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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

**EU guidelines for the safe resumption of activities in the cultural and creative sectors -
COVID-19**

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I. The EU's cultural sectors and the COVID-19 pandemic

The cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI), also referred as industrial ecosystem, have played a crucial role in the unprecedented circumstances arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. The crisis has highlighted the importance of culture for people's well-being¹ and mental health. Culture has helped people cope with the impacts of lockdown and social distancing, thanks to the engagement and creativity of CCSI reaching audiences in innovative virtual environments. The wide-ranging restrictions that have been put in place since the outbreak of the pandemic have hit the CCSI particularly hard: many activities have come to a halt, with the closure of venues and spaces, cancellation of events, festivals and tours, and radically reduced mobility of cultural professionals and circulation of cultural works.

The 2021 Annual Single Market Report² has confirmed that the ecosystem was among the hardest hit industrial ecosystems in the EU. The Report explains that *'this is particularly the case for activities based on venues and visits: performing arts and 'heritage' sectors (e.g. live music, theatres, circus, festivals, cinema, museums and heritage sites). For example cinema operators in the EU report a 70% drop in box office sales in 2020, music venues report a 76% drop in attendance (64% in revenues) and museums lost revenues up to 75-80% (in popular touristic regions). This impact is further illustrated by a decrease of around 35% in royalties collected by collective management organisations for authors and performers, whose revenues are expected to continue to fall in 2021 and 2022.'*³

At a more aggregated sectoral level, Eurostat value added data shows that in 2020, the arts, entertainment and recreation activities experienced the largest percentage drop compared to 2019 (see Figure 1). The impact was particularly strong in the second and fourth quarters, corresponding to the most relevant waves of the pandemic⁴. A large share of these activities are part of the ecosystem.

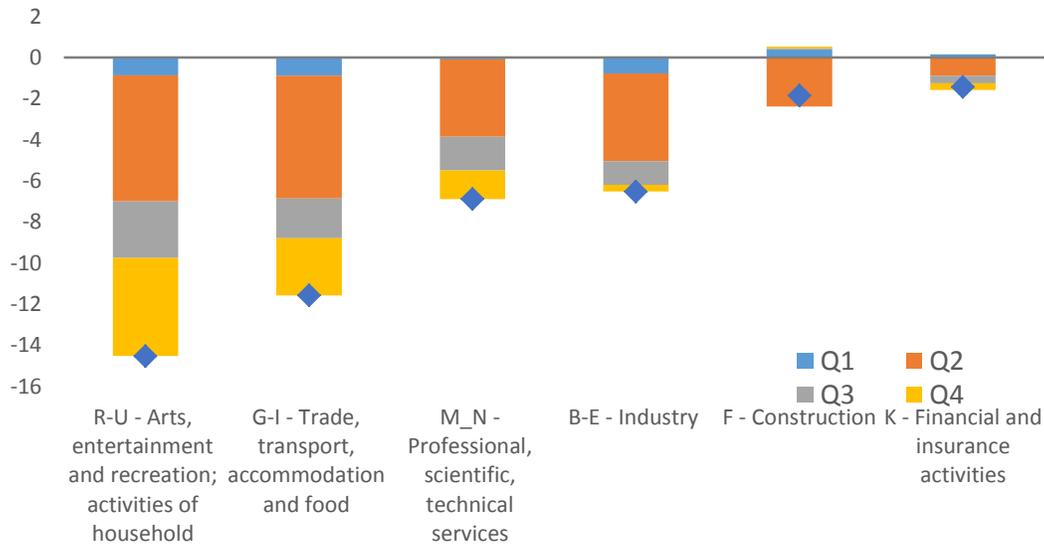
¹ The mental health dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic was addressed at a conference on 10 May 2021; https://ec.europa.eu/health/non_communicable_diseases/events/ev_20210510_en

² Commission Staff Working Document "Annual Single Market Report 2021", accompanying the Communication "Updating the 2020 New Industrial Strategy: Building a stronger Single Market for Europe's recovery ", SWD(2021)351; 5 May 2021

³ Rebuilding Europe – the cultural and creative economy before and after the COVID-19 crisis, EY (January 2021).

⁴ Annual Single Market Report 2021.

Figure 1: Gross value added, 2020. Percentage change with respect to the same period in the previous year.



