

B U L G A R I A N  
M E M O R Y  
F O U N D A T I O N



## **REPORT**

# **Good European Practices in Intercultural Connectivity, Creativity and Entrepreneurship**

Erasmus+ Project 2020-1-BG01-KA227-YOU-095019:

“Entrepreneurship and connectivity of young people in  
the Balkans through creativity and culture”



# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **SUMMARY**

### **CHAPTER 1. BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS**

**1.1. Terminological explanation of the basic concepts**

**1.2. Interpersonal and Intercultural Relationship of Entrepreneurship in the Emerging Spatial-Temporal Modifications**

**1.3. The inter-relation "values-culture-European identity-creativity-entrepreneurship"**

### **CHAPTER 2. THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTORS**

**2.1. Coronavirus consequences for the cultural sector**

**2.2. The impact of the coronavirus on cultural sectors**

**2.4. The Future of Culture and Creative sectors in post-COVID-19 Europe**

### **CHAPTER 3. SUCCESS EXAMPLES IN THE THREE COUNTRIES (BULGARIA, REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA AND SERBIA)**

**3.1. Bulgaria – a successful example**

**3.2. The Republic of North Macedonia – a successful example**

**3.3. Serbia – a successful example**

*This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.*

## SUMMARY

The Report with Good European Practices in Intercultural Connectivity, Creativity and Entrepreneurship is the First Intellectual Output of the Erasmus+ project: “Entrepreneurship and connectivity of young people in the Balkans through creativity and culture” [2020-1-BG01-KA227-YOU-095019], implemented by the Bulgarian Memory Foundation, Bulgaria – Project Coordinator, and the Association for Macedonian-Bulgarian Friendship, Republic of North Macedonia & GLAS, Serbia.

The main objective of the project is, through creative and cultural tools, to create an innovative methodology for the development of entrepreneurship and creativity among young people in the Balkans, to be developed and tested with 15 youth workers and 60 young people (50% of them disadvantaged), \*contributing to their personal development, active civic participation and connection; \*strengthening the capacity of organizations engaged in the cultural sphere and \*being an open educational resource (OER).

Specific project objectives are:

- \* Analysis and synthesis of good European practices in the field of intercultural connectivity, creativity and entrepreneurship, with a focus on young people, incl. disadvantaged;
- \* Elaboration of an innovative methodology for the development of entrepreneurship and creativity, applicable in formal and non-formal education;
- \* Testing the methodology among young people, youth workers, and stakeholders, encouraging their commitment and civic participation;
- \* Creating an online platform (in accordance with the methodology) with activities, videos and exercises that stimulate the creation of creative content (OER);

- \* Development of digital skills in order to accelerate the digital transformation of creative and cultural activities, making them accessible to the maximum number of people in the conditions of COVID-19 pandemic;
- \* Development of the creative potential of youth in the Balkans, contributing to the sustainability of the cultural and creative sectors;
- \* Development of civic and intercultural competencies;
- \* Building connectivity between EU citizens and the Western Balkans, promoting European identity and culture as a key factor for social inclusion and mutual understanding;
- \* Strengthening the international dimension in the activities of the partners.

### ***Subject, aim and objectives of the report***

**The main ideas** framed in the “**Report with Good European practice in Intercultural Connectivity, Creativity and Entrepreneurship**” are the cultural understandings of tradition and their implementation in the socio-economic spheres of the cultural sector during the coronavirus pandemic, by putting the already existing concepts in the national states within a European context.

**The main subject** is the activities, which the cultural sector has been able to implement in the face of a global pandemic.

### **This report has the following objectives:**

- Presenting the terminological nature of the subject matter;
- Analyzing contemporary societal attitudes;
- Tracing the historical justifications for cultural entrepreneurship and its use in different societal aspects;
- Examining the cultural model and the underlying principles for its implementation in entrepreneurial activity;

- Describing cultural sector during a pandemic;
- Viewing upon digitalization as a new resource for cultural realization of events;
- Interconnecting the three countries through creativity and culture.

### ***Structure of the report***

This report is divided into three main chapters:

**The first chapter:** “*Basic terms and concepts*”, covers the theoretical aspects of cultural entrepreneurship and cultural understanding. Key concepts that are used in the report are defined and thoroughly explained.

**The second chapter** is entitled: “*The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the creative and cultural sectors*”. It analyses, on the one hand, the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural and creative sectors in Europe and, on the other hand, the opportunities that Industry 4.0 offers, in terms of digital online cultural content that reaches a maximum number of European citizens without the need for them to be physically present at an event. In a context of social distance and various restrictive measures, the crucial role of digitization is highlighted: to preserve the continuity of cultural and creative activities.

**The third chapter:** “*Success examples in the three countries (Bulgaria, Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia)*” focuses on intercultural and interpersonal connectivity, placing a specific focus on organizations engaged in cultural and creative activities. In addition, good examples from the three countries are given, concerning participation in cultural events, creative and entrepreneurial initiatives of young people disadvantaged, due to ethno-religious and/or socio-economic factors.

This report could be used for non-formal training of young people, youth workers and other relevant stakeholders. It will help them understand better the challenges in front of the creative and cultural sector in times of lockdown and social distancing. It is an Open Educational Resource on what action the EU takes to revive and strengthen the creative industry, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

# CHAPTER 1.

## BASIC TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Within the framework of the European Union and the European identity that develops within a multicultural environment, the idea of improving entrepreneurial skills in cultural diversity is dynamically developing.

Precisely because of the rapid growth of the societal economic spheres, competences such as:

- ❖ Discovering new opportunities;
- ❖ Creativity;
- ❖ Quality assessment skills;
- ❖ Evaluating ideas;
- ❖ Ethical and sustainable thinking;
- ❖ Self-awareness and self-efficacy;
- ❖ Motivation and perseverance;
- ❖ Mobilizing resources;
- ❖ Financial literacy;
- ❖ Mobilizing and inspiring others;
- ❖ Taking initiative;
- ❖ Planning and management;
- ❖ Skills to deal with uncertainty and risks;
- ❖ Working with others;
- ❖ Learning through experience

– proving to be necessary in the professional development of young people and the newly graduated specialists. However, practice proves the new generation do not develop these skills in the process of formal education, but on the contrary – integrating them into multicultural environments in the process of constant communication with the other, the different.

This is the point where in that exact direction the transversal, digital and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills are used through cultural and creative tools to contribute to the dealing process of the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As youth in the biennium were forced to use digital tools to solve problems, not only in a career and educational aspect but also in a social one, the skills acquired throughout the period find their significance in entrepreneurship and connectivity through the providence of creativity and culture.

According to the Plan endorsed by the European Commission in 2020, the strategy for "smart, sustainable and inclusive growth" focuses on turning creative, innovative and diverse ideas into new goods and services in the labor market that generates growth, high-quality jobs and help solve the European and global social problems through entrepreneurship. Although the Commission's Report does not mention the forthright intervention of cultural diversity as an instrument for solving the problems caused by the pandemic, the fact that the intervention of the policies was being specified at regional, national and European levels, involves the interference of culture in an individual and collective aspect.

For this reason, the culture plays a significant role in the social spheres of entrepreneurial skills - creativity, innovation, intelligence, the ability to think outside the box, etc. The innovative and creative solutions must satisfy a specified need and generate a profit. Through the development of current enterprises and the creation of new ones, both creativity and innovation contribute to a country's entrepreneurial success according to the cultural dimensions of the country.



## 1.1. Terminological explanation of the basic concepts

Defining concepts, topics, statistics and their clarification for a practical-applied activity is of a particular importance because a word, a sentence or even a phrase carries a different meaning for different people.

**In this report, the words: culture, collectivism, European, creativity and entrepreneurship are widely used.** Each one of these concepts has its basic meaning and specification, which report takes into consideration. Moreover, the multiplicity of some concepts and their differentiation in relation to each of the countries of the world is different. That is the reason why each term is used in a commonly accepted version at the European level.

**The classification of the concepts relies on several fundamental aspects, such as:**

- Conceptual explanation of the concepts versus historical formulations and characteristics;
- Conceptual definition using in the report;
- The application of the concept in the contemporary environment;
- The interpretation according to the European common standard.

### *Defining the term culture*



*Figure 1 – Multiculturalism*





*Source: Wolfestonegroup.com*


Perceptions and understandings of culture in the public sphere rest on language, religion, habits, traditions, and even some types of art. Moreover, the meaning of culture nowadays is categorized in terms of the national awareness. For example, Greek nationality, French nationality, etc. and, at EU level - European nationality or citizenship. Therefore, defining culture turns out to be a problematic issue.

It is historically proven that the word “culture” came from the Latin word “Colere”, which is the infinitive form of the verb “cole”. The verb “cole” actually means cultivation and this can include land, space or human character or behavior/ manners. Thus, cultures, perceived under the concept, are not coherent and denote different phenomena.

The first mass use of the term is recorded in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, through which the growth of European society or the so-called cultivation of the multitude of peoples to walk and develop in one direction was the evidence. But in the 19th century, emphasis was laid on the cultural development in the sphere of the educational system - refinement and intellectualization of society.

However, in the 20th and 21st century, emphasis was placed on an anthropological understanding of the concept, culture being characterized as a set of actions that cannot be genetically explained. Over the course of time, culture affected several basic understandings:

-  The ability of citizens to identify themselves according to certain symbols;
-  Distinctive racial characteristics;
-  Distinctive national activities and historical events;
-  Self-determination on religious grounds;

 A lifestyle according to the nation-state.

These specificities are the “intangible values” of a society, such as language, conventions, etc., which serve as the basic signifier of the term “culture”. The “tangible values” are everything that each civilization produces or had historically built.

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, culture is the way of life, especially the common customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time. But in the European framework, culture is represented as a compulsory respect for different cultural perceptions, based on democratic values and rights. European society brings all these differences together in a new form of cultural signification – European culture and “the development of Europe's cultural heritage”.

TEU states that in the field of culture, the Union has the competence "to take actions to support, coordinate or complement Member States “actions”. The TFEU states that the Union must work for the flourishing of the cultures of the Member States while respecting their national and regional diversity. EU action must promote cooperation between the Member States to spread knowledge about the culture and history of the peoples of Europe.

Of course, the European Union is a community that does not discriminate, but accepts diversity and by accepting the role of this type of instrument, the cultural autonomy of each member state of the union is recognized as long as it does not restrict minority groups or citizens who define themselves differently.

In this report, the term “culture” is used as an understanding of the difference and at the same time promoting the national. In other words, the culture of each country is relevant and how the country itself has dealt with its cultural activities during the pandemic situation, are the main themes. Therefore, respect

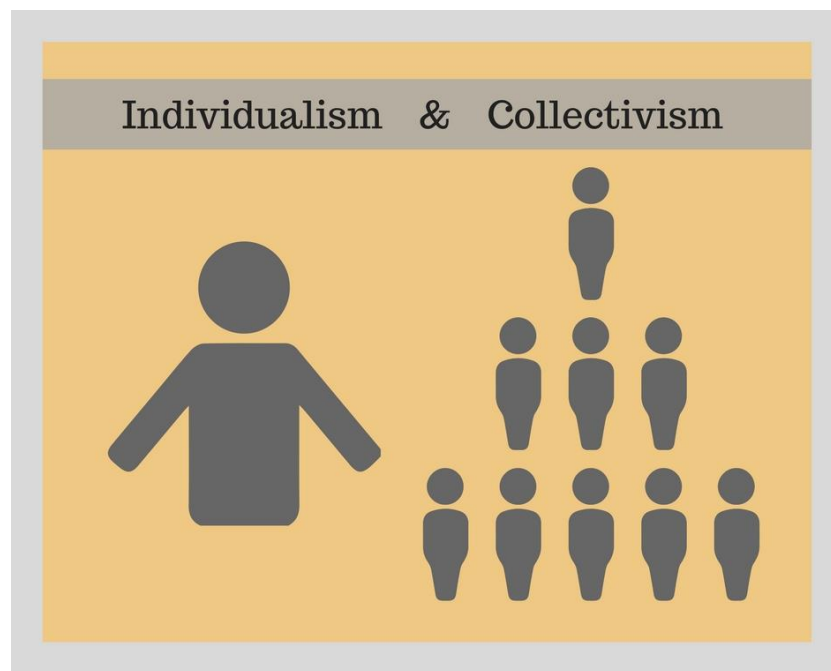
for diversity is a fact, as well as the personal and private choices at the state-territorial level.



### *Defining “Collectivism”*

Collectivism as a value and a type of emphasis in the present paper encompasses the spatial and geographical action of a group of people. The emphasis is on the “many” rather than the “few”.

The term itself denotes collective action and is used in groups collectively gathered by certain values, activities or spiritual understandings - the alliance and the community is more important than the individual (fig. 2).



*Figure 2 – Difference between collectivism and individualism*

*Source: Differencebetween.net*

Since antiquity, the philosopher and scientist Aristotle distinguished the civic theory of social happiness itself. In his work “Politics”, he states the importance of the polis and why it is more important than the individual is. Since his idea of a successful empire and polis were directly connected as well as the functions of the human organism and the interconnected organs, he perceived the importance of society as a whole rather than independently. These are the so-

called "sum of parts" which have their own individual role, but without the participation of the other constituent parts, cannot be fruitful – “the community is more important than the part”.

Other thinkers, scholars and philosophers have written after him, some supporting him and others criticizing him, but ultimately, historically speaking, the word and concept of “collectivism” itself has had been promoted since 1762 in a dialogical aspect. The philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau described the “social contract”, according to which each person has a social contract with society and if the agreement in question is respected, the good functioning of the state structure will be maintained.

In European terms, Europe promotes collectivism as one of the values of the Union through which more will be achieved together. Examples of European policies that have already been adopted in this area are precisely the green themes, the electric cars and even the latest one on combating the pandemic and vaccines.

Nowadays, collectivism is not so applicable in some parts of the world, but in these dynamic years, one cannot survive alone. That is why people help each other and, thanks to their common interests, principles and values – they walk together.



### *Defining “European”*

The term 'European' includes geographical, historical and cultural factors that contribute to varying degrees of building a European identity based on shared historical ties, ideas and values - without overthrowing of each country’s national identity.

According to Western European Studies: Geography, European identity and the criteria used to identify “Europeans” emerge as a focus of interest. Thanks to the diversity of cultures, EU Member States have become multi-ethnic and multicultural societies, raising issues of (multiple) identities at national, regional

and local levels within the EU. A concept of a single European identity would see it built through a process similar to that of creating national identities. EU cultural and educational policy initiatives seek to promote the creation of a common consciousness and shared identity beyond existing local and national similarities.

European identity also refers to personal identification with the European Union. We can also deduce from the European identity symbols such as the European flag, the anthem, the holiday of Europe, the single currency - the euro and others.



### *Defining “Creativity”*



*Figure 3 – Creativity*

*Source: Aiche.org*

The process of creativity entails the development of innovative and distinctive ideas or concepts as well as the formation of new linkages between pre-existing ideas or concepts. The outcomes of creative thought, also known as divergent thought, are seen frequently as having both “original” and “appropriateness” from a scientific perspective. According to the Cambridge dictionary, the definition of creativity is the ability to produce or use original and unusual ideas.

Numerous explanations for creativity exist, including supernatural inspiration or intervention, cognitive processes, the social environment,

personality attributes, and chance. It has been connected with comedy, mental illness, and brilliance. Some claim it is a quality we are born with, while others assert that it could be learned via the use of basic practices. Although it is frequently linked with the arts and literature, creativity and invention are crucial to careers in business, economics, architecture, industrial design, science, and engineering. The search for creative ideas and the development of creativity approaches have given rise to entire businesses, maybe in spite of the ambiguity and multifaceted character of creativity.

