and the integrity of cultural goods. Through events, policy inputs, and educational outreach, AMCGI advocates for an art market ecosystem that is ethical, inclusive, and sustainable.

#### Whom do you target?

The target of this activity, includes **researchers**: Individuals engaged in academic and scientific study related to art markets, cultural goods, and their societal impact; **practitioners**: professionals working within the art and cultural goods sectors, such as artists, gallerists, auctioneers, conservators, and other market actors; **policymakers**: Government officials and individuals involved in developing and implementing regulations and policies affecting the cultural sector, artist status, and the integrity of cultural goods.



This group aims to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among these stakeholders, at global level, to address various issues within the art market ecosystem, ensuring ethical standards and promoting sustainable development.

#### What results do you expect to achieve?

This Working group is expected to proactively and anticipatively fosters critical dialogue on emerging challenges and opportunities; develop actionable insights and foster sustainable, inclusive, and transparent practices in the art market sector through consultation processes, regular meetings, and public discussions; inform policy decisions, support evidence-based reforms, and advocate for an art market that benefits all stakeholders by disseminating findings through various publication formats, including briefs, articles, and books.

#### On which areas will your activities focus?

The main areas of interest are art market actors (professions, career paths, and regulation), economic dimensions of art markets (transparency, valuation, NACE classifications), heritage and ethical issues (provenance, trafficking, and preservation), and cross-cutting concerns, such as innovation, sustainability, policy.

#### What future activities are you planning?

We will be holding Art talks and lectures on a yearly basis, and we will be participating in several events, including the BRAFA, TEFAF, Art Brussels, ENCATC Annual Congress, and many others. Furthermore, we have drafted a dissemination plan that includes the production of articles for both the ENCATC Policy Tracker and the ENCATC journal.

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**ENCATC** thanks its members and partners for their collaborations to this issue of the magazine!

ENCATC Magazine is a new digital publication with its inaugural issue launched in June 2020. It is meant to educate, entertain, raise awareness, and inform on various topics related to cultural management and policy. It is also created to offer an additional space for the publication of articles to our members, as well as a space for knowledge transfer to our partners (EU, UNESCO, ASEF, etc.)

Our contributors are leading academics, researchers, experts, practitioners, and policy makers. They are recognised by the industry we belong to as influencers. For our magazine, they are generously providing us with high-quality content, commentary, the best industry practices, and personal stories. Their contributions aim to help ENCATC to achieve its mission of helping the cultural sector become stronger and more sustainable. This publication is made possible thanks to the financial support of the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

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ENCATC is the leading European network dedicated to advancing cultural management and policy. Established in 1992, this membership-based NGO unites over 100 higher education institutions and cultural organizations across more than 40 countries.

As a dynamic platform for collaboration, ENCATC fosters the exchange of knowledge, methodologies, comparative research, and innovative practices. It also conducts regular assessments to address the evolving training needs of the cultural management sector from a distinctly European perspective.

Through its diverse working groups, projects, activities, and events, ENCATC actively shapes the future of cultural management and policy. Its impact is further amplified by its unique positions: Consultative status at the United Nations, NGO in official partnership with UNESCO, and Observer status to the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe.

ENCATC's work is proudly co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, underscoring its commitment to excellence and innovation in the field.

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