Given their strong assets, culture and the CCSI are important for the EU’s sustainable recovery, the increased resilience of our societies and, more generally, our European way of life. More coordinated and tailor-made efforts are needed across Member States to allow the sector safely and gradually to resume its activities and become more resilient and prepared for future crises. At the same time, the CCSI need a clear perspective.

The Commission has taken several measures, complementing and supporting Member States’ action, to address the consequences of the pandemic for the sector. The CCSI have benefitted from cross-cutting immediate EU response measures and targeted support from EU funding instruments. They will also receive support for inclusive and sustainable recovery and resilience under the new (2021-2027) Multiannual Financial Framework and NextGeneration EU.^{5, 6}

With the increased vaccine uptake, providing cause for optimism that vaccination will help us substantially reduce the spread of COVID-19, Member States have gradually started considering and implementing lifting of restrictions, including in the field of culture by allowing re-opening of cultural venues, activities and events. Given the dynamic evolution of the pandemic, these steps are based on difficult choices. Also, there are big differences between the various measures taken at national level.

To help Member States in their decision-making, the Communication “Coronavirus: a common path to Europe’s safe re-opening”⁷ announced EU guidelines for the safe re-opening of the cultural sector, in the field of music, audiovisual, performing arts, exhibition spaces such as museums or galleries, libraries, and cultural heritage. The aim of these guidelines is to ease

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/resources/coronavirus-response>
https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en

⁶ To strengthen exchange of good practices in the sectors and amongst EU Member States, the Commission launched two new platforms in the spring 2020: [Creatives Unite](#), a platform for and by the CCSI, and a platform for EU Member States allowing representatives of culture ministries to exchange good practices.

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/communication-safe-sustained-reopening_en.pdf

Member States' choices and facilitate coordination of their measures at EU level. They cover two key dimensions: the **safe reopening** of the cultural sector and its **sustainable recovery**.

The guidelines are presented in the context of a gradual improvement in the public health situation in the EU⁸ based on recent increases in vaccine supply and levels of vaccination, combined with fewer new cases and deaths, more population groups protected from the disease, and existing non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) in all Member States⁹. While there is certainly space for optimism, SARS-CoV-2 transmission remains widespread in large part of the EU/EEA, with the added threat of variants of concern, requiring continued surveillance, vigilance and careful assessment of risk.

II. EU guidelines for the safe re-opening of the cultural and creative sectors

Importantly, trial events organised in various CCSI settings across the EU have demonstrated that **few COVID-19 cases have been associated with transmission at or around cultural events**. Specific requirements for participation and the monitoring of data in the follow-up of these experiments have been crucial to safe organisation.

These EU guidelines set out a **common EU-wide approach for the coordinated and safe resumption of activities in the CCSI**. They aim to allow for the necessary flexibility to take account of the different epidemiological situations in the Member States, adapt to progress in mitigating the pandemic and ensure interoperability with other EU and international tools and standards. They are based on input from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and exchanges with the Health Security Committee (HSC) in May 2021.

The EU guidelines are presented hereafter in the form of:

- general principles and indicators; and
- recommendations.

Member States are encouraged to use the guidelines, which, in full respect of subsidiarity, remain voluntary.

1. General principles and indicators for the safe re-opening of the cultural sector

a) Vaccination coverage

Sufficient vaccination coverage in the population is essential for the widespread safe reopening of society, including cultural establishments. We are gradually moving towards the target of vaccinating at least 70% of the adult population by this summer¹⁰, but a considerable number of people have not yet been vaccinated. It is therefore essential to **plan the reintroduction of social**

⁸ ECDC, Weekly COVID-19 Country overview page: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/covid-19/country-overviews>

⁹ ECDC Rapid Risk Assessment: Assessing SARS-CoV-2 circulation, variants of concern, non-pharmaceutical interventions and vaccine rollout in the EU/EEA 15th Update, 10 June 2021, <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/rapid-risk-assessment-sars-cov-2-circulation-variants-concern>

activities using a phased approach, guided by lessons in each phase as to how effectively reduce the risk of infection and by the underlying epidemiological situation.

b) Settings and contexts

Cultural establishments encompass a diverse variety of settings (e.g. indoor vs outdoor, guests moving around vs occupying assigned or free seats) with people gathering to differing degrees. It is important to be aware of the extent to which flows of movement can be controlled and of possible levels of interaction. Measures such as NPIs reduce the risk of transmission, but cannot fully eliminate it. The decision to allow a specific type of event, should therefore be made on the basis of a **careful assessment of the risk**¹¹. When opening up cultural activities that have previously been closed, **Member States should take account of the indicators in Tables 1 (population level)¹², 2 (individual level) and 3 (cultural establishment level).**¹³

