



# ENCATC

The European network on cultural management and policy

**BROCHURE**



## 14th ENCATC Academy on Sustainable Cultural Management and Policy

**21-24 April 2026  
Bilbao, Spain**

[#2026EncatcAcademy](#)

An initiative by:



With the support of:



KULTURA ETA HEZKUNTZA  
POLITIKA SAILA  
DEPARTAMENTO DE CULTURA  
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# CONTENTS

**THE 3 PILLARS OF THE  
ENCATC ACADEMY** **3**

**2026 ACADEMY AT A GLANCE** **4**

**INSIGHTS FROM PAST  
ACADEMY ATTENDEES** **7**

**PARTNERS** **8**

**DISCOVER BILBAO** **9**

**STUDY VISITS** **11**

**PROGRAMME** **12**

**PRACTICAL INFO** **16**

# THE 3 PILLARS OF THE ENCATC ACADEMY

## EDUCATING, COLLABORATING, EMPOWERING

Sustainability is a key issue in contemporary cultural management and policy, and fundamental to ENCATC's approach towards all its activities and services. Since 2011, ENCATC has been developing its Green Policy, prioritising sustainable goals, and working with key players and initiatives, such as the Climate Heritage Network. Collaboration and cooperation are at the heart of our vision of sustainability, and in this context the annual ENCATC Academy is a central element in bringing together diverse actors in the efforts for climate resilience.

At the ENCATC Academy, the cultural management and policy community comes together to learn and adopt new approaches, actions and policies. Born from the desire to help academics and cultural actors embed sustainability in their practice, the Academy is now the leading annual event for educators, researchers, managers and practitioners who wish to create sustainable futures through culture. We facilitate exchange and insight through our pillars:

- **Enhancing** knowledge, skills and competences in the field of sustainable management and policy;
- **Exchanging** mutual learning and sharing good practices for educators and practitioners;
- **Energizing** the cultural management and policy community to be key actors in a sustainable future.



ENCATC has been creating and delivering the academies for over 10 years, in collaboration with Goldsmiths, University of London, pioneers in cultural relations policy, and alongside local partners. The 2025 edition of the Academy will bring together academics, cultural operators, and policy makers to develop the skills and abilities needed to face common challenges and create new and innovative approaches to sustainability in the cultural sector. It will offer a unique opportunity to engage in mutual and collaborative learning with cultural relations organizations, policy makers, and individual experts, seeking to create new knowledge for a more sustainable future.

The work of the ENCATC Academy goes far beyond the days of the event itself. By stimulating peer learning, the exchange of best practices, and shared reflections on challenges and their potential solutions, the Academy sets the foundations for ongoing endeavours by cultural institutions, academics and individual professionals, enabling productive connections for further collaborations. Participants of the Academy will leave not only with more knowledge and skills, but also with much more potential for effective and successful initiatives.

# 2026 ACADEMY AT A GLANCE

Hosting this edition of the ENCATC Academy in Bilbao, in the heart of the Basque Country, provides a unique and compelling framework for exploring sustainability in cultural management and policy.

Over the past three decades, Bilbao has become an international reference for urban, cultural, and social transformation, evolving from an industrial city into a dynamic hub of innovation, creativity, and sustainability-driven development. Its commitment to regeneration through culture, strong public governance, and integrated sustainability strategies makes it an ideal living laboratory for the Academy's mission. Bilbao is deeply aligned with global sustainability agendas. As the **hosting city of the Local 2030 Coalition**, Bilbao champions the localisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), integrating cultural participation, social inclusion, and ecological responsibility across its policies and institutions. This alignment reinforces the Academy's focus on the triple transformation—green, social, and digital—while offering participants a tangible example of how cities can harness culture as a driver of systemic change.

