

## THE CREATIVITY TURN IN EUROPEAN CULTURAL POLICIES. STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE SECTOR

MIKI BRANIȘTE<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT.** This paper aims to analyse the conditions that enable a double political-economic instrumentation of culture through European Union programmes, and their consequences for the cultural sector. The first European programmes focused on the symbolic value of culture which was perceived as an essential element for strengthening the European identity, and thus as a crucial tool in the project of building the European identity, which is part of a political integration programme. In the context of the development of the creative economy, which overlapped the 2008 economic crisis and a growing influence of the market ideology, a few years later, the European Union launched the Creative Europe programme, thus setting up a new development framework for the cultural sector. For culture, the economic and political arguments in the Creative Europe programme outline a future inherently connected to its contribution to these fields, leaving behind the symbolic and social value of culture characterised by non-lucrative purposes. The programme lays out a direction in which culture is monetized as competitive advantage and bets on the contribution of the cultural and creative industries to become a competitor on the global creative economy. The new framework offered by Creative Europe transforms the approach to culture, placing it in a landscape of global competition, in the company of creative industries, favouring the integration of culture by the latter, not the other way around, thus entailing structural changes in the cultural sector.

**Keywords:** culture, non-profit, cultural industries, entrepreneurship, EU cultural policies.

### By way of introduction

Ever since its establishment, the economic component of the European Union's policies has been a marker along its existence, and the *common market*, established with the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC), was

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD and Associate Lecturer of the Faculty of Theatre and Film, Babeş-Bolyai University, [nicoleta.braniste@ubbcluj.ro](mailto:nicoleta.braniste@ubbcluj.ro).

set up to ensure prosperity for the European citizens. Its Eastward expansion after the fall of the Iron Curtain gave rise to new needs related to the integration of post-communist countries, as the diversity of Europeans needed a unifying factor, which was culture. Beyond this, culture was seen as a special mark for Europe, bearing a symbolic, universal value, which is why the European Union has made strategic investments, starting 1996, in the development of its European dimension. Before 1996, the EU did have cultural actions, such as “European Cities of Culture”, the European sculpture competition, or actions to improve young people’s access to museums and cultural events, but not programmes to subsidize culture.

Although there was no document entitled European cultural strategy, the funding programmes made available to the sector by the European Union functioned as a strategy allowing us to understand its vision on the development of culture and its role for the present and the future of the European space. Besides, certain documents, such as the European agendas for culture, have inspired the subsequent programmes. Because they are specific documents, in order for readers to have direct access to them, I chose to quote them in the footnotes when they first appear.

The launch of the first European programme dedicated to culture, Kaleidoscope, was marked by the need to consolidate the European identity and citizenship, so this programme is considered to have contributed to “increasing mutual knowledge and respect and to promoting the idea of citizenship of the European Union”.<sup>2</sup> The symbolic value of culture was used to strengthen the European identity, thus being a crucial instrument in building the European identity, which was part of a political integration programme. To these will be added programs that will emphasize the social and economic dimension of cultural activities. Concepts such as cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue were at the heart of the cultural programs of the European Union.

The cultural field is not regulated at a European level, as decision-making forums considered the diverse range of cultures on the European territory required a national approach through the competent ministries of the 27 member states. However, the European Union's vision of culture, promoted through programs dedicated to this sector, comes to influence national policies and have a direct impact on the sector in most countries. In the current article I wanted to analyze, starting from a broader context, how this influence is articulated and

---

<sup>2</sup> Decision No 719/96/EC of the European Parliament And Of The Council of 29 March 1996: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31996D0719&qid=1603369954448&from=EN>, page 7, accessed 22.10.2020.

what its effects are on the cultural scene and actors. Between 2008-2020 I was myself involved as a cultural worker in the realization of three European projects, the respective period corresponding to two different programs dedicated to culture. What struck me was a visible change in the objectives of European programs, including at the discursive level, showing a conceptual mutation that favours the economic dimension of art and culture. The relevance of documents setting out the principles for the operation of European funding programs exceeds the fact that their understanding facilitates access to non-reimbursable funds and contributes to the development of the organizations and institutions that access them. Although these are apparently a kind of guidelines for the sector, they actually create a rather restrictive format for future projects carried out at European level and show a neoliberal economic vision applied to the cultural field. In order to receive European funding, cultural actors must be in line with the priorities of the cultural programs, the latter being aligned with strategic priorities of the European Union since 2007.

A number of relevant transformations are taking place through the implementation of the Creative Europe (2014-2020) program which creates a favourable framework for bringing culture together with the creative industries, with creativity expanding its agency to the lucrative area as an active element in the development of the creative economy. This vision has existed in Europe since the late '90 with the UK's cultural policies linked to the narrative of the economic recovery proposed by Tony Blair. Over time, they came to penetrate European programs that valued art and culture mainly for their social binding dimension and their intrinsic value, with the economic dimension becoming a priority. Amid global changes (digitization, the 2008 economic crisis, the globalization of the economy, the development of the creative economy etc.), supporting *culture* seems to have become a key element of the new political-economic agenda. Against the background of the effects of the Great Recession that began in 2008, European cultural policies are gradually opening up until they adopt the paradigm of creativity. The European Union saw the emergence of creative and cultural industries as a new contributor to its own economy, giving it a competitive advantage on the global economic market. In these new circumstances, culture is seen as a key element for the development of creativity and creativity is seen as a necessary ingredient for innovation which will determine economic growth. European *cultural policies* are starting to take an increasingly close shape of *creativity policies*, which are key elements of the new European neoliberal narration for smart growth of the economy. This is a turning point for the cultural sector, with the objectives of the projects on which it would obtain European funds being subsumed to the EU's objectives of

increasing its economic competitiveness vis-à-vis the major powers of the global economy, the US and China.

