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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 - Action “Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors, with a specific focus on the energy crisis”: Stocktaking exercise on the energy crisis

- Presidency Note

Delegations will find attached a Presidency note on the above that aims at summarizing the contributions made by the Member States and the Commission during the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) stocktaking exercise on the energy crisis, as part of the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026 action “Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors”, with a specific focus on the energy crisis in relation to the cultural and creative sectors.

Possible additional comments from delegations on the basis of the attached text may be sent to the Presidency (david.ek@gov.se ; tobias.adolfsson@gov.se) by **21 April 2023 COB**.

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EU WORK PLAN FOR CULTURE 2023-2026

Action “Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors, with a specific focus on the energy crisis”

Stocktaking exercise on the energy crisis

- Presidency Note -

I. INTRODUCTION

The following note intends to summarise the contributions made by the Member States and the Commission during the Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC) stocktaking exercise on the energy crisis, as part of the action *Stimulate the green transition of the cultural and creative sectors, with a specific focus on the energy crisis* in the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026¹. The stocktaking exercise has provided the opportunity to focus more on the energy crisis part of the action, while placing it in the larger context of the green transition of the CCS and providing an opportunity to discuss how the next part of the action, foreseen in 2024, could be designed.

The material used for this note comes from a January 2023 Presidency discussion paper (doc. 5106/23), discussions and presentations during CAC meetings in January and February 2023 as well as written input by Member States.

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/60399/st15381-en22.pdf>

II. CONTEXT

Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world. To overcome these challenges, the European Green Deal aims to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, ensuring: no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050, economic growth decoupled from resource use and no person and no place left behind².

Russia's unjustified military aggression against Ukraine and its weaponisation of gas supplies have provoked an unprecedented energy crisis for the EU. They have caused a sharp rise in energy prices and brought hardship for Europeans³.

RepowerEU is a roadmap to reduce the dependence on Russian fossil fuels and fast forward the energy transition without leaving anyone behind, based on 3 pillars: diversification of our energy supplies, energy saving and energy efficiency and, thirdly, massive acceleration of investment in renewables⁴.

The raise in energy prices has had, and may continue to have, substantial effects on the CCS in Europe, with increasing costs that in many cases have affected the planning and activities of the CCS. The effects are seen across the CCS, including cultural heritage sites and institutions, but the conditions and possible solutions may differ between sub-sectors.

² European Commission – for more information about *A European Green Deal - Striving to be the first climate-neutral continent* and initiatives and legislation within this framework, several of which are relevant to the CCS, visit: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

³ European Commission – for more general information by the Commission on the energy crisis, please visit the website *EU action to address the energy crisis* https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/eu-action-address-energy-crisis_en

⁴ European Commission – for more information about RepowerEU, please visit: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/repowerEU-affordable-secure-and-sustainable-energy-europe_sv

III. CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ENERGY PERFORMANCE

On 14 October 2020, the European Commission presented its Renovation Wave Strategy. Among its aims one finds to protect the right of everyone to have affordable, liveable, accessible and healthy housing while safeguarding cultural heritage and respect for aesthetics and architectural quality, where renovation must respect design, craftsmanship, heritage and public space conservation principles⁵.

The OMC report ‘Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change’⁶ addresses the issue of the energy performance of cultural heritage. It states that there is a lack of methods that realistically assess the energy efficiency potential in large stocks of historic buildings to contribute to regional planning and national and EU strategies. Current software assessment systems which concentrate on the notional energy performance of the building fabric fail to include an assessment of the actual energy used, the contribution of the embodied, or grey, energy in an existing building and the whole-life-cycle assessment of the building’s performance.

⁵ European Commission – for more information about *Renovation Wave*, visit: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficient-buildings/renovation-wave_en

⁶ OMC report *Strengthening cultural heritage resilience for climate change* <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4bfcf605-2741-11ed-8fa0-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

The report adds that energy efficiency improvements such as stopping air leakage and improving heating and cooling efficiency, and other system approaches, can often be used in historic buildings. However, it states that based on the draft proposals of the Energy performance of buildings directive (EPBD) revision⁷, it seems important to insist on the possibility to keep exceptions for buildings with heritage value including those owned by public authorities, whatever the percentage targeted by the legislation.

The revision of the EPBD contains two articles that concern cultural heritage buildings: article 5(2) on Minimum energy performance requirements (former article 4(2)) and article 9(5) on minimum energy performance standards. Article 4(2) of the currently applicable text foresees possible exemptions for protected buildings. In the proposal for the new text, article 5(2) foresees possible adaptation for protected buildings, more specifically that “Member States may decide to adapt the requirements [...] to buildings officially protected as part of a designated environment or because of their special architectural or historical merit, in so far as compliance with certain minimum energy performance requirements would unacceptably alter their character or appearance”.