Table 1: Indicators at population level

Indicator	Details
Background epidemiological situation	Viral circulation in the community has a direct impact on the risk of potential transmission in any setting, including cultural establishments.
Vaccination coverage at population level	Ensuring high vaccination coverage at population level, starting from those at increased risk of severe COVID-19, is considered the only sustainable approach to lifting measures and re-opening society including cultural establishments.
Circulation of immunity escape variants of concern	The risk of transmission by vaccinated or previously infected individuals may be higher in areas with community transmission of immunity escape variants .

Table 2: Indicators at individual level

Indicator	Details
Age mix and pre-existing medical conditions	Being older than 60 years and having a pre-existing medical condition are risk factors for severe COVID-19. Reported examples of the latter include hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease, chronic kidney disease, immune compromised status, cancer, and obesity.
Testing, vaccination status, and previous infected individuals	A negative rapid antigen detection test (RADT) at the entrance to a venue can reduce the risk of infected people coming in. People who have been vaccinated present a limited risk of transmitting

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0035>

¹¹ A risk assessment tool has been developed for planners of mass gathering: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/10665-333185>; the [European COVID-19 Forecast Hub](#) can also help with the planning of larger events by providing forecasts for outbreaks.

¹² Data on the background epidemiological situation can be found in the ECDC [COVID-19 weekly country overview](#); data on vaccination coverage can be found in the ECDC [COVID-19 vaccine tracker dashboard](#), and information on the circulation of variants in the ECDC [SARS-CoV-2 variants dashboard](#).

¹³ Other information and indicators that may support risk assessment, include: a) outcomes data on SARS-CoV-2 transmission from trial cultural events; b) data on SARS-CoV-2 transmission risk for fully vaccinated individuals in medium to large gatherings of individuals of mixed or unknown vaccination status, in full compliance with EU privacy and data protection rules; and c) data on SARS-CoV-2 infection risk for unvaccinated and previously infected individuals in medium to large gatherings of individuals of mixed or unknown vaccination status, in full compliance with EU privacy and data protection rules.

	<p>COVID-19 to other visitors and participants.</p> <p>People with evidence of previous infection also pose a lower risk of transmission. The duration of this protective effect from the time of infection is not certain. Positive antibody tests are not considered adequate proof of non-infectiousness and should therefore not be used as criteria for entry and participation in cultural activities¹⁴.</p>
Implementation of NPI measures	<p>Avoiding physical contact and keeping a physical distance of 1-2m is considered to be a key preventive measure. Social distancing has been widely promoted in Europe and worldwide.</p> <p>The use of face masks is linked with a small to moderate decrease in transmission and can be used as a complementary measure to reduce transmission in indoor spaces and crowded outdoor spaces.</p> <p>Observing respiratory hygiene measures is strongly recommended throughout the pandemic and as good practice for the prevention of all diseases transmissible by direct contact as a result of respiratory secretions.</p> <p>Observing proper hand hygiene measures is strongly recommended throughout the pandemic and as good practice for the prevention of all diseases transmissible by direct contact through respiratory secretions or the faecal/oral route.</p>

Table 3: Indicators at cultural establishment level

Indicator	Details
Type of event	Outdoor events are linked with lower risk than indoor events and should be preferred where possible. In indoor spaces, optimal ventilation should be ensured in accordance with the applicable building regulations, taking into account the size of the venue and the number of visitors/participants.
Distribution of people	SARS-CoV-2 is particularly transmissible in crowds . Also, in situations where participants are moving (as compared with events where people are seated), it is harder to ensure proper social distancing. Assigning represent an added value if there is a need for contact tracing.
Size of event	The size of the event is directly related to the complexity of potential contact tracing if positive cases are detected subsequently. Contact tracing following large events with participants can be harder to manage.

c) Coordination and communication measures

It is essential that mechanisms are in place to ensure coordination and communication between the authorities and operators in the cultural sector, and between local and national/regional governments. Risk communication, including through digital means, is also vital in ensuring that the public is well-informed about the local context, measures to follow in the event of suspected COVID-19 cases, how to access healthcare etc., in particular as for larger events or establishments audiences might originate from other regions or other countries. Clear guidelines and clarity on the timing of measures entering into force, or being eased, are key for supporting the sector.

