

European Creative Hubs Campus Event
Speech by Commissioner Tibor Navracsics

Brussels, 24 January 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be here with you today.

Creative hubs and similar places show the key role of culture and education in building strong, inclusive communities.

I am deeply impressed by examples such as the hub in Bosnia and Herzegovina that runs 3D-printing and coding workshops for school-pupils on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Another great example is the Warehouse in Italy, which has been running programmes enabling young unemployed people to pick up new skills in the cultural and creative industries by learning from peers. Entrepreneurial education and crowdfunding activities are also organised on this hub's premises to help these young people start their own projects.

Some of these creative spaces give new life to the talents of older people, enabling them to pass on their skills to the younger generations, as well as to refugees – skills otherwise neglected or forgotten, such as woodworking or knitting.

There are so many excellent examples. Last month, at the Culture Forum in Milan, we heard about the Athens creative hub, directly engaged in activities fostering social inclusion in its neighborhood. And creative hubs can also pioneer new forms of work, as the collaborative time-bank model proposed by a hub in Zaragoza clearly shows.

In spite of the economic recovery, finding a job still remains a challenge for many people, in particular young people. I admire you for finding innovative ways to involve people in the collaborative economy.

I am also happy to see that you have been engaging with the EU Policy Lab in the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, our in-house science and knowledge management service. Creative hubs can play a role in preparing young people for a changing labour market and new forms of work. Your experience is valuable in helping us design better policies to make the most of this potential.

The cultural and creative industries are crucial in driving economic and social development: knowledge-intensive and based on individual creativity and talent, they generate considerable economic wealth and shape European identity, culture and values. They generate above-average growth and create jobs – in particular for young people – while strengthening social cohesion.

By being creative and flexible, these industries can more easily adapt to changing circumstances and even show the way for other sectors. Creative hubs thus play an important role for prototyping new and innovative solutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2018 is a very special year as we are celebrating the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

This is an excellent opportunity to promote and strengthen cultural heritage as a source of inspiration and innovation. A chance to highlight the potential for stronger interaction between the cultural heritage sector and other cultural and creative sectors.

Cultural and creative industries can play an important role in giving new meaning to cultural heritage: by giving new uses to heritage buildings, by reviving “intangible” heritage like music or ways of preparing food, or by re-packaging and re-casting heritage in new stories and new contexts.

With the evolution of European society, part of our industrial, religious and military heritage has lost its original function. But instead of demolishing these buildings or simply letting them slowly fall apart, we can give these sites a new lease of life through smart restoration, renovation or transformation.

In this way, their social and economic value increases, while their cultural or historical significance is respected. Transformed into new enterprises, creative hubs or even tourist attractions bring economic and social dynamism to their cities and regions. There are a number of such examples in your network.

That is why one of the ten EU initiatives we are launching as part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage will promote smart ways to transform Europe’s industrial, religious and military heritage for new uses. We want to show that this kind of transformation can drive development in European cities and regions.

To support this, we will bring together heritage experts, architects and local policy-makers so that they can share their experiences and develop ideas on how to best keep this part of our heritage alive through re-use.

Many of your creative hubs are actually located in industrial or other heritage sites; I therefore count on you to help us promote the European Year of Cultural Heritage. Showcasing creative hubs and how they give a new meaning to old buildings and fill them – and the communities around them – with new life is exactly what we need.

I am proud that Creative Europe allows us to support creative hubs and other valuable projects in the field of culture. Before I conclude, I would like to say few words on the future of the Creative Europe programme after 2020.

We want an ambitious programme with ambitious goals, a programme with substantially more funding.

This is crucial to allow us to fully reap all the benefits that cultural cooperation across borders can bring to our economies and to our societies.

We must ensure that the new programme builds on the strengths of the current one, which is working well. The current programme’s overarching objectives remain broadly valid, supporting cultural diversity and the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors. Yet there is a need for further integration and expansion.

Our intention is to streamline and scale up some actions, whilst creating synergies with other programmes. Our ultimate ambition is to create an environment that enables us to keep supporting the development of all the cultural and creative sectors. This is particularly relevant given the significant impact of digitisation, globalisation and fragmentation of the European markets along national or linguistic lines.

We have just launched a public consultation on the future EU budget, including in the area of culture. It is open until 8 March and it is very important that you take this opportunity to make your voice heard.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Culture is not a niche area. At their meeting in Gothenburg in November of last year, European Heads of State and Government agreed that education and culture can strengthen people's sense of belonging and being part of a cultural community. They agreed that we should choose culture as a driver of our progress.

I am proud that their discussion was based on a bold vision of our cooperation in culture that was put forward by the European Commission. I will now take this work forward, for example with a proposal for a reinforced European Agenda for Culture.

Culture has a vital part to play in building inclusive, fair and resilient societies – and a better Europe for the future. Let us work together to ensure we make the most of this potential.

I wish you all very fruitful discussions today and many more innovative ventures for the future. Thank you.

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NETWORK



Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union