

11 European cultural policy and climate action

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Introduction

Three interrelated developments – climate change, biodiversity loss and growing pollution – pose an existential risk to the natural world on which human health and well-being depend.

Climate change is unprecedented, widespread, rapid and intensifying, as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has warned. Already, extreme weather and climate disasters are wreaking havoc on ecosystems, economies and people around the world. Immediate, rapid and large-scale reductions in greenhouse gas emissions such as CO₂ and methane are essential to limit further warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Even then, some of the changes observed, such as continued sea level rise, will be irreversible for hundreds if not thousands of years.

Climate change is interconnected with accelerating biodiversity loss and environmental pollution. Partly as a result of climate change, biodiversity (the diversity within species, between species and within ecosystems) is declining faster than at any other time in history. One million of the world's estimated eight million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction, and extinction rates are accelerating. At the same time, the loss of healthy oceans, forests, wetlands, peat bogs and other ecosystems contributes to further climate change. Environmental pollution – pollution of air, water and soil – compounds both biodiversity loss and climate change. As these three global emergencies are intertwined, all three must be addressed simultaneously. Together they constitute, in the fitting words of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, a “code red for humanity”.

Addressing three such worldwide crises concurrently, effectively and in ways that respect social, international and intergenerational justice is a task of unparalleled complexity. On the positive side, the science is clear, and the fact that the world's leading scientists agree about the nature, scale and urgency of the problems is hugely encouraging. So is the commitment of millions of activists, epitomised by Greta Thunberg's inspiring leadership, to a greener, healthier and more just world. Thousands of smaller and larger businesses and organisations are taking steps to green their performance, as

are many local, regional and national governments. The EU has pledged to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030, compared to 1990 levels, and to cut them to net zero by 2050. The targets apply at aggregate, European level, but leave each EU government free to set its own pace. The European Commission also proposed a law to restore nature.

These are precious signs of hope and their importance should not be underestimated. But is also true to say that overall, society's pace in addressing climate change and related threats has been uneven and insufficient. Poverty and the concern to make ends meet restrict many people's capacity to adopt a greener lifestyle; affluence and ingrained habits limit other people's readiness. And all too often, decisive political leadership is lacking, as electoral considerations outweigh political willingness to address seemingly long-term problems. Current national policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions will result in disastrous warming of at least 3°C by 2100 (UNDP 2021). A greater sense of urgency is clearly needed.

Climate change affects all life on the planet. It is the single biggest threat to human health and security today, and all of society will need to make an effort to address it. The cultural sector, too, needs to be fully involved. Although other sectors contribute more to greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and biodiversity loss, culture's share is far from negligible. Each European feature film, for example, adds on average 192 tons of CO₂ to the climate burden. (Gassmann and Gouttefarde 2021, p. 7) Book production contributes to deforestation, chemical effluents and emissions. Cultural festivals, museums, heritage sites and art galleries also have a significant carbon footprint, including as a result of attendee travel. The entertainment and media sector (gaming, streaming, TV, etc.) accounts for 1.2% of global emissions and 3% of global electricity production. (Malmodin and Lundén 2018) Additional carbon emissions, waste and pollution are caused by downstream usage, such as distribution and end-user (consumer) apps.

This chapter will explore how cultural practitioners and policy-makers can be part of the solution. The first section looks at public policy: are cultural and climate policies joined up? The second section examines cultural climate mitigation and adaptation. The discussion then turns to culture's contribution to public awareness and empowerment. The fourth section discusses the role of the European Union. A final section concludes.

Policy and practice

To combat climate change, companies and institutions must reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and manage the risks of a changing climate (adaptation). This means they must mainstream climate mitigation and adaptation across the material, digital and human dimensions of their work. In the cultural field, these tasks are proving challenging. Although many international umbrella associations endorse the need for climate action, their national members often struggle to implement the guidance.

