

Cultural Heritage in the Frame of European Funding Programmes: Challenges and Opportunities

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1 Context and Institutional Framework

Tangible and intangible CH is constituted by a multifaceted set of expressions, encompassing not only acknowledged creative forms such as works of art and monuments, but also other cultural manifestations such as folk songs, narratives of the oral tradition or manmade landscapes.

CH plays a crucial role at the European level, representing an invaluable asset for all its citizens, and at the same time being a potential source on which to invest both from a social and economic perspective.

The commitment towards its creative and cultural richness is grounded in the constitutional basis of Europe, the Treaty of Lisbon, stating that “[the Union] shall ensure that Europe’s cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced” and

the Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore. [...] In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article the European Parliament and the Council [...] shall adopt incentive measures.¹

These principles are enforced also in the frame of UNESCO Conventions,

¹ Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community [2007] OJ C306/01, art.3 and 167.

to which the EU is a party. The 2005 UNESCO Convention² underlines the dual nature of cultural activities, goods and services, stating their economic and cultural nature, as they convey identities, values and meanings. It aims to strengthen international cooperation and solidarity in order to favour the cultural expression of all countries and individuals.

The 2003 UNESCO Convention³ highlights the needs of safeguarding the ICH, ensuring respect for the ICH of the communities, groups and individuals, raising awareness at the local, national and international levels of its importance and providing for international cooperation and assistance.⁴

Despite the international stress on its paramount importance and potential, culture and humanities as well are progressively suffering from a shortage of financial support from local, regional and national institutions and, often, are under-represented in the frame of sectors where they could play a crucial role.⁵

The most relevant challenges to tackle, as listed in the 2013 regulations⁶ establishing the 2014-2020 EU funding programmes can be summarised as follows:

- 1.1 the diversification of European cultural and creative sectors, often linked to their territories, that may raise obstacles to the circulation of cultural and creative works and professionals, lead to geographical imbalances within European territories and a limited choice for end users;
- 1.2 the massive impact of the digitalisation (digital shift) on how culture is perceived, accessed, created, communicated and disseminated;
- 1.3 difficulties in accessing the funds needed to support cultural activities, to maintain and increase competitiveness and internationalise activities. This is significantly more difficult in

2 UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005.

3 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003.

4 Other recent policies of primary importance are the Resolution of the Council on a European Agenda for Culture (2007), OJ C 287/1, and the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on a Work Plan for Culture [2014] (2015-2018), OJ C 463/4.

5 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Towards an integrated approach to cultural heritage for Europe" - COM(2014) 477.

6 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, N. 1855/2006/EC and No 1041/2009/EC, OJ L 347/221 and Regulation (EU) No 1291/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing *Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation* (2014-2020) and repealing Decision No 1982/2006/EC, OJ L 347/104.

- some cultural sectors due to the intangible nature of many of their assets or risks to be faced in order to grow or to innovate;
- 1.4 some cultural fields work on information and data that are difficult to gather and store, and scarcely comparable. This raises the need to design and share effective policies both at the national and European level;
 - 1.5 the relationship between research, innovation, science, education and culture, that must be progressively deepened.

In order to meet these needs, the EU established specific funding programmes⁷ that have been developed and refined through the years. In the following paragraphs, we will outline the overall European funding landscape on these themes, and the latest debate and related initiatives.

2 A Rich but Fragmented Funding Landscape

The funding initiatives aimed to tackle the above-mentioned challenges are many. Here is a short presentation of the most relevant ones.

- *EU structural funds 2014-2020*: CH management is one of the investment priorities for the EU structural and investment funds. In the 2014-2020 period, CH investments are possible under the specific regulations of the cohesion policy, with an overall budget of €325 billion. The relevant funds are the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). These can cover a wide spectrum of actors and activities in the public and non-profit sectors as well as in the private sector (in particular SMEs).
- *Creative Europe (2014-2020)*: it provides funding for artists and cultural professionals to develop their skills and to work across borders and for transnational cultural activities within and outside of the EU; it support schemes tailored to the specific needs of the audiovisual and the cultural sectors in the EU; it offers easier access to private funding through a financial guarantee facility and increased banking expertise in the cultural and creative sectors; it helps develop Europe's competitiveness in culture and film while safeguarding cultural and linguistic diversity. Its budget corresponds to €1.46 billion and its aims include providing funding to 2,500 artists and cultural

⁷ *Mapping of Cultural Heritage actions in European Union policies, programmes and activities, 2017.*

professionals, 2,000 cinemas, 800 films, 4,500 book translations. A financial guarantee facility of up to €750 million for small businesses active in the sector was also established in 2016.

