



European Commission - Speech [Check Against Delivery]



Video message for the event “A cultural Deal for Europe”

Brussels, 1 February 2022

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for your kind invitation today.

It is a pleasure to speak about such an important matter for our society, history, and economy: culture.

The cultural sector is one of the sectors that has suffered most in the Covid crisis. And small organisations and young artists have particularly struggled.

If the cultural sector suffered in the crisis, it follows that we must emphasise culture in the recovery.

This is especially true, since for many years now our regional analysis has shown that culture is a key success factor in regional development.

And for many years now cohesion policy has invested in culture. In the past seven years, we invested more than 6 billion euros in cultural projects at the regional level. And a further 1 billion euros to cultural exchanges across regions, as well as international cultural relations.

You will notice by the way, that this sum of just over 7 billion euros was almost exactly 2% of our total investments, just as much as you are asking for the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

And we plan to do more in the new programmes, which will start in the coming months.

Because we know that culture is crucial for regional development and that special investment is needed following the crisis. We have created a new specific objective, a new priority for programming, devoted to culture and sustainable tourism.

Within this priority, we want to finance: investments that broaden access to culture, (we all agree – it should be for everyone!) investments that make culture greener, investments that promote digitisation and innovation, investments that promote social innovation, and investments that include marginalised or vulnerable people.

In all these investments, we want to promote new business models for culture and to exchange experiences and best practices.

In fact, we have a specific fund for innovation. Our Urban Innovative Actions are supporting cities to test innovative ideas in the field of culture. In 2020, we supported six cities with up to EUR 5 million each, and we plan similar actions in the coming years.

I hope you will take advantage of all these opportunities under cohesion policy.

In this context, the New European Bauhaus offers the opportunity put people at the centre of the European Green Deal, to create a cultural movement for sustainability, beauty and inclusiveness.

Too often, people think of the green economy in terms of constraints, limitations and things we might lose. But what if we could flip the script? What if we could use design and artistic thinking to transform the places where we live and our lifestyles?

This would be a project of hope. And this would truly be building back better.

So we are bringing together architects and engineers, designers and planners, artists and educators.

People from the creative and cultural sectors have a key role to play. 3 of the 4 themes of the New European Bauhaus are particularly relevant for those working in culture.

First, can you think of projects which help **reconnect with nature**? This means preferring natural solutions beyond human-centred perspectives. It also means educating people and shifting the paradigm, fostering a new culture of sustainability.

Second, can you think of projects, which help **regain a sense of belonging**? This implies

connecting people to the places and communities in which they live through shared cultural heritage. The New European Bauhaus is very much about inclusiveness. Culture has and always will connect people and build communities.

Third, can you think of projects which **reach the people and places that need it most**? Removing barriers to culture and beauty, making a greener lifestyle accessible to all.

If you can contribute in any way, by example, by action, or by using your platform to get the message out, I encourage you to get involved in local actions, and to join the New European Bauhaus festival in the spring.

If you haven't yet, it is never too late to become part of the New European Bauhaus community. It is now time to deliver – and culture will play central role in this.

In conclusion, culture is in fact critical for recovery. We need culture for better places to live in, and for better lives to live. Cohesion Policy is and will remain a strong supporter of cultural investments, with 2% of our investment or some 7 billion euros already focusing on culture.

But culture also has a crucial role to play in the future. Imagining and generating new, greener and better ways of living. And educating and inspiring others to do the same.

So your discussion today is crucial. I hope that this is only the beginning. I hope to see you involved in strengthening cohesion in our society, across European regions, aspiring for a more sustainable, inclusive and qualitative lifestyles promoted by the New European Bauhaus.

We count on you!

Thank you.