In the history, there is no clear and specific opinion on the concept, but philosophers Plato and Aristotle formed the concept of inspiration, which was considered as a synonymous with creativity. Eventually, the word “creation” emerged in the 17th century from the Polish poet and theorist Maciej Kazimierz Sarbiewski, who is also known as "the last Latin poet." He derived from the poet's profession, the moment of construction - the poet "creates anew" in the "God's way".

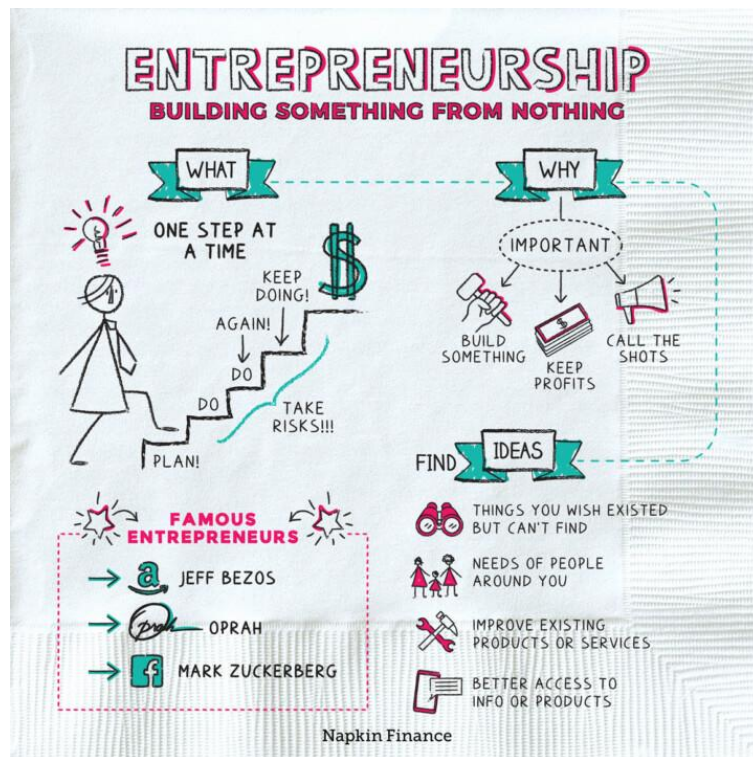
Europe tries to agitate the young generation and the new to develop new ideas by also emerging as a dominant skill for youth development in modern times. On this principle, “innovative schools” are also formulated according to a European standard, which 70% of the time includes the active use of new techniques and resources.



### ***Defining “Entrepreneurship”***

Contrary to what is argued in most literature on entrepreneurship, the term “entrepreneur” is quite old and variously perceived across time-space. Quite a few writers and researchers emphasize that depending on the conceptualization of society and the basic needs of humanity, entrepreneurship has had been characterized by multiple terms according to the situation. For example, cultural entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, or an example from the 21st century is

social ecology, which quite a few entrepreneurs develop as multiple ideas. In addition, the meanings of words and terms change often over time, especially when they are used in different situations and at different times.



**Figure 4 – What is entrepreneurship**

**Source: Napkinfinance.com**

Historically, the word “entrepreneur” derives from the French language and the verb “entreprendre”, which means, “to achieve something” or “undertake” in the 14th century. Back then, a person who started a commercial enterprise was meant by this terminology - an entrepreneur. On the other hand, the term was officially introduced by Richard Cantillon in 1730, who was an economist. His basic idea for the use of the word structured as a distinctive quality of an entrepreneur - it defined the willingness to take the financial risk of a new enterprise.

In the 19th century, the term was also formally adopted in the qualified circles of academic professionals - popularized by Jean-Baptiste Say and John Stuart Mill, who were also economists.



In the European sphere, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs as businesspersons are seen as the main conceptualized tools for economic growth, creating new businesses, opening jobs, developing new markets, developing new skills and capabilities. According to an official communication and report of the European Commission issued in 2013 entitled “Entrepreneurship 2020 Action Plan – Reviving Entrepreneurship in Europe”, entrepreneurship “contributes to a more competitive and innovative economy and is a crucial factor in achieving the objectives set out in several sectorial policies at European level”. For these reasons, in all Member States in EU, since 2013, specific courses, training and even vocational training for students to acquire knowledge and skills related to entrepreneurship have had been introduced in the educational sphere.

In this report, entrepreneurship is viewed upon as a key competitive resource for countries' economic and cultural development. Several fundamental aspects are analyzed, such as:



Culture – a restoration and economic spatial resource for the past and future generation in the national aspect;



Digitalization - a new key element for a successful business model;



Communication - the exchange of ideas and celebration of the main socially constructive themes;



Initiative - taking action.

Entrepreneurial activity is extremely important as it can explain between 1/3 and 1/2 of the differences in economic growth rates between countries. Furthermore, impressive economic-related results have had been recorded at stationery and local level by numerous global agencies.

## **1.2. Interpersonal and Intercultural Relationship of Entrepreneurship in the Emerging Spatial-Temporal Modifications**

Reflection on the basic ideas, understandings and future goals of society, on a rather large scale, and the differences of citizens around the world, formulate, albeit unconsciously, problems related to the communication channels of citizenship. The interrelationships between cultural understandings and personal interests began to change over time, and after the pandemic of COVID-19, have been modified. Attendance and face-to-face meetings were replaced by online communication resources. Workplaces accommodated different ways of hiring workers, even digitally (remote interviews). People started to have difficulties in having a dialogue and because of the social effects caused by the pandemic – it is easier for citizens to do everything online and without meeting other people.

Naturally, this way of working has its pros, but the cons are also there. Because cross-cultural communication in the business industry uses the natural characteristics of other cultures as a means to exchange ideas and identify possible problems, in a space where everything happens online and digitally, people lose touch with each other. Furthermore, in the global marketplace, commercial interaction and strategic decision-making by representatives of many cultures presents a difficulty in an age that lacks the dialogic and mannered relationship of a real social environment rather than a computer one.

The level of organizational commitment and outcomes in multinational ventures are influenced by the cultures of countries and organizations. According to some analysts, there are significant effects of country culture variations on trust and commitment in exporter-distributor relationships in entrepreneurship. Also, it has been shown that communication may affect trust and commitment differently than in national relationships, where the level of loyalty to the entrepreneur from a foreign culture is strongly related to financial performance.

It is necessary to rely on appropriate theoretical and practical-applied solutions and a well-organized system of practical communication activities to deal effectively with international constructive communication and the shaping of new innovative entrepreneurial ideas.

To improve cross-cultural communication, it is essential to analyze several factors related to internationalization during and after the global pandemic:

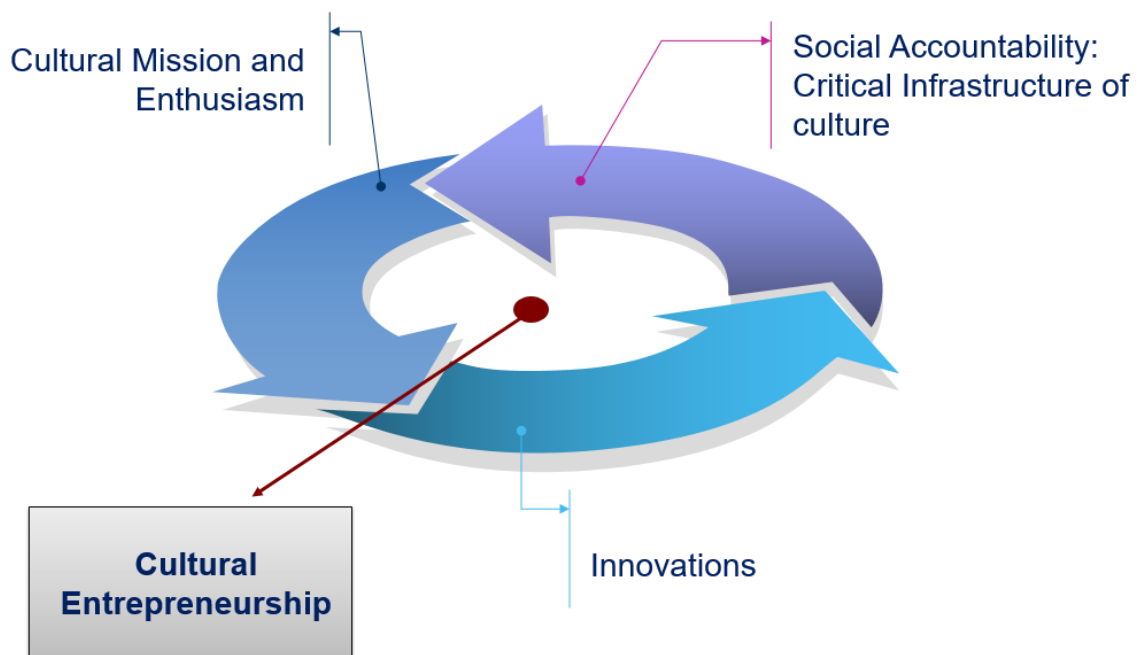
- ✚ The definitional aspect of cultural entrepreneurship;
- ✚ The importance of cultural entrepreneurship;
- ✚ European's maintenance of cultural entrepreneurship;
- ✚ Digital transformation;
- ✚ The involvement of young people in the cultural sector.

### ***The definitional aspect of cultural entrepreneurship***

In the 21st century, the expression “cultural entrepreneurship” is used quite frequently, reflecting the rapidly growing importance of the “quaternary sector of the economy” comprising idea-based enterprises (e.g. culture). It is usually associated primarily with “cultural industries”, a phrase that refers to both the production and provision of services for commercial mass culture and the fine arts (arts, dance, public holidays, and national activities). The phenomenon of culture weaves like a thread through the idea of entrepreneurship, making it a complex idea. It could be expected that among cultural entrepreneurs, culture is the main driving element that is immutable.

The conceptualization of cultural entrepreneurship consists of three interrelated components and formulate the schematic overview of cultural entrepreneurship. Figure № 5 shows the three main concepts: “cultural mission and enthusiasm”; “innovation” and “social accountability”. At the center of the

circle is “cultural entrepreneurship”. They are interconnected and each one depicts an individual idea and specificity that is connected with others.



*Figure 5 – A culture entrepreneurship*

*Source: Researchgate.net*

“Cultural mission and enthusiasm” depicts each cultural idea for which a detailed business plan is to be developed. The idea should be directly related to the nation state where it is to be promoted and disseminated. If it develops at European level, the idea should link several cultures to be effective (multiculturalism).

The next element is “innovation”, which depicts the different and the unknown. As the ideas of the past to disseminate national ideas and values have been forgotten in the 21st century and largely the idea would not gain interest, so something creative and unexpected should be developed to gain interest. Innovation and creativity are essential to entrepreneurship and are crucial to the development of marketing, which is an indispensable part of any business idea.

The final element is “social accountability”, which, as well as being at an internal constructive level, must also be at a societal level. Firm distribution is

structured at different levels and workers with different professions have different qualification parameters that can only be used constructively. The element of constructive criticism is of particular importance. It is important that this element is understood neither as something bad, nor as something very good - it must be found in the middle of the cultural-entrepreneurial organization, which can only be used with its special purpose – understood as an intermediate and at the same time as a connecting element.

The next differentiating aspect of cultural entrepreneurship is who the people calling themselves “cultural entrepreneurs” actually are and what their obligations are.



*Figure 6 – A culture entrepreneur*

*Source: Entrepreneur.com*

In Figure № 6, the main aspects of the cultural entrepreneur are shown by a terminological separation of words.

The meaning of the words “entrepreneur” and “culture” is quite similar, since both terms act as catalysts for dynamic growth. One concept is significant

and tangible, while the other is directed at spirituality and a sense of community. They also have a vague, tautological impact on society as a whole.

The main idea of the meaning of cultural entrepreneurs focuses on the humanitarian points of view of society - the coordination of the individual views of many people, which is reproduced by cultural entrepreneurs. People who engage in cultural entrepreneurship are able to change people's motives to contribute to economic development. They even broaden the boundaries of thought and constantly change it as quite often and perceive artists as the founders of cultural entrepreneurship.

### ***The importance of cultural entrepreneurship***

Creativity, imagination and innovation are at the heart of culture and creative economies themselves have the power to promote social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development. One of the important components that contribute to the sustainable development of creative industries is entrepreneurship - in the case of the cultural economy and engagement, it is cultural entrepreneurship. A significant part of these differences are attributed to culture, as at the same time differences in entrepreneurial activity between nations and areas within those nations remain and cannot be explained entirely by institutional and economic factors.

The importance of cultural entrepreneurship is shaped in the so-called national historical heritage, traditions, language, history, holidays and much more. And the people who are promoting, in an interesting and different way, the cultural roots of a nation, a state or a people – comes to the fact that this activity for the activists has economic importance and financial value, but at the same time the cultural value is not less, but even greater. After such an initiative, the cultural perception of the people who had no idea of what is being presented to

them, in the next moment these people become the main actors in the next project. This is also how so-called passive recruitment is formed.

The other perspective of cultural entrepreneurship is finding a balance. A balance between artistic, social, economic and institutional innovations for different actors in the arts that offers important insights into how artists and arts organizations can be more entrepreneurial despite the psychological, political and financial barriers to entrepreneurship in the creative industries. In doing so, creative approaches to cultural entrepreneurship in urban development are shaped, with a focus on ways to sustain existing creative businesses as well as attract new ones. Analyzed from this perspective, creative industries play a critical role in improving “people's social and cultural lives” while promoting the synergistic benefits of economic growth, innovation, and creativity.

The other important focus for cultural entrepreneurship - it has played the role of an economically structured education system for citizens in interesting and different ways. Formal institutions such as schools and universities provide pupils and students with study material that is presented in writing context and in textbooks and books, while cultural entrepreneurs adopt the vision of informal educators who through different approaches educate citizens indirectly. This type of entrepreneurship works positively for both developers and users.

### ***European's maintenance of cultural entrepreneurship***

In the modern world and the contemporary understanding of business idea and balance, under the influence of the significant changes that have occurred as a result of digitalization and globalization, cultural and creative entrepreneurs are operating in a highly competitive environment that has complicated the entire structure of idea formulation in the post-pandemic environment. This is the result across the world at the moment, which is still reeling from the economic and social consequences. The facts show that the majority of cultural and creative

organizations in Europe operate as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The likelihood that the figures of manager and entrepreneur in this situation coincide is quite high.

This type of manager-entrepreneur is distinguished by its willingness to reinvent the work process, by its quick reaction to changes in the environment and by his constant search for new opportunities and alternative resources.

As far as the EU is concerned, as early as 2007, the European Commission's Communication 'A European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World' saw cultural activities as a key component of societal integration, a source of innovation and a means of combating poverty and social exclusion. That document lists a number of key objectives that are linked to the requirement to promote cultural entrepreneurship:

- 1) Promoting the use of creativity in the classroom;
- 2) Promoting the development of cultural entrepreneurship
- 3) creativity;
- 4) Creating innovative relationships between the cultural and other sectors;
- 5) Stimulating the cultural sector, in particular through management training and entrepreneurial activities.

That was the start and the beginning of the current European Alliance towards cultural entrepreneurship as it continues to this day. In 2010 a Green Paper was published – unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries. In 2011 the Small Business Act was published and in 2013 a formal opinion of the European Commission was proposed to the European Parliament, the council, the European economic and social committee and the Committee of the regions, focusing on boosting entrepreneurship in general.



In addition, since 2006 the European Commission has been awarding the Entrepreneurship Promotion Awards (EPEA) - recognizing efforts made to promote SMEs and entrepreneurship in Europe. By 2015 alone, 3 100 projects had participated in national competitions to get the chance to compete for the Awards, with 49 of these projects were awarded. In that year alone, a total of 31 countries submitted their applications for the ENNP.