The **city's robust cultural ecosystem** further enriches this edition. Its infrastructures represent diverse approaches to sustainability, innovation, and community engagement, which participants will explore through a series of study visits:

- Arriaga Theatre, a historic institution integrating sustainability into its organisational strategy;
- Harrobia, a pioneering performing arts centre supporting creation, experimentation, and ecological awareness
- Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, a global icon of cultural-led regeneration and a key actor in advancing sustainable museum practices
- Azkuna Zentroa is a landmark cultural centre that illustrates Bilbao's vision of culture as a driver for innovation, participation, and sustainability
- La Perrera, a creative hub nurturing local talent, artistic experimentation, and socially engaged cultural practices

These visits, together with a programme enriched by experts and practitioners from Euskadi, will allow participants to engage directly with local perspectives, insights, and case studies reflecting the Basque Country's leadership in sustainable cultural development. Their contributions will ground the Academy in a strong regional context while providing relevant, transferable knowledge for professionals working in diverse cultural and policy environments. Through this strategic location, the 2026 ENCATC Academy offers not only a learning experience but also an immersion into one of Europe's most emblematic examples of cultural transformation, making Bilbao an essential partner in advancing sustainability across the cultural and creative sectors.

# 2026 ACADEMY AT A GLANCE

## Scope and Objectives

- **Encouraging Action at the Organisational Level:**

The Academy motivates participants to **translate knowledge into action**, enabling them to adopt sustainable practices and policies within their organisations. It aims to align participants' efforts with evolving environmental demands while enhancing their operational sustainability.

- **Capacity Building for Emerging Challenges:**

Participants gain the tools, expertise, and confidence to anticipate and tackle emerging challenges in the **green transition**, ensuring that their organisations are resilient and future-ready.

- **Knowledge Sharing and Networking:**

The Academy is a **platform for consistently exchanging best practices, policy insights, and success stories**, fostering collaboration across sectors. It provides invaluable networking opportunities, enabling participants to build partnerships and expand their professional networks.

- **Policy Development and Practical Tools:**

Participants can access the latest resources and practical tools by linking the Academy to **relevant publications, toolkits, policy reports**, and projects. Guest speakers—renowned experts and practitioners—provide **essential insights and actionable advice** that participants can immediately apply in their work.

- **Leadership in the Green Transition:**

Through engaging lectures, study visits, and hands-on workshops, the Academy positions participants and their organisations as **leaders in the cultural sector's green transformation**, contributing to broader systemic change.

## Key Programme Themes

- **Sustainable Management Practices:** Training professionals to implement green, innovative strategies at the organisational level
- **Policy Advocacy and Development:** Equipping policymakers with insights and tools to integrate green objectives into cultural policy frameworks
- **Digital and Green Synergies:** Exploring how digital technologies can drive sustainable innovation in the CCS
- **Climate Action Through Culture:** Highlighting the CCS's role in promoting global environmental awareness and action

# 2026 ACADEMY AT A GLANCE

## WHAT TO EXPECT

- **Lectures and seminars** from leading experts in sustainability in the cultural sector
- **Case studies** designed to develop essential skills
- **Group practical exercises** to consolidate knowledge and encourage discussion
- **Debates** to promote experience sharing with lecturers and other participants
- **Study visits** to enable hands-on experiences
- **Networking** opportunities to forge connections and build relationships

## WHO THE ACADEMY IS FOR

- **Educators** seeking to embed sustainability in their programmes
- **Researchers** in the cultural sector with an interest in sustainability
- **Masters** and **PhD students** in cultural management, policy and related fields
- **Artists** and **practitioners** interested in sustainable practices
- **Cultural actors** including leaders, managers and operators
- **Policy representatives** from local, regional, national, European and international organisations
- **All those interested in and committed to** sustainability through culture

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Learn about the latest advances** in sustainable cultural policy and management
- **Gain or expand awareness** of the multiple dimensions of sustainability in culture
- **Acquire knowledge** on how sustainability and resilience best apply to cultural activities
- **Get acquainted with the cultural actors** that make the sustainable transition possible
- **Network:** build and expand relationships with like-minded professionals from the cultural field
- **Enhance your expertise** in the digital environment and sustainable external relations



# INSIGHTS FROM PAST ACADEMY ATTENDEES

"As an aspiring Museum Professional the Academy is such a great way to learn about unique aspects of the museum industry. You not only learn from the speakers but also from your peers. Each person has insightful experiences to share."

**Ana Selena Mercado, Ministry of Education Madrid - Language Assistant (Spain)**

"A great chance to meet high profile professionals, academics and thoughts which are based on practical themes and real-world cases, issues and solutions."