- *Joint Programming Initiative in Cultural Heritage and Global Change (JPI-CH)*: through this JPI, the EC encourages Member States to “develop a common strategic research agenda [...] in the area of preservation and use of cultural heritage in the context of global change”.⁸ The main objective of JPI CH is to promote the safeguarding of CH in its broader meaning, including tangible, intangible and digital assets. Member States and Associated Countries are expected to coordinate national research activities, as well as the use of resources in order to face major societal challenges.
- *Horizon 2020 (2014-2020)*: the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation encompasses many activities and opportunities linked with CH. Since 1986, the EU has been funding research thanks to its research framework programmes: just to provide an overview, it invested about €100 million in projects related to CH under FP7, the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development. Horizon 2020, the current Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, foresees an investment of €80 billion for 2014 to 2020, and support for culture and heritage-related research is available under its three ‘pillars’, Excellent Science, Industrial Leadership, and Societal Challenges (in this pillar, we highlight the dedicated Challenge 6 “Europe in a changing world: Inclusive, Innovative and Reflective Societies”).
- *ERASMUS+ (2014-2020)*: it aims to boost skills and employability through education, training, youth, and sport. The programme provides opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain work experience, and volunteer abroad. It supports many different types of activities of varying scales. These include the European Voluntary Service, mobility for Adult Education staff, Strategic Partnerships, Sector Skills Alliances, Knowledge Alliances, Youth Capacity Building, and Transnational Youth Initiatives. Its total budget corresponds to €14.7 billion.
- *Europe for Citizens (2014-2020)*: it aims at contributing to citizens’ understanding of the EU, its history and diversity, fostering European Citizenship and improving conditions for civic and democratic participation at European level. The CH and history of Europe, as well as town-twinning projects, encompass themes related to CH. The Programme has an overall budget of €185,468,000.

8 European Commission Recommendation (2010/238/EU) of 26 April 2010.

- *COST Actions*: COST fosters trans-national cooperation among researchers across Europe. It is a unique means to jointly develop ideas and new initiatives across all fields, through pan-European networking of nationally funded research activities. COST Actions are bottom-up science and technology networks, open to researchers and stakeholders, with a duration of four years. They are active through a range of networking tools, such as workshops, conferences, training schools, short-term scientific missions and dissemination activities.
- *HERA, Humanities in the European Research Area*: the European Commission provided an ERA-NET Cofund grant to the HERA joint research programmes. The HERA partnership consists of 24 European research funding organisations from 23 countries, committed to the continued growth and development of collaborative and transnational research on Humanities across Europe.

Other relevant initiatives, just to mention some of them, are: the *Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on Energy-efficient Buildings (EeB)*; the *Joint Research Centre (JRC)*, that is currently carrying out research on the importance of the *Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs)* as a driver of economic growth; the *COSME Programme (2014-2020)* and its dedicated strand on sustainable and cultural tourism; the *Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)*, supporting studies and investments associated with the maintenance, restoration and upgrading of the cultural and natural heritage of villages, rural landscapes and high nature value sites, including related socio-economic aspects, as well as environmental awareness actions. Funding opportunities may be found also in the frame of *Life Programme*, or can be issued directly by EU Directorate-Generals: for instance, opportunities are provided by Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), Directorate-General for Development and Cooperation (DG DEVCO); EuropeAid; Directorate-General for Enlargement (DG ELARG).

Variety and differentiation constitute, of course, an element of richness and give evidence of the increasing attention on these themes. Yet, providing a clear state-of-the-art analysis on CH (and Humanities in general) is still a hard task to achieve. An extensive study on funded projects gathering different funding programmes and providing facts and figures at the European level has never been carried out. This is mainly due to the plurality of Directorate-Generals within the EU that are dedicated to these specific field of expertise, and therefore to the different funding opportunities. Just to mention the main key-players, DG for Research and Innovation, DG for Education and Culture, DG for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, DG for Migration and Home Affairs and DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

Information available is based on the annual or multiannual reports of each funding programme. On the one hand, they reveal a good investment

of funds, the implementation of high-level actions and an effective circulation of professionals, ideas and good practices.⁹ On the other hand, the overall picture shows that, although there are important opportunities to take, the landscape is still very fragmented. The big picture is therefore very difficult to define. Each funding programme has its own specifics: objectives and priorities reflect in the funded projects, in their management procedures and, consequently, in the ways of collecting and analysing related data, both *in itinere* and *ex-post*.

