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**2026 ENCATC Annual Congress – Education and Research Sessions**  
**Nice, 23-25 September 2026**  
**in partnership with Université Côte d'Azur**

**Artists and Cultural & Creative Professionals at the Centre:  
Rethinking Work, Policy, and Cultural Ecosystems**

**CALL FOR ABSTRACTS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS, PANELS AND  
TEACHING METHODS**

**Deadline for submission: Thursday, 5 March 2026**

Dear members and colleagues,

The **2026 ENCATC Congress** will take place from **23-25 September 2026** as a **face-to-face event in Nice, France in partnership with Université Côte d'Azur**. This international gathering wishes to bring together researchers, artists, cultural practitioners, policy makers and educators to discuss the roles, working conditions and support ecosystems for artists and cultural professionals. We wish to reflect on contemporary dynamics and consider how artistic and creative work is performed, supported, valued, and sustained today.

Current debates highlight the need to reassess how the **status of the artist** is framed within different international, national and regional policy environments, and how these frameworks shape the rights, protections, and socioeconomic conditions of cultural workers. At the same time, persistent **statistical blind spots** continue to limit the visibility of artistic, cultural and creative labour, with many professionals counted under other sectors or omitted altogether, reducing the capacity of existing **policies** to accurately understand, value, and respond to the realities of the field. These issues intersect with broader discussions about the definitions, boundaries, and classification models of the **cultural and creative industries**, where divergent terminologies and policy approaches determine which practices and sectors are recognized, funded, or strategically prioritized. There is a growing need to rethink evidence, language, and policy frameworks so they better reflect the diversity and complexity of contemporary artistic and cultural work.

**Such debates further involve re-imagining fair working conditions for artists, creative and cultural professionals, while also critically examining who is considered a creative and cultural worker in the first place.** Importantly, these conditions vary dramatically across regions, nations, and cultural contexts: the resources available, the policy frameworks in place, and the social recognition of artistic and creative labour differ widely, producing uneven opportunities, vulnerabilities, and expectations. Understanding these diverse contexts is essential for analysing how cultural work is organised, valued, and sustained both locally and globally. Freelancing, project-based employment, unpaid labour, and blurred boundaries between personal and professional time have long structured cultural and creative work. These pressures have intensified with digitalisation, new cultural consumption habits, and evolving public funding frameworks, amplifying precarity while also expanding expectations placed on artists. At the same time, many practitioners work collectively or

outside traditional institutional pathways — in community arts, socially engaged practices, informal networks, online spaces, or hybrid creative roles that challenge conventional definitions of “the artist.” These forms of organising often remain under-recognised in policy and social protection systems, even though they shape significant parts of today’s cultural ecosystem. Questions of resilience, sustainability, mental health, and equitable recognition are therefore at the heart of current debates. Policies, institutions, and sector practices must evolve to ensure that all cultural workers — in their diversity of roles, identities, contexts, and organising models — can work under fair conditions and build sustainable careers.

