

## **Presidency Summary on the Discussion from the Informal Videoconference of the EU Ministers of Culture and Audiovisual on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Cultural and Creative Sectors**

The informal videoconference of EU Ministers of Culture and Audiovisual and the European Commission, held on 19 May 2020 and chaired by HR PRES Minister Obuljen Koržinek, was a follow-up to the videoconference held on 8 April. Ministers met in April in an effort to urgently respond to the unprecedented crisis caused by COVID-19, impacting the cultural and creative sectors.

During the videoconference on 19 May, Ministers addressed the repercussions that the COVID-19 crisis continues to have on the cultural and creative sectors, as well as the possibilities to re-engage artists and audiences. They talked about further steps to take in the transition period of the crisis marked by the gradual lifting of restrictions, opening of cultural institutions and resumption of cultural activities. This poses a challenge for creatives and audiences alike and there is a need to cooperate and coordinate at EU level in order to jointly respond and communicate in a clear and simple way so as to address their concerns. Ministers also discussed how lessons learnt so far can shape future policies and measures, given that the ramifications of the COVID-19 crisis will be long-term.

In addition, Ministers reflected on the vital role of the media in this challenging period and they are looking forward to the EU support plan for the cultural and creative sectors, as a part of the wider EU recovery plan. They agreed that, considering the constant influx of information, media literacy should be highlighted as a key tool in combatting fake news and disinformation. Moreover, freedom of press and encouraging credible and objective reporting based on facts, as well as championing the vital role of journalists, should always be one of our priorities.

A joint and efficient European approach and a dedicated set of horizontal actions, upholding the EU values, were advocated. Particularly underlined was the necessity to apply maximum flexibility in the implementation of the Creative Europe programme and restructure its financing for the next generation of the programme. In this context, a significant number of Member States emphasised that level playing field should be given particular consideration.

Furthermore, a number of Member States appealed that special funds dedicated to culture be allocated within the EU Corona Recovery Fund.

Ministers agreed on the need to maintain the exchange of up-to-date information and closely follow the latest developments with the aim of designing relevant policies and assisting the cultural and creative sectors in a timely and decisive manner. As it is impossible to predict with certainty how this crisis will evolve, this exchange would allow the shaping of mid- and long-term measures.

Finally, the incoming German Presidency of the Council of the EU presented their programme and priorities for the second semester of 2020.