



Access to Culture Platform – Policy Guidelines

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The **Platform on Access to Culture** is a channel for cultural stakeholders to provide concrete input and practice-based policy recommendations to European, national, regional and local policy makers. It was launched on 5 June 2008 at the initiative of the European Commission in the framework of the European Agenda for Culture. Alongside with the Platform on the Potential of Cultural and Creative Industries and the Platform for an Intercultural Europe, it has the mandate to bring in the voice of civil society to provide recommendations for policies that can foster the access of all to cultural life in its different dimensions. The Platform also aims to represent the needs of the sector, identify suitable actions in the different stages of policy formation and also to organise itself the way many other sectors have done previously. Access to culture is a new crucial issue within the European agenda and the structured dialogue with civil society is a new instrument for consultation at European level. Special attention should therefore be given to the recommendations as they pioneer and open the way to new reflections and policy development at European, regional, national and local levels.

In order to ensure a perspective as wide as possible, the Platform has selected three main threads relating to access that have been examined in three respective working groups. The **working group on education and learning** explores the benefits of the interaction and synergy between education, learning and culture and the role that cultural participation plays in different educational settings. The **working group on creativity and creation** advocates for the best conditions for artistic creation, to ensure access to the creative process for all, and to explore the creativity of the arts sector within the wider field of 'creativity and innovation'. Finally, the **working group on audience participation** advocates the importance of taking audience participation into account in all levels of policy making based on the broad spectrum of added value that a participative audience brings, not only to the cultural sector but to society as a whole, especially in terms of civic participation and citizenship.

On June 9th 2009 the Platform endorsed the Policy Guidelines document which is the outcome of the working process of its first year of existence. The document is directed to the European Commission, Member States, local and regional authorities and cultural institutions. It places **access and participation within a human rights framework** and provides guidelines for policy measures aimed at:

- **Improving access to culture** and including it as a fundamental theme in the next generation of EU programmes (2014-2020) and in the Culture Programme in particular.
- Underlining the **importance culture plays** in the lives of the peoples in Europe and the urgency of taking affirmative legal and policy action to make culture accessible



A fundamental right of all citizens

for everyone, based on Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which recognises taking part in cultural life as a fundamental right.

- Drawing attention to the **contribution** that an **active, vital, thriving cultural sector** brings to the development of society as a whole. Participation in cultural life, exposure to artistic creation, access to artistic skills and knowledge enriches individuals and communities, and strengthens the civic and social nets that compose the fabric of our European societies.
- Highlighting the importance of supporting all steps of the **chain of processes related to creative expression, as well as their interaction**. These include: education/training, creation, production, dissemination, documentation/preservation and media/art criticism.
- Fostering special attention to improving **conditions for artistic creation** and artists; to facilitating conditions for a continued **capacity building process** of cultural, educational and creative professionals; to addressing imbalances in their social statutes. This includes legal financial and social protection, adequate funding possibilities, professional development opportunities - such as mobility and access to information – for artists. It also includes identifying new communication processes with the public in order to understand their cultural participation needs.
- Stimulating more **detailed, qualitative and impartial research and data collection** on the different forms of access and participation in cultural life from education to creation, interpretation and enjoyment of culture.

The policy recommendations of the Platform can be summarised as follows:

Understanding the needs of all publics

Data collection, research and consultations - to improve policymaking in the field of access to culture.

Overcoming linguistic barriers

Language education and support to translation - to remove linguistic obstacles to access to culture.

Supporting highly qualified professionalism

Social protection, education and training programmes - to ensure professional development and growth and, in turn, broaden the diversity of the cultural offer.

Improving funding and procedures

More diverse and flexible funding opportunities, easier access to information - to facilitate access to funding to a larger group of artists and cultural professionals.



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Advancing mobility and exchange

Mobility funding, spaces for encounters and exchange, support to diffusion of artistic processes and products – to increase mobility, and integrate cultural stakeholders in foreign actions.

Promoting the cultural use of new technologies

Increased access to new technologies to public and cultural actors, while insuring appropriate protection of creators' and interpreters' rights – to increase the cultural potential of new technologies.

Stimulating learning through culture

Recognition of the synergies between education and culture and support to such projects in all appropriate funding instruments – to increase the access to culture through education and the access to education through culture.

Positioning access to culture upstream and transversally in all cultural policy-making

Participatory policymaking, interdisciplinary policy working groups – to improve specific and general policies promoting access to culture.

Raising awareness of the legal frameworks on access to culture

Information, ratification and implementation of all legal instruments on access to culture – to translate international commitments on access to culture into genuine policies.

The Platform's **Policy Guidelines** Document can be **downloaded** from the **European House for Culture** webpage <http://www.efa-aef.eu/en/activities/european-house-for-culture/>, from the **sites of the Platform Members** and from the **Cultural Portal of the EC** http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1581_en.htm.

For more information contact the **Access to Culture Platform Secretariat @**



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