

The Amsterdam Declaration

addressed to regional, national and European policy-makers and

adopted by the participants of the workshop “Towards a Pan-European initiative in support of creative industries in Europe” organised by the European Commission’s Enterprise & Industry Directorate-General in cooperation with the City of Amsterdam, the European Design Centre, the Association of Dutch Designers and IIP Create.

Cultural and creative industries are at the crossroad between culture, creativity and innovation. They offer a huge potential to contribute to the transformation of European society, responding to major social, demographical and environmental challenges and leading to a more sustainable and smarter economy within the EU 2020 strategy. Yet, the combined cultural and economic potential of these dynamic industries still remains largely underestimated and untapped.

In Europe, creative industries build upon a rich and diverse core of cultural heritage and skilful arts and other creative practitioners. This core is surrounded by interconnected and related layers of entrepreneurial and innovative services bringing creativity to the market. While promoting and enriching European cultural diversity, they prove a powerful economic lever. They not only represent dynamic, fast growing sectors in Europe, but they are also global leaders and competitive exporters in a wide range of fields. Moreover, they are characterised by strong spill-over effects to other industries, which help us to modernise our economy and are a basis for future industries and growth. They can also contribute to inclusiveness and quality of life, to the improvement of public services and other social ends. Now, there is the opportunity to build on these assets and develop integrated strategies and new tools, collaborations and approaches, so that the creative industries in the EU become global leaders and pioneers in addressing the grand challenges of our time and of tomorrow.

How to create a favourable environment for the further development of this sector was the subject of the workshop “Towards a Pan-European initiative in support of creative industries in Europe”, held in the city of Amsterdam, one of Europe’s leading creative cities, that actively supports the creative industries.

The participants agreed on the importance of the huge potential of the creative industries in Europe. Beyond their contribution to cultural diversity, creative industries represent indeed a great economic and social potential. In order to take full advantage of this potential, there is a need to combine arts and creativity with entrepreneurship and innovation. These industries are not only a source of inspiration but represent also an enormous asset to be turned into competitive advantages and the creation of new and better jobs in Europe. Therefore, the European Commission is invited to develop, in an holistic approach to the knowledge society, new or better policy incentives and practical tools for the further strengthening of the creative industries. Such an approach should mobilise a variety of policies and instruments at the

crossroad of cultural, innovation, cohesion and regional policy. The new Innovation Plan, the European Agenda for Culture, the Digital Agenda and the Intellectual Property Strategy will play a major role in shaping the environment, whereas structural funds and the R&D framework programme will constitute fundamental instruments.

The participants of the Amsterdam workshop highlight the importance of the creative industries as a strategic sector for the economy as well as the necessity of creating the right framework conditions at local, regional, national and European level to valorise the potential of job creation.

While linguistic and cultural fragmentation in Europe may hamper the development of strong and internationally competitive creative industries, cultural diversity is a strong asset to be better exploited in Europe. To be successful, creative companies depend on a high density of creative talents and supportive eco-systems that enable exchange of knowledge and open innovation. The challenge is to use the cultural and economic potential of creative industries by bringing different actors and institutions together in order to follow a holistic approach in supporting businesses to become more creative and creative people to become more entrepreneurial

In this context, and looking forward to the forthcoming consultation process to be launched on the basis of the Commission's Green paper on unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries, the participants of the Amsterdam workshop concentrated on some fundamental policy issues: innovation, governance, clustering and access to finance.

There is the opportunity to turn Europe's cultural diversity into a real competitive advantage for the rejuvenation of Europe's economy, without losing its special identity. To make this happen, the participants of the Amsterdam workshop "Towards a Pan-European initiative in support of creative industries in Europe"

- Welcome the idea of establishing a "European Creative Industries Alliance" that should help to better exploit the innovation potential of the creative industries both across and within countries in Europe by bringing together the European expertise on policies and practical instruments and support;
- Urge regions, Member States and the European Commission to promote a favourable "eco-system" for creative industries, in particular by developing new cluster concepts that, firstly, go for a radically different cluster concept that focuses on how to improve the physical and social environment for creative workers and related institutions, such as art and design schools or museums, and to foster their collaboration through clustering; secondly, to have a more specific focus on creative industries companies and how they can better benefit from being located in the same place by fostering networking, providing better support for stimulating creative start-ups and bringing the user-dimension into existing clusters;
- Urge regions, Member States and the European Commission to undertake more efforts to understand the particular framework conditions of creative industries and to carry out more foresight activities;
- Invite regions, Member States and the European Commission to develop more sophisticated business support measures and to facilitate the establishment of dedicated organisations, which are able to reach out to creative companies and creative

individuals by devising new and better tools and approaches that help to foster their innovation potential through more flexible and adaptable approaches than traditional innovation support;

- Call upon regions, Member States and the European Commission to take action, firstly, to raise the awareness of investors about the economic value and potential of creative industries and, secondly, to raise the awareness of creative entrepreneurs about the need to be investment-ready at an early stage;
- Recognise that lack of access to finance is a core barrier to growth for many businesses in the creative industries and calls upon regions, Member States and the European Commission to facilitate more access to finance for the creative industries companies by, firstly, developing dedicated financial instruments stimulating and leveraging cross-border private investment and access to loans (e.g. guarantee funds) and, secondly, by improving the accessibility and capacity of the horizontal venture capital funds like the European Investment Fund's High Growth and Innovative SME Facility (GIF1) and the High Growth Expansion Phase Facility (GIF2);
- Call for a higher investment in research and skills in general and for the creative industries in particular as a prospectus investment in our future;
- Propose that the "European Creative Industries Alliance" should mainly focus on the interaction of the creative industries with other industries with a view to facilitating creativity and innovation more broadly. Besides, it should also focus on the development of better policies and instruments for strengthening the creative industries as emerging industries that drive competitiveness and innovation in Europe;
- Agree with the proposal of the Business Panel on future EU Innovation Policy to invest in cultural and creative institutions, organisations and networks as the interdisciplinary brokers for innovation, creative content and new knowledge. This includes investing in policy and governance initiatives that reinforce the role of intermediaries, to act as agents of change, facilitators and brokers between disciplines, sectors, regions and countries;
- Call upon the European Commission to further develop policy actions and an integrated and cross-sectoral European strategy for Creative Industries to be presented to the Council, the European Parliament and the Committee of the Regions;
- Invite the Spanish presidency to bring forward the key messages and outcome of this workshop to the "Europe 2020" Agenda and the European Innovation Plan; and to further advance the policy discussions about creative industries, in particular during the Presidency Conference on cultural and creative industries to be held on 29 and 30 March 2010 in Barcelona.

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More information on the event is available at <http://www.edc.nl/amsterdamconference> and http://www.europe-innova.eu/web/guest/home/-/journal_content/56/10136/162471