The changes in European cultural policies through the adoption of the creative paradigm are articulated by taking on a vision, language and models borrowed from the business area, that are beginning to have a major influence on the cultural sector in terms of the perception over the role of culture and the actors creating it. They directly affect its ethos, which is largely non-profit-making and operates in its own market, regulated by the direct involvement and support of national states. The above turning point is to try to turn art and culture into a profit-making industry, connected to a global market, whose aim is intrinsically linked to the contribution to GDP and employment growth, the contribution to the development of society being at most secondary. Although art and culture are included in the "conversation" about the creative industries, one can notice that, even on a European level, they receive less attention and support than the lucrative creative fields. Facing these structural changes already present on European territory, the article aims to call for scholars, practitioners and stakeholders to rethink cultural policies based on the concept of culture as a public good for citizens and not on culture as a "special commodity" for customers and consumers.

In order to understand the evolution of European policies, I consulted the documents by which it was decided to establish funding programs (such as decisions and regulations of the European Parliament and the European Council), as well as the presentation of these programs on the website of the Executive Agency for Education, Audiovisual and Culture. These were complemented by documents that contributed to shaping programs such as the European agendas for culture in 2007 and 2018, informal strategic documents developed following consultation with the cultural sector.

### **From symbolic to political**

In the 1996 Decision of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the first programme dedicated to culture, Kaleidoscope, the two institutions substantiated their decision, among others, on the following:

in reality, the most tangible and influential aspect of Europe as a whole is not merely its geographical, political, economic and social features but also its culture; whereas the perception of Europe in the world is largely determined by the position and strength of its cultural values; (Decision No 719/96/EC)

Thus, funding programmes dedicated to the cultural sector were created, as well as two European institutions to monitor their unfolding: the Directorate-General for Education and Culture and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency.<sup>3</sup>

There have been several European cultural programs over time but I have selected the most relevant for this research. The first three programmes under analysis – Kaleidoscope, Culture 2000, Culture 2007-2013 –, overlapped for quite a long time in terms of visions and objectives or at least showed a common source of understanding of the value of culture, placing an accent on the Europeans' symbolic and community binder dimension. The definition of culture reveals its role as basis for the new European citizenship, as culture always – in the discourse of the studied documents – played a coagulative role for European society around the universal values it has created: freedom of expression, human dignity, democracy, human rights, etc. Its placing alongside universal values, as well as the Europeans' cultural contribution over time is one of the reasons why they regard themselves as standing in an area of cultural supremacy as compared to others, an area of social prestige. Maintaining this supremacy required funding and the way these were used had to meet certain evident needs of the EU, such as bringing added European value through the Kaleidoscope programme, integrating the new members in the case of the Culture 2000 programme, or integrating and promoting European citizenship, contributing to social economic development in that of the Culture 2007-2013 programme.

Besides meeting these needs of the financier, there were numerous objectives related to the development of the cultural sector, which aimed to create new artistic forms, improving professional skills (Kaleidoscope), promoting the mobility of artists and their works, multi-annual cultural cooperation, audience development, exploiting European heritage, raising awareness on sustainable development (Culture 2000 and Culture 2007-2013). Therefore, the first three programmes seem to have resulted from negotiations between the needs of the cultural sector and those of the European Union, both sides would be coming out as winners in the deal. The cultural actors could reach a new level of professionalization and development in their European culture, and the EU tapped into a useful instrument promoting European values and identity, via European cultural projects.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Directorate-General for Education and Culture is responsible for drawing up and implementing the European Commission's cultural policies. The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency implements the European programmes, by organizing project calls, evaluating the submitted projects through international evaluators, maintains contact with beneficiaries, monitors, etc.

The amounts of money that the EU contributed as non-reimbursable funds during the three above-mentioned programmes varied between 25% and 50% or 60% of the total value of a project. Unlike other non-reimbursable European funds, in which the Union's financial contribution is much higher, even reaching even up to 98%, in the case of cultural funds, one can notice that these were prominently accessible to financially stable entities. The accessed funds contributed to the consolidation of those cultural actors that could afford to cover the co-financing from their own funds or from other sources – up to 75% in the case of the first programme or 50-40% in the case of the others. Moreover, having a cash flow was a *sine qua non* condition for beneficiaries to be able to access these funds. Even nowadays, the last instalment of a European project funding is paid at least six months after the final evaluation of the project, which implies the provision of a consistent cash deposit by the project leader and partners.

### **Changes in discourse, changes in the sector**

In the documents I analysed (the above-mentioned documents), the contribution of culture to social development was always presented alongside its economic consequences, whether these being translated into jobs in the cultural field or in the income drawn by cultural events, or the subsequent presence, the presence of creative industries. Beginning with the Culture 2007-2013 programme, one can notice an explicit connection to the EU development strategy, entitled the *Lisbon Strategy*, and the very formulation of the programme. This connection to the strategies of the European Union was not present in the previous programmes, as references to these were not included in the programmes' founding documents (Szakáts, 2014). Through the Lisbon Strategy, adopted in 2000, the EU aimed to become one of the most advanced knowledge-based societies by 2010, thus justifying the need for funds supporting the cultural industries. The Decision establishing the programme Culture 2007-2013 explicitly mentions that it is open to the participation of cultural industries, particularly small cultural enterprises, *on condition that they are acting in a non-profit-making cultural capacity*.<sup>4</sup> Besides, the same Decision stipulates that the specific nature of the cultural sector in Europe should be taken into account, by considering “the practices and the developments in the cultural sector” (Decision

---

<sup>4</sup> Decision no. 1855/2006/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A129016>, accessed on 23.10.2020.

no. 1855/2006/CE: 3). As I see it, the above-mentioned statement refers to the non-profit character of cultural projects, as this represents the specific nature of the cultural sector. In general, the Culture 2007-2013 programme has been designed around supporting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, as this is a good rhetoric for European citizenship.