Another focus is on **career development**. Careers of creative and cultural professionals are increasingly shaped by technological innovations, globalisation, and evolving cultural and wider policy frameworks. As professional profiles shift, the **skills and competences** required in the sector are being redefined, prompting new expectations around digital literacy, interdisciplinary collaboration, and adaptive forms of creative and managerial expertise. In parallel, education and training systems -from higher education and vocational programs to informal, peer-to-peer learning- are evolving to address these emerging needs, experimenting with **new pedagogies** and practice-based approaches. Professionals experiment with new tools and platforms, including AI and digital media, while adapting to changing audience expectations, institutional priorities, and funding models. Furthermore, career development at the international level -through residencies, collaborations, festivals, and cross-border mobility plays a crucial role in building reputation, skills, and professional networks. Finally, issues of diversity and inclusion have become central to creative work, affecting who participates in cultural life, whose work is recognised, and how opportunities are distributed across the sector. Artists and creative and cultural professionals continually develop resilience and sustain their practices in shifting technological, social, and policy contexts. They position themselves to remain relevant both locally and globally, balancing engagement with immediate communities and participation in international networks. Their voices, needs, and priorities must be clearly communicated to policymakers, funders, and other stakeholders so that their experiences meaningfully inform cultural policy and sector development. Contributions are invited that explore individual strategies, professional trajectories, and forms of agency, as well as how careers in the cultural and creative sectors can be supported, recognised, and made sustainable in ways that account for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Cultural and creative work is rarely an individual endeavour. It emerges within ecosystems of interdependence: shared studios, cooperative infrastructures, peer-learning communities, informal support networks, cultural intermediaries, and community cultural spaces. Increasingly, entrepreneurial activity in this field takes collective rather than individual form. Artist-run spaces, cultural associations, cooperative production structures, and community-based initiatives contest the dominant narrative of the **creative entrepreneur** as independent and self-reliant. Instead, they foreground practices of mutual **care**, shared risk-taking, **commons-based** resource management, and co-creation. Meanwhile, **social and solidarity economy** models are gaining visibility as viable frameworks for artistic work and cultural production. We invite contributions exploring how such **alternative organising models** can be supported and scaled — not only in terms of the environments that sustain creative and cultural activity, but also in the concrete **organisational practices** developed by artists, creative and cultural professionals themselves. Artists and cultural professionals actively structure cooperation, make decisions collectively, share resources, and distribute responsibilities within diverse organisational contexts. A range of governance models and day-to-day practices enable solidarity-based forms of cultural production to function effectively.

Policies, funding mechanisms, and institutional practices must recognise, sustain, and legitimise these collective and often experimental forms of cultural work.

**The conference also invites consideration of how funding ecosystems for arts and cultural organisations, as well as for artistic, creative and cultural work, are evolving and adapting to new challenges and priorities.** Access to sustainable funding and supportive infrastructures remains a central challenge for artists and cultural professionals. Traditional sources — public funding, philanthropy, sponsorship, and IP-based revenue — remain vital but are often insufficient or volatile. In response, new entrepreneurial models are emerging: crowdfunding, digital patronage, cooperative resource pooling, match-funding, and impact-driven investment. Cultural and creative entrepreneurship, blending artistic vision with innovative business practices, offers new pathways for resilience and autonomy. Yet these models also shift financial risk onto individuals, sometimes deepening precarity under the appearance of flexibility. Crowdfunding, NFTs, and impact investment have emerged during the last years as new forms of funding cultural and artistic work. A deeper understanding is needed of how evolving funding and entrepreneurial frameworks shape cultural and creative work and influence the future of the sector.

Finally, we wish to explore how artists and cultural and creative professionals are shaping social and ecological futures today. Across territories and disciplines, artistic, creative and cultural work is increasingly intertwined with social responsibility, civic engagement, and environmental awareness. Artists contribute to public debate, support community well-being, and experiment with low-impact materials, circular processes, local production systems, and regenerative artistic practices. They create spaces for collective learning, nurture civic imagination, and cultivate new relationships — between people, communities, and the more-than-human world. At the same time, the growing prominence of **green cultural policies** — from climate strategies and environmental standards to sustainable production guidelines and green mobility schemes — is reshaping the conditions of cultural work. These frameworks influence funding priorities, organisational practices, and touring or production models, often placing new expectations on already precarious professionals while also opening pathways for innovation and ecological leadership. Cultural policies, institutions, and funding mechanisms must recognise and support the expanding social and ecological mission of artistic and cultural work. New frameworks are required to better sustain those who place social transformation at the heart of their practice. Artists and cultural professionals actively navigate these roles by shaping their identities, asserting their creative agency, and making choices aligned with their values, vision, and sense of purpose.

We welcome interdisciplinary approaches from management, sociology, communications, economics, cultural studies, humanities, arts or policy.