The heritage sector is a case in point. Tangible cultural heritage is at risk of climate-induced flooding, rainfall, moisture, drought, fires, landslides, pests, mould, fungus and ecosystem degradation. Much intangible heritage (including the knowledge, traditions and stories of rural populations) is similarly endangered. But heritage institutions and policy-makers have sometimes been slow to respond. Szántó and Schell warn: “as one strolls through the world’s galleries, art fairs, and museums, this shared emergency hardly stands out as a core concern” (Szántó and Schell 2021). Heritage expert Andrew Potts concurs: “we still have too many cultural institutions, too many libraries, archives, museums and heritage site that are doing business as usual” (Potts 2021). In climate-conscious Sweden, researchers found, most local and regional authorities have barely begun to focus on climate-related threats to cultural heritage. (Antonson et al. 2021) An EU-funded research project – perhaps somewhat starkly – even sees a “broken link” between cultural heritage and the environment (SOPHIA 2021).

Similar findings are reported from the audiovisual industry and other cultural subsectors. In the audiovisual industry, an EU study concludes, people are “not always aware of these issues and ... too little is done to come up with long term solutions and emergency routines” (Gassmann and Gouttefarde 2021, p. 23). In the visual arts, Scottish researchers note, “not all organisations have considered the impact climate change has already had on their practice, and what effects it will have in the future” (Creative Carbon Scotland 2019).

Elsewhere in Europe, similarly, progress has been uneven. One report notes that “Few Dutch cultural organisations work with an integral sustainability policy” (Boekmanstichting and Bureau 8080 2020). The urgency is “understood, but not sufficiently internalized” (Schrijen 2022). A major French report, *The Shift Project*, published in 2021, that proposed ways to decarbonise the visual arts, live spectacles, publishing and the cinema sectors, was met with scepticism across the spectrum. (Girard 2021). What could explain this relatively slow uptake of climate mitigation and adaptation in the cultural domain? One important factor is the relative silence about the issue in public policy.

In cultural policy, requirements for climate action remain quite rare (Knol et al. 2022; *Julie’s Bicycle* 2021, p. 8). Within national screen policy, for example, researchers observe a “near absence of environmental adaptation” (Sorensen and Noonan 2021). A recent international survey found that there are as yet few public programmes for the arts to reduce their environmental impact, or to provide the necessary training. Instead, public investment remains directed at traditional activities such as programming, commissions, collaboration and the role of arts as communication. In fact, most responding arts councils, cultural ministries and public arts development agencies reported that they lack a formal mandate to address climate or environmental issues (*Julie’s Bicycle* 2021). Even in France, where cultural policy is held in

high regard, climate and the environment are not a transversal priority of the Ministry of Culture (The Shift Project 2021, p. 8). A similar situation exists at local level. A 2021 survey of major European and non-European cities found that only 23% of culture departments saw environmental issues as a priority (World Cities Culture Forum 2021, p. 10).

Conversely, environmental policy-makers have not paid much attention to culture either. Climate policy naturally focuses on areas that produce most greenhouse gas emissions, such as transport and construction. The cultural and creative sectors still play a marginal role. Art, heritage and the creative industries also barely figure in the Sustainable Development Goals, the world's holistic roadmap to a more equitable and sustainable future. Nor, as will be discussed later, did the European Union include culture in its well-financed Green Deal. Despite the EU's promise of a holistic approach to climate change, environmental policy-makers and cultural policy-makers still tend to operate in separate silos with limited interaction.

Such fragile policy consistency causes problems on the ground. It results, first of all, in a lack of European standards, and by implication a lack of standardised and comparable data. There are no binding European standards for measuring, reducing and reporting CO₂ emissions in cultural institutions. Museum directors, film makers, festival organisers, visual art producers and other cultural actors are largely left to their own devices. This is more than a methodological problem: it also affects the bottom line. Action to cut emissions, reduce pollution and protect biodiversity comes at a price. Post-COVID many cultural institutions struggle to balance their books. Will cultural producers invest unreservedly in climate mitigation, knowing that their competitors elsewhere in the EU may not? And in the absence of reliable, cross-sectoral data, how will the EU be able to tell which cultural sectors are performing well, and which others may need additional support?