The European Commission emphasizes the transformative economic and social power of culture in its impact assessment for the EU Creative Europe program. According to the Commission, the Union's cultural and creative sectors account for roughly 4.5 % of its GDP (2008) and employ about 3.8 percent of its workforce.

Given the sector's significance in supporting smart, sustainable, and equitable growth, funding for the EU Creative Europe initiative was boosted within the EU's 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework. The EU Council approved conclusions on cultural heritage in May 2014, highlighting the need for the EU to tackle cultural heritage holistically and the sector's importance for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth within the context of the Europe 2020 plan.

### ***Digital transformation***

Digital innovation and change herald the imminent arrival of what has been dubbed the Fourth Industrial Revolution in Europe and the rest of the world. To capture this digital transition in business across all industries, the term Industry 4.0 has evolved. Value creation strategies had to incorporate digital advances, and system connectivity and integration via the internet had the opportunity to create seamless digital value chains.

As a result, the continuous acceleration of technical progress is a necessary core component of the digital transformation of European countries. However,

the digitalization strategy for the European economy needs more than roaming restrictions and free wireless internet access for all. The digitization of the European economy, which includes the automation and robotisation of component production, is creating unprecedented new economic prospects, which, as much as they have pros, also have cons, especially in the social spheres.

The idea and the policy are based on innovative technologies that make it possible to provide another type of speed information.

The new industrial model based on system integration and networking, in particular the integration of people and digitally controlled equipment into the Internet and information technology, is driven by technological advances that are influencing changes in the socio-economic situation.

From a business perspective, the term 'digital transformation' refers to a process of change in a company's business model, goods or organizational structures using digital technologies. The number of articles examining various organizational and technological elements of digital transformation has increased dramatically in recent years. Businesses are interested in Industry 4.0 because they believe that technological advances will increase their productivity and influence the introduction of new business models, services and products that will ultimately define the place of national economies on the world stage.

The digital revolution affects many aspects of employment, daily life and the economy. Several indicators show how technology is changing social and economic growth.

It is important to point out that all industrial sectors over the world are undergoing digital transformation. As digital technologies increase productivity, improve energy efficiency and develop a business model by which governments create new regulations.

In recent years, the digital transformation has intensified significantly. A lot of that information could be found in the form of digital content. In the field of creativity and culture, it helps to spread news very quickly, which is of great importance –for example, some advertising or information about a cultural event. It also contributes to constant access to up-to-date information and raising people's awareness.



### *The involvement of young people in the cultural sector*

In the 21st century, a number of different policies focus on youth - how to engage young people in public life. Examples of this are volunteer initiatives such as cleaning up a space or during an epidemic situation, taking on volunteer shifts in medical centers.

Naturally, when it comes to young people and children, main understandings and perceptions frame basic ideas. For example, social and economic sciences distinguish two main perspectives on youth and their place in society. According to one, youth contribute to the increased dynamism of the social structure through the inventions that are so important and characteristic of industrial civilizations. According to the other view, youth are a group whose members are connected by common experience. It maintains a specific subculture that is generally not at odds with the dominant culture.

The nature of the new generation and what they are able to do with the new media, which is a natural environment for young people. They use hypertext, graphics, and images on a computer or other media device is rather than traditional writing. Moreover, it is obvious that young people think differently from their parents or professors. A generation that has grown up in a digital society are able to use the new digital tools. They prefer visual and audio materials over words. They enjoy multiplication and multitasking. Their attitudes and abilities play a major role in how they are perceived in the digital world.

However, many European Union countries are trying to change the newly created stereotype and engage the younger generation in certain initiatives. For example, 2018 was the European Year of Cultural Heritage. That year, numerous events have taken place, with more than 6.2 million people taking part. Young people have had been mobilized in various volunteer projects, and the new tools have been developed to implement cultural heritage in the classroom. The ultimate goal was to enable and raise the awareness of younger people to understand better, protect and improve our heritage.

According to the article “Engaging Youth for an Inclusive and Sustainable Europe” on the UNESCO website, one of the most important measures for heritage protection at the national level is education. The UNESCO project helps to set long-term goals. Such is the encouragement and assistance of young people to get to know their cultural heritage and take extra care of its preservation and transmission. The project enhances the exchange of information and cultural heritage knowledge among young people. The project activities present examples of preserving cultural heritage through education, highlighting the benefits of creating a united and sustainable Europe. After completing the project, schools and all young people are expected to be more aware of their cultural heritage and its importance in the future.

In collaboration with the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in the EU, UNESCO has conducted many activities to support schools and understand how living heritage is present in school communities. Teachers can show and acquaint young people with the subject much better by teaching mathematics, physics, literature, or computer-aided design with living heritage.

### 1.3. The inter-relation "values-culture-European identity-creativity-entrepreneurship".

“Cultural and creative entrepreneurship” encompasses three main parts of entrepreneurship, culture, and creativity, where entrepreneurship is seen as a matter of entrepreneurs, artists and creators through innovation and the decision-making processes that accompany it, are not directed in just some kind of economic progress, but also in improving people's lifestyle. This process is described by irreducible factors of personality and subjectivity, as well as imponderability and restricted rationality, and is impacted by the socio-economic intention (fig. 7)



*Figure 7 - Tree of the Socio - Economic process*

The inter-relation between the five components formulate the following characteristics of the model (fig. 7):

- ✚ Collectivism - group action;

- ✚ Symbolism - production and integration of new goods and services with distinctive features;
- ✚ Initiative and entrepreneurship - participation of motivated people striving to accomplish the project proposal/ product;
- ✚ Appreciative awareness - anticipated or identified by need or circumstances, but also by means and resources;
- ✚ Assessment of the aesthetic, cultural and social value;
- ✚ Calculability - assessment of the economic value.

Due to its expanding economic weight and the relevance of its cultural and sociological function, the cultural and creative industries sector plays a significant part in the development of contemporary societies. Thus, it is important to emphasize on the meaning of the culture because of the multiple existing perceptions in different contexts - it relates to art, or what could be used to represent a group of people, and creativity is associated with values, creation, invention, imagination, and originality.



### **The European values – interconnection to entrepreneurship**

From a cultural point of view, a one person's value system appears to be the one of his/her driving forces socially. On the European side, the value system that operates internationally is an amalgam of many others with the democracy as a main core. However, the inter-relation between values and entrepreneurship, represents a topic that exhibits individualism differently to the other commonly known nationally identified values - the economic-social structure.

Structures of this type usually have a clearly established formation that they follow, but when European values are placed at the level of the hierarchy, the commonly known mechanism no longer applies. The organizational structure was

formed in a completely different way. European values are placed at first, and they are the foundation on which every innovation and idea must be built.

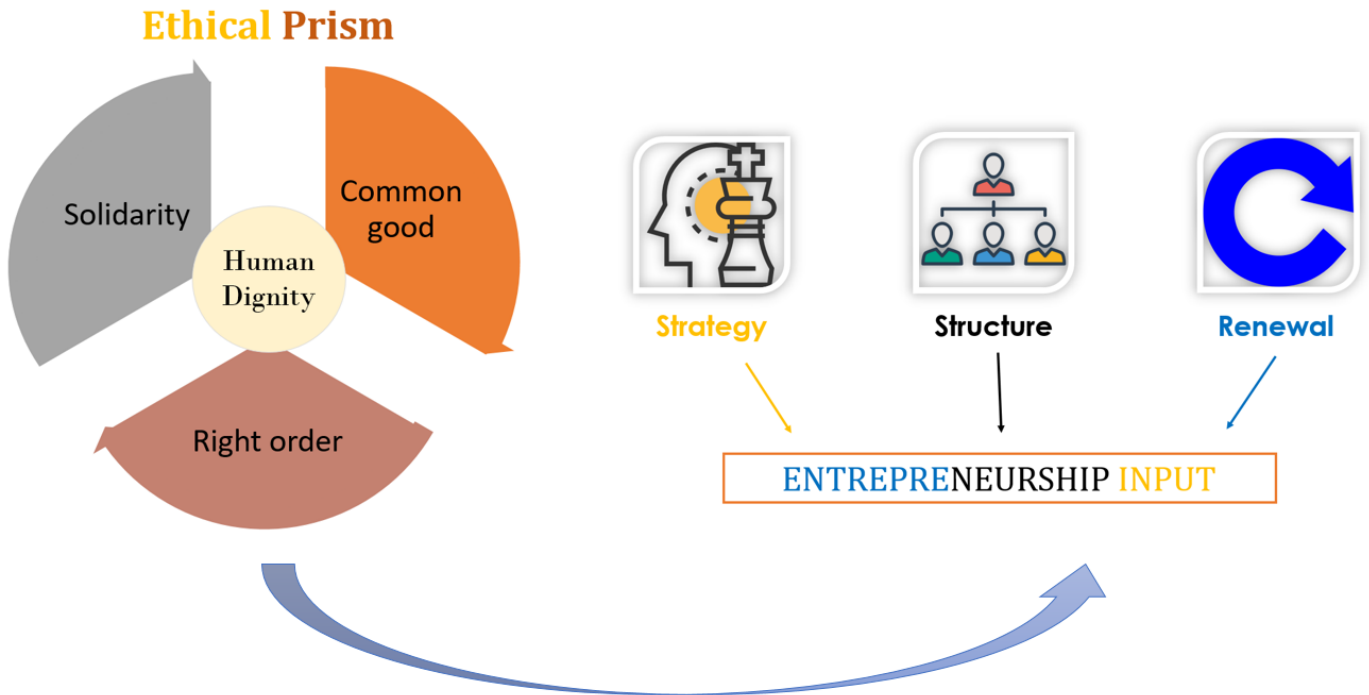
These values are, as follows:

- Human dignity;
- Freedom;
- Democracy;
- Equality;
- Rule of law;
- Human right



### *Human dignity in an entrepreneurial input*

The concept of human dignity is associated with its metamorphoses in labor, has been developing since Antiquity, placing a major emphasis on human values and how they distinguish humans from other forms of life. The philosophers Plato and Aristotle focus on human awareness based on the economic goals, opportunities, actions and outcomes (strategic emphasis). **Since human ideals, aspirations, values are the so-called driving force, and the driving apparatus of this force is precisely human dignity, binding the conceptual formula of unity. Thus, economics are align with moral prescriptions in a business plan that is reflecting in the reality and potential growth of the individual or team majority**



*Figure 8 - Human Dignity in an entrepreneurial input*

*Source: Researchgate.net*

The figure № 8 is divided into two sections: ethnic prism and an entrepreneurial input. Through the ethnic prism, the basic elements of human dignity as a value and how this value was developed in the entrepreneurship are depicted as a situational ethical for high-level strategies. For example, because it comprises creating direction and future objectives, corporate strategy is possibly the most important planning task for the future leaders. Another significant problem is establishing the organizational structure. Some businesses have developed their businesses from the ground up with ethical standards in mind but at the same time, a significant difficulty is also the organizational renewal, which occurs when a significant ethical failure occurs that harms the company's reputation and necessitates "corporate ethical repair." The figure's categories cover a wide range of circumstances in which clear ethical thought (and conduct) is beneficial.



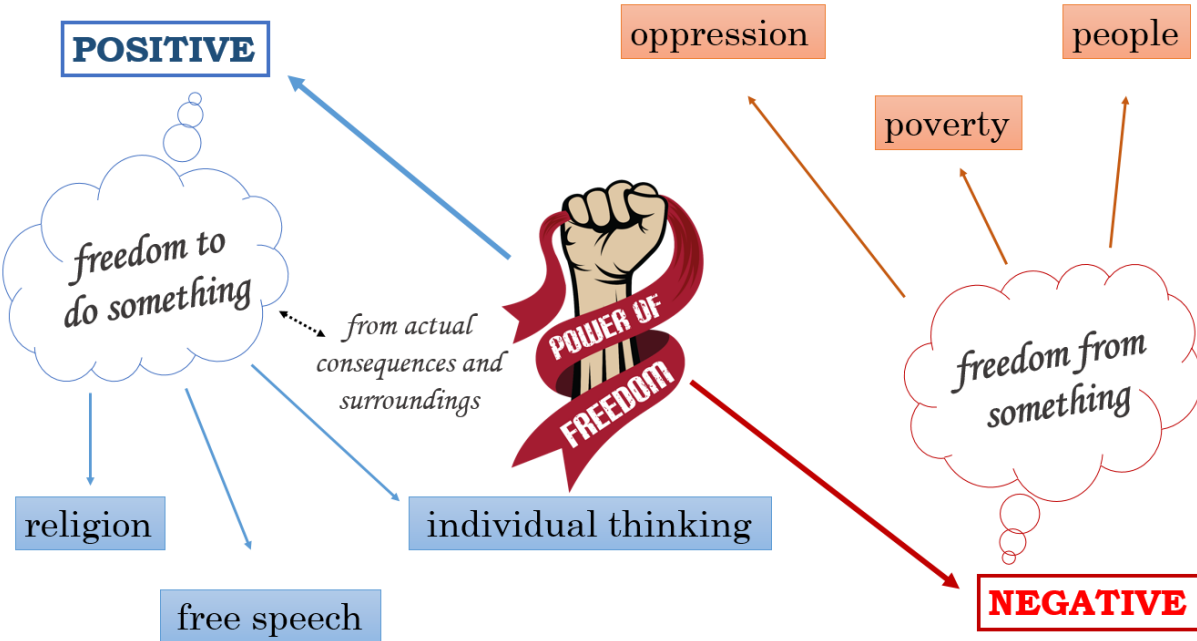
An example of a strategic entrepreneurship and management is the so-called humanistic corporate governance, which emphasizes on human dignity as a fundamental tool for successful human well-being in an emerging network of business ideals and individuals.

**👉 Freedom in an entrepreneurial input**

When it comes to cultural entrepreneurship, the other core value needed to create a quality product with economic value is freedom. However, this freedom in question is characterized in two different, yet related aspects:

- 1) Individual freedom;
- 2) Economic freedom.

The terminological interpretation of the two phrases presents itself under several various concepts. For example, “freedom” as a concept, according to the official website of the European Union, means:



**Figure 9 – Positive and negative Freedom**

*Source: Archives.evergreen.edu*

“Freedom of movement gives citizens the right to move and reside freely within the Union. Individual freedoms such as respect for private life, freedom of thought, religion, assembly, expression and information are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights”.

Defined in this way, the so-called European framework for shared societal growth is presenting the shared ideas. However, the word itself is unambiguous. There are positive and negative perceptions of the idea on international level. This contrast can be interpreted differently, but the basic notion, according to the theorist Isaiah Berlin, is that the interference of other people manifests itself in the role of one being “restricted” from doing anything.

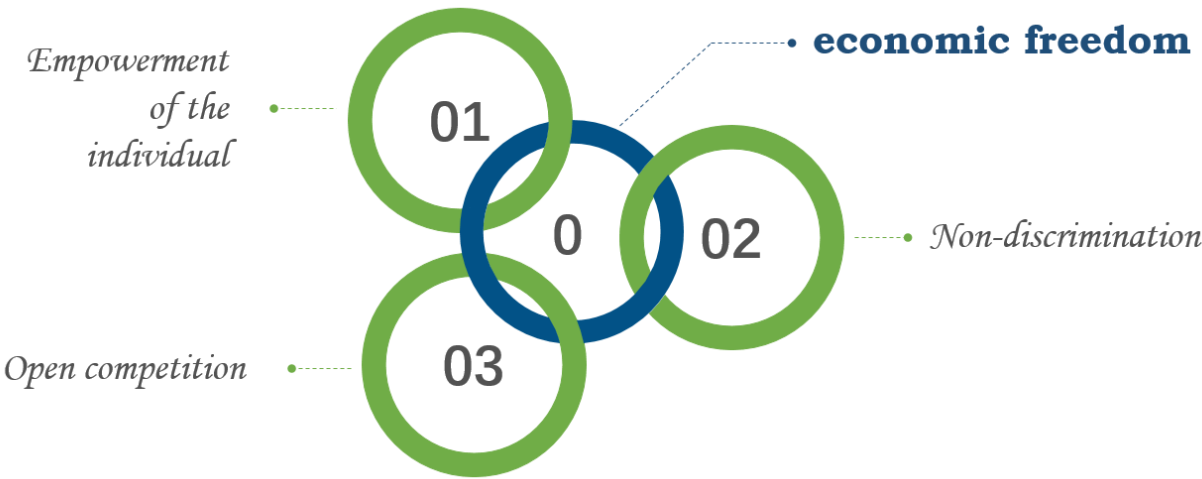
From a positive perspective, freedom defines as what one can or cannot do, considering factual consequences and one's surroundings. Whereas the "negative" or "bad" version emphasizes the absence of certain constraints that one person can impose on another (fig. 9).