Besides the Lisbon Strategy, the Culture 2007-2013 programme is also correlated with elements of the “European agenda for culture in a globalizing world, 2007”.<sup>5</sup> This is a reference document for European cultural policies. The Agenda sets out three priorities, of which one takes further the argument of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. Two new priorities are introduced: “stimulating creativity for growth and jobs” and “culture as a vital element” in the international relations of the EU. The second priority aims at “strengthening the organisational capacities of the cultural sector, by focusing on entrepreneurship and the training of the cultural sector in terms of management competences” (European Agenda, 2007), but this is not included in the Decision on the programme. The absence of this could be a sign of a negotiation and a non-harmonized vision among the opinions of the political actors and a part of the cultural sector. The same document plays an essential role in promoting “culture as a catalyst for creativity”, as several initiatives were thus established by instituting the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation* (2009). This programme led to the institutionalization of the connection between culture and certain economic objectives (Litzo-Monnet, 2015: 13). At the same time, it contributed to the capitalization of the results of numerous studies and investigations on the impact of culture in relation to creativity, entrepreneurship in cultural industries, local and regional development.

What's more, in 2010, an year marked by economic crisis, the paper entitled *Green Paper - Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries* was published, advocating for culture and creativity from the standpoint of their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product, to economic innovation, and secondly, to social innovation. The arguments in these document place culture in the service of consolidating the new economy, i.e. the creative economy. The artistic and cultural diversity of this territory becomes an element of added value, so needed by the EU, as a *player* of global economy. More than that, to paraphrase President José Manuel Barroso, the document shows that, in order for European economy to remain competitive in the global context of digitization, it needs to invest in factors that are favourable to “creativity and innovation in a new entrepreneurial culture” (Green Paper, 2010: 2). This document is clearly

---

<sup>5</sup> *European agenda for culture in a globalising world*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:l29019&from=EN>, accessed on 28.10.2020.

correlated with “Europe 2020 – A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth” or, in short, the “Europe 2020 Strategy”, and alongside other studies, they make up the foundation of the new programme, Creative Europe.

Many professionals in culture have noticed that culture was being driven towards a distinct field, endangering its production, value, and the way the audience relates to it. Although Yudhishtir Raj Isar understands the intersection between arts and culture and the digital mediation developed by creative industries as a step towards the evolution of the cultural sector, he mentions that this meeting gives rise to a process in which “the aesthetic has been commodified while the commodity has been aestheticized”. For example, production modes which used to be specific for culture, such as graphic arts or storytelling, have become a means of production claimed by the advertising industry. In this case, culture becomes a support element for selling products. The field of culture is penetrated by the landmark of the “cultural industries”, which Isar calls “culture as business”, and confuse the sector characterised as non-profit and non-industrial with the for profit ethos. One of the landmarks he mentions is the validation of cultural production through its potential economic gains. Isar notices that the field of culture using this as an argument to convince the European Union to support more funds for cultural and creative industries only gives a neoliberal vision to the production and broadcasting of artistic and cultural works.

In the consultations organized by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture in 2007, representatives of one of the platforms involved, *Access to Culture Platform*, expressed their concern regarding the fact that the European Agenda for Culture lacked a dimension of community binder. Moreover, they showed their discontent about the fact that “the cultural industries are too closely connected with the interests of intermediaries that transmit cultural content, rather than the interests of artists” (Littoz-Monnet, 2015: 16). Another opponent of the culture commercialization process is Dragan Klaić, who, in his book *Mobility of imagination*, states:

Cultural industry depends on a steady input of creativity from many artists, and on the creativity of software developers and designers for product formation, as well as of many marketing and advertising experts who create needs, new modes of usage, habits, fashions, styles, fads and hype. Many of these diligent and creative individuals are driven by their own desire to innovate, to create something original or stunning. However, the central goal of corporate endeavour is maximization of profit.



On the other hand, various studies support the tendency to bridge the gaps between the cultural sector and the creative industries and their respective production modes, such as the one conducted by A. J. Wiesand and M. Söndermann (2005) who plead for the semantic fusion of the two:

In other words, for this paper it does not really matter whether we speak of a 'culture sector' or a 'creative sector', as long as all private, public and informal activities related to culture in the larger sense are understood to be part of it.

A more optimistic vision on the association between the two fields comes from cultural economist David Throsby. He proposes using the interest of political decision-makers for the economic value of the cultural industries as a "Trojan horse" to make the voice of culture heard (Throsby, 2010: 10). In order to establish a dialogue with decision-makers, the cultural sector started using their language with a view to determining the economic value of what had previously been considered as having a cultural value in itself, a symbolic value, or a social value. We will later see the negotiating leverage of using the words and language of economic value, that determine the winners and the losers of this process.

In the above-mentioned *Green Paper*, the cultural field, defined by professionals as cultural sector, is used as a synonym for the cultural and creative industries, which, at least for a part of the "sector", means an act of appropriation, as the two work in clearly different ways. The cultural sector is the sector in which cultural institutions function, whether public or private, the latter mostly organized as NGOs and aiming to offer public services: facilitate the public's access to culture, strengthen communities, represent marginal voices, show critical artistic contents, encourage artistic research and experiments, etc., and their activities are non-profit. The creative industries are represented by profit-making small and medium enterprises, regardless of the services they offer (public or private, free of charge or for a fee). *The overlap of the words sector and industry causes at least confusion as we try to get used to the existence of another pair of terms, culture and creativity (s.n.).* We may speak of the health sector, but not about the health industry. Of course, we may refer to the pharmaceutical industry, which is a different element, a partner of the health sector. There are certain nuances and differences that must be understood and taken into account, for otherwise the topic of the discussion changes. But this analysis is exactly about this change. Therefore, I do not think it was by chance that the two fields, culture and creative industries, were placed together. Their

fusion was performed pragmatically, as culture is used as a resource to imprint a competitive advantage to creative industries. The balance of power between the cultural sector and the creative industries clearly tips towards the industries that represent an emerging economic market, while the cultural sector depends on private funds, and most especially on public funds, which are proportionally fewer and fewer. The creative industries act on a global scale, as they may have *clients* anywhere in the world, whereas the cultural sector mostly has a local *audience*, and accesses a national, regional, European, international audience supported by mobility funds, so mostly via public support. An evident question thus arises: why does the European Union choose to support this association that leaves at a disadvantage the very field which conferred it a symbolic value at a global level?