In the proposal for the article 9(5), possible exemption for protected buildings is envisioned: Member States may decide not to apply the minimum energy performance standards [...] to [...] buildings officially protected as part of a designated environment or because of their special architectural or historical merit, in so far as compliance with the standards would unacceptably alter their character or appearance.

⁷ Directive 2010/31/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 on the energy performance of buildings (recast) https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/;ELX_SESSIONID=FZMjThLLzfxmmMCQGp2Y1s2d3Tjwtd8QS3pqdkhXZbwqGwlgY9KN!2064651424?uri=CELEX:32010L0031

The European Parliament agreed on the compromise amendment on 14 March 2023 and the trialogues are soon to start.

For the purpose of the EPBD revision, the Commission has conducted an exercise to find the approximate number of buildings which would have the possibility to be exempted from minimum energy performance standards. Through responses from over 20 Member States the Commission found that, on average, already protected buildings constitute around 2-3% of building stocks of the majority of Member States, with some exceptions of Member States having larger share. It was furthermore assumed that roughly 5 to 10% of the entire EU building stock is protected or likely to be protected in the near future after Member States review and extend their numbers.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EU AND MEMBER STATES' SUPPORT MEASURES

EU INSTRUMENTS AND PROGRAMMES

The Energy Efficiency Directive sets rules and obligations for achieving the EU's 2020 and 2030 energy efficiency targets⁸. In addition, the Commission presented a communication in May 2022 entitled EU 'Save Energy'⁹. For renewable energy, EU legislation and additional measures, such as support mechanisms, are in place¹⁰.

⁸ Directive 2012/27/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on energy efficiency, amending Directives 2009/125/EC and 2010/30/EU and repealing Directives 2004/8/EC and 2006/32/EC (revised in 2021) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32012L0027>

⁹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, EU 'Save Energy' <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2022%3A240%3AFIN&qid=1653033053936>

¹⁰ For more information, visit: https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/renewable-energy/renewable-energy-directive-targets-and-rules_en

The EU's Just Transition Mechanism (JTM) provides targeted support to help mobilise around €55 billion over the period 2021-2027 in the most affected regions, to alleviate the socio-economic impact of the transition towards a climate-neutral economy. It includes supporting regions affected by transition to climate neutrality¹¹. There is also a Temporary Crisis Framework for State Aid amended to support fuel switching¹².

The Creative Europe Programme (2021-2027) states in its legal basis that the programme is to contribute to the mainstreaming climate actions and to the achievement of the overall 30% target for Union's budget spent on supporting climate objectives. As a result, specific requirements for project applications to mainstream environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation have been included in most of the Culture strand calls¹³.

¹¹ European Commission – for more information about *Just Transition Mechanism*, visit: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal/finance-and-green-deal/just-transition-mechanism_en

¹² European Commission – for more information about *Temporary Crisis Framework for State Aid*, visit: https://competition-policy.ec.europa.eu/state-aid/ukraine_en

¹³ Examples within the Culture strand are the call for Circulation of European literary works, the call for European Platforms for the promotion of emerging artists, the call for European Networks of Cultural and Creative Organisations, the call for European Cooperation projects, as well as the call for Pan-European cultural entities where the European Green Deal is consistently referenced as policy framework and the role of the CCS in the green transition and the fight against climate change is emphasised. Similarly, the 2022 call to support the implementation of the European Heritage Label includes as one of its cross-cutting priorities the contribution to the green transition. In their proposals, applicants to the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) initiative need to consider city development aspects, and more and more frequently include sustainable considerations in their bidding documents.

DIRECT SUPPORT/FUNDING

One way for Member States to support the CCS during the energy crisis has been, and continues to be, to include them in general support schemes for public institutions and private actors in all sectors – there are cases of extra encouragement and support where cultural institutions can apply to more general funds. The funding could take the form of pure compensation, funding indexation or the freezing of energy bills, or be directed to support rapid energy-saving work on public or other buildings, such as installing intelligent thermostats (for example based on the number of persons present in the room), purchasing heat pumps, changing boilers, adding insulation, switching to LED lighting, etc., as well as more long-term investments. There are also cases of national eco-labels that can be awarded to CCS actors and that can affect future funding.

Another possibility that has been used is to offer targeted support specifically to the CCS (public institutions and/or other cultural actors) in the face of rising energy prices and costs, with subsidies, also sometimes conditioned here as regards short- or long-term investments, and also for example on the condition of presenting sustainability concepts with measures for circular economy.

The targeted support to the CCS can be channelled through the culture budget, but also Recovery and Resilience Plans can play an important part in this support – also for capacity building for cultural operators to manage the digital and green transition. There have also been examples of greater flexibility in general support conditions to cultural actors and institutions.

In addition, the drawing up of action plans for energy saving among cultural institutions and the use of energy consultants have been encouraged, and there have also been examples of support to performing arts institutions to pool, reuse and recycle resources needed for performances.