Possible themes include, but are not limited to:

- **Status of the artist, policy frameworks and statistical gaps:** The challenges of quantifying cultural labor; the underrepresentation or misclassification of creative professionals across statistical systems (e.g., tourism, technology, education); implications for policy, advocacy, and sectoral recognition; emerging methodologies to better capture the realities of cultural work; Comparative perspectives on how different countries define and legislate the status of artists; recognition of artistic labor; rights, protections, and regulatory models; debates around professional criteria, income stability, taxation, and social benefits.

- **Fair working conditions, artistic freedom, diversity and inclusion:** Precarity, mental health and wellbeing; unions and other forms of collective organising; fair approaches to rights and protections, social security and protection regimes; diversity of cultural expressions, censorship, artists-at-risk and support organisations and structures; gender diversity, intersectionality, power relations; internationalisation of careers and challenges.
- **Funding, entrepreneurship and new economic models:** Public funding, philanthropy, the promise and pressures of being a “creative entrepreneur”; professional identities, self-organisation, and survival strategies; crowdfunding, cooperative models, hybrid financing, impact investment, and their consequences for artistic and creative autonomy and resilience; commons as organisational and economic models.
- **Creative ecosystems, infrastructures and alter-organising frameworks in the cultural and creative sectors:** How networks, hubs, collectives, residencies, and cultural intermediaries support (or fail to support) creative practice; horizontal governance, shared leadership, and cooperative or commons-based models; collective decision-making, mutual care, and resource redistribution, just and sustainable organisational futures; local, municipal and regional cultural ecosystems and their role in enabling creative environments; synergies between policy making, education and practice; urban and regional development strategies and cluster or entrepreneurial ecosystems; mobility, export and internationalisation strategies; programmes supporting cultural cooperation and cross-border collaboration (e.g., Culture Moves Europe).
- **Cross-innovation, collaboration, artistic practice as social and political engagement:** Artists and cultural professionals working with science, health, climate action, education, business, or technology; what emerges at these intersections; Community-led projects, activism, cultural justice, and the role of artistic and creative labor in responding to crisis and change, including the climate crisis.
- **Skills, competences, learning paths and lifelong training approaches:** Current and emerging skillsets in the cultural and creative sectors in the context of digital transformation, ecological transition, and shifting labor markets; impact of AI, digital tools, and emerging technologies and the transformation of artistic creation, cultural mediation, and professional practices, ethics and human-machine collaboration; redefinition of job profiles; transversal skills and new forms of artistic, managerial, and mediation expertise; higher education institutions, vocational programs, artistic academies, and informal learning environments adapting to new professional challenges; experimental pedagogies, practice-based research, interdisciplinary curricula, and the co-creation of knowledge between practitioners, educators, and communities.
- **Debates on cultural and creative industries (CCI) definitions and boundaries:** Ongoing discussions around terminology, scope, and classification; how different regions and policy frameworks include or exclude specific sectors (e.g., heritage, digital creativity, craft, gastronomy, language, community arts, etc.); the political and economic implications of these definitional choices.

- **Green policies, ecological transition and environmental responsibility in the cultural and creative sector:** How sustainability frameworks shape organisational practices, funding models, and creative processes; implications for working conditions, resource use, and professional responsibilities; environmental reporting, green mobility and touring, and climate-aligned cultural strategies; ecological skills, capacities, and expectations placed on cultural workers; tensions between sustainable imperatives and existing precarity; emerging models of climate-conscious governance, programming, and production.

### Impact & Engagement

ENCATC encourages authors to reflect on impact and engagement because research in cultural management and policy is most valuable when it can inform real-world decisions. Making your intended contribution explicit helps your work travel beyond academia and be taken up by practitioners, organisations, educators, and policymakers.

