

R1 Enabling creation, preserving memory. For the progressive cultural policy for Eastern Europe.

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Resolution text

1 Across Eastern Europe, culture is increasingly treated as a marginal or
2 instrumental policy rather than a public good. Artists and cultural workers are
3 often deprived of social security, forced to take on additional jobs outside the
4 cultural sector, and pushed into precarious employment conditions, rendering
5 long-term cultural work unsustainable. This leads to talent drain, burnout,
6 emigration of artists and cultural workers, and the exclusion of people from
7 less privileged backgrounds from artistic and cultural professions. At the same
8 time, underfunding of cultural institutions in some countries, such as Serbia,
9 is a political tool used to silence critical and anti-government narratives,
10 further contributing to the precarity of culture workers and undermining
11 artistic freedom. The fair pay and social security of artists and culture
12 workers, as well as good, sustainable funding of institutions, should thus be a
13 priority of cultural policy. The universal basic income for artists can be
14 considered, following the evidence from pilot programmes, eg, in Ireland, that
15 show strong socio-economic profits from such investments[1].

16 Participation in culture needs to be encouraged, especially among young people.
17 There are several good practices already implemented in Eastern European
18 countries, such as free museum entrance days programmes existing in Bulgaria or
19 cultural vouchers covering entry to cultural institutions for students and
20 teachers in Slovakia[2]. Young people need to be treated as creators of culture,
21 not just consumers, and have spaces to create and participate in shaping
22 cultural spaces and programmes in their communities. Culture needs to be
23 integrated into education. There are some good ways to do it, such as school
24 visits to cultural institutions or the Estonian initiative to organise the
25 lessons with trained culture workers[3]. This needs to be tailored to the age
26 and needs of children, to build the habit of enjoying culture, and go in pair
27 with broader reform and modernisation of the educational system. Regional
28 culture and local institutions should be financed to be attractive for young
29 people, and cooperate with schools.

30 Systematic underfunding or neglect of cultural infrastructure also affects the
31 cultural heritage. Archives, collections and documentations of historical and
32 contemporary culture are often neglected or fragmented. Cultural products
33 sectors as early digital art, video games, etc., are being lost[4]. The
34 initiatives such as Stop Destroying Videogames[5] highlight the need for legal
35 and institutional frameworks that allow preservation, archiving and public
36 access to digital cultural works. Moreover, the neglect of digitalisation and
37 the lack of open-source and free digital materials lead to further inequalities
38 in access to culture, especially between big cities and towns and rural areas
39 with little to no cultural institutions. Countries should follow examples such
40 like Slovakiana cultural portal that has digitised over 180.000 objects from
41 over 75 institutions.[6].

42 Promoting cultural heritage and collective memory is an important aspect of
43 building resilience and decolonisation in some countries, such as Moldova or the
44 Baltic States. On the other hand, historical revisionism is a key discourse
45 point of Vucic's or Orban's regimes, and even in democratic countries, it is
46 often a political tool used to consolidate power and spread hatred towards
47 minorities and neighbours. For example, the Institute of the Romanian Revolution
48 of December 1989 was led for 17 years by former president Ion Iliescu and used
49 to promote himself and his political movements rather than conduct independent
50 and reliable research. Similarly, the Polish Institute of National Remembrance,
51 despite some successes, is widely used to legitimise current right-wing politics
52 and whitewash Polish crimes (such as Operation Vistula). While promoting further
53 decolonisation, states should depoliticise collective memory and focus on
54 creating research institutions that promote high-quality scientific research,
55 archiving, institutional intercultural dialogue, and funding for interactive and
56 immersive museums.

57 With this, we urge the Eastern European politicians:

- 58 • Guarantee stable and independent public funding for culture, including a
59 minimum budget threshold;
- 60 • Introduce social protection mechanisms, including healthcare, for cultural
61 workers.
- 62 • Expand participatory cultural governance, including participatory
63 budgeting and public involvement in shaping cultural priorities and
64 programmes;
- 65 • Integrate culture meaningfully into education systems.
- 66 • Ensure public access to publicly funded culture, including the principle
67 that cultural content financed publicly should be available digitally
68 whenever possible and the implementation of good programmes from other
69 countries.

70 CDN will contribute to these processes by:

- 71 • Advocating for cultural workers' rights and proper culture funding,
72 including social security and fair pay, and promoting evidence-based
73 policy arguments and good practices from Eastern European countries;
- 74 • Continuing its work to provide counter- and alternative narratives
75 addressing populist use of prejudices and collective memory, supporting
76 intercultural dialogue and decolonisation processes;
- 77 • Promoting digital access and archiving of culture, including open-access
78 cultural content or initiatives to preserve endangered cultural forms;
- 79 • Working with its partners to develop youth-focused cultural participation
80 programmes, with emphasis on active creation, such as a guidebook for
81 leading school theatre or peer-led performances on important environmental
82 issues

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- 84 [1] Department of Culture, Communications and Sport. (2025, September 22). Basic
85 Income for the Arts pilot produced over €100 million in social and economic
86 benefits. Government of Ireland. <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-culture-communications-and-sport/press-releases/basic-income-for-the-arts-pilot-produced-over-100-million-in-social-and-economic-benefits/>
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- 89 [2] Council of Europe. Culture vouchers in: Strategy 21 - Good practices.
90 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/-/back-to-school>
- 91 [3] Council of Europe. Back to School in: Strategy 21 - Good practices.
92 <https://www.coe.int/en/web/culture-and-heritage/-/back-to-school>
- 93 [4] Campbell, I. C. (2020, November 19). The Internet Archive is now preserving
94 Flash games and animations. The Verge.
95 <https://www.theverge.com/2020/11/19/21578616/internet-archive-preservation-flash-animations-games-adobe>
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- 97 [5] European Citizens' Initiative. Stop Destroying Videogames. https://citizens-initiative.europa.eu/initiatives/details/2024/000007_en
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- 99 [6]<https://slovakiana.sk/en/about-slovakiana>