Better integration of climate action into cultural policy would bring other benefits, such as more systematic and effective skills development. Many cultural practitioners are eager to contribute to a greener future but feel insecure and often lack the time to build their skill set on their own. Relevant academic literature can be difficult to find and/or to access. The EU's new Creative Pact for Skills is a good starting point, but more targeted national support would clearly be welcome.

Although the public sector can and should do more, it is not solely responsible for culture's uneven contribution to climate action. European philanthropic foundations, which play an important supporting role in cultural funding, are still allocating less than 2% of their total giving to climate change mitigation (Roeyer et al. 2021, p. 2). Academic research into the relationship between climate and culture is in its infancy. Ingrained habits in the cultural sector, such as an occasional aloofness to political and social issues, also play a role. And sometimes people simply feel overwhelmed. In Scotland, researchers noticed a general air of apathy and resignation among

visual arts practitioners: some saw the challenges as too big to tackle, given the lack of resources and finance that arts organisations traditionally experience (Creative Carbon Scotland 2019, p. 2).

Notwithstanding these problems, there are welcome signs of change, as the next section will discuss.

Mitigation and adaptation

Cultural climate action as witnessed in Europe takes various forms. Principal categories include declarations of intent, publication of guidance and toolkits, concrete steps to reduce emissions and waste and initiatives to support climate action around the world. Although a comprehensive discussion would exceed the confines of this chapter, some prominent examples may serve by means of illustration.

Certain cultural networks have opted for public declarations of intent. Signatories of the international Creative Industries Pact for Sustainable Action, for example, have pledged to enact a sustainability strategy, including metrics to quantify, track and report on resource consumption and emissions. They also commit to the reduction and efficient use of energy and materials, to prioritise the consumption of low-carbon foods, and to “influence” supply chain and procurement decisions. Partners in the Climate Heritage Network pledged to support arts, culture and heritage offices and agencies to understand their role in deep decarbonisation pathway planning, to scale innovative policy solutions, provide learning opportunities, build metrics and indicators and connect cultural actors to experts and government peers. The Music Climate Pact similarly contains a number of high-level commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ignite broader societal action on the climate crisis. Members are invited to sign up to “science-based targets” or the UN’s Race to Zero campaign, with its target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

Some networks have gone a step further. The 46 theatres in the European Theatre Convention have pledged to become climate-neutral already by 2030. Nine other networks, including the International Network for Contemporary Performing Arts (IETM), the European Music Council and Trans Europe Halles, agreed to not only develop general guidelines but also have the results independently certified, albeit only at the level of the platform organisations.

Numerous organisations, think tanks and individual experts have published detailed climate guidance by means of toolkits, roadmaps and “how to” guides. Part of this material is sector-specific, other guidance is thematic. Sector-specific climate action toolkits and roadmaps are available, *inter alia*, for museums (Curating Tomorrow), art galleries (Gallery Climate Coalition), theatres (Green Book), festivals and events (Eurocities/Julie’s Bicycle), the live music sector (Tyndall Centre), visual arts (Julie’s Bicycle) and fashion (Ellen MacArthur Foundation). Various thematic guides to reduce waste, save

energy and cut pollution are available from consultancies such as KI (Netherlands) and Julie's Bicycle (UK). The Green Web Foundation offers ideas for greening websites and digital supply chains. These toolkits are mostly concerned with climate change mitigation. Suggestions for adaptation have been published by Cultural Adaptations, an EU-sponsored project.

Inspiring as this material can be, it does not generally address the question how to measure results. Cultural institutions and companies need to know how they can measure reductions in CO₂ emissions. In the absence of European standards, various parallel, voluntary schemes have been developed at national as well as sectoral level. Arts Council England has pioneered this approach. Since 2012, it has made environmental reporting supported by Julie's Bicycle's carbon calculators a funding requirement for around 800 cultural organisations. The conditionality may not have been popular but it yielded results: by 2018 recipients reported a 35% reduction in carbon emissions and 23% in energy consumption, resulting in £16.5 million savings in energy costs (Arts Council England 2019). In 2020, Germany created a national network on sustainability in culture and the media; in 2022, it launched a pilot project to test a carbon calculator in 19 cultural institutions. The Netherlands has its (multisectoral) Envirometer. Sectoral carbon footprint calculators exist for galleries (GCC Carbon Calculator), the French music industry (IMPACT(S), German audiovisual producers (Green Shooting), the British film industry (Albert), the French film industry (EcoProd) and the Austrian film industry (Lower Austrian Film Commission). Additionally, some agencies have developed their own method, such as Europeana. Some sectors also make use of environmental certification schemes such as ISO-14001 or BREEAM for buildings. Anecdotal evidence suggests that growing numbers of cultural institutions and companies are applying these instruments, but in the absence of EU-wide statistics, it is difficult to assess the extent or the impact on carbon footprints.