This way of specifying freedom in the two extreme axes of the scale, in fact, gives the definition of the individual freedom of individuals - everyone is free to do as he/she sees to be right, while respecting the generally accepted rules and laws of the society in order to prevent the transformation of social freedom into mass anarchy.

Practically, subtractions from individual liberty take a back seat to economics. In the social-democratic balance, the dependence on "successes" and "failures" applies to the professional and career development of the population. People are being empowered to make personal choices that are categorized as "failures" or "successes" according to the results. Thus, the idea of individualism in career development is followed by economic freedom. One succeeds or fails because of one's abilities and the amount of effort put forth. However, applying this framework is not enough. In a democratic society, difference is recognized as a value and, following the path of logic, cannot tolerate discrimination in the

entrepreneurship - the light of equal opportunities combats the ingrained prejudices of the past about gender, race, origin, etc.

In a civil free and economically autonomous society, the opportunities and powers to make economic decisions and take actions had been distributing in a certain way, and the allocation of resources for necessary production versus idea and consumption is based on open competition that gives each person or enterprise a fair chance to prosper. The basic principles or the so-called fundamental ideas that are followed to achieve economic freedom are "empowerment of the individual", "equality" or "non-discrimination" and "open competition", the basic concepts of economic freedom that support and explain the commonly accepted Index of Economic Freedom (fig. 10)



*Figure 10 – Index of Economic Freedom*

*Source: Thf\_media.s3.amazonaws.com*

The purpose of economic freedom is to create and maintain a sense of freedom for all, not just for those who are free from government coercion or constraint, with emphasis on the legal framework applied by a country - those who enjoy the benefits of economic freedom are obliged to respect the economic rights and freedoms of others. The so-called "positive economic rights" such as property and contracts provide social as well as individual protection against the

destructive tendencies of others, and governments are designed to create basic safeguards against the ravages of nature or the predation and inhumanity of one citizen upon another.

Economic independence is significant in itself as a component of human dignity, autonomy and personal empowerment in the entrepreneurial sphere and idea. On the other hand, economic freedom is also an extremely important factor in achieving broad-based economic activism to ensure long-term inclusive growth and to increase the well-being for society as a whole.

### ***Democracy in an entrepreneurial input***

The interrelationship between democracy and social entrepreneurship and business development often are being confused as synonymous. This confusion arises because of the origins of entrepreneurship, because everyone is free to develop one's ideas in society and to receive income for that kind of activity. Logically, it also naturally follows that democracy or democratic principles allow this freedom of speech, thought, and work capacity, and thus the strongest link between democracy and entrepreneurship is proving to be through the value of freedom. Democracy, which symbolizes freedom, supports the ability of individuals and groups to engage in behaviors and activities that both discover and create opportunities, and act and seek those opportunities.

Democracy and entrepreneurship have the same underlying force or medium, although in the entrepreneurship literature, the two terms are not in any systematic or formal way put together. Freedom of thought and action serves as a formal formula for democracy - the numerous literatures find entrepreneurship requires an environment of free choice in both thought and action.

The first historical evidence of any form of entrepreneurship dates back to 20,000 AD in the simplest tribal formations in which they exchanged resources. Naturally, ideas then developed further, creating the exchange of currencies for

every country in the world. At a certain period, this form of commercial freedom had discouraged, and this happened during the reign of Adolf Hitler and National Socialism. During that period, the entrepreneurial idea was developed in a particular form, and the idea of Hitler's Germany was actually to oppose decentralized independent decision-making by moving to undermine democracy through the destruction of entrepreneurship and the use of legalized cartels. For this historical figure, liberty was the issue, or more accurately, public liberty.

However, another perspective shows the necessity of entrepreneurship for democracy. The other thesis confirms it - entrepreneurship helps the democracy. To strengthen this theory, several historically proven times confirm it. Entrepreneurs in their form as workers took part in the 1986 "people power movement" in the Philippines and the 2011 Arab Spring in Egypt. Entrepreneurs unite with other political outlets or ordinary citizens to demand greater freedom and accountable governance in these periods. Entrepreneurship fights for democracy, not derives from it. It creates economic diversity by introducing new entrants, displacing established players and creating new markets. Political pluralism is influence by economic pluralism. A strong civil society raises and the power of the state is balances by a competitive private sector.

Perceived in this way, entrepreneurship affects several sectors in the political-economic landscape of countries:

- Systematic transformation;
- Social displacement;
- Individual change.

From a European perspective, democratic values, such as freedom of speech; the right to informed accessibility; participation in political decision-making, transparency and communicability occupy a key place. Democracy influences and influences permanent reform actions in this direction. Although

the entrepreneurial idea and the people engaged in this kind of activity strongly support democracy, the appropriateness of their innovative ideas indicates a possible threat to a complete restructuring of the political economy, creating new perspectives and a new inclusive politics. In the end, free competition, involvement in public life, personal responsibility, helping others, and a preference for finding solutions within the bounds of the law are fundamental principles of both democracy and entrepreneurship. A society where varied businesspeople prosper is a world where democracy can advance. Many business owners would be happy about this because they are also citizens.



### ***Equality in an entrepreneurial input***

Equality and equal rights in an evolving society are of great importance, especially when it comes to the entrepreneurial initiative. This covers equal rights through the legal framework of the country, parties or union. The principle of equality between women and men underpins all European policies and is the basis for European integration. It applies in all areas. The focus of equal pay for equal work became part of the Treaty of Rome in 1957.

Although inequalities persist today, the EU has made significant progress in recent decades. This is a result of the legislation on equal treatment and integration. Despite the EU's efforts, gender differences remain. For example, women are still over-represented in low-paid sectors and under-represented in management positions in the labour market.

The EU Gender Equality Strategy delivers on the von der Leyen Commission's commitment to achieving a Union of Equality. The strategy combines political goals and actions to make significant progress by 2025 in Europe with gender equality. The goal is for everyone to have the freedom to follow their chosen path and have equal development opportunities.

The European Union is doing everything it can to address gender differences, but there are still countries in the European Union that are struggling on this issue. By encouraging women's social and economic engagement, gender equality promotes economic growth and social advancement. Women's educational possibilities and chances for economic engagement may be impacted by the amount of gender equality in the country.

Countries that advance gender rights also offer equal opportunities for men and women to participate in economic, social and educational activities, while those with low levels of gender equality offer unequal opportunities. Therefore, depending on the degree of national and international gender equality, gender differences in the relationship between entrepreneurial education and entrepreneurial ambitions may vary. For example, women in countries with insufficient gender equality may benefit more from education for entrepreneurial intentions, as such education can significantly increase access to chances for entrepreneurial activities. Entrepreneurial purpose could be significantly influenced by increased awareness and self-efficacy. As a result, women may benefit more from entrepreneurial socialization experiences than males do, and these benefits are to be stronger in nations with lesser gender equality.

### ***Rule of law in an entrepreneurial input***

It would appear that adequately defined and upheld property rights are necessary for entrepreneurship to operate efficiently. A system of agreement for contracts must exist, as must a legal framework for their enforcement.

The EU is based on the rule of law. Everything EU does is founded on treaties, voluntarily and democratically agreed by its EU countries. Law and justice are upheld by an independent judiciary. The EU countries gave final jurisdiction to the European Court of Justice - its judgments have to be respected by all.

However, this type of argument consists of two parts. One is phrased this way - while business owners who conduct their business legally undoubtedly benefit from a cheap, transparent and fair legal system, resourceful people are finding alternative but potentially equally effective means of enforcing contracts that are not dependent on the legal system. In doing so, they may believe that increased transparency is not in their interest. The next point is that while most business owners stand to gain from advances in the rule of law, they may not gain as much as large corporations that are better positioned to take advantage of their dominant market position. Using a sample of both middle-income economies and underdeveloped nations, they discover a favorable impact of the Rule of Law.

### *Human rights in an entrepreneurial input*

Human rights are protected by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. These cover the right to be free from discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, the right to the protection of your personal data, and the right to get access to justice. These values are laid out in Article 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

In 2012, the EU was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for advancing the causes of peace, reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe.

Suggestions to add new rights to the current list instantly raise the devaluation worry in the current climate of human rights inflation: adding more rights will lessen the moral and legal weight of existing ones. Although this is a legitimate concern, it is also crucial to make sure that our human rights system is sensitive to the wrongdoings and injustices that people encounter on a daily basis, whose nature and significance change as new situations arise. The harsh working conditions of wage laborers were widely known at the time the UDHR was passed, but little was known about the pockets of informal entrepreneurship that



already existed. A great number of people make their living in this sphere of work. Every government knows that they are unable to access informal markets because of a number of institutional barriers that the human rights system may be able to detect and remove.

Human rights do not automatically imply a reduction in the importance of the current criteria. Moreover, the so-called freedom to develop a business idea is not a legal violation of human rights. Furthermore, the right to exist and work is a right that cannot be taken away from people.

## **CHAPTER 2.**

### **THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTORS**

Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS) includes all cultural and creative sectors whose activities are based on cultural values or artistic and other creative expressions, regardless of whether their activities are market-based or non-market oriented. The type of structure and funding does not matter. The activities are related to the production, development, creation, preservation and distribution of goods and services that contain cultural, artistic or other creative expressions. Sectors included are also architecture, museums, libraries, music, literature, performing arts and others.

That creative and cultural sectors are most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused the closure of cinemas, theatres, museums, concert halls, and festivals across the EU. These sectors have become almost entirely dependent on concrete policy decisions. For them, everything has changed radically. Even if the measures have been more relaxed at times, everything has happened under extraordinary conditions, leading to a huge decrease of potential profits from these events. Each of the industries reports a decline. One of the most affected is the music business. Nowadays, most musicians make a living mainly through live performances. In the film industry, the crisis is affecting the closure of cinemas and the cancellation of festivals and film productions. There was also a sharp decline in the fine arts, as many fairs and exhibitions were cancelled. However, as with the music business, the performing arts are also going through a very difficult period. This includes private theatres and schools where many freelance artists rely entirely on performances. This whole situation has led to many programs and initiatives to help these sectors. The digital environment has become a leading center for culture. For almost two years

now, online platforms have played as entertainment spaces, broadcasting live or recorded events. The leading portals that have helped the cultural sector are YouTube, Facebook and Instagram.



*Figure 11 – Coronavirus consequences*

*Source: Unesdoc.unesco.org*



## **Cultural enterprise and activity**

The number of people living in creative professions is increasing compared to previous years. Thanks to social networks, citizens can take part in various

cultural initiatives. Artists also help people overcome the difficulties of the pandemic by contributing their creations free online. Unfortunately, culture is also a type of economic activity that people in this sector depend on for their economic survival. Freelance and independent artists attend this sector to the most important public cultural institutions.

For example, cultural enterprises carry out a large number of activities, including:

- ✚ Creative and entertainment activities;
- ✚ Architectural, photographic and design activity;
- ✚ Production of musical instruments, jewellery, publishing books and others.

Italy is one of the countries with the highest share of cultural enterprises, followed by France, Germany, Spain and others. Nevertheless, they are most affected by the pandemic. In countries such as Germany, Netherlands and France, the self-employed are approximately three times more in the cultural sector than in the total employment. Almost a quarter of all cultural workers in the EU are writers and artists.

## **2.1. Coronavirus consequences for the cultural sector**

The spread of the coronavirus and the social consequences are so far-reaching that even psychologists define psychological problems on a completely different level. All over the world, country borders were closed, restaurants - forced to operate at certain hours or make deliveries only. Citizens were to follow a principle of social distancing and hardly leave their homes except when necessary.

World economy has suffered from these constraints, incl. the cultural sector, which in fact relies most on attending events and meeting audiences. The

closure of cultural venues, the postponement of cultural events and the suspension of many community practices for cultural practitioners were all aimed at limiting the spread of the virus. So many jobs were lost that artists were forced to rely on online networks such as YouTube to hold concerts and activities in front of a live-shared camera. On the other hand, there is no ignoring the effect of live audiences, who to a certain extent have already become accustomed to the online space and are experiencing some hesitation about returning to attending theatrical venues, visiting museums, or generally, going to venues.

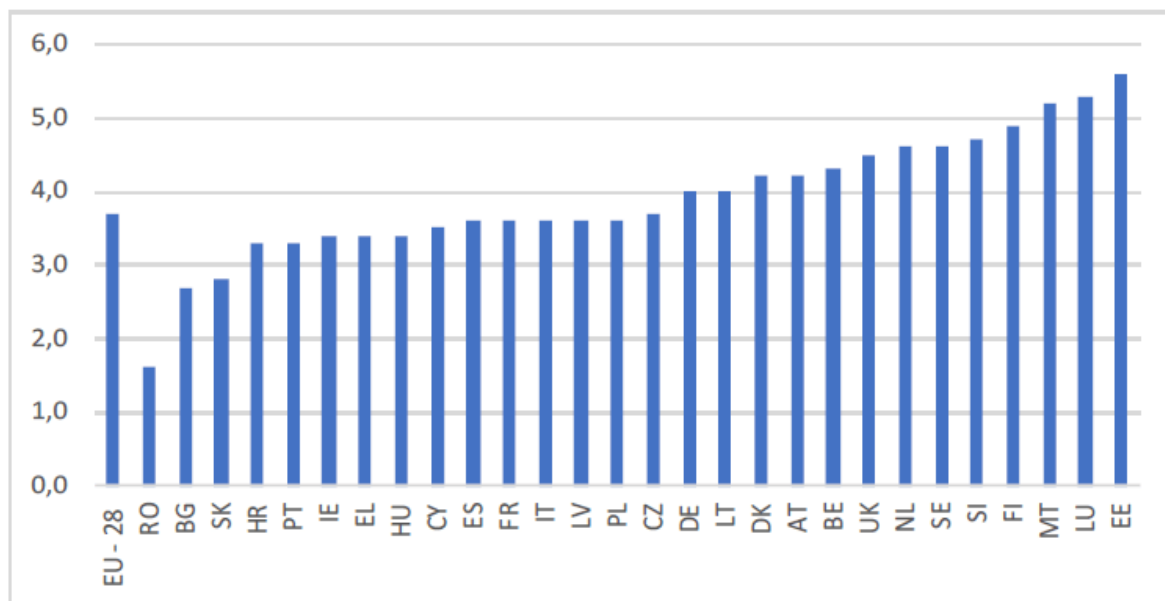
Due to the state of emergency imposed at local, national and European level, governments were forced to reallocate their resources to meet the most pressing needs, which has left few options to tackle the problems on a European scale. The options were not so many, but rather rested on a single option - to reallocate national resources to the sectors of most urgent need. In this case, the larger percentage of state budgets went to the health sector, and the rest to aid. However, the cultural sector then did not receive such. A similar example, according to a study conducted in 2021 by the Cultural Relations Platform, is the Western Balkans and Eastern countries close to the European Union.