The professionals in the field of culture who handle the project vision and management, cultural policies, etc., were referred to as cultural operators in the first three programmes mentioned. This seems like a neutral term compared to the one later employed in Creative Europe programme, which led to critical interpretation. An argument is that the term *cultural operator* derives from tourism (tour-operator) and supports an instrumental dimension over culture (Oancă, 2017). Within the sector, there are different visions on this self-definition: from *cultural operators*, to *cultural actors*, and *cultural producers/workers*, the latter closely connected to valuing their work alongside other occupations represented by workers who perform both manual and non-manual labour. It is worth mentioning that this phrase is preferred by the left-leaning cultural environment, while whereas the most frequently used name is cultural operators. The expression *cultural actors* is perhaps the most neutral from an ideological point of view; as I see it, it emerged through negotiation between cultural operators and workers. With the multiplication of studies on cultural and creative industries and the introduction into the sector of SME (small and medium enterprises) -type entities, the road is being paved to a new kind of professional, as the previous model “must” be *updated* according to the survival needs in the creative economy:

Among them, enterprises consisting of one to two people represent the overwhelming majority of the companies in the sector and encompass this new type of ‘entrepreneurial individuals’ or ‘entrepreneurial cultural workers’, who no longer fit into previously typical patterns of full time professions. (Green Paper, 2010: 13)

A new association has thus emerged – entrepreneur-worker in the field of culture, which resulted in a lack of clarity, as some cultural actors no longer knew what their professional identity was. I am referring to the confusion around the discursive promotion of a new seducing identity which, once embraced and calibrated to hard work and innovation, promises at least two things: 1) being part of the creative class, the urban driver for development; and 2) the survival of the cultural entrepreneur, a contributor to economic growth.

The association of “entrepreneurial individuals” and “enterprising cultural workers” is interesting. Being a person with initiative and a dynamic spirit is a *sine qua non* condition to working in the cultural field, which is continuously changing. Being curious and being proactive are two basic features of these people. *However, this does not necessarily overlap being an entrepreneur (s.n.).* An entrepreneur also has the above-mentioned qualities (as well as others), but is used to promote the business they manage. According to the presentation of the Business Academy professional training programmes, “Entrepreneurs focus on starting and organizing a company’s business with a view to creating a new market and generating profit.” Merging the two terms limits the action of cultural workers to a framework marked by the need for these actions to result in economic benefits and “suggests that the very capacity to act, to do things only materialized in and through economy” (Mateescu, 2020).

The presentation of Creative Europe mentions a new professional profile, called in English “*cultural and creative players*”. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the above-mentioned phrase is used in the sense of decision-makers and this marks a new dimension that indirectly includes a bit of the privilege of taking part in decision-making, the dynamic character of the entrepreneur, the playful character and ability of creativity. One can thus notice that a new world must be established not only through new programmes, but also through new meanings and words, such as *creativity/creative*, with impressive lexical success (Bruell, 2013: 22). Past organizational models and the philosophy of their existence and action are less and less interesting to the European Union, which is ready to sacrifice an entire “sector” for a new “industry” with very few natural ties with the sector originally considered.

### **The Creative Europe spirit**

The establishment of the Creative Europe programme must be considered in the economic and social context of the moment when it was designed. It was set out in a period when the effects of the 2008 economic crisis were still present. Europe needed a new beginning for an economy that felt the effects of

digitization in an already globalized world. It needed its citizens' trust to ensure a peaceful social life, in the context of the discontent caused by the loss of jobs or the precariousness of existing jobs (caused by massive salary cuts), both in the public, and the private domains. This new start called for a new narrative of prosperity for Europeans, keeping them united, making them (for instance, in the case of the Greeks impoverished by the loans so hard to reimburse) feel that they still had something in common (in our example, with the Germans who granted them those loans). Against the background of the 2008 economic crisis, nationalism gained momentum and extreme right parties gained ground, as the crisis affected ordinary citizens, whose income dropped considerably. Made vulnerable by the crisis, the European citizen became sensitive to various nationalistic and populist discourses and, why not, to that of the European Union, from which they had great expectations. In this context, the UE put forward a relaunch plan based on a narrative aimed at bringing optimism and trust that we would overcome a difficult period and be able to once more talk about economic growth. The politicians opted for a narrative connected to emerging industries, i.e. the creative one, which was presented as the industry of the future, that promised long-term economic growth. Thus, the creative economy paradigm emerged as a potential solution for the future of the European society, and EU programmes had to meet the needs for its development in as many policy areas as possible.

Although, for the first three cultural programmes, the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture had "an agenda that supported market-correcting mechanisms and subsidies to the cultural sector" (Litzo-Monnet, 2015: 4), one can notice the assumption of a different direction, much closer to the objectives related to the competitiveness of European economy. Culture, a field of creativity by excellence, was also included in this area marked by the footprint of creative economy, and this is how the 2014-2020 Creative Europe took shape. It came as a response to the EU major objectives set out in the "Europe 2020 Strategy", which aimed at turning the European Union into a "smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion."

The focus seems to be exclusively on the objective of economic growth by creating jobs, *thus obtaining a paradigm shift that highlights the sector's economic activity* (s.n.). Economic value seems to be the main justification of the EU's cultural policy, as it moved away from the rhetoric characteristic of the cultural field (Litzo-Monnet, 2015: 4). The justification seems purely economic, but it was also profoundly political: beyond economic growth, jobs create

stability, and stability is essential for the European political project. The EU promised a better life through the new jobs, by stimulating *start-ups*, etc., by supporting innovation. *Innovation* is a key concept in the new policies, which create optimism as they imply a higher quality of life, thus allowing for a projection of a favourable future.

