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COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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# Creating our future: creativity and cultural heritage as strategic resources for a diverse and democratic Europe

Council of Europe

Conference of Ministers of Culture

Strasbourg, 1 April 2022

## Concept note

Europe is facing unprecedented challenges. Many of these are global: health, climate change, biodiversity loss, technological challenges, as well as democratic, economic and social inequalities. The pandemic crisis has highlighted the need to accelerate change in our developmental and societal models towards sustainability. The digital transformation is increasing its impacts on our societies, and developments in artificial intelligence provide both opportunities and threats, as predictive algorithms risk reducing cultural diversity in the digital environment.

In order to successfully address these challenges a cultural shift in society is required. The value and the potential of culture, creativity and cultural heritage is crucial in this endeavour, although it remains underestimated and underexploited. It is high time to emphasise this unique capacity of culture to nurture open, healthy, pluralistic, diverse, successful societies and stable, well-functioning democracies, while enhancing the overall quality of life of people in a constantly evolving society, economy and environment.

The [Italian Presidency](#) aims at strengthening the principles and values shared by the member States of the Council of Europe by focusing on culture, heritage and landscape as strategic assets and key areas of its programme, encouraging their transversal contribution to sustainable development policies, for the benefit of all the peoples on the planet.

Culture is a motor for political, social and technological transformation; art, storytelling, design and cultural heritage play a fundamental role in contributing to social innovation and people's quality of life. The capacity of creativity and participatory art to empower people, enliven the freedom of expression, stimulate public debate and change behaviours should be recognised beyond the cultural arena.

Culture and creativity, cultural heritage and landscape inherently contribute to ensuring freedom of expression, online and offline; fighting growing social inequalities and poverty; ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups; fighting inequality, racism, xenophobia and discrimination; supporting human rights-centred artificial intelligence developments; fighting environmental degradation and climate change; empowering civil society; educating to democratic citizenship and empowerment.

## Objectives

Art and creativity, heritage and landscape can benefit from technological developments and also help define the new reality. In line with the priorities of the [Italian Presidency programme](#) as well as the challenges linked to the digital transformation of our society, and the urgent need of achieving sustainability, the conference will specifically focus on:

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*How to ensure that the unique legal framework created by Council of Europe Conventions on Culture, Heritage and Landscape supports society in addressing the challenges of our time?*

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Which solutions in the cultural landscape will guarantee the protection of cultural diversity and freedom of expression in the digital environment, while enlarging democratic participation?

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These questions will be addressed with particular reference to two policy areas of high relevance to European Ministers of Culture:

Digital Technologies – including Artificial Intelligence – and the implications for European standards on the protection and promotion of cultural heritage, such as the Council of Europe's Valletta, Faro and Nicosia Conventions.

The challenges posed to creativity, diversity and pluralism by Artificial Intelligence developments and by global digital technological players and the use of predictive algorithms within the audio-visual industry.

In addition to the Council of Europe's legal *acquis*, the conference will draw on and connect to the most recent debates at political level – such as the G-20 Summit of Ministers of Culture held in Rome in July 2021, and other relevant work by international and European bodies.