**Matteo Giovanardi, CCW**

"The Academy gives knowledge, develops personal skills and gives the possibility of establishing contacts, but also gives an excellent picture of the current international situation and directions of the cultural profession."

**Annamária Szu, Project Professional Leader at the Hungarian Open Air Museum (Hungary)**

"To learn about good practices and interesting examples that concern the theme of the Academy. Even if the practices cannot be directly implemented, they can inspire to re-think the existing models in a specific country/institution/organisation."

**Marijana Jurcevic, Cultural Operator, Kultura Nova Foundation**

"It creates a comfortable and open environment where it is possible to discuss and debate about high-level issues and dynamics of sustainable cultural management and policy. Especially valuable are the brainstorming sessions where insights and ideas of professionals coming from different backgrounds merge together and help create new awareness and perspectives into every participant."

**Nicolò Rosada, Student, Maastricht University**

# PARTNERS

## With the support of:



Department of Culture and Language  
of the Basque Government



**Bilbao**

Department of Culture  
of the Town Hall of Bilbao

## Partners:



The Michael Culture Association (MCA) is a not-for-profit organization founded in 2007, dedicated to promoting and valorizing European cultural heritage through digitization and dissemination. It gathers over 100 public and private organizations from across Europe, focusing on cultural content and digital cultural heritage. The association supports various activities, including publications, conferences, and participation in European projects, aiming to enhance the network of professionals working on cultural and digital heritage

[michael-culture.eu](http://michael-culture.eu)



The Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) was founded in 1992 as an independent network of national museum organisations representing the museum community of the member states of the Council of Europe.

Together, NEMO's members speak for more than 30,000 museums in 40 countries across Europe. NEMO ensures museums are an integral part of European life by promoting their work and value to policy makers and by providing museums with training, information, networking and opportunities for collaboration.

[www.ne-mo.org](http://www.ne-mo.org)



Eurocities is the largest network of European cities, with over 200 large member cities, representing more than 150 million people across 38 countries, from within and outside the European Union.

Eurocities' mission is to build places where people can enjoy a good quality of life in a healthy, green environment, where low-carbon and smart solutions make for cleaner air and better public services. And where people can move around sustainably, feel connected to their community and all newcomers are welcomed.

[eurocities.eu](http://eurocities.eu)



Formed in 1952, the World Leisure Organization (WLO) is a non-profit, non-governmental body of individuals and organizations from throughout the world. WLO's most prized partnership is its recognition as a consultative organization with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This recognition provides WLO with a platform to support the work of the United Nations by reflecting its goals in the organization's programs and services. WLO is committed to the belief that well selected leisure experiences improve quality of life for all – from childhood to later life.

[www.worldleisure.org](http://www.worldleisure.org)



Julie's Bicycle is a pioneering not-for-profit organisation mobilising the arts and culture to take action on the climate and ecological crisis. Founded by the music industry in 2007, now it works across the arts and culture. Combining cultural and environmental expertise, Julie's Bicycle focuses on high-impact programmes and policy change to meet the climate crisis head-on. JB works with cultural policymakers to create structural change at a local, national, and international level. JB's freely available resources are the most comprehensive library of good environmental practice for culture anywhere, co-created with the thousands of artists, cultural workers, and creative organisations they have worked with.

[www.juliesbicycle.org](http://www.juliesbicycle.org)

# DISCOVER BILBAO: A LEADING CITY IN SUSTAINABILITY AND CULTURE

Bilbao is the largest city in the province of Biscay and the main urban center of Spain's Basque Country. Historically shaped by shipbuilding, steel production, and maritime trade, Bilbao grew around its port and river, becoming one of northern Spain's most important industrial cities during the 19th and 20th centuries. While this industrial past brought prosperity, it also led to environmental challenges and urban decline toward the late 20th century.

Beginning in the 1990s, Bilbao launched an ambitious program of urban regeneration that fundamentally reshaped the city. This transformation emphasized modern architecture, improved infrastructure, cultural investment, and environmental recovery. The result is often referred to as the "Bilbao effect," a term used internationally to describe how strategic cultural projects can drive economic and social revitalization.