Another form of support that has been used is an interest-free energy loan that has been granted for installing photovoltaic installations and battery storage.

PUBLIC SECTOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY TARGETS, INCLUDING IN THE CCS

Several Member States have general guidelines for energy efficiency in the public sector, with goals set for the reduction of electricity consumption. One of the measures used here is to lower the indoor temperature in public buildings (or raise the threshold for starting cooling measures), with possible adaptations to the nature of cultural institutions' activities, such as collection care or conditions for the performing arts.

Other measures relate to light saving (indoor and outdoor decorative lighting), mandatory working from home during specific periods, energy-efficient installations and building energy audits as well as the appointment of energy saving officers. There are also wider plans for the reduction of energy, water and material consumption, and greenhouse gas emissions, targeting buildings, equipment, fleets, and infrastructures.

CONSULTATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE-SHARING

Some Member States have launched consultations with the cultural sector in order to better understand the possible effects of demands on energy saving (for example the compatibility with COVID-19 air quality standards) and there are also cases of compilations by governments of good practices and green auditing tools that the CCS can make use of.

The dialogue with the sector could also be viewed in the wider context of the green transition. With the Commission initiative New European Bauhaus, a new framework for interdisciplinary creation connects the European Green Deal to our living spaces and experiences, with the keywords ‘beautiful’, ‘sustainable’ and ‘together’, including principles, prizes and project funding that could encourage and highlight good practices, not least in the CCS¹⁴.

Also, more general awareness-raising campaigns have been initiated (recognising that on the one hand the CCS have a potential to raise awareness on climate change and ecology, on the other hand they also need to transform themselves in an ecological and sustainable way).

Recommendations have also been made by some Member States regarding the assessment and improvement of the energy status of cultural heritage buildings, including, for example, the installation of solar panels on roofs of historic buildings. An example of state-level contribution to knowledge-building is a centre for the collection and re-use of historic building materials, complemented by the establishment of a laboratory testing innovative materials and new technological solutions for different types of historic buildings.

¹⁴ For more information about New European Bauhaus, visit: https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en

There have also been test projects on thermal modernisation of cultural and artistic education institutions, initiated by the state level and partly financed by European Cohesion Funds, and studies on systems for the production of energy and/or the recovery and redistribution of rainwater in cultural heritage sites. In addition, there have been examples of research grants for energy efficiency measures.

V. FUTURE MEASURES

As part of the stocktaking exercise, Member States were asked to indicate what measures could be taken in the future in order to support the CCS in coping with the energy crisis and in finding new solutions, in the context of the green transition, on national and European level.

NATIONAL LEVEL

Among the answers received, some put focus on the importance of breaking the silos, and to include expertise for example from Ministries other than those for culture, from local administrations and from higher education institutions. The need was identified to better map the sector, also on regional and local level, to better understand its challenges and needs, and to include equality and fairness perspectives.

The possibility was raised to include, where appropriate, funding criteria related to energy usage reduction and greening measures, or to in other ways, for example through certification or supporting using consultancy, promote innovative technologies used in cultural institutions.

Reversing the focus, also the importance of the state level and its institutions to act as role models was highlighted, for example regarding applying the principles of green architecture from design to building demolition, throughout the life cycle, to reduce carbon emissions.

Some Member States specifically highlighted the possibility to look further at culture’s educational and transformative function, or to focus on cultural heritage and its specificities and challenges in relation to climate standards – for example, how to measure heritage sites’ long-term energy “life cycle” balance.

EUROPEAN LEVEL

Among the answers received, the possibility was raised to aggregate knowledge and initiatives on national level to the European level. For example, to create a network between national “one-stop shops” (contact points gathering expertise, knowledge, data collection, advice and resources on the green transformation in the CCS), or to develop a CO2 calculation standard on EU level, following national standardisation initiatives. There was also interest expressed regarding how the Davos Quality System could be implemented EU-wide.

The current greening of the Creative Europe Programme was welcomed with hopes for a continuation and a monitoring of its progress.

Several Member States raised the need for ways to share information, for example on relevant legal obligations under EU and national law, but also on best practice on innovative measures for state-run cultural institutions and CCS actors.

Thus, the possibility of an OMC group on the topic of stimulating the green transition of the CCS was welcomed by Member States.

The work of such a group could, according to the input by the Member States, contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and take forward the work on issues related to earlier relevant OMC groups' reports, such as "Strengthening Cultural Heritage Resilience for Climate Change". The work of the group could also find synergies with possible future workshops.

Thematically, there was a wish for the group to focus on (innovative solutions in) cultural policy measures, institutional measures (including on green mobility and sustainable audience patterns), capacity building, research and awareness-raising, as well as the importance of breaking the silos between the CCS and other sectors – not least through expertise from different actors (including European cultural networks and other civil society stakeholders) and sectors.

The possibility of the group mapping existing funds and other resources at national and EU level to support the CCS green transformation was also raised.