Furthermore, some funding programmes are connected to thematic support networks that work independently from each other, in relation to the particularities of each programme itself. The most relevant instance of these thematic networks is Net4Society,¹⁰ linked to Horizon 2020. Net4Society is constituted by the National Contact Points in almost 50 countries for Horizon 2020 - Societal Challenge 6 *Europe in a changing world: inclusive, innovative and reflective societies*. It is especially relevant for researchers from the socio-economic sciences and humanities: its main activities are providing them with up-to-date information on funding schemes and opportunities for their research project ideas, offering support for partner-search activities, communication and visibility opportunities. Last but not least, it fosters successful SSH integration in research projects of every discipline funded under Horizon 2020.

3 In the Spotlight: the Future of CH

In this last section, we will highlight two crucial initiatives for the future of CH at the European level, driving the attention, on the one hand, on the importance of an integrated approach to projects on CH and, on the other hand, on the significance of the involvement of society at large.

The first one is the project *Cultural Heritage Counts for Europe*,¹¹ funded under Culture Programme 2007-13, that has become a reference point for EU bodies planning future policies on CH. Its final report clearly demonstrates heritage's full potential, providing straightforward evidence of the value of CH and its impact on Europe's economy, culture, society and the environment.

9 See, for instance *Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, budget and disciplines. Monitoring report on SSH-flagged projects funded in 2015; Integration of Social Sciences and Humanities in Horizon 2020: Participants, budget and disciplines. 2nd Monitoring report on SSH-flagged projects funded in 2015 Evaluation of Creative Europe, Culture, Media and Media Mundus Programmes; Evaluation of Creative Europe, Culture, Media and Media Mundus Programmes*.

10 <http://www.net4society.eu/>.

11 <http://blogs.enactc.org/culturalheritagecountsforeurope/outcomes/>.

At present, about 300,000 people work directly in the CH sector in the EU and about 7.8 million jobs are created indirectly by the sector. After its extensive analysis, the report also gives strategic recommendations, calling for the elaboration of specific *heritage indicators* to facilitate and improve the collection of cultural statistics, which are key to support policy makers in evidence-based policy making. It also promotes a holistic impact assessment to be conducted as a requirement in all EU-funded projects on CH, to measure impact and monitor trends over a longer period of time.

European Institutions and Member States at all levels of governance are thus invited to integrate the care, protection and proper use of heritage in all related policies, programmes and actions and to include all stakeholders and civil society in developing strategies and policies for CH. Last but not least, the report calls for the recognition of CH's positive contribution to regional and local sustainable development in the context of the mid-term review of the present funding programmes and the preparation for the next generation of funding opportunities beyond 2020.

The second initiative is the decision establishing the first *European Year of Cultural Heritage* in 2018, which will celebrate the diversity and richness of our European culture. This initiative, aimed to raise awareness of European history, will surely draw attention to the opportunities offered by our CH, but also to the challenges it faces.

Tibor Navracsics, EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, once again stated that:

CH is not only a means to understand our past, but also an asset that can help us build the Europe of the future. The Year will help bring the richness of our European CH to the fore, highlighting its many social and economic benefits.¹²

The allocated funding corresponds to €8 million, spread among a dedicated strand in the frame of Creative Europe programme and 10 flagship initiatives, and will cover events and activities all around Europe to be implemented at international, national, regional and local level.

The *Year of Cultural Heritage* will be an invaluable opportunity to implement the recent audience development policies of the EU. This will mean to involve society at large, and above all the youngest citizens of Europe, in order to make their access to European culture easier, therefore enhancing their sense of belonging to a European family and its heritage, in order to take care of it in the future.

¹² European Commission - Press release, "Commission welcomes European Parliament's backing for European Year of Cultural Heritage", Brussels, 27 April 2017.