At the heart of this renewal is the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, designed by Frank Gehry. Opened in 1997, the museum's sculptural titanium exterior and bold, experimental design quickly became an international icon. Beyond its architecture, the museum hosts major exhibitions of modern and contemporary art, attracting millions of visitors and placing Bilbao firmly on the global cultural map.



The city is built along the Nervión River, which flows through its center toward the Bay of Biscay. Once heavily polluted by industry, the river has been cleaned and integrated into the city's public life. Revitalized promenades, bridges, and public spaces along the waterfront now serve as focal points for leisure, events, and everyday urban life.

Bilbao's cultural identity is deeply connected to Basque traditions, language (Euskara), and cuisine. The city is renowned for its food scene, particularly pintxos, often elaborate snacks displayed on bar counters and enjoyed socially. Traditional Basque dishes emphasize fresh seafood, local produce, and simple but refined flavors. The historic district, Casco Viejo, is especially famous for its bars, markets, and lively atmosphere, as well as landmarks such as Santiago Cathedral and Plaza Nueva.

# DISCOVER BILBAO: A LEADING CITY IN SUSTAINABILITY AND CULTURE

Reminders of Bilbao's industrial heritage remain visible in former docklands and factory zones, including Zorrozaurre, a once-industrial peninsula now undergoing large-scale redevelopment. This area represents the city's future-focused approach, combining housing, creative spaces, technology hubs, and sustainable urban design.

Bilbao also places strong emphasis on quality of life. The city offers numerous parks, green hills, and viewpoints, such as Mount Artxanda, which overlooks the urban landscape. Its public transportation system, featuring a modern metro, trams, buses, and walkable neighborhoods, makes the city accessible and easy to navigate.



Overall, Bilbao is a city defined by transformation and balance. It successfully blends a proud industrial legacy with cutting-edge architecture, strong cultural institutions, a distinctive culinary tradition, and a commitment to sustainability. This combination makes Bilbao not only an attractive destination for visitors but also a dynamic, forward-looking city for those who live there.

[DISCOVER MORE](#)

# STUDY VISITS

## TEATRO ARRIAGA ANTZOKIA



Teatro Arriaga Antzokia, a historic public theatre located in the heart of Bilbao, stands today as a leading example of sustainability in the cultural sector. As the first theatre in Spain to receive the ETC Theatre Green Book European sustainability certification, it has integrated environmental responsibility into its productions, operations, and building management. Rooted in Bilbao's broader urban transformation towards ecological and cultural innovation, the Arriaga has implemented a comprehensive strategy involving energy efficiency, waste reduction, circular material use, and audience engagement. Its commitment demonstrates how cultural institutions can become catalysts for climate action, aligning artistic excellence with the goals of the European Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

[Learn more on Teatro Arriaga Antzokia.](#)

## HARROBIA – HUNTZA HIEDRA



Harrobia – Huntza Hiedra is a pioneering Cultural Innovation Centre based in Bilbao that is redefining how cultural infrastructures engage with the ecological transition. Through its comprehensive Huntza-Hiedra plan, Harrobia integrates technological innovation, artistic creation, and environmental responsibility to address the climate emergency. Its strategy—structured in three phases—includes actions such as energy efficiency upgrades, intelligent building management systems, renewable energy generation, and participatory waste and emission co-management. Inspired by biomimicry and systemic thinking, the project promotes a holistic model where culture, sustainability, and digital transformation converge. Harrobia thus emerges as a benchmark for regenerative cultural practice, aligning local action with the broader goals of ecological resilience and sustainable cultural governance.

[Learn more on Harrobia - Huntza Hiedra.](#)

## GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM BILBAO



Guggenheim Museum Bilbao is a global benchmark for integrating sustainability into cultural management. Beyond its pioneering environmental measures—such as its certified carbon footprint, installation of solar panels, and energy efficiency initiatives—the Museum promotes economic sustainability through stable local partnerships and the generation of long-term cultural tourism that supports Bilbao's creative economy. Equally, it fosters sociocultural sustainability by engaging diverse audiences, supporting local artists, and advancing accessibility and education programs that strengthen community participation. The Guggenheim thus exemplifies a holistic model where culture, economy, and ecology converge to drive sustainable urban and cultural transformation.