The main problem is that the measures taken by the health authorities to limit the virus and its contagion seem to be too extreme for some people. In addition, COVID-19 mortality is significantly higher in different age groups. It continues to change and surprise the world with new mutations. These mutations were the cause of the constant insecurity in human relationships. In practice, everything related to culture and tourism was limited by the measures taken within the national borders of the countries, and in some cases, at the local level.

According to the European Commission, in 2018, 3.8% (8.7 million) of all those employed worked in the cultural sector (fig. 12), ranging between 5.6% in Estonia, 5.3% in Luxembourg and 5.2% in Malta, and 1.6 % in Romania, 2.7% in Bulgaria and 2.8% in Slovakia. However, the proportion of self-employed people

is more than double the average rate in the EU: self-employed people accounted for almost 14% of total employment in the EU-28 and more than 30% of cultural employment in 2018.

In the Netherlands, Germany and France, the self-employed were about three times more numerous in the cultural sector than in total employment.



Data source: [Eurostat](#), European Commission, 2018.

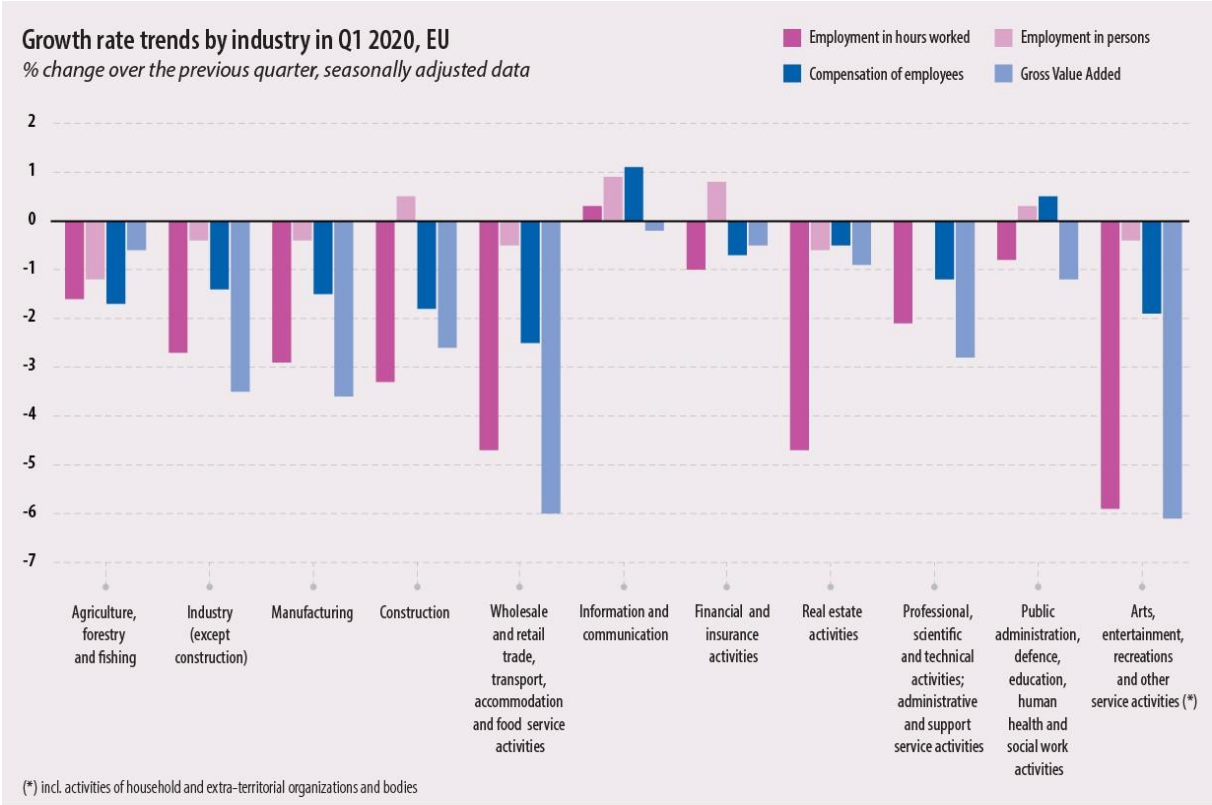
*Figure 12 – Employments in the cultural sector, EU*

*Source: Eurostar*

In most cases, every country which relies on tourism is constantly checking the free movement of people in other countries. In this way, people can have fun and visit various beautiful places. However, culture focuses more on the search for meaningful human existence based on cultural awareness and the ability to express oneself creatively.

In the figure № 13, the most significant decline was observed in “wholesale and retail trade, transport, accommodation and activities in the field of food services” and “arts, entertainment and other service activities”.

Unfortunately, some of the government's measures did not apply to everyone. Many freelance artists do not have the opportunity to take advantage of this type of interest-free loan. The reason is that the banks do not grant them a loan, as they believe that they will not be able to repay the entire amount that were taken.



**Figure 13 – Growth rate by industry in Q1 2020, EU**

**Source: Ec.europa**

A recent study presents the economic impact of social distancing measures in France. It confirms that due to the administrative closure of the arts and leisure sector and 'hotel restaurants', they are one of the most affected by these measures taken by governments to control the pandemic. This study estimates the impact on value-added growth after six weeks of social distancing on the sector, among the most affected, at -7.7%, with an average drop in the country's gross domestic





cultural tourism accounts for 40% of the main sectors of constructive development.

The inability to travel is leading to a significant decline in visitors to important cultural sites, including museums and historic archaeological sites, World Heritage sites. As a result, the performing and entertainment arts industries suffer, as do entire ecosystems for the production and delivery of cultural products.

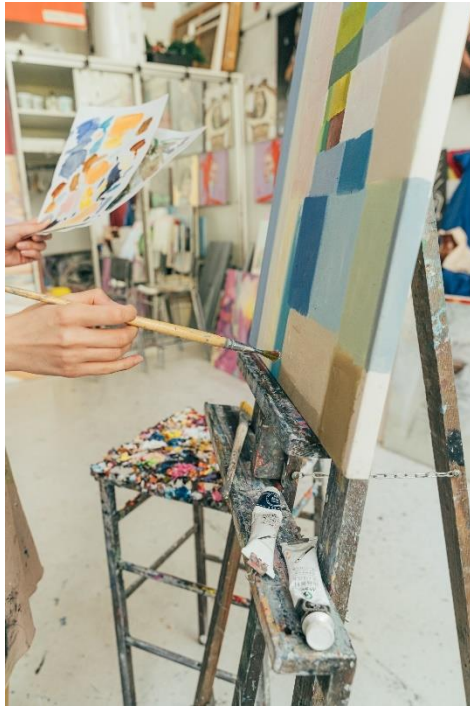
Cities that rely heavily on tourism for their revenues, according to a study by “The UNWTO Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility Department”, released in February 2021, have the stark possibility of experiencing a severe economic downturn resulting in 120 million job losses and a sharp reduction in profits from international tourism.

The issues associated with cultural tourism are slightly different as the type of tourism associated with cultural heritage differs from other types of tourism. The condition of historical sites, museums, preserved archaeological excavations, etc., are based on a country/country's cultural history or identity, which have an identifying character.

From the results of the constraints it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected the economic and cultural tourism sector worldwide and the European Union, especially Member States that rely on this type of economically engaging revenue. The impacts experienced by the cultural tourism sector include a significant reduction in the number of tourist arrivals, leading to a reduction in turnover for traders and job losses.

At the same time, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a direct impact on the surrounding states' municipal development economies, as many destinations and industries had to temporarily close during the pandemic. The negative effect even

forced some businesses to close permanently. As a result, many people around the world tourist destinations have lost their sources of livelihood.



## **Cultural Performing and Visual Arts**

In the pandemic environment, performing arts, theatre performances and art galleries were particularly affected due to social distancing. Performers and artists who actually travel to third countries to disseminate their work, in 2020-2021 alone: 38% postponed their engagements; 40% cancelled them completely; 20% were reported as reduced in the form of initiatives. National and international festivals and celebrations were postponed or did not take place at all during the pandemic years. Some of these examples are the Hong Kong Arts Festival and the Macau Arts Festival. Of course, these are not the only ones.

There has been quite an impact on the visual arts, especially in view of the closure of art galleries, museums and auction houses. The travel restrictions and social gatherings triggered by the pandemic have had an extremely severe impact

on the global visual arts market and its associated ecology. The industry also relies heavily on major events, fairs and biennials. The loss of the ability to make money from the presentation of the works, paintings or other art from the sale and resale of these works has had a significant impact on visual artists. The financial losses recorded in Europe alone in 2020, according to the European Visual Artists, have forced artists to give up their artistic careers, look for alternative means of income and downgrade their artistic pursuits to a hobby.



## **Music industry**

This industry is struggling to survive in any way, as revenues are minimal. The crisis will also accelerate the main music trends. For example, there is an increase in streaming. The main revenues of the music industry come from two places. One carries over 50%, mainly from concert ticket sales. The second is recorded music, which combines the profits of streaming, physical sales, digital download and licensing of music content in television advertising and others—nowadays, streaming accounts for about half of the revenue in this industry.

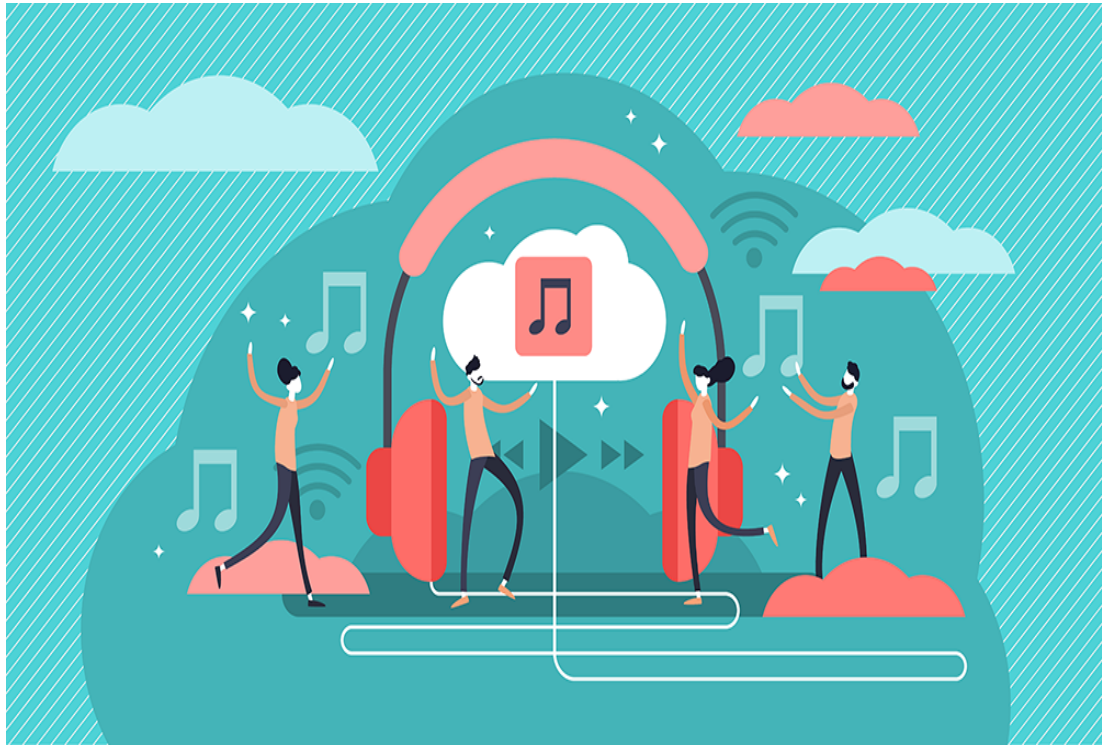
Since the pandemic, physical sales, which account for about a quarter of recorded music revenue, have fallen by about one-third. This is normal, given the closure of stores. There is also evidence of a change in the way people listen to music. There is a growing use of home applications on smart devices and TVs. The positive impact of the pandemic is the increase in revenues from online music subscriptions, which have increased by about 70% on an annual basis.

The music industry is also experiencing a decline in advertising costs. Various studies show that about a quarter of media and brand buyers stopped advertising in the first months of the pandemic, while the rest reduced those costs. Therefore, this is also unfavourable for the advertising industry. Unfortunately, many of the performers cancelled their tours and concerts because the virus protection measures did not allow many people to gather in one place. This resulted in zero revenue from this type of event.

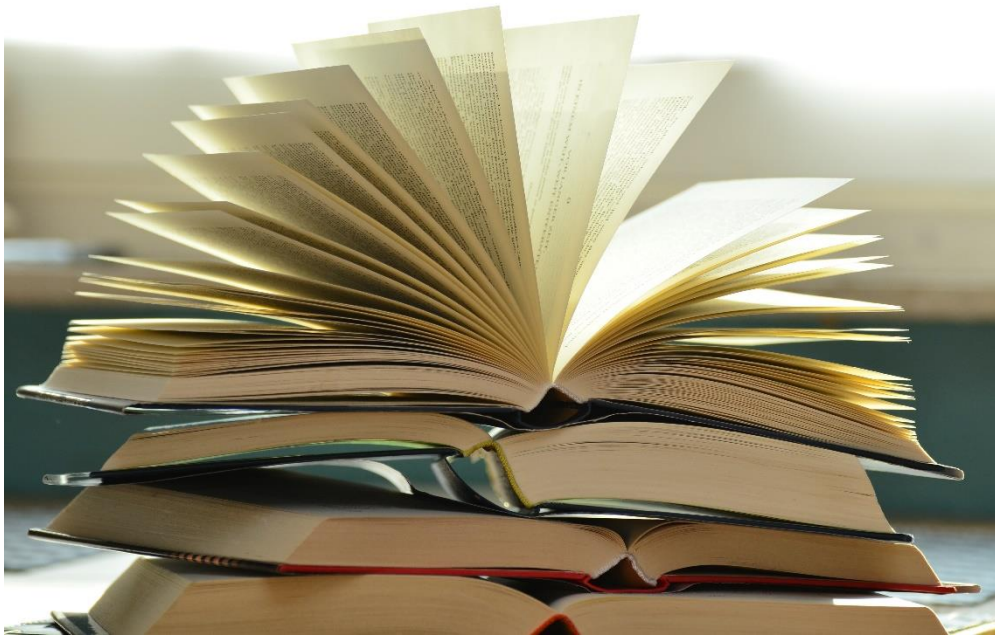
The industry has joined forces to benefit its community through various public-private support mechanisms. This includes donations from Live Nation Entertainment and Universal Music Group and Amazon Music, YouTube Music, Spotify, TIDAL, and many more. Tencent Music Entertainment, China's most prominent music platform, has also supported the industry. Many music providers are also trying to help music by creating mechanisms through which each user can donate directly to funds at their discretion. Globally, governments have also developed various aid projects for workers and industries affected by COVID-19, granting large sums of grants and loans.

A significant factor for the development of this industry is communication with fans. Now artists are forced to look for different ways to reach people. One way is by contacting them directly from their own homes, through various services such as Instagram TV, Twitch and others. This is not new, but the pandemic has expanded its audience, and music companies provide this type of live broadcast equipment. According to various sources, these measures have

yielded positive results. In the long run, that can strengthen the relationship of artists with the audience. For example, French mass media holding company Vivendi has developed a platform for artists to present content and communicate with fans, taking advantage of sponsorships and fees.



In recent years, record companies have raised their ratings, mainly due to the growth of consumers who pay for streaming services. Some users prefer to buy more subscription services at home, while others do not have this financial opportunity. The good thing about them is that they can afford to offer their services free for a while, thanks to advertising funding. Over time, music consumption has become increasingly digital, leading to a growing role of platforms in music distribution. For example, Fortnite hosted a live rap concert that attracted about 30 million live viewers.