¹⁴ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/use-antibody-tests-sars-cov-2-context-digital-green-certificates>

d) Robust surveillance and continuous monitoring

Based on events organised across the EU, requirements for participation and follow-up of participants for the purpose of contact tracing, in order to study whether such events can be organised in a safe way, have been tested.¹⁵ These indicate that Member States should continue to consider admitting participants in cultural events and venues under certain conditions, in combination with the above mentioned assessment of risks. Robust surveillance and monitoring should remain part and parcel of any mass gatherings, to prevent the possibility that such events become “super-spreaders”.

2. Recommendations on health protocols for cultural establishments

In addition to ECDC risk assessments and recommendations from relevant health authorities, in particular the World Health Organization, the recommendations below should **guide the design and implementation of measures and protocols** in the Member States for the resumption of cultural services and events. They aim to support a **coordinated approach** in line with specific national/regional/local conditions and to **ensure safer conditions** for audiences, cultural professionals and workers **through the use of health protocols in CCSI**.

When drawing up measures and protocols for cultural establishments, Member States are encouraged to

- work closely with stakeholders and ensure that measures are tailored and proportionate to the size and the nature of the service. Member States should consider supporting their implementation;
- regularly re-evaluate and adjust the measures to protect the health of audiences and workers, taking into account all relevant expertise and considerations, in the light of current public health needs;
- ensure a close inter-sectoral coordination between local and/or national public health authorities and cultural establishments to ensure that the latest rules and regulations in a given geographical area are shared and applied, and their implementation monitored; and
- apply equally the proposed measures and protocols to the cultural establishments / cultural institutions no matter if they are of state, private, self-governmental or any other character.

¹⁵ Findings of studies, such as the Technical University of Berlin study on contagions through aerosol particles in cultural venues (GCF 2/2021– official link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14279/depositonce-11401>), provide scientific grounds for encouraging the resumption of cultural activities. Research published in December 2020 by the Institut Pasteur highlighted that cultural events played a minimal role in the spread of the virus, with only 2.2% of positive cases suspected (none proven) originating from a cultural event. [See quote on page 7, penultimate paragraph of this document, only available in French.](#) Two key examples of safe trial cultural events: pilot event in Barcelona on 27 March: [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099\(21\)00268-1/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/laninf/article/PIIS1473-3099(21)00268-1/fulltext); concert at Accor Arena, Paris on 29 May (https://www.culturematin.com/publics/secureite-accueil/live-le-concert-test-de-l-accor-hotel-arena-s-est-il-bien-passe.html?nl=103306&utm_source=email&utm_id=219248&utm_campaign=newsletter-2021-06-03). Further examples can be found here: <https://creativesunite.eu>.

The following measures are recommended¹⁶:

- 1) Member States should continue to take a strategic, phased approach, starting with gradual opening and restricted numbers of participants. Numbers can be increased if the epidemiological situation does not worsen (including increased circulation of variants of concern) and vaccination coverage progresses sufficiently.
- 2) Cultural establishments should have a preparedness plan that sets out actions to be taken to prevent SARS-CoV-2 transmission during an event/in the establishment. A specific action plan detailing staff's roles and responsibilities should be made available to all staff at all times. This should include protocols of actions in the event of COVID-19 cases being detected.
- 3) Employers in cultural establishments should also ensure that staff can follow as many NPI recommendations as is practicable. This may include adequate provisions of appropriate protection, decreasing the number of staff on-site, minimising the number and duration of physical contacts with other people, allowing for teleworking, phased break times, maximising the use of electronic communication, and providing appropriate training for all staff.¹⁷
- 4) Employers should facilitate and promote their employees' access to COVID-19 vaccination according to the national plans, as cultural establishment staff come in contact with the public and with other staff.
- 5) The public should receive all necessary information in an accessible manner, including through digital means, prior to arrival and on site, on all current guidance from local public health authorities, and specific measures at the venue.
- 6) Access to cultural establishments could be made conditional upon proof of negative COVID-19 test (RT-PCR test or rapid antigen test) and/or vaccination and/or proof of COVID-19 diagnosis within certain time-periods, i.e. similar to the EU Digital COVID Certificate. Establishments may also consider providing rapid antigen tests at entry, if this is feasible. Depending on the local epidemiological situation (e.g. circulation of immunity escape variants), this requirement could be extended to fully vaccinated individuals.
- 7) Establishments should ensure that audience members' contact details are available in case they are needed for contact tracing. Contact tracing measures should be strictly limited to the purposes of dealing with the COVID-19 outbreak. Establishments should make participants aware of the possibility of using mobile contact tracing apps, as they are useful for notifying close contacts of persons who fall ill after the events. Many Member States provide such apps, established in line with the common EU toolbox of the eHealth Network on mobile applications to support contact tracing in the EU's fight against COVID-19, and some are working on enhancing them with further functionalities, e.g. with presence digital contact tracing for crowd notification of COVID-19 hotspots.