Creative Europe is a supporting programme for the adaptation of the cultural and creative sectors to the digital age. Yet, it has not been set up without a context favouring a change of rhetoric around culture, and this context emerged over the years, and was supported, through studies and research, through the creation of *a new discourse applicable to culture in conjunction with creativity*. A paper that directly contributed to the strengthening of the creativity paradigm was “The Economy of Culture in Europe”, conducted in 2006 by the consultancy agency KEA European Affairs. One of the arguments of this study has to do with the need to consolidate the economic role of culture and creativity in order to achieve higher leverage in relation to European decision-makers. The study was conducted in close connection to the Lisbon Strategy, offering the necessary rhetoric to *shift the paradigm from an interest in building the European community to an interest in culture as a source of competitiveness* (KEA, 2006). Certain arguments in the paper have been picked up over the years in various documents of the European Commission, which contributed to the gradual acceleration of associating the cultural sector and the creative industries, despite the actors in the two fields having different interests. The rather vague presentation made by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the new joint framework for culture and creativity as sectors that have an important contribution to economic development made it possible for the two sectors to “mobilize their interests” (Litzo-Monnet, 2015: 6). The mobilization aimed to gain more influence together in what regards future funding programmes, obtaining a legislation defending their copyright interests, etc.

The common definition of the “cultural and creative sectors”<sup>6</sup> blurs a major difference between the two, namely the (creative industries’) orientation towards the market, on the one hand, and the (cultural sector’s) non-profit character, on the other. The interpretation of the Regulation establishing the Programme – hereinafter referred to as the Regulation – shows that the European Union sees the digital environment as profoundly competitive. In this context,

---

<sup>6</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing Decisions no 1718/2006/EC, no 1855/2006/EC and no 1041/2009/EC, article 2, item 1, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1295&qid=1603370220582&from=EN>, accessed on 28.10.2020.

it mentions the need to change the approach to production and dissemination of creation due to the fact that nowadays it can be accessed globally. Even two presidents of the European Commission made statements regarding the importance of culture and creativity. If president José Manuel Barroso stated that: “Without culture, Europe and its citizens would lack the inspiration, creativity and spirit of innovation they need for their joint project”, President Jean-Claude Juncker went even further. Studies in the field of creative industries have shown their capacity to create new jobs through SMEs, as they (in a broad sense) become a priority in ensuring economic growth in the European space: “SMEs are the backbone of our economies, creating 85% of new jobs in Europe”. Paragraph 7 of the Regulation brings together the two presidents’ above-mentioned ideas: “... cultural and creative sectors are a source of innovative ideas that can be turned into products and services that create growth and jobs and help address societal changes”.

Analysing the quote, I notice that it emphasizes the utilitarian/instrumentalist discourse over culture, highlighted through the phrase “a source of ideas” that can create economic growth and jobs. Only subsequently does it mention the capacity of culture to generate and contribute to societal changes, thus revealing a lower share of the social dimension of arts and culture in a context of economic crisis. In order for this new mantra of *culture/creativity - innovation - jobs - economic growth* to become reality, the EU advances a set of measures and sub-programmes capable of changing the cultural sector over time. According to Littoz-Monnet, the terms *culture-creativity-innovation* are mentioned and used as if one generated the next: “... in a rather artificially articulated triadic relationship between 1) culture as a source of creativity, 2) creativity as a necessary factor for technological innovation, and 3) technological innovation as conducive to growth and competitiveness (2015: 8).”

The concept of competitiveness (mentioned seven times) is used also in conjunction with artistic excellence as well, motivating the need to support and promote artists, creators, etc. Strengthening the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors is mentioned as one of the two objectives of the Creative Europe programme, as it aims to “*promote smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*” (Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013). I would like to mention that here “inclusive” refers to inclusion in employment, but omitting the social connotation in previous programmes (it aimed to the inclusion of vulnerable groups). The negotiations carried out by the Directorate-General for Education and Culture with the cultural sector on the one hand, and on the other hand, with political decision-makers, on the Creative Europe programme, managed – by merging culture and creative

industries – to obtain a much bigger budget for this programme and to grant much better visibility to culture. For example, the programme Culture 2007-2014 had a budget of EUR 400 000 000. The programme Creative Europe, including the programme Media, was given a budget of EUR 1 462 724 000. The price paid was that the negotiations were borne in the decision-makers' economic terms, not in their own terms (Littoz-Monnet, 2015: 16), *which subsequently brought other consequences for the cultural sector.*

As we have noticed, in order for this change of direction to be accepted by the cultural sector, it was justified by numerous studies and European programme monitoring reports. For instance, the Media programme, dedicated to cinematographic production, or studies favouring the entrepreneurial dimension in cultural and creative industries, provide information on the challenges faced by the two fields. The Regulation mentions six types of common challenges, such as: changes caused by the globalization of communication means, the development of the digital environment, market fragmentation in the context of linguistic diversity, low access to funding, red tape in accessing funding, shortage of comparable data (I suppose, in relation to other fields that bring a contribution to the GDP).