### **Authors and the EU book sector**

The publishing sector is one of the most significant cultural industries in Europe. Unfortunately, he suffers from the lava process of digitizing books and the younger generation's steadily declining interest in reading.

Due to the spread of COVID-19, many readings and events were organized in schools, bookstores and other cultural institutions. This also includes book fairs, lectures, seminars and much more. This period brought economic downturns and significant losses for many authors and translators. Due to the cancelled events and the closed bookstores, it hinders the sale and distribution of books. All this invariably leads to great fears on the part of writers because they will not have financial stability. They are worried because they have to pay rent and insurance, and for many, it is unclear whether they will be able to return to their positions.

The book market also faces many difficulties. As more and more bookstores are closed, and, likely, some of them will not work again at all, publishers cancel or postpone new titles. Freelance writers, translators, smaller publishers, and independent bookstores will face significant difficulties.

In some countries, due to the closure of schools and the mass transition to homeschooling, there has been an increase in sales of books for children and young people. In addition, most booksellers who have developed online platforms have reported a significant increase in the online ordering business.

To develop their bookstores, they have established their supply chains by bicycle or city courier. Many book authors have developed various strategies for webinars and web readings. They also build different online reading communities and broadcast online lessons daily.

Due to the need to revitalize the sector, the EU supports the industry through a combination of different policies and instruments, including dialogue, funding and regulation. One of these programs is Creative Europe.

The program's main objectives are to increase the distribution of literary works in the EU, strengthen the competitiveness of the publishing sector, and diversify the audience of European books. To increase book publishing and promote translation, the program offers co-financing to publishers, especially from lesser-represented languages. In practice, they cover 50% of the costs of translation and promotion and dissemination. Most of the advertising activities are organized with the help of various booksellers, libraries or festivals. Over 320 projects have been implemented since the beginning of the project, and more than 2,700 books from 41 different languages in Europe have been promoted. In this way, everyone has a more significant opportunity to become acquainted with the cultural diversity of European literature.

In addition to supporting the translation of literary works, the program offers co-financing of various collaborative projects and platforms.

The READ ON project aims to increase the interest of young people in literature and attract them to read using new technologies. Six countries are participating in the project, organizing various events in schools, restaurants and

others. Web solutions ensure that young people read and become interested in books.

For the Creative Europe programming period (2021-2027), the European Commission has decided to increase its support for book publishing by increasing funding for translations and promotion of books.

The European Union Prize for Literature highlights contemporary European literature's diversity, creativity, and richness. This increases the interest in foreign literature. The main support comes from the Creative Europe program. Thanks to this award, over 135 new authors have reached new markets as their works have been translated into new languages.

One of the first measures governments took against the spread of the virus was the closure of museums, cinemas, theatres, galleries and more. These places are the primary source of income for most European artists. They see what situation they are in when they do not have the opportunity to present their exhibition or sale.

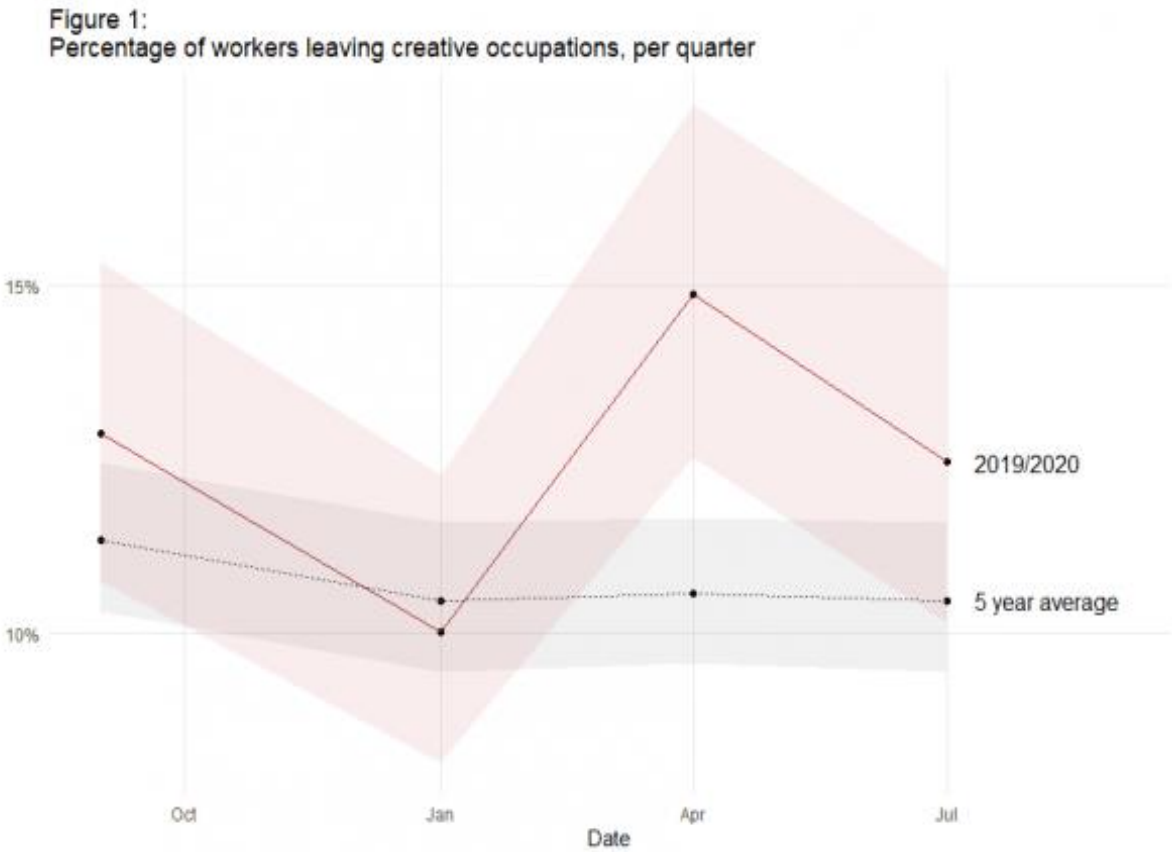
### **2.3. Artistic and cultural organizations' reactions**

Since the beginning of the pandemic, many professional organizations in the creative and cultural sectors have launched various studies on the conditions of the pandemic. These studies will also include recommendations for a faster recovery of the industry. The Network of European Museum Organizations (NEMO), supported by the Creative Europe program, has launched a mapping exercise of the effects of coronavirus on museums, fearing that many museums in the EU will not be able to reopen. The results undoubtedly confirm the difficulties faced by museums. Their need is to increase investment to mitigate losses as much as possible. Together with the Culture Action Europe and European Cultural Networks, platforms and cultural organizations, on 20 March 2020, NEMO issued a joint letter to Commissioner Gabriel proposing measures to cope with the impact



of the pandemic on CCS and for the Creative Europe program. The text authors have requested greater flexibility about eligibility periods for projects and frameworks. Also for the costs related to cancelled events to still be eligible, a 'solidarity fee' for freelancers whose events were cancelled, flexibility in the format of a planned event, and additional funding for losses due to participation fees and refunds.

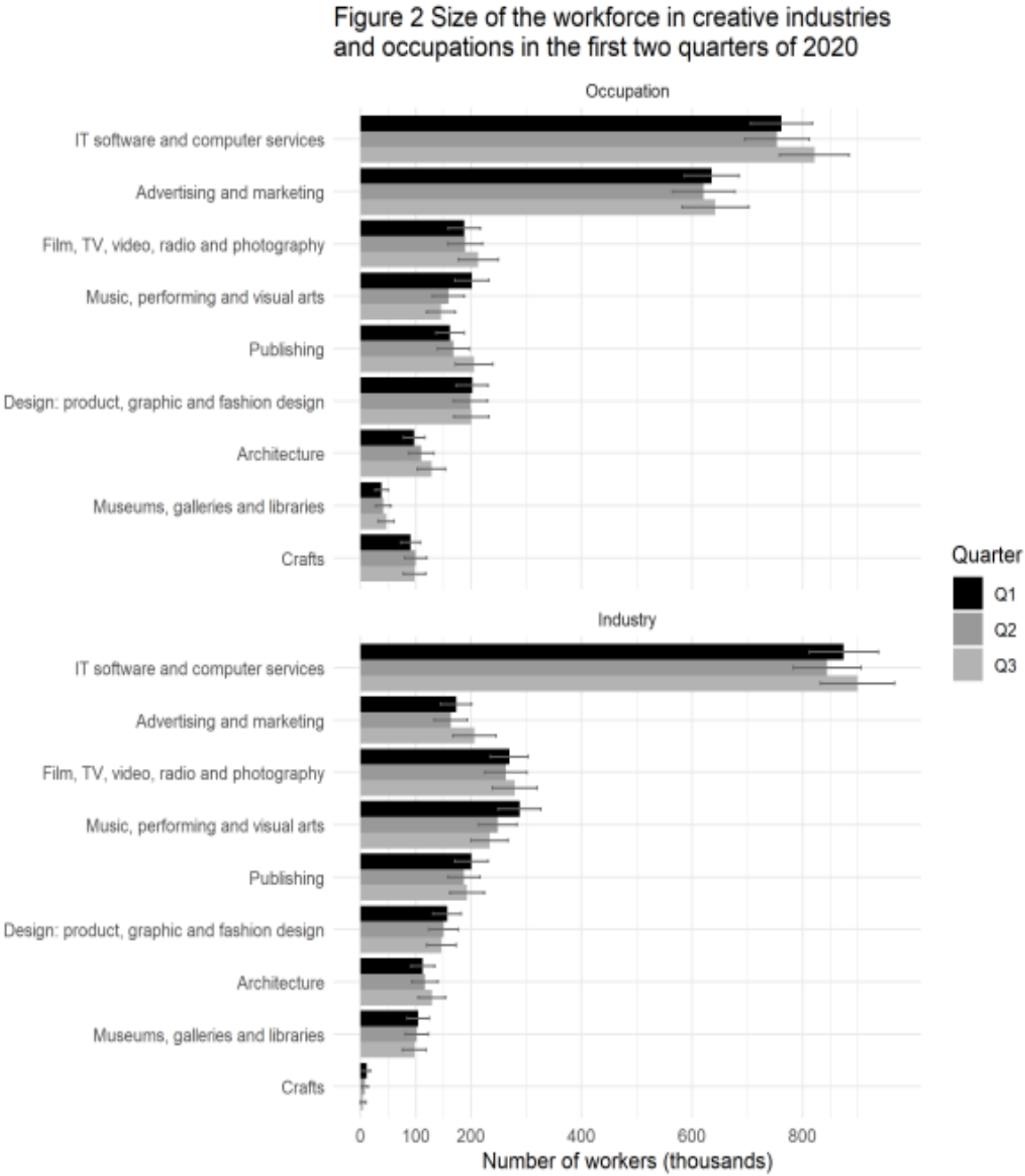
The “Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre” shows two main points in the following figure. The five-year average proportion of people leaving creative occupations in each quarter, and the proportion leaving in each quarter between Q4 (October-December) 2019 and up to Q3 (July-September) 2020. The comparison allows us to see how unusual the 2020 employment patterns are.



*Figure 15 – Percentage of workers leaving creative occupations, per quarter*

*Source: Pec.ac.uk*

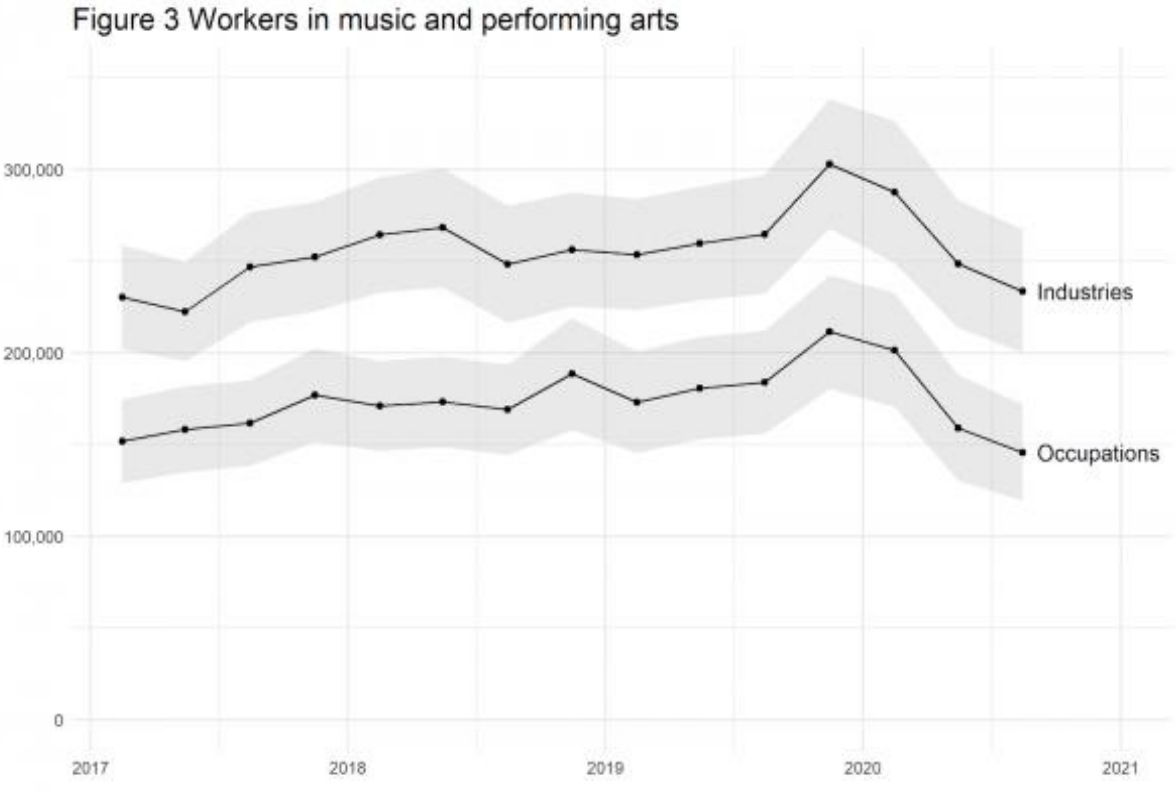
Creative professions include many jobs. These are writers and musicians and filmmakers, designers, and many others. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has hit this sector hard. Many workers in the creative industry in the early 2020s changed jobs in the middle of the same year. The percentage of these people has increased dramatically compared to previous years.



**Figure 16 – Size of the workers in workforce in creative industries and occupations in the first two quarters of 2020**

**Source: Pec.ac.uk**

When looking at specific sub-sectors in the creative sector, at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, there was not much change in the number of workers. However, when it comes to the professions in music, visual and performing arts, things are different. The number of workers in these areas has dropped significantly.



*Figure 17 – Workers in music and performing arts*

*Source: Pec.ac.uk*

Unfortunately, this graph shows how the crisis has affected the hours worked by people on creative work. The reduction in hours is noticeable. Those most affected are crafts, television, music, performing and visual arts and others. From this and the previous graphs, we can summarize that there are a large number of job losses and the number of hours worked in this sector.

## **2.4. The Future of Culture and Creative sectors in post-COVID-19 Europe**

The European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe appreciates at a very high level the measures and initiatives taken by each of the EU Member States, regions and cities in response to this serious crisis. Undoubtedly, the cultural and creative sectors are among the most affected. About 30% of those affected are self-employed and do not have security protection. The measures and bans taken, and in particular, the prolonged social restraint will have a long-term impact on this sector and exacerbate economic uncertainty. Despite the difficulties they face, these sectors have offered us their works online free, thus positively impacting people's mental and emotional health and well-being. The European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe welcome the European Parliament Resolution on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences (17 April 2020/2616), recognizing the essential economic and social role of this sector and recognizing the negative impact of the people working in this environment. They call for true European unity in diversity and for everyone to work together. The European institutions and every EU citizen interested in this area to come up with new ways to move forward.