¹⁶ In view of the epidemiological situation, latest ECDC Rapid Risk Assessment (10 June 2021): <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/rapid-risk-assessment-sars-cov-2-circulation-variants-concern>

¹⁷ <https://osha.europa.eu/en/themes/covid-19-resources-workplace>

- 8) Participants in large events should be monitored, and outbreaks identified and investigated in order to improve understanding on approaches to organising safe re-opening of cultural activities.
- 9) Establishments should put in place targeted measures to ensure that social distancing is maintained in communal areas where people are likely to gather for prolonged periods (i.e. longer than 15 minutes), such as limiting the number of guests allowed in each common facility (i.e. restaurants, cafés, bars, lobby, queues inside and outside venues). If social distancing cannot be fully observed, the use of face masks by the attendees should be strongly considered even if the venue is in an open space.
- 10) In addition to social distancing, specific personal protective measures (e.g. hand and respiratory hygiene) and cleaning and disinfection protocols should be implemented.¹⁸
- 11) Hand hygiene is an essential NPI and its importance should be clearly communicated. Establishments should ensure easy access to hand-washing facilities with liquid soap, single-use paper towels or automatic dryers for drying, and alcohol-based hand rub solutions.
- 12) The use of face masks by both staff and the public should be considered as a complementary measure (if 1-2m distance cannot be guaranteed), not instead of core preventive measures. Appropriate use of face masks is important and should be explained to operators and audiences, particularly where/when social distancing cannot be maintained¹⁹.
- 13) Increasing the frequency of air exchanges and supplying as much outdoor air as possible is recommended for closed spaces, by natural or mechanical ventilation, depending on the establishment²⁰.
- 14) The cleaning of frequently touched surfaces as often as possible (at least daily and if possible more frequently) is key.²¹
- 15) Monitoring and surveillance of the implementation of requirements should be carefully supported.

III. Actions to support the sustainable recovery of the cultural sectors

The re-opening of cultural settings should be accompanied by a range of actions to ensure **sustainable recovery and resilience of the entire sector in line with the recent update of the EU industrial strategy²²**, and in accordance with State aid rules. Member States could use

¹⁸ Guidelines for the implementation of non-pharmaceutical interventions against COVID-19 <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/covid-19-guidelines-non-pharmaceutical-interventions>

¹⁹ Using face masks in the community: first update - Effectiveness in reducing transmission of COVID-19, ECDC: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/using-face-masks-community-reducing-covid-19-transmission>

²⁰ Heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems in the context of COVID-19: first update, ECDC: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/heating-ventilation-air-conditioning-systems-covid-19>

²¹ <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/disinfection-environments-covid-19>

²² https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age/european-industrial-strategy_en.

The EU Industrial Strategy has identified the sector as one of the 14 industrial ecosystems for inclusive and sustainable recovery and the twin (green and digital) transition of the EU economy.

these actions in close cooperation with the cultural sectors and sub-sectors to support their recovery and improve their resilience.

a) EU tools to facilitate the re-opening

At the Commission's request, the European Standardisation Committee (CEN) has put forward health and safety protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the tourism ecosystem; these specifically address certain cultural sectors. The initiative also includes a dedicated label, the **European Tourism COVID-19 safety seal** that Member States can make available. Member States can also help cultural organisations wishing to benefit from the Safety Seal to make use of the various EU funding opportunities available for tourism and culture, in order to cover potential costs associated with its implementation.²³

As part of their national solutions, Member States may decide and are encouraged to use the **EU Digital COVID certificate**²⁴ for the safe access and participation in cultural activities²⁵. Using the EU Digital COVID certificate will simplify citizens' formalities for travelling to other Member States and attending cultural events.

Member States should use the opportunities of the "**Re-open EU web-platform**"²⁶, which provides essential information, including on the opening of cultural settings, allowing Europeans to plan their travel with confidence. Member States should continue to provide timely and validated information on cultural settings for this platform.