I also believe the above-mentioned argument might be refuted, for example by comparing the challenges faced by the cultural sector with those of the educational sector. Nowadays, we can all see the challenges faced by the educational system in relation to the digitization of teaching and the intermediation of the relationships between teachers/pupils/students in the digital space. Also, access to information in a global world changes studying modes, teaching methods, etc. Low access to funding: at least in Romania, the budget for education is very much below where it should be to face these challenges. Additional funds are granted following international competitions that come with stronger and stronger competitors. The red tape behind European or Norwegian projects for research is also notorious. *If we can claim that the argument of market fragmentation does not fit the educational field, why would we accept it as valid for the cultural field? Why would it be necessary for the latter to be connected to a market?* If a part of the goods and products of the cultural sector bear a symbolic and social dimension related to establishing communities and relations, creating new meanings, as well as local and universal values, should they not benefit from a different treatment protecting them from being instrumentalized as economic goods with European added value? The Regulation refers to the 2005 UNESCO Convention (adopted by the EU in 2007), which pleads for a balanced vision on the value of culture: “underlines that cultural activities, goods and services have both an economic and a cultural nature, because they

convey identities, values and meanings, and must not, therefore, be treated as solely having commercial value.”

The Regulation is nevertheless clearly favourable to the development of a commercial value of culture through the subsequently mentioned objectives. Why have the European Council and European Parliament, endorsers of this Regulation, not placed culture on the same line as education, but chose to draw – sometimes unnatural – connections with a field that is in the end fundamentally different? As stated above, an essential difference between the two fields is the purpose of the entities creating cultural products or creative products: non-profit versus profit-making. This means that the motivations of cultural actors are different from the motivations of the entrepreneurs in the creative industries: the first unfold non-profit activities, as any financial profit is reinvested in a future project. On the other hand, the entrepreneurs aim for profit, as this is the factor that ensures the existence of an SME or a *start-up* in the global market economy. This difference in vision is based on a different ethos in the two fields, thus creating a relevant gap, in my vision. Moreover, another important difference is the fact that the cultural sector works specifically with a local audience, not excluding an international audience, while the creative industries address consumers that may be anywhere in the world. The cultural sector serves an *audience*, the creative sector serves *clients*. Cultural entities produce events that aim at educating and empowering, developing the audience, etc. The financial results are not as important, for this field is mostly subsidized by the state, which assumes any possible risks, for the benefit of democratic access of audiences to acts of culture. The creative industries create products that are normally related to entertainment (games, apps, multimedia products), accessible free of charge or for a fee, which are tightly connected to the idea of financial success. The cultural field develops a civic dimension, connected to the idea of common good and public service, while the creative industries develop a domestic/private-use dimension.

From my point of view, the different practices mentioned above keep the two fields in separate policy areas and I plead for treating them separately in terms of public policies for funding. I support the collaboration between the two sectors and I am aware of the transformations they bring upon in society, as well as of their common potential to instil change (see digital platforms for the dissemination of culture), understand the co-dependence between each one’s particularities in terms of accessibility and agreeability to the virtual public, and appreciate the importance of experiment as practice mode for both fields. However, I call for a relation of partnership between the two, not one



based on a framework subordinating the cultural field. The connection between the two should not be based on a contractual relation to the detriment of culture, offering “the glitter of aesthetics, the patina of authenticity, the energy of artistic creativity...” (O’Connor, 2020) and, in exchange, adopting the specific profit-oriented management practices. Surely, there are other interesting practices in the creative industries to be borrowed by other sectors, but Creative Europe focuses on this fundamental aspect related to their capacity to generate income in order to achieve future sustainability. Instead of emphasizing on the dual nature of culture, the European Union chooses to favour the economic dimension, which gives rise to counter reactions, such as the reflex defence reaction of the symbolic value itself, disconnected from other dimensions, without considering the context of global societal transformations (Bruell, 2013: 47). Still, from the standpoint of large-scale dissemination and production, the cultural content depends on the use of new technologies, especially in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to remain relevant and accessible for the audience, but especially to gain a new audience, the cultural sector must renegotiate, on its own terms, the relation to the field of creative industries.

I think it is problematic to associate these fields without taking into account their particularities, to blur nuances in a context marked by competitive and entrepreneurial change, allowing for the large-scale commercialization of cultural initiatives. In this context, in the absence of survival tools per se, we could speak about the disappearance of the non-profit cultural sector in time, as it is brought to its knees – willy-nilly – by the strongly marketized industries of immediate entertainment, first and foremost based on technological evolutions and the ephemeral condition of commercial goods. Levelling the sector in the direction of cultural entrepreneurship can bear serious consequences, going as far as suppressing it altogether. The programme’s objectives and priorities indicate that Creative Europe is throwing the non-profit cultural sector into the lion’s den, next to competing SMEs, stimulated by the capacity to generate profit. By directing it to assume competences from entrepreneurship, the European Union is promising the cultural sector that it will survive in the new competitive existence framework. Nevertheless, survival and adaptation are outlined in the framework created by this programme that is setting out a transformation of the sector by being assimilated by the creative industries, as an extension of the latter, in the best of cases the cultural sector being able to develop a hybrid mode of existence. The Regulation stipulates that the implementation of the programme must take into account the intrinsic value of culture and the importance of not-for-profit entities, but considering that 69% of the budget is allocated to SMEs, and only 31% of the programme is dedicated to non-profit

cultural projects, we get quite a clear picture of which of the two sectors is preferred by the financier.

If the first programmes created opportunities for the cultural field to develop, at the same time serving the political purpose of developing the European citizenship, Creative Europe downright guides cultural actors in a direction defined by terms such as competitiveness, market, economic benefits, job growth (all of these connected to the Europe 2020 Strategy). For the first time, motivated by the context of globalization, the European Union proactively draws a cultural policy whose objectives include offering a development framework aimed at professionals in culture acquiring new competences. One of the priorities of the Creative Europe programme implies adapting the cultural sector's management models to *business models*. The phrase "business models" was not used by chance and I notice that cultural *management* – a word that refers to the sector's administrative practices – is not at all mentioned in the (original English version of the) Regulation. A new order is put in place, i.e. the orientation towards the creation of "cultural businesses" allowing for a sustainable development of the "sectors". *However, acquiring business-related competences equals changing the ethos of the cultural sector.* By internalizing a new mode of existence, cultural actors prepare to launch their products on the competitive market, and are not anymore driven by aims to produce changes in society. This discourse emphasized the economic value of culture was, at the time when this funding programme was being prepared, the framework of the cultural media in the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and Australia. Thus, some of its effects, such as the acceleration of instrumentalization or the influences on the *standard business and marketing discourse* in the cultural field, were known (O'Connor, 2020). The Regulation thus justified the European cultural policies' change of direction, in the context of the impact of the digital age on the other two fields:

in order to adapt to the context of the digital shift and globalisation, the cultural and creative sectors need to develop new skills and require greater access to finance to upgrade equipment, develop new production and distribution methods and adapt their business models. (Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013)