To create a new culture of solidarity that is well sustained beyond the current crisis. The crisis is putting to a great test the EU's ability to act and think in non-traditional and at the same time effective ways to cope. Every emergency requires cohesion, flexibility and new measures. The action taken will define the future.



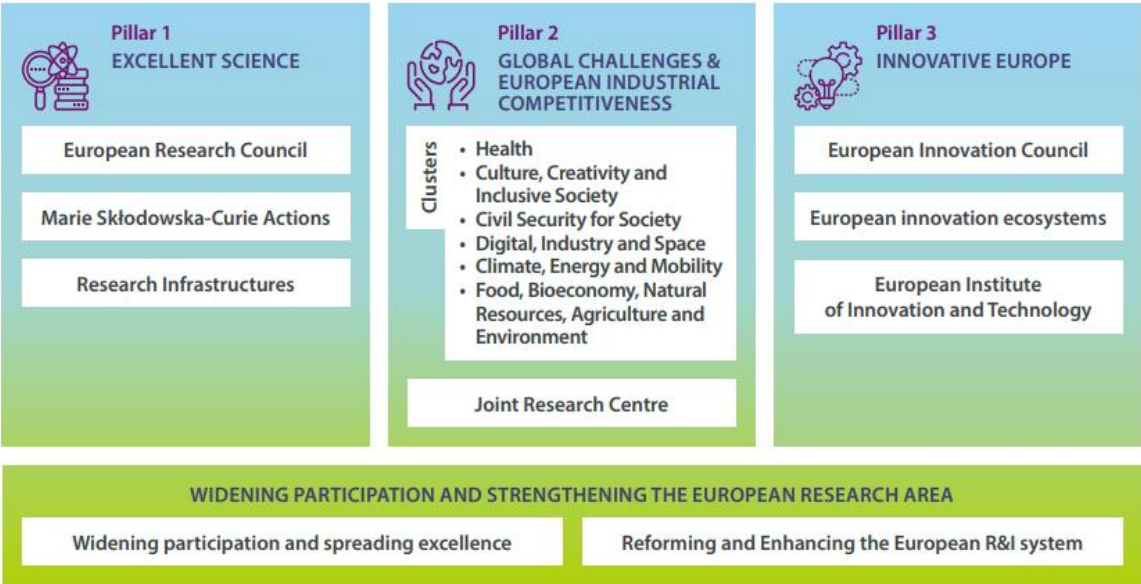
The world of arts, culture, heritage and creativity will not be the same after COVID-19. Due to the state of emergency, not only at the local but also at the national level, it has forced governments to support the most urgent needs and the worst affected sectors. Current strategies, approaches and tools will need to undergo significant changes. The EU needs to rethink its future by reviewing its plan and models. Eurogroup finance ministers held a meeting in April 2020, endorsing the Commission's intention to adapt its current proposal for a multiannual EU budget to reflect the impact of the crisis and the size of the challenges ahead. Ensure cohesion within the EU through fairness, solidarity and responsibility.

The new Programme, Horizon Europe (2021-2027), is a tool for research, innovation and experimentation with a budget of 95.5 billion euros. It seeks to address issues such as climate change, helping to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and boosts the EU's competitiveness and growth. The program helps to collaborate and enhance the impact of research and innovation in developing and implementing EU policies while addressing global challenges. It supports the creation and better dissemination of technology and knowledge. It also creates new jobs, stimulates economic growth, promotes industry

competitiveness, and optimizes the investment impact within an enhanced research area. The program should form a basis for cooperation and exchange between cultural experiments, research and other sectors (health, environment, etc.).

The European Commission proposes setting up two platforms for sharing good practices between the Member States and offer solutions. If the Programme goes according to plan, a framework can be created to nurture the European public space for culture and a platform for new ideas and debates. To be as effective as possible, they must be designed jointly with the European Commission, Member States, and the cultural and creative sectors.

**THREE PILLARS FOR IMPLEMENTATION**



A proposal has been made to the European Commission to launch a dialogue with all cultural and creative sectors, taking into account all identified needs, good practices, knowledge and expected challenges in the period after COVID-19. This can be achieved through regular exchange and mutual support—expected progress. The European Commission and national governments are also

encouraged to invite cultural and creative professionals to participate in national groups to help develop and return to a new norm.

The European Cultural Foundation was founded in 1954. Its founders believed in culture as a vital ingredient for Europe's post-war reconstruction and healing. Their vision of a united Europe, where citizens feel proud to be Europeans, a place where they can live, work, dream and express themselves. They created the ECF "to stimulate European sentiment, to promote the development and preservation of a sense of mutual understanding and democratic solidarity between the peoples of Europe by encouraging cultural and educational activities of common interest". The Foundation has always focused on programs and grants that allow mobility and exchange of ideas and education through culture and capacity building. Over the years, the Foundation has developed and initiated more than twenty programs and supported thousands of Europeans. It is also designed to stimulate European sentiment, promote development and preserve a sense of unity among the peoples of Europe by promoting cultural and educational activities.

In 2020, the Culture of Solidarity Fund was launched, which aims to support cultural initiatives that, in difficult times, strengthen European solidarity and the idea of Europe as a shared place.



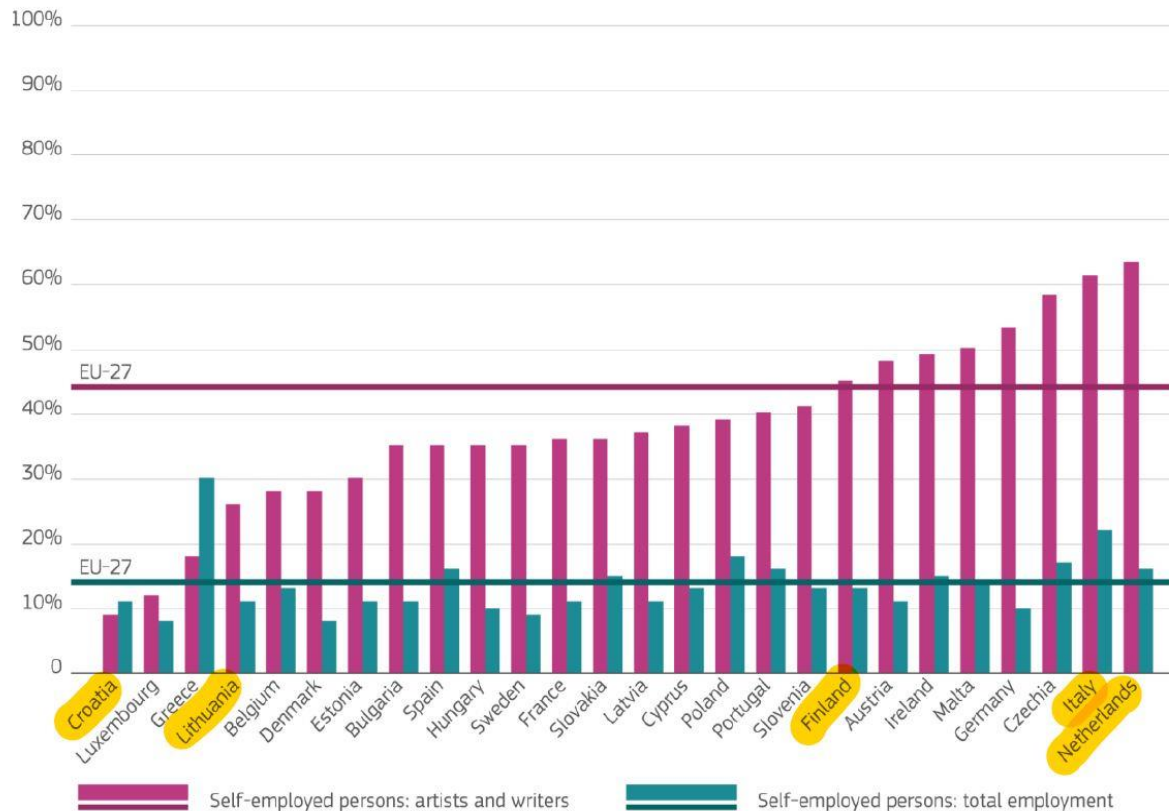
The crisis we are all experiencing calls on all stakeholders to come together and find creative solutions to help build relationships. The European Cultural Foundation has launched the Culture of Solidarity Fund - an initiative supporting imaginative actions that strengthen European solidarity.

The European Cultural Foundation and Culture Action Europe have taken urgent measures to be implemented throughout Europe.

Three different researchers working in the creative and cultural sectors have explained how the pandemic's beginning has affected the industry in which they work. According to Professor Before, the COVID-19 crisis has alleviated some of the problems of culture in the long run. It would be interesting to explore across Europe how we could support a sector that is currently quite vulnerable. The sectors are severely affected, but not every industry has the same tools to deal with the crisis. The impact will be felt everywhere but more strongly in some parts of the sector.

According to an article on the official website of the EU, accounts for 3.7% of total employment in the EU. However, this number is likely to be lower than reality, as various facets and sectors encompass cultural and creative activities. The self-employment rate is 32% in the industry, doubled 14% in the whole economy. This means that self-employed artists are at risk of job losses due to COVID-19 and a lack of alternative financing schemes or unemployment and health insurance.





The COVID-19 crisis has also hit the visual arts sector hard. The EU study "Rebuilding Europe: The Cultural and Creative Economy Before and After The COVID-19 Crisis" illustrated the situation in numbers. This sector represents a turnover of 138 billion euros in 2019. This makes it one of the most developed and vital sectors in the cultural and creative industries. It also offered the highest number of jobs at 1,890,000 jobs in Europe. This sector remains one of the least supported and funded by governments in several countries. Artists are artists, many of whom are freelancers. They have lost their job opportunities due to the closure of exhibition halls and museums. It is also negative for them that they are excluded from most state aid systems to which full-time workers are entitled. Due to this fact, some of them are taking the step of moving to other sectors. This would lead to a significant loss in the quantity and quality of creative content in the long run.



### 🚩 A digital cultural offer during the quarantine coronavirus

The OECD's digital toolkit introduces us to the situation of consumers facing the challenges of digital technology. The data highlights inequalities depending on age and income, pointing to the OECD average 71.6% of 55-74 year-olds using the internet and a 75.1% average of households with the lowest income. The situation is different in the EU, which depends directly on the Member States and regions, the quality of the bottlenecks and, most importantly, people's access to digital equipment. Equipment, connection quality, and skills are very likely to exacerbate occupational and social inequalities. A similar scenario could be expected with the differences between the Member States, regions and social groups, affecting the workforce of the cultural sector to move digitally and continue their activities. It is also an additional obstacle for writers and artists, who face competition from established dominant providers of creative and cultural content. At this pandemic, the demand for digital cultural content and electronic sales of cultural goods and services have grown significantly among

the population. Some are already a video on demand (VOD) or subscription video on demand (SVOD) to watch movies or subscribe to music streaming services or e-commerce platforms. Most often, international corporations buy e-books or read newspapers online. Others continue to consume pirated content. To continue the cultural activity, cultural institutions such as theatre, museums, operas and others have provided the opportunity for users to view them online free. Actors, artists, bands for events, who stream their current or past work free, have joined this idea. Only time will tell the impact of this digitalisation on the cultural and creative sectors. Many questions arise that still do not have a clear answer.

Each EU Member State has taken different measures to tackle the pandemic. One of the measures taken initially was the cancellation of major public events and gatherings. This included the closure of all kinds of galleries, theatres, halls and more. For example, Slovakia has used the EU Social Fund to support individuals, including artists and cultural workers. In Germany, part of the creative and cultural sector measures are cultural events, where it is possible to replace them with digital versions.

Cultural policy is not an EU competence. Therefore, action at the EU level in this sector is limited to supporting the Member States to promote cultural heritage and diversity. The pandemic has created a situation where this type of action is needed. Measures taken by the EU are aimed at protecting workers and the self-employed.

## **CHAPTER 3.**

### **SUCCESS EXAMPLES IN THE THREE COUNTRIES (BULGARIA, REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA AND SERBIA)**

Hitting Europe's cultural sector and cultural industry, which includes the aforementioned sectors, during a pandemic was a challenge. Apart from the fact that the European Union had difficulty in engaging in more cultural events, and this because of the restrictive measures, which in turn were due to the coronavirus. Quite a large percentage of countries closed completely and did not allow any gaps for people to congregate and exchange practices. Fines were even imposed, if there were breaches of the rules.

Italy, as one of the first countries and the country that gave the most victims during the full wave of the virus, did not allow any compromises. Germany, which was moving at a normal pace, had introduced one of the most stringent policies for any sector involving human handling.

Naturally, there are also so-called other types of countries in Europe, which, due to multiple economic policies and losses, have proved to be much more compromised. Some of these countries are Bulgaria, the Republic of North Macedonia and Serbia.

In Bulgaria, cultural activities have changed to their digitalization, combined with a cluster of people depending on the defined restrictions imposed at the state level. Numerous methods were used in 2020 and 2021, leading to more than 6 000 cultural projects implemented in the country. This number proved to be possible only because of mass digitization. Concerts, theaters, sports tournaments were held with no audience. They were filmed and played live with professional equipment. In this way, the country has largely dealt with the depression and social influence of the virus. On the other hand, by broadcasting

online and publishing online contests, even the population in the more remote and economically volatile places had the opportunity to participate. Bulgaria managed to combine the mass presence with the digital conduct, improving its own approaches to the conduct of the events, but also the cultural sectors recovered to a certain extent.

The Republic of North Macedonia, on the other hand, because of the national restrictions in 2020, had almost no events held, but that was the basis on which these activities managed to resume the following year. In 2021, some of the largest festivals were held in the country with more than 15 countries-participants. Moreover, due to the stagnation in the cultural sector and the decrease in the number of participants, the festivals showed innovative and different aspects of creativity and culture. The desire and passion of the artists grew. Amazing projects were implemented with the participation of people from the EU Member States, third countries, and many Macedonian citizens. Even those living in the remote settlements of the country were able to attend.

Serbia, on the other hand, unlike the two countries (Bulgaria and the Republic of North Macedonia), had some of the strictest restrictions. There was almost no compromise on holding cultural events during the pandemic. This is why the Parliament and the cultural sector have implemented digital platforms to support cultural sectors. All kinds of events that could not happen in museums, theaters and galleries, took place in the virtual space in the form of catalogues, seminars, lectures and even live transmission of certain historical artifacts. In this way, the country engaged the entire population to support culture and also brought educational elements into the initiatives themselves. Digitalization for the country proved to be the saving tool for people of all backgrounds - economically, physically, healthily, and psychologically.

### 3.1. Bulgaria – a successful example

Bulgaria, similarly to other countries in Europe, reacted as quickly and adequately as possible to deal with the created panic. Initially, all eating establishments and all types of mass events were closed. Masks became mandatory, and after a while schools closed as teachers began teaching online. Within two weeks, the Bulgarian education system went online.

Compromise options for citizens and the population were analysed, but such plans for the cultural sector failed to work during these first months of the pandemic. According to the orders adopted at that time by the Health Authorities, the only cultural activity that was allowed to take place from 5 May 2020 were visits to museums, which were outdoors, but they were a subject to the requirement of social distance and all anti-epidemic measures. There are 12 museums and cultural venues of this type in Bulgaria, and since the Ministry's order prohibited mass gatherings of people, even at these museums, visits are minimal.

