



DECLARATION

“Cooperation in Culture for Development: Towards a Sustainable Transformation”

The health crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic has profound and multidimensional impacts on the communities. The cultural and creative sectors are playing an important role in the crisis fostering social relations. But they are also among the most vulnerable, being at risk the existence of most fragile cultural actors. At the end of an unprecedented period of physical distancing, culture, as a vector of social cohesion, will be more necessary than ever for populations. In this context, it is essential to highlight the contribution that culture can make to crisis response policies due to its economic potential and the fundamental role it plays as a source of resilience and social inclusion.

We, the undersigned members of The Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation, having convened on 4th May, 2020.

Aware of the value of culture as a defining aspect of human beings and of human social life, and of the relationship culture has with the dignity of persons, freedom and the exercise of human rights;

Considering the multiple facets of culture, as encompassing spiritual and symbolic values, beliefs and ways of living, as materialized in cultural heritage and cultural products, as well as through creative expression, in line with the UNESCO definition of Culture¹, and within the framework of international principles of rule of law, democracy and human rights;

Considering what culture brings to population in terms of social cohesion and sustainable and inclusive development, as well as its contribution to economic development and employment through the cultural industries;

Highlighting cultural diversity as a form of human capital, which we seek to preserve and understand, and which leads us to respect the identities of individuals and communities;

Bearing in mind the current sustainable development framework, focused on people, the planet and prosperity, which is only possible through partnerships and in cohesive societies living in peace in line with the UN 2030 Agenda²;

Recognising, as part of the UN 2030 Agenda, the need to “foster inter-cultural understanding” and “acknowledge the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of sustainable development”;

Reaffirming the role of culture in this framework, as a driving force for and facilitator of sustainable development, as well as its contribution to the stability and sustainability of communities and to their mutual exchanges;

¹ UNESCO (2001), *Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity*. ([link](#), Accessed 15 April 2020).

² UN. *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* ([Link](#), Accessed 15 April 2020)



Fully acknowledging the role of international cooperation in achieving global sustainable development, which should build on the exchange of knowledge and mutual respect for the collective identity and cultural references of communities, leaving no one behind.

Bearing in mind the new European Consensus on Development “Our World, our Dignity, our Future”³—as well as the relevant EU Council Conclusions and Decisions that recognise that “Culture is both an enabler and an important component of development and may facilitate social inclusion, freedom of expression, identity building, civil empowerment and conflict prevention while strengthening economic growth. Emphasising that the EU is guided by the universality, indivisibility, interrelatedness and interdependence of all human rights, the EU and its Member States will promote intercultural dialogue and cooperation, and cultural diversity, and will protect cultural heritage, boost the cultural creative industries and will support cultural policies where these would help achieve sustainable development”.

We acknowledge the role of culture in international cooperation for sustainable development and confirm our engagement to working better together in order to unleash the transformative power of culture for the development of individuals and peoples, and to prevent it from being misused for actions aimed at exclusion and violence, in order to leave no one behind and support the aims and principles of the UN 2030 Agenda.

And in accordance with the above, we undertake to explore and intensify, in our respective institutions and within our respective mandates, the debate on the role of culture as a driving force for and facilitator of sustainable development, and its contribution towards the effectiveness and quality of international cooperation, including by building shared values between our partners. Moreover, we undertake to foster debate on the relationship between culture and development within the Practitioners' Network, with the EU institutions and with our partners, in order to illustrate how culture can contribute to achieve the aspirations of the UN 2030 Agenda.

These engagements are not binding in nature; however, they express our aim to continue to collaborate to promote and maximize the values of culture in order to achieve our shared objective of contributing to inclusive and sustainable development. They are in line with the recommendations to Member States in the EU Council Conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action.⁴



³ *New European Consensus on Development. Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission, 7 June 2017. (Link. Accessed 15 April 2020).*

⁴ *Draft Council conclusions on an EU strategic approach to international cultural relations and a framework for action – Adoption (7749/19) 21 March 2019. (Link. Accessed 15 April 2020)*