Creative Europe imprints and accompanies cultural actors as they turn into cultural entrepreneurs. This insistence on creating new business and administrative models announces a possible premature end to a cultural management model based on multiple state subsidies, especially for the NGO

environment. State subventions have made possible, by virtue of understanding culture and art as a common good, types of artistic projects and actions whose results cannot be quantified through the numerical indicators preferred by European authorities. They have created relationships, connections, knowledge that cannot be financially monetized. Therefore, a series of legitimate questions arise: the things that cannot be monetized are no longer relevant in the framework set out by Creative Europe? What is the European Union trying to convey to the non-profit sector through Creative Europe? That in order to stay relevant in the future, it should become *profit-making*? Separating culture from the creative industries is not a solution as this will not make for a positive repositioning of culture in the eyes of decision-makers (O'Connor, 2020). From the standpoint of economic statistics, the contribution of the creative industries is much higher than the cultural sector's contribution to the GDP, which is why O'Connor proposes shifting attention to another type of impact: "... its real 'impact' is located not in these metrics but in the value added to other sectors, mostly urban real estate, hospitality and retail economies" (2020).

Although the previous programmes mention the need to develop the audience, in paragraph 11 of the Regulation the word *consumer* is used instead of audience, showing a language slip that betrays the spirit of the programme which is making room for a new model of relationship with artistic creation and its receivers. *Creative Europe supports an industry that creates products for consumers*. The focus on citizens – present in previous European programmes – has shifted to consumers. Although the main objective of the Creative Europe programme retains part of the previous rhetoric of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, they are placed in a framework marked by the narrative of economic growth through creativity and innovation. In the justification of the programme, the Regulation stipulates: "promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, culture as a catalyst for creativity in the framework for growth and jobs and culture as a vital element in the Union's international relations" (Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013).

The role as catalyst in a broader process (in economic circumstances) can, on the one hand, offer a chance to acknowledge the contribution of culture to the well-being of society, including at an economic level. However, enclosing it into a discourse mainly based on its economic or political benefits puts it on a secondary place, as the accent falls on creativity. Bruell goes even further, stating that "... culture is clearly framed as not existing apart from the orientation towards markets, and requirements for growth" (Bruell, 2013: 22). The terms *cultural diversity* and *intercultural dialogue* seem linked to previous

programmes, symbolic reminiscences redefined in the context of economic competitiveness.

The European Union has set out a programme through which it has institutionalized a new era for the cultural environment. Besides the instrumental political-economic dimension it assigns to this sector which, in the meantime, at discourse level, has become an “industry”, Creative Europe develops a third component in the programme, entitled the *cross-sectoral strand*, through the “Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility”. This is a financial instrument similar to a loan fund for SMEs and cultural organizations, which attracts financial partners in order to take on some risks of experiment and innovation. The financial sector becomes a partner in the implementation of the programme, as the main guarantor of this component of the programme is the European Investment Fund. The purpose of this instrument is presented under paragraph 22 of the Regulation: “A self-standing financial instrument, the Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility should enable the cultural and creative sectors at large to grow, and in particular should provide sufficient leverage for new actions and opportunities.”

*The Guarantee Facility is included in the programme, so it can be used for projects that can generate profit*, as later on they will have to reimburse the contracted loan. This results in inequality for non-profit projects, which would need a treasury flow, but cannot access this fund, because it was designed without a harmonization between the logic of subventions and that of investments (Bruell, 2013: 45). Including the Facility in the programme as a component in itself, with a relevant share of 13% of the programme budget, once again shows the European Union’s interest to adopt certain business models from the economic field. Introducing the loan as a current practice also contributes to changing the management mode in the cultural field. Loans may include investments “in tangible or intangible assets, business transfers, working capital (such as interim finance, gap finance, cash flow, credit lines)” (Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013). This shows how a completely new type of language for the cultural sector and the introduction of new instruments gain more and more importance in European cultural policies, as they mainly serve market-oriented entities.

On the other hand, the cultural field’s familiarity with a *guarantor* other than the state (the European Union, in this case) leads to the idea of the state that no longer supports the cultural and creative industries, associating new operators instead, such as financial ones, to their development. This may translate into a transfer of responsibility from the state to private financial operators (Konopka, 2015: 15). The proximity of the financial world to the

cultural field will reshape it, may imprint more financial pressure, create new dependencies and may contribute to changing the role and the essence of culture. Financial success aimed at covering loans may become a target in itself, demoting the objective related to the quality of the cultural act. In the absence of a regulation regarding the relationships between the financial world and the cultural sector, any change in the latter is possible, including its financialization. The presence of this Guarantee Facility marks a step towards the commercialization of the cultural and creative environment, altering the logic of granting funds and imposing the criterion of financial profitability instead of cultural value (Konopka, 2015: 15).

### **Conclusions**

Having analysed the European Union's programmes dedicated to culture, my observation is that we are witnessing an act of abandonment the non-profit cultural sector into to the uncertainties of globalized economies, without providing any safety net. To avoid this, the EU is dedicating a component of the Creative Europe programme that comes with objectives related to the sector's reform, giving it six years to adapt to new work models. Should the non-profit sector be able to adhere to business thinking and organization pattern and turn its existence into an entrepreneurial mode, the financial loans would, to a certain extent, be its safety net. The majority of the projects in the non-profit cultural field include activities that replace or complete public services, *thus having a public service profile*. Why should a public service become a profit-making one? How will it be possible for the audience/citizen to remain at the core of this services if the cultural actors are pressured to make profit from their activity? The programme looks like a "regulation and selection instrument" endowing the European Union with the authority to decide on the art and culture that deserves to be supported (Bruell, 2013: 48).