[Learn more on Guggenheim Museum Bilbao.](#)

## AZKUNA ZENTROA



Azkuna Zentroa is a landmark cultural centre that illustrates Bilbao's vision of culture as a driver for innovation, participation, and sustainability. Housed in a former wine warehouse redesigned by Philippe Starck, the venue brings together contemporary art, community engagement, and responsible resource management in an inclusive civic space. Through a diverse programme of exhibitions, performances, and learning activities, Azkuna Zentroa promotes cultural participation while integrating sustainability into its operations, from energy efficiency and accessibility to collaborative partnerships with local actors. Its model demonstrates how multifunctional cultural infrastructures can foster creativity, social cohesion, and environmental awareness at the heart of the city.

[Learn more on Azkuna Zentroa](#)

## LA PERRERA



La Perrera is a dynamic cultural and creative hub that embodies Bilbao's commitment to socially engaged and sustainable cultural practice. Located in a regenerated industrial space, it hosts artists, cultural organisations, and community initiatives that explore new forms of creation, participation, and civic innovation. La Perrera fosters sustainable development by providing accessible spaces for experimentation, supporting emerging creators, and promoting projects rooted in social inclusion, local identity, and environmental awareness. Its collaborative model encourages interdisciplinary work and community interaction, positioning the hub as an essential catalyst for cultural democratisation and grassroots sustainability. As a living example of how cultural infrastructures can nurture resilience and social cohesion, La Perrera reinforces Bilbao's role as a leader in sustainable cultural transformation.

[Learn more on La Perrera](#)



## TUESDAY 21 APRIL

Town Hall. Arab room

12:00 - 17:00	<b>Participants' arrival in Bilbao</b>
17:00 - 17:30	<b>Welcome to the 2025 ENCATC Academy and introduction to the Academy</b> <b>GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens</b> , Secretary General, ENCATC, Belgium
17:30 - 19:00	<b>The Cultural and Green Policy of the City of Bilbao: challenges and opportunities</b>  This session brings together representatives from Bilbao, Euskadi, and EU bodies to explore the city's cultural and green policies, discussing challenges, opportunities, and how local initiatives connect with broader regional and European Union strategies.  Open discussion
19:30 - 21:00	<b>Networking Cocktail at the Arab room of the Town Hall</b>

## WEDNESDAY 22 APRIL

Historical Archive

9:00 - 9:30	<b>Registrations</b>
9:30 - 11:00	<b>Session 1:</b> <b>Sustainable Cultural Management: Frameworks for Organisational Change</b>  This lecture will include methodologies and examples for embedding sustainability in the management and organisational policies of cultural institutions  <b>Iphigenia Taxopoulou</b> , Founding Member and General Secretary, Mitos21, Greece
11:00 - 11:30	<b>Coffee Break</b>
11:30 - 13:00	<b>Session 2:</b> <b>Workshop: Designing Sustainable Cultural Projects</b>  Participants will work in groups to develop cultural projects considering environmental impact.  <b>Iphigenia Taxopoulou</b> , Founding Member and General Secretary, Mitos21, Greece
13:00 - 14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>
14:00 - 17:30	<b>STUDY VISIT 1: Arriaga</b> <b>STUDY VISIT 2: Harrobia</b>
17:30 - 18:00	<b>Session 3:</b> <b>Conclusions of the day</b>

## THURSDAY 23 APRIL

Historical Archive

9:30 - 11:00	<p><b>Session 4:</b> <b>Agenda 2030: From Sustainability Reporting to Impact Assessment</b></p> <p>This lecture will provide theoretical and practical insights into frameworks, indicators, and methodologies for cultural organisations to measure, communicate, and enhance their sustainability. Through a practical workshop, you will learn about sustainability reporting, SDGs, and ESG models.</p>
11:00 - 11:30	<p><b>Coffee Break</b></p>
11:30 - 13:00	<p><b>Session 5:</b> <b>Workshop: From Reporting to Impact</b></p> <p>Participants will work on group to learn about sustainability reporting, SDGs, and ESG models.</p>
13:00 - 14:00	<p><b>Lunch Break</b></p>
14:00 - 15:30	<p><b>Session 6:</b> <b>Localizing the SDGs – Dialogues and tensions between the local and the global</b></p> <p>Local2030 Coalition Secretariat in Bilbao</p>
15:30 - 18:00	<p><b>STUDY VISIT 3: Guggenheim Museum</b></p>
18:00 - 20:00	<p><b>Free time</b></p>
20:00-22:00	<p><b>Networking dinner</b></p>