Member States' local administrations are encouraged to use "**Cultural gems**"²⁷ – an open mapping platform for cultural and creative places in Europe – to provide visitors information on culture in cities and towns, thus supporting cultural tourism. Local administrations might engage local residents in the mapping process.

b) Rebuilding trust by engaging with lost audiences

Member States should help design and facilitate new business models and innovative schemes addressing the need to increase the sectors' capacity to emerge from the crisis.

The sectors have also experimented **new forms of engaging with their audiences through digital technologies**, for example in the audio-visual field, where cinema cooperated with online platforms, or in the field of performing arts and music. Across sectors, festivals have also embarked on innovative online models of audience outreach.

²³ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/new-european-tourism-covid-19-safety-seal-available_en. The new CEN Workshop agreement for the tourism industry also sets out protocols for museums, heritage sites, the night-time economy, performing arts and exhibitions.

²⁴ [EU digital COVID certificate - Consilium \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁵ By providing for the necessary legal basis for the processing of personal data in national law, which must comply with Union data protection law.

²⁶ [Re-open EU \(europa.eu\)](#)

²⁷ <https://culturalgems.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

Under the Creative Europe programme a new tool, “**Perform Europe**”, has been launched to support innovative, inclusive and sustainable distribution, and touring models in the performing arts sector.²⁸ An innovative scheme to support the **sustainable recovery of Europe’s music sector** will also be made available in 2021.²⁹

c) Experiment with new ways of promoting cultural content and responding to changes in audience behavior

Member States should help the sector adapt to new societal needs after the pandemic, by combining actions targeting the digital and physical environment. Measures to facilitate the engagement and understanding of digital audiences should be promoted.

In the second half of 2021, the Commission will launch an **expert group on understanding digital audiences** to focus on lessons learned from COVID-related practices and innovations to retain audiences and build new audiences online. Member States are encouraged to provide expertise for this group and to implement relevant good practices emerging from its work.

d) Adapt the cultural offer to specific targets and different settings and strengthen the link between culture and well-being

Member States are encouraged to foster a **stronger connection between culture, education and well-being**. They should support the sector in its efforts to address the needs of groups particularly affected by the pandemic and make sure that vulnerable groups’ access to culture remains a priority. The Commission has launched a call to support bottom-up policy development for culture and well-being.³⁰

e) Facilitate investment in strategies that promote the sustainability and resilience of the sector

It is essential that Member States take full advantage of the **Recovery and Resilience Facility**³¹ to enable recovery from the negative impact of the pandemic and to make the CCSI more resilient to future crises by addressing the structural challenges they face.

Member States should also **work in close cooperation with regions and local authorities** to make the best use of the opportunities for culture linked to the Cohesion policy for the 2021-2027 programming period³².

Member States should continue to **explore the possibilities for complementary funding for cultural heritage**. Together with cultural institutions they should consider ways to promote and implement the results of best practices across the EU, as recently identified by the Commission³³.

²⁸ [Perform Europe](#)

²⁹ [2020 Preparatory action Music Moves Europe: Innovative support scheme for a sustainable music ecosystem.](#)

³⁰ [Preparatory action - Bottom-up Policy Development for Culture & Well-being in the EU | Culture and Creativity \(europa.eu\)](#)

³¹ [Recovery and Resilience Facility | European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

³² [Cohesion Policy 2021-2027 - Regional Policy - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

Member States should also explore measures to **use mixed sources** to help alleviate the additional financial burden linked to re-opening (e.g. costs of applying health protocols and implementing measures such as staff training and communication to audiences).

f) Invest into skills, digital training and digital capacity-building

Member States and the CCSI are encouraged to **promote new training models, peer learning and upskilling** to give cultural workers and professionals the new skills that are needed for the digital recovery.

At EU level, the ‘**Pact for Skills**’³⁴ will facilitate stakeholders’ access to information. The Skills Agenda for Europe³⁵ supports digital skills, including digital crash courses for SMEs and the “digital volunteers” programme to upskill the current SME workforce in digital areas.

The **Creative Europe programme** will continue supporting professionals in equipping them with the needed skills to fully embrace the opportunities offered by digital technologies, both for creative and business purposes. In 2021, under the Culture strand, support to developing digital tools to encourage transformation and enhancing competitiveness has been flagged as a possible priority for all sectors and as a part of relevant capacity building specifically for music and cultural heritage professionals. The Creative Europe Media programme-skills and talents development action will continue supporting audiovisual professionals.