In addition to signing statements of intent, issuing guidance and experimenting with carbon calculators, some cultural actors support partners in the global South, usually in the form of capacity-building, mobility projects or award schemes. ICCROM runs a multi-level capacity-building project (Net Zero) in five risk-prone countries, using heritage to help mitigate climate change. The Danish Cultural Institute, the Goethe Institut, the Institut Français and other national cultural institutes sometimes finance environmental projects outside the EU, as does their umbrella organisation EUNIC, which has encouraged its members to integrate the global Sustainable Development Goals into their work. The Dutch *Prince Claus Fund* supports individual artists and cultural professionals working on environmental and other matters in Africa, Asia and Latin America. By and large, however, climate change is not a prominent theme in international cultural cooperation.

As this cursory overview indicates, encouraging climate-related initiatives are being developed across the arts, heritage and creative industries. Although the trend is upwards, much work remains to be done, particularly in respect of impact measurement, transparent reporting and institutional cooperation.

First, impact measurement remains a challenge: the various carbon calculators differ with regard to composition and methodology, and some, such as those for the digital sector, do not reflect a scientific consensus. The proliferation of calculators also does not facilitate cross-sector comparisons or identification of best practices. Are the right things being measured, and are they being measured right? Second, there is a need for greater transparency about results. How many galleries, museums, creative companies, festivals, theatres and heritage sites are following up on their associations' pledges and statements of intent? How many are implementing the various guides, toolkits and certification schemes, and to what effect? Few cultural entities publicly report the impact of their climate-related policies, and independent, external evaluations are rare. Greater openness would facilitate mutual learning. Third, results are rarely aggregated at cross-sectoral, national or European level. This too makes it difficult for cultural practitioners and policy-makers to compare experiences, draw lessons and identify best practices. To know what works, where, and why, findings would have to be shared more frequently across institutional boundaries.

Awareness and empowerment

In addition to greening itself, the cultural sector has an equally important role to play in terms of public communication. Major change is needed in the way we work, travel, shop, eat, relax and vote, and such extensive cultural transformation can only succeed if it is rooted in public support. It is not enough for institutions to fight climate change; each and every one of us will need to lend a hand. And there is much that artists and other cultural professionals can do to help change people's hearts, minds and behaviour.

This is why the cultural sector figures prominently in international policy for climate awareness and empowerment. The UN Work Programme of Action for Climate Empowerment explicitly invites cultural institutions and other stakeholders to play a "key role" in education, training, public awareness, public participation, public access to information and international cooperation on climate change. Governments are asked to include cultural events such as festivals in their climate communication campaigns. The Council of Europe has also called upon the creative skills of artists and cultural workers to promote the behavioural changes needed to address climate change. So have the culture ministers of the G20.

In some respects, governments have been pushing at an open door. Artists, curators and cultural administrators have been profoundly affected by the climate crisis and the unprecedented damage inflicted on the natural world, and many have already responded critically and imaginatively. Climate-related projects have proliferated particularly in the narrative, visual and performing arts. A comparative analysis of recent projects identified five partially overlapping orientations. Some projects focus on fostering dialogue and transdisciplinary networks between artists, scientist and society. Other initiatives aim at finding practical solutions, envisioning imaginative futures, or creating

climate-related science fiction. Most climate art projects (around half) were found to focus on awareness raising by visualising planetary change, and on addressing the emotions caused by climate change like grief, loss, sadness, hopelessness and trauma (Galafassi et al. 2018).