The majority of people did not accept the rulers, so on May 11 2020, the order was updated:

- Visits to indoor and outdoor museums, galleries and libraries were allowed, subject to the requirement of social distance and all anti-epidemic measures, including no use of air conditioning;

- Cultural events, such as concerts and other performances, may be held on open-air stages, with a seating capacity of up to 30 % of the maximum capacity, subject to social distance and all anti-epidemic measures;

- Visits to cinemas, with an admissible occupancy of seats up to 30 % of the maximum capacity, subject to the requirement of social distance and all anti-epidemic measures, including the use of no air-conditioning, were allowed.

Despite the lifting of some of the restrictions, according to Bulgaria's national cultural calendar, more than 50 cultural events that had been scheduled did not take place at all or, following the lifting of some of the restrictions, failed because the organisers and municipalities did not have enough time to react. However, in an official report of the Sofia Municipality (Sofia), for the year 2020, 3,523 events were realized in the municipality alone, as follows:

- 105 projects were implemented in partnership with a municipal cultural institute or other organization;
- 113 projects with planned educational events;
- 133 projects that implemented activities aimed at developing the public's interest in culture;
- 123 projects that make a link between culture and education.

In total, 38 155 cultural projects were involved, of which 1456 were open access and 640 were outdoor events. Quite a large number of these projects had a digital presentation developed for the rest of the public space (316), the total number of the public reported in the 2020 report counts 915,000 people.

At this stage of the epic, it is important to focus on the heritage of Cultural Sofia, which is evident in every work of art and skillfully conveyed, using modern tools, cutting-edge techniques and digital technologies. Contemporary art, collaborations with international artists and organizations, exhibiting artists of the highest level and presenting contemporary art to the public happened simultaneously.

The global coronavirus epidemic has caused a significant increase in digital cultural production and presentation, enabling the public to access art, and artists to continue their work.



Developing and exhibiting Venelin Shurelov's high-tech work *One Man* in an urban environment was the highlight of 2020. The work, created and selected after a competition within the Out programme, was on display for everyone to see in the City Garden until the end of 2021, challenging contemporary society in both a social and aesthetic sense. Furthermore, this work provoked much discussion and reflection and gave all citizens and visitors of the capital the opportunity to experience contemporary art.

One of the main goals of the Capital Municipality is to involve the general public in the cultural life of the city. In addition, in 2020, the conditions for funding projects with financial instruments included the need for an interactive approach to audiences that encourages their involvement, generates interest and stimulates participation, as well as a special focus on children and youth audiences, and the participation in cultural life of people from different specific and vulnerable groups. In 2020, the number of initiatives targeting youth audiences or involving educational activities were implemented in each of the cultural and artistic fields.





The municipality's cultural activities continued to draw international attendees in 2020 thanks to collaborations with a number of foreign embassies and cultural institutes. Emblematic activities that broaden cultural life and include the city in the "Festival of Science 2020," "European Night of Literature 2020," "European Night of Museums 2020," and "European Heritage Days 2020" were realized in collaboration with cultural institutes.

These types of activities were taking place across the country. Other example is the "Ellita Association", which is a non-profit association, which was established in 2012 in Veliko Tarnovo. The main goal of that organization is to



promote Bulgarian art, culture, as well as sports in Bulgaria and abroad. Of course, that kind of activities are possible thanks to various events, including music concerts, festivals, multiple competitions, tours and educational events. Some events were created and supported by the association and based on cultural education.

The first is the free webinar, suitable for children and young people aged between 10 to 24 years old. The only requirement for them is to have a basic knowledge of information technology or visual programming alongside with computer with an Internet connection. Event participants have the opportunity to take a closer look at how to write an equation correctly, using Python operators, which helps them to understand programming language more easily.

Another exciting project, organized together with the National Culture Fund was called “The Crossroads of Arts”. It aims to support young people, involved in creativity and culture by organizing lectures, concerts and other events. Various initiatives have been prepared throughout the year.

Another one is “The Sound of Time” project, which is an international festival that gives people aged from 5 to 25 years old to perform in two groups. These are for vocalists and instrumentalists. The competition aims to discover and encourage young talents who have the opportunity to express themselves in front of an audience, as well as to rediscover themselves through music. Each of the guests and participants in the event have the opportunity to enjoy many concerts, open lessons, also exhibitions, which are presented by some of the most established representatives in this field.

According to the national annual report of the "National Fund of Culture", the cultural events and projects that have applied for state funding under the set competitions from the country amount to 13 009 887.40 EUR. A total of 4 653 projects applied, of which 2 351 were approved. This national total does not include NGOs and cultural tourism, which were not covered by the national fund.

The active development of the cultural sphere in Bulgaria, despite the epidemic situation at the European level, did not stop organizations to realize a number of new events.

### **3.2. The Republic of North Macedonia – a successful example**

The overall administrative and practical organization of the cultural sector in the Republic of North Macedonia is slightly different from the EU Member States.

Every initiative in the field of creativity and culture must be approved by the Ministry of Culture, which controls all cultural funds. The Ministry of Culture has the authority to choose the leaders of the national cultural institutions, to fund their initiatives and operating expenses, to manage the labor market, etc. Additionally, the so-called autonomous cultural sector is financially dependent on the government and the Ministry of Culture.

Media space in Macedonia quite often does not reflect cultural events and aspirations, unless they are patriotic in nature. For this reason and with the entry of the coronavirus into the country, the cultural sector has suffered serious setbacks. Of course, there were lone voices, particularly those of the Syndicate of Cultural Workers and several NGOs, insisting for a better decision-making with regards to the sector.

The main stakeholders and those working in the cultural sectors took the initiative on taking special measures to help the independent cultural sector, approaching the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Culture and the Mayor of Skopje.

The work of the Coordination Unit on COVID-19 and its implications for culture was also very useful to learn about the experiences of other European countries related to reducing the effects of the blockage of the cultural sector, which naturally showed its positive impact. A specific fund for monthly subsidies

for the independent sector, the immediate payment of awards, past due for 2019, and monthly financial assistance for “independent” (self-employed) artists were among the fundamental steps outlined by the proposal. The government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture, unveiled new regulations on May 29th that addressed monthly payments (minimum wage) for independent film professionals, as well as other artists and cultural workers.

However, when commenting and addressing good examples, in the case of the Republic of North Macedonia it is important to take the example of Skopje. For the first time, the city has demonstrated its will and influence to support artists and cultural workers at this time rather than ignore the epidemic. This has significant cultural implications since it demonstrates that cities do not entirely rely on the phlegmatic Ministry of Culture. Similar actions and programs were taken in a number of other places, although sadly not nationwide and on a lesser scale. The Ministry of Culture would have had a great chance to lead by example and financially or otherwise promote initiatives and programs in smaller cities similar to those in Skopje.

As the implications for the country's cultural sector were more than threatening, a new budget line was being created in 2021 to support the cultural sector. The new budget line was called “Cultural heritage in danger” with the goal of giving priority to the preservation of significant intangible cultural assets. A fund of 12.000.000 MKD, or around 200.000 EUR, was designated for this purpose. This fund supported urgent initiatives for the preservation, restoration, and protection of significant structures regarded as emblematic of intangible heritage. Six such monuments were recognized in 2021. A new Cultural Heritage Law was drafted.

The impact of the pandemic in the Republic of North Macedonia actually turned out to be a period of innovation towards cultural heritage - permeating post-industrial civilizations in all their forms. It extended far beyond museums,

historical landmarks or conventional cultural institutions, as it was a territorial resource derived from heritage-creating features, talent, industry and particularities of language. It motivated and inspired technology hubs, creative clusters, well-attended festivals, digital networks, new industries and services as it encourages innovation, social and creative entrepreneurship, and innovative working practices. The country's powerful social media platforms used cultural products (music, fashion, TV shows, games, performing arts and sports) as their main resources to create invaluable data exchange. Alongside their economic importance, cultural activities fostered social connections that make places more attractive, peaceful and beneficial to well-being (culture as a happiness industry). Since citizens did not attach such importance to them before the pandemic, it was only since the restrictions were imposed that the need for such cultural activities had actually been indicated.



Naturally, the country has its annual official festivals, many of which did not take place in 2020 but managed to take place in 2021. One example of such a cultural event is the Balkan Folklore Festival, Ohrid, which takes place every year in the town of Ohrid, including in the pandemic 2021. The festival presents the tradition and the traditional beliefs passed through the generations of many countries through dances, songs, customs, national costumes, and musical instruments.



Another similar event is the International Festival of Antique Drama "Stobi", which was also not held in 2020, but was successfully conducted in 2021. The festival is the second largest festival with this profile in Europe, after the one in Epidaurus. It involves people and collectives from all over Europe, and some from third countries as well, effectively bringing multiple cultures together and exchanging ideas.

Another such event is the Manaki Brothers Film Festival, Bitola, which was held successfully in 2021, as opposed to 2020.



Another key stakeholder is the so-called “Loesje” Bitola, which is an institution for Education, based in North Macedonia. The organization was funded by group of youth workers, trainers and project managers active more than 10 years in youth work locally and internationally, with the aim to respond to the needs of the young people, youth workers and educators, as well as the society as a whole. They work hard towards promoting active citizenship, fostering human rights education, raising awareness about the values of diversity, equality, tolerance, freedom of expression towards combating discrimination, hate speech, social and religious intolerance, all this topics concerning attitudes and behaviors of young people.

The main goal is to empower youth (especially from marginalized groups) towards active European citizenship, responsible for their actions and capable to be committed in the societies where they live. Their youth workers work to equip them with different skills and competences, helping them to build strong society. The organization believes that each young man and woman has some strength, knowledge, and experience that can be shared.

“Loesje” Bitola builds its strategy on inclusive participation principle to involve young people with different background and opportunities. They believe that through discovering their full potential, developing communication and critical thinking skills, and active citizenship young people will transform their strengths for community development and fostering positive changes in society. “Loesje” Bitola key staff are people who have experience and sensitivity, as well as passion for youth work. Their active youth workers implement different workshops and activities with young people and the community as whole, focusing on the marginalized people. The people involved, apart from their professional skills and competences, also possess good personal characteristics. They are friendly, responsible, tolerant, and able to work in big international teams, to deal with deadlines and are available for any kind of information.

### **3.3. Serbia – a successful example**

Due to COVID-19, in Serbia, like anywhere in the world, cultural events were postponed. Public access to cultural institutions was restricted and events - especially festivals - cancelled or postponed. Public access to historical monuments, archaeological sites and cultural heritage sites was also banned. This countrywide ban came into force on 16 March 2020, but was reversed at the end of April 2020. Some cultural institutions such as museums, galleries, etc. opened for visitors, but performing arts remained closed.



The Serbian government worked very hard to preserve cultural life, adopting various financial policies in this area and supporting artists and cultural institutions in their efforts to be present online and on social media, where they have tried to open up new opportunities for people to access cultural heritage and to participate in online cultural events. However, the pandemic did not allow for mass gatherings, which posed a problem. To address this situation, the Government of Serbia and through the Ministry of Culture and Media, developed digital content for culture.

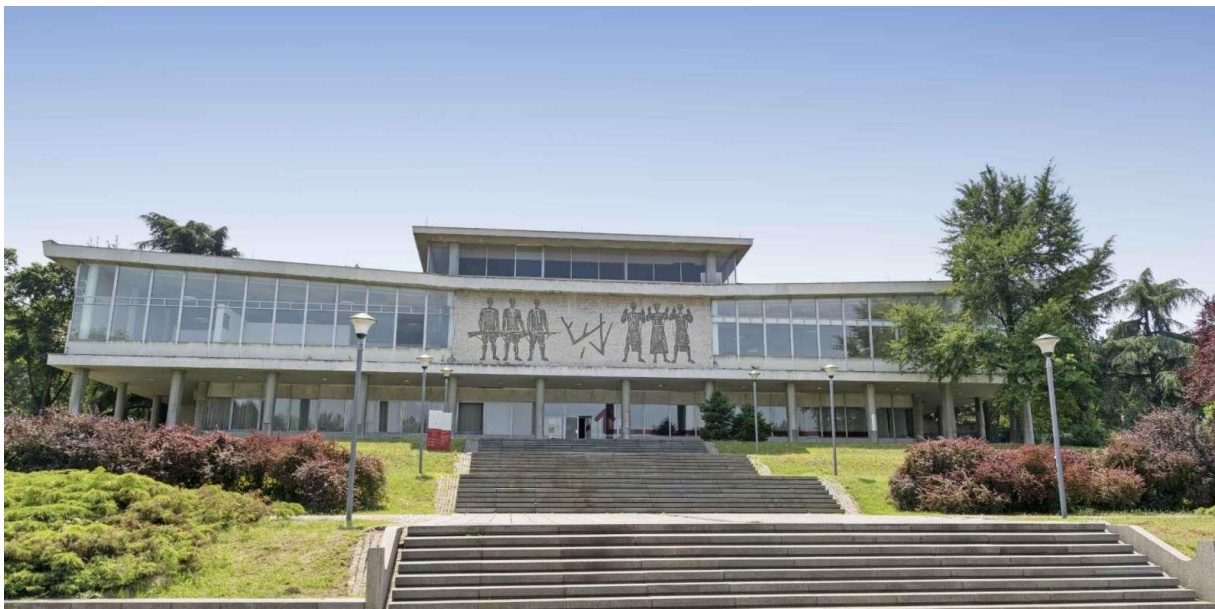
In order to disseminate information about cultural events, the Serbian institutions developed new platforms to reach a maximum number of people. For them, the function of internet platforms became vital. It is worth noting that even before the crisis, cultural activities in Serbia were promoted on social networks such as Facebook and YouTube to attract people to events.



A national platform called: **digitalnasolidarnost.gov.rs** was developed, where information about all free platforms, tools for learning and working from

home, as well as free books, courses, films, music, television and cultural content was disseminated for the duration of the epidemic. And organisations that actually included their content on the website had an option to send invitations to Serbian citizens.

Museums also went online. Because the museums themselves had a backlog of artifacts whose history was known, a gap emerged through which the museums could also function properly online. An example of such a museum is the one in Shabatz, which created a campaign - each week it offered a narrative about a museum object on digital platforms such as Instagram and Facebook.



Another such museum is the Museum of Yugoslavia, which actually had digital content developed on its artifacts or historical notes even before the pandemic began. The way the museum promoted its activities online was through a digital calendar that was shared monthly. For example, it featured dates such as “9 May - Europe Day” or “25 May - Youth Day”. The other interesting activity for this museum took place through the “#YUDOM” idea. A cultivated participatory approach through which the Museum of Yugoslavia invited viewers

from the region to discover Yugoslav heritage (furniture, cutlery, electronics, toys) and then include them in the virtual exhibition organized by the museum.

In addition, there are organizations in Serbia, actively engaged in cultural heritage and creativity projects. One of these projects is Project: 'Friendship Bazaar', which is funded by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia.



The main goal is to strengthen tolerance towards migrants and asylum seekers at the local level is the central idea of the project's lead. The organisation felt that it was necessary for the local population to bring closer the culture, customs and tradition of migrants and asylum seekers to the local community accepting their presence and recognized the importance of cultivating diversity and breaking the stereotypes and prejudices that dominate them.

The Center for Social Integration from Vranje, in cooperation with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, during the period of three months worked on the realization of the project “Friendship Bazaar”. The “Friendship Bazaar” program is funded from donor funds provided under the project “Support to the Migration Management System in the RS”, funded by the Government of Switzerland, and implemented by the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia.

The project included the “Friendship Bazaar” organization, in order to promote the culture of migrants and asylum seekers to the local population. The program is aimed at strengthening tolerance between migrants and the local population. The project included the “Friendship Bazaar” organization in order to promote the culture of migrants and asylum seekers to the local population. A brochure was developed that fully describes the project and its results, with photographs of workshops, life stories from people from Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, as well as recipes representing the cuisines of these countries.

*This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein.*