By including the word "creative" in the name of the programme and allocating a bigger share of the financial support to the creative industries, the European Union shows its preference for the creative, rather than the cultural dimension. The concept of creativity extends from a characteristic of the artistic and cultural activity to a way of bringing added value to non-manual labour (the creative industries), and to becoming a way of life that offers cities a new head start through the presence of creatives (the creative class), which contributes to (creative) economic growth. These terms "were and are in this process essential propaganda tools" for a real problem that is treated through the emergence of a successful narrative (Raunig via Bruell, 2013: 39).

Oli Mould says that by redefining creativity to create a new narrative of global economic growth, neoliberal policies have actually ensured their own growth (2018). The cultural policy of the European Union responds to a globalized world, at a time when we are moving towards a new industrial age, *Industry 4*, by aligning to the cultural policies of the competitors who have already turned it into “an arm of economic policy” (Throsby, 2010: 5). Creative Europe<sup>7</sup> legitimizes turning cultural capital into economic capital and culture into commodity, in an attempt to make it present and accessible at global level. Behind this programme presented using terms that mimic ideological neutrality lies, in fact, a political-economic brand of the creativity narrative which reveals that it pertains to neoliberalism, turning the cultural sector into a new no man's market.

## REFERENCES

- Barroso, Jose Manuel (2010). *Speech held on the occasion of the launch of “Essen – 2010 European Capital of Culture”*. [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/uk/IP\\_10\\_10](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/uk/IP_10_10), 2010, accessed on 11.11.2020
- Bruell, Cornelia (2013). *Creative Europe 2014-2020: A New Programme-A New Cultural Policy As Well?*, Stuttgart, DEU, Edition Culture and Foreign Policy.
- Business Academy - certified by Cambridge International Examinations <https://www.business-academy.ro/ce-face-un-antreprenor>, accessed on 3.11.2020
- Decision No 719/96/EC of the European Parliament and of The Council of 29 March 1996: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31996D0719&qid=1603369954448&from=EN>, accessed on 22.10.2020.
- Decision no. 1855/2006/CE of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM%3A129016>, accessed on 23.10.2020.
- European agenda for culture in a globalising world* (2007), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:l29019&from=EN>, accessed on 28.10.2020.
- EUROPE 2020 - A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth* (2010), <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/6a915e39-0aab-491c-8881-147ec91fe88a>, accessed on 28.10.2020.

---

<sup>7</sup> The new programme Creative Europe (2021-2027) is following in general the principles of the first Creative Europe's grant scheme. It aims to “promote cultural and linguistic diversity, heritage and competitiveness, and will allow cultural and creative organisations and professionals to co-create and cooperate across borders and to reach wider audiences, tackling current societal questions and supporting emerging artists.” More on: <https://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu/creative-europe-2021-2027>, accessed on 15.05.2021.

- Green Paper - Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries* (2010), <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52010DC0183>, accessed on 28.10.2020
- Isar, Yudhishtir Raj undated. *The Cultural Industries and the Economy of Culture*, [https://cultureactioneurope.org/knowledge/creatives-industries/cae\\_yudhishtirrajisar\\_economyculture/](https://cultureactioneurope.org/knowledge/creatives-industries/cae_yudhishtirrajisar_economyculture/), accessed on 4.11.2020.
- Junker, Jean Claude (2014). *A new start for Europe: My agenda for Jobs, Growth, Fairness and Democratic Change*, European Parliament plenary session, Speech at European Parliament Plenary Session, Strasbourg, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-14-546\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-546_en.htm), accessed on 28.10.2020.
- Klaić, Dragan (2007). *Mobility of imagination: a companion guide to international cultural cooperation*. Center for Arts and Culture, Central European University, p 29.
- Konopka, Blanka (2015). *The Evolution of EU Cultural Policy in the Post-Maastricht Period - Towards Commission Dominance and the Commodification of Culture?*, Master thesis, Central European University, Budapest.
- Littoz-Monnet, Annabelle (2015). Encapsulating EU cultural policy into the EU's growth and competitiveness Agenda: Explaining the success of a paradigmatic shift in Brussels., în Evangelia Psychogiopoulou(ed.), *Cultural Governance and the European Union*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, pp 25-36.
- Mould, Oli (2018). *Against creativity*, Londra & New York, Verso Books, p 12.
- Oancă, Alexandra (2017). *Bidding wars: enactments of expertise and emotional labor in the Spanish competition for the European capital of culture 2016 title*, PhD thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 191.
- O'Connor, Justin (2020). *Art as Industry*, accessed în 10.11.2020, <https://wakeinalarm.blog/2020/06/20/art-as-industry/>.
- Szakáts, István (2014). Article *Fishing for religion*, <https://www.contributors.ro/?s=fishing+for+religion>, accessed on 30.10.2020.
- Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Creative Europe programme (2014 to 2020) and repealing Decisions no 1718/2006/EC, no 1855/2006/EC and no 1041/2009/EC, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013R1295&qid=1603370220582&from=EN>, accessed on 28.10.2020
- The Economy of Culture in Europe* (2006), study by KEA European Affairs, accessed on 15.10.2020, [https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/studies/cultural-economy\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/culture/library/studies/cultural-economy_en.pdf).
- Throsby, David (2010). *The economics of cultural policy*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wiesand, Andreas Joh and Söndermann, Michael (2005). *The "Creative Sector": An Engine for Diversity, Growth, and Jobs in Europe*. European Cultural Foundation, p 5.