Prize-winning novelist Ben Okri spoke for many when he voiced his personal distress. In an article published during the 2021 Glasgow climate summit (COP 26) Okri urged artists to imagine the end of time. “Of the things that troubles me most, the human inability to imagine its end ranks very high. ...How else can one explain the refusal of ordinary, good-hearted citizens to face the realities of climate change?” For Okri this means that

everything I write should be directed to the immediate end of drawing attention to the dire position we are in as a species. ... I must write now as if these things are the last things I will write, that any of us will write. It means that writing must have no frills. It should speak only truth. In it, the truth must be also beauty.

(Okri 2021)

Textile artist Sandra Sawatzky shares Okri’s sense of apprehension. Her narrative embroidery “The Age of Uncertainty” consists of twelve large panels, each of which focuses on an uncertainty that, in Sawatzky’s words, “keeps us up at night”. The panels address climate change, war, nuclear threat, income inequity, debt, workplace/employment, corruption, electronic surveillance, artificial intelligence, over-population, the non-ethical use of science and technology and over-exploitation of resources (Sullivan 2021). Much climate-related eco-poetry similarly evokes a sense of existential dread and foreboding. Johns-Putra notes that “lament is by far the most dominant tone of climate change poetry” (Johns-Putra 2016).

Such apocalyptic art forms can help to raise awareness of the seriousness of climate change. They also enable an exploration and sharing of powerful emotions which may alleviate eco-anxiety and climate trauma. It is less clear, however, to what extent such projects also facilitate the behavioural changes needed to fight climate change. In fact, there is mounting evidence that messaging aimed at provoking fear and anxiety may backfire: rather than empowering people to take action, it can result in denial, resignation and apathy (Burke et al. 2018). Nor does dystopic messaging tend to convince climate sceptics, who have been shown to be particularly resistant to fear and guilt appeals (Moser and Dilling 2011). This is not to say that art forms should avoid appealing to emotions; the mere transmission of factual information about climate change rarely triggers personal change. But empathy alone does not suffice. Climate change art that opens a perspective on solutions, emphasising the beauty and interconnectedness of nature, may be more promising in encouraging action (Sommer and Klöckner 2021).

Let us take a closer look at how this could be done. What would a perspective on solutions entail, and what role could art and culture play?

A positive perspective, researchers have found, helps to lower two of the main psychological barriers to climate-friendly behavioural change. Climate change can be a frightening notion and people may respond by putting some distance between themselves and the issues. The threat may be interpreted as remote and abstract: “it does not affect me personally”. Weak efficacy beliefs also discourage some from taking action: “the little I could do would not make any difference”.

Artists are increasingly experimenting with ways to counter the sense of remoteness. Some artists exhibited climate works in the streets of Paris instead of in an art institution. This made the artworks more accessible and open to people who are not used to visiting galleries and museums (Sommer and Klöckner 2021). Another notable example is Shaunak Sen’s film *All that breathes*, which tells the story of two Indian brothers who create a rescue centre for black kites, wild birds suffering from Delhi’s toxic air pollution. The film (winner of the World Cinema Grand Jury prize) invites viewers to connect emphatically with a global theme through the eyes of its protagonists.

Toxic air pollution is not only a problem in Delhi or Beijing; it is also the single largest environmental health risk in Europe. In 2019, more than 260,000 people in the EU died prematurely as a result of heart disease, stroke, lung diseases and lung cancer attributed to air pollution (European Environmental Agency 2021). British researchers have warned that air pollution is also likely to increase the risk of dementia. Worldwide, air pollution causes over 6.5 million deaths each year. The problem is compounded by plastic pollution: microplastics, which contaminate the entire planet from the Arctic to the oceans, have recently been detected in the blood and lungs of living people.

Air pollution is closely linked to climate change. The main cause of CO₂ emissions – extraction and burning of fossil fuels – is also a major source of air pollutants. At the same time, many air pollutants contribute to global warming by affecting the amount of sunlight in the atmosphere. Visual, narrative and performing arts projects and exhibitions can be instrumental in raising awareness about the impact on people’s personal health and well-being, thus lowering the barrier to climate action.