When preparing your abstract (and, if accepted, your full paper), please include a brief reflection on impact: beyond the academic contribution, what difference could your work make, for whom, and how? For example, you might indicate how your findings could inform policy debates, organisational practice, education and training, sector advocacy, or the working conditions and support ecosystems of artists and cultural professionals - clearly linked to the Congress theme and the challenges it addresses. This does not need to be a full 'impact plan'. A short statement is sufficient, focusing on intended use, likely users/audiences, and practical implications. Authors may describe a plausible contribution (not only proven attribution). Where impact is anticipated, briefly state any key assumptions and the likely route to uptake.

## RESEARCH PAPERS AND PANEL PROPOSALS

### GUIDELINES FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

**RESEARCH PAPERS** (Between 300 and 500 words). The completed online form must include:

- Title
- Author(s) details (names, affiliations, e-mails of all authors)
- 3-5 keywords
- Aim, context, and objectives of the research
- Theoretical framework informing the research
- Methodological approach
- Summary of the main or expected results and conclusions
- Main references (not included in the word count)

As an option, the submission system will enable you to add a few sentences on impact: use the 'Impact Seed' box to describe how your output is expected to create benefit, change, or learning beyond academia. This is not compulsory for submitting your proposal, but it would greatly strengthen the articulation of how cultural policy and management research and education contribute to policy and practice, in line with ENCATC's commitment to strengthening these connections.

**Access to the submission form:** <https://2026encatccongress.exordo.com/>

Please consider that presentations will be no longer than **15 min**. Further information will be provided in due course.

The proposals for abstracts must be submitted in English. All **oral presentations** of accepted papers must be delivered in **English**.

Please consider that approved works can only be presented if an author or a co-author is registered to the Congress' main programme.

Each author may submit **one proposal only as the main author**. There is no limitation for participation as a co-author.

### ASSESSMENT OF ABSTRACTS FOR RESEARCH PAPERS

All abstracts will be assessed by at least two members of the Scientific Committee, based on the following **selection criteria**:

- Consistency of the objectives, approach and argumentation structure
- Methodological rigor
- Theoretical framework and use of appropriate literature
- Relevance to the field of Cultural Management and Policy, and connection to the main theme of the Congress
- Contribution to knowledge
- Soundness of the conclusions

### PANEL PROPOSALS:

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The session should be organized in a panel format, including 3-4 abstract presentations. The description of the overall panel and the abstracts – which should include all the elements mentioned above for the abstracts – needs to be submitted via the online panel proposal form.

**Access to the submission form:** <https://2026encatccongress.exordo.com/>

## TEACHING METHODS

### FRAMEWORK

Teaching methods are intended to provide innovative teaching approaches, exchange of curricula, and e-learning interactive tools for the improvement of conventional teaching, as well as project methodology for student-oriented learning, and pedagogical tools to be applied within cultural management and policy. Innovative presentation formats – e.g. case studies, videos, interviews with experts and leading thinkers in the field, artistic works, etc. - are strongly encouraged. Educational and training materials developed in the framework of EU projects are particularly welcome. All proposals for teaching methods must include:

### GUIDELINES FOR ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

(Between 300 and 500 words):

- Title
- Author(s) details (names, affiliations, e-mails of all authors)
- Topic of the teaching methods
- Main content of the teaching methods (incl. learning objectives)
- Format of the teaching methods
- The new and innovative angle of the teaching method
- Applicability of the teaching method to different course contexts and educational levels

As an option, the submission system will enable you to add a few sentences on impact: use the 'Impact Seed' box to describe how your output is expected to create benefit, change, or learning beyond academia. This is not compulsory for submitting your proposal, but it would greatly strengthen the articulation of how cultural policy and management research and education contribute to policy and practice, in line with ENCATC's commitment to strengthening these connections.

**Access to the submission form:** <https://2026encatccongress.exordo.com/>

Please consider that teaching demonstrations will be no longer than **20min**. Further information will be provided in due course.

### ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING METHODS

All teaching methods will be assessed by at least two members of the Scientific Committee, based on the following **selection criteria**:

- Consistency of the objectives, approach and argumentation structure
- Relevance to the field of Cultural Management and Policy
- Contribution to knowledge
- Focus on new curricula and upskilling opportunities.
- Innovative character of the methodological proposal

## IMPORTANT DATES

- **05 March 2026:** Deadline for abstracts for research papers and teachings methods
- **27 March 2026:** The results of the evaluation are communicated to authors.
- **10 April 2026:** Deadline for participation confirmation.
- **31 May 2026:** Final papers are due (further guidelines will be provided in due course).

## SUBMISSIONS AND CONTACT POINT

All proposals should be completed through their respective online forms. Any questions regarding the Education and Research Session of the ENCATC Annual Congress should be e-mailed to [congress@encatc.org](mailto:congress@encatc.org).

## PUBLICATION OPPORTUNITIES AND BEST RESEARCH PAPER AND TEACHING METHODS AWARDS

While the submission of a full paper is not compulsory for presentation at the Education and Research Session, all full papers submitted as per the deadline above will be published in the Congress e-book of proceedings – unless indicated otherwise by the author(s).

One of the full research papers (only full papers, not abstracts) will be selected for the Best Research Paper Research Award, which includes the publication of the paper in the *European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*, now published in full Open Access (OA) by leading publisher Frontiers, with fully waived Article Processing Charges (APCs).

Any other papers presented at the Education and Research Session may also be considered for publication in the *European Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*. The Journal works independently from the Education and Research Session, which means that panelists are invited to re-submit their papers for the Journal. Still, their papers will only be considered for the Journal upon resubmission – i.e. full papers submitted for the e-book of proceedings will not be automatically considered for the Journal. It must be noted that only papers in English could be considered for publication in the Journal.

In addition to the standard submission track, congress participants are warmly invited to explore the Journal's ongoing publication opportunities, including several open calls for Special Issues. These Special Issues cover a wide range of emerging topics in cultural management and policy, offering inspiring avenues for researchers to disseminate their work beyond the conference and engage with international scholarly debates. Information on current Special Issues and upcoming thematic calls is available on the Journal's website.

The best teaching method contribution will be published in the ENCATC SCHOLAR publication and the author(s) will get a special interview disseminated through the ENCATC channels.

## STEERING COMMITTEE

Elena Borin, ENCATC ENCATC President, Pegaso Digital University (Italy)  
GiannaLia Cogliandro, ENCATC Secretary General (BE)  
Gerald Lidstone, ENCATC Board member, Goldsmiths, University of London (UK)  
Matina Magkou, ENCATC Board member, Gredeg and SIC.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur, (France)

## SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

Claudine Batazzi, Sic.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
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Aleksandar Brkić, Goldsmiths, University of London (UK)  
Elena Borin, Pegaso Digital University (Italy)  
Céline Bourbousson, Gredeg/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Charline Callet, Sic.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Rani Dang, Gredeg/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Constance DeVeraux, University of Buffalo (United States)  
Piotr Firyach, Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland)  
Sophia Galière, Gredeg/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Avril Joffe, UNESCO Chair in Cultural Entrepreneurship and Policy, University of the Witwatersrand (South Africa)  
Linda Idjéraoui-Ravez, Sic.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Toni-Matti Karjalainen, Sibelius Academy (Finland)  
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Patrizia Laudati, Sic.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
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Kristina Kuznetsova-Bogdanovish, University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy (Estonia)  
Matina Magkou, Gredeg and SIC.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Nicolas Pélissier, Sic.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Camilla Rossi-Linnemann, Museo Nazionale Scienza e Tecnologia Leonardo da Vinci (Italy)  
Marine Thebault, Sic.Lab/ Université Côte d'Azur (France)  
Aleksandra Uzelac, Institute for Development and International Relations (Croatia)  
Anna Villarroya, University of Barcelona (Spain)  
Ana Zuvela, Institute for Development and International Relations (Croatia)