The new **Digital Europe programme**³⁶ will constitute an essential resource for enabling Member States and CCSI to create synergies across digital managers and strengthen digital capacity-building.

Member States are encouraged to monitor the developments and findings of the **CHARTER project**, the ongoing **Erasmus+ Sector Skills Alliance** in the field of cultural heritage.³⁷

g) Dissemination of data and follow-up on trial events

Member States are encouraged to **collect and disseminate data** about the results and safety of trial cultural events to support the exchange of information across the CCSI, and, as appropriate, with the scientific community.

h) Increased resources under new EU programmes

³³ The Commission helped to identify ways to boost funding for culture and cultural heritage beyond public subsidies at a workshop on complementary funding for cultural heritage in January 2021. Over 100 good practices were identified and published. Two EU-funded projects provide further insights: Circular models leveraging investments in cultural heritage adaptive reuse (CLIC) – financed through Horizon 2020; and Financing impact on regional development of cultural heritage valorisation (FINCH) – financed through Interreg Europe. For more information, see: <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/cultural-heritage/funding-opportunities-cultural-heritage>

³⁴ [Pact for Skills - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

³⁵ [EUR-Lex - 52016DC0381 - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

³⁶ DIGITALEUROPE - The voice of digitally transforming industries in Europe.

³⁷ [Home - CHARTER \(charter-alliance.eu\)](#)

Member States should **disseminate information to the CCSI about new funding opportunities** under the new (2021-2027) generation of EU programmes. Cultural authorities and organisations should be encouraged to leverage the potential of programmes such as **Creative Europe and Horizon Europe**, which have earmarked a substantial increase of their budget for the CCSI. To address the sectors' most pressing needs, the topped-up Creative Europe programme will front-load its support by making €728 million available in 2021 and 2022.

In autumn 2021, and building on the online interactive tool developed in spring 2021 for the audiovisual and media sectors, the Commission will publish a dedicated online **guide on EU funding for culture, covering over 15 EU funds**, which Member States and stakeholders are encouraged to use.

i) VAT rates and other measures

Member States are encouraged to consider the specificities of the cultural sectors' workers, particularly as far as artists are concerned, as well as those professionals whose jobs are extremely precarious. In order to foster the transition to a more digital and sustainable cultural ecosystem, Member States may wish to use a variety of measures, ranging from investments to **subsidies**, in accordance with State aid rules, **to help preserve** jobs and workers' rights in the CCSI. Access to lower VAT rates on services supplied by the cultural sector in particular is already available to Member States enabling them to apply what they consider as the **most appropriate VAT rates** in support of this sector.

As regards **state aids**, the **Temporary Framework** to support the economy in response to the COVID crisis³⁸ covers all sectors, including CCSI. Most notified schemes have covered a range of sectors, so it is impossible to give the exact amount of aids granted to the CCSI under this framework. However, by the end of May 2021, the notified specific state aid schemes to support the CCSI amounted to approximately €268 million³⁹.

j) Artists' working conditions

Artists' status and working conditions will be an important topic for EU cooperation on culture. In April 2021, the Commission convened a Voices of Culture dialogue with 47 cultural and creative sector organisations⁴⁰ and a **new group of Member States experts** will start its work in autumn 2021. The Commission continues to hold a **sectoral social dialogue with performing arts** organisations, through the Committee on Live Performance⁴¹. The Commission also launched an **EU study on the health and wellbeing of music creators**.⁴²

³⁸ [EUR-Lex - 52020XC0320\(03\) - EN - EUR-Lex \(europa.eu\)](#)

³⁹ [The list of adopted decisions under the Temporary Framework is available at: Competition - State aid - State aid rules and coronavirus - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴⁰ [Status and Working Conditions of Artists and Cultural and Creative Professionals – Voices of Culture](#)

⁴¹ [Sectoral social dialogue - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴² <https://ec.europa.eu/culture/sectors/music/music-moves-europe>

IV. Next steps

The Commission encourages Member States to make use of the guidance in this Communication. It will facilitate the timely exchange of information on the implementation of measures on the safe re-opening of the cultural sectors in Europe between ECDC and Member States' representatives. A focused discussion with the CCSI will be organised at EU level on the use of the present recommendations and on the results of experiments and their relevance for a safe and sustained_reopening of the sectors concerned. The outcomes of these discussions should also inform future EU policy cooperation with regard to culture.