## FRIDAY 24 APRIL

Historical Archive

9:30 - 11:00	<p><b>SESSION 7:</b> <b>Embarking on digital transformation</b></p> <p>What do CHIs need to know to embark on a digital transformation process? How can they assess their digital maturity?</p>
11:00 - 11:30	<b>Coffee break</b>
11:30 - 12:30	<p><b>Guardians of Digital Memory: AI, Cybersecurity, and the Future of Cultural Heritage</b></p> <p>Considerations on Cultural Heritage and AI</p>
12:30 - 14:00	<b>Lunch Break</b>
14:00 - 16:00	<p><b>Cybersecurity in the cultural sphere and the role of the Cyber Humanist</b></p> <p>Cyber attacks, such as those against the British Library, the Natural History Museum in Berlin, and the Internet Archive, have highlighted an increased risk to digital cultural heritage. These attacks reveal the cultural world's substantial unpreparedness to address these threats. Cyber Humanities represents an emerging discipline that, through a transdisciplinary approach, can address the issue of protecting cultural heritage, including digital heritage, with theoretical and technological tools.</p>
16:00 - 16:30	<b>Network of European Museum Organisations: NEMO's work on Digital Transformation</b>
17:00 - 19:30	<p><b>STUDY VISIT 4: Azkuna Zentroa</b> <b>STUDY VISIT 5: LA PERRERA</b></p>
19:30 - 21:00	<b>Self-organized networking gathering for participants.</b>

## Accommodations in Bilbao

Following our environmental commitment, ENCATC has curated a list of hotels in Bilbao following a Green Policy:

[Catalonia Gran Vía Bilbao](#)

[Hotel Barceló Bilbao Nervión](#)

[Hotel Abando](#)

[Hotel Carlton](#)

[Hotel Illunion San Mamés](#)

[Hotel Vincci Consulado de Bilbao](#)

## Getting to Bilbao

### AIR TRAVEL

Bilbao is served by Bilbao Airport (BIO), located about 12 km north of the city center. The airport offers frequent domestic flights to major Spanish cities such as Madrid and Barcelona, as well as international connections to many European destinations. Regular bus services link the airport directly to central Bilbao, making transfers quick and convenient.

### TRAIN

Bilbao is well connected by rail to other parts of Spain. Long-distance and regional services are operated mainly by Renfe, providing routes to cities such as Madrid, Zaragoza, and San Sebastián. In addition, Euskotren operates regional and commuter trains that connect Bilbao with towns across the Basque Country. The city has several train stations, with Abando being the main hub.

### BUS

Long-distance buses are an affordable and popular way to reach Bilbao. The main bus terminal, Bilbao Intermodal, is centrally located near the San Mamés area. Companies such as ALSA operate frequent services from cities across Spain and neighboring countries. Buses also provide excellent regional connections throughout the Basque Country.

### CAR

Reaching Bilbao by car is straightforward thanks to its well-developed road network. The city lies along the A-8 (Autovía del Cantábrico), which runs along Spain's northern coast and connects Bilbao with cities like Santander and San Sebastián. Driving allows flexibility to explore the surrounding coastline, mountains, and nearby towns, though parking in the city center can be limited.

## Language

All activities and materials will be delivered in English.

## Participation fees



ENCATC Members and  
Partners (NEMO, FRH,  
AAAAE, TAPCS, ASEF)



Non-members

### TO KEEP IN MIND:

All costs for accommodation, lunches, dinners and transport are on participants expenses.

There is no possibility to have a refund of purchased tickets.

Participants who are unable to attend can transfer their ticket to a colleague.

ENCATC is the leading European network dedicated to advancing cultural management and policy. Established in 1992, this membership-based NGO gathers over 100 higher education institutions and cultural organisations in 38 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.

ENCATC is an NGO with a consultative status at the United Nations, it has an official partnership with UNESCO, is an observer to the Steering Committee for Culture of the Council of Europe, and is co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

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