However, changing minds is one thing; changing behaviour is another. Many of us do not believe that changing our own behaviour, individually or collectively, would have an impact on climate change. What can culture do to narrow the gap between people’s attitudes and acts? (Venghaus et al. 2022). How can art empower as well as inform?

One way could be to connect with public concerns about pollution-induced hazards to human health. Researchers find that health framings resonate with different groups and work particularly well in supporting behaviour change (UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy 2021). The world is producing twice as much plastic waste as two decades ago, and OECD countries account for 35% of global microplastics leakage. Only 9% of plastic waste is successfully recycled, a recent OECD report shows (OECD

2022a). Artist-led community projects to reduce and recycle plastic waste could help to change the tide.

Artistic projects focusing on local communities could also be instrumental in empowering people to adapt their lifestyles. Contrary to widespread belief individual lifestyle changes do matter; in fact they are critical to mitigating climate change. The latest IPCC report compared 60 socio-cultural and lifestyle changes that could accelerate climate change mitigation. Six steps have the highest mitigation potential: car-free mobility and adoption of electric mobility, reducing air travel, cooling setpoint adjustments, reduced appliance use, shifts to public transit, and shifting consumption towards plant-based diets (IPCC 2022). In the EU food consumption is the main driver of negative environmental impacts generated by households, followed by housing (especially space heating) and mobility (particularly the use of private cars (European Commission, Joint Research Centre 2019). We can each make a meaningful difference by changing the way we travel, use electricity, eat and drink.

The problem is, of course, that changing our behaviour is far from easy. Even when we see the need for change and understand how we could contribute, our ingrained social and cultural habits often stand in the way. Reducing meat consumption is a case in point. Europeans consume 1.5 kg of meat a week – twice the global average – and shifting to a plant-based diet goes against ingrained cultural and national traditions. Should Europeans give up on their prosciutto or Jamón Ibérico? When a Spanish minister urged his compatriots to eat less meat, prime minister Sánchez intervened: “Speaking personally, a medium-rare steak is hard to beat”. Overcoming such social pressure is hard. Young people in particular often feel deeply discouraged by government responses (Hickman et al. 2021). All the more reason for artists and other (counter-) cultural professionals to provide inspiration and help us visualise, narrate and share the path.

As discussed, the three global emergencies of pollution, climate change and biodiversity loss are interdependent and must be tackled together. What can cultural practitioners and policy-makers do help protect and improve biodiversity?

Forests, healthy soils, peatlands, wetlands and oceans play a crucial role in capturing and storing carbon dioxide and in limiting the impact of climate change. Protecting, restoring and sustainably managing these and other ecosystems (nature-based solutions) are key to effective climate policies. In fact, biodiversity is nothing short of essential to human life and well-being. Three quarters of food crops depend on pollination by bees and other animals; clean drinking water depends on forests, grasslands, lakes, rivers, soils, aquifers and estuaries; phytoplankton sustains global fish stocks and an estimated 50,000–70,000 plant species are harvested for traditional or modern medicine, to name just some examples. Yet “biodiversity” is often understood as something remote and technical, far removed from our daily concerns, and policies to protect the natural world are frequently – and increasingly – portrayed as a left-wing political hobby.

The EU has so far failed to halt the loss of biodiversity. This is why the European Commission has proposed legally binding targets to reverse the decline of pollinators, restore river areas and floodplains, improve the biodiversity of agro-ecosystems and forests and provide green spaces and tree cover in cities. This bold proposal to restore Europe's natural environment has not yet received the attention it deserves. Artists, galleries, museums and other cultural institutions could be instrumental in raising public awareness and support, individually or in partnership with nature conservation organisations. As the Institute for European Environmental Policy argues, "the EU will not halt the loss of biodiversity until a commitment to do so receives adequate buy-in from outside the biodiversity sector" (Rayment et al. 2018).

Restoring biodiversity, just as reducing pollution and combating climate change, calls for profound socio-cultural change. It involves living from, with, in and as nature. The leading global biodiversity body has found the right (poetic) words.

Living from nature emphasises nature's capacity to provide resources for sustaining livelihoods, needs and wants of people, such as food and material goods. Living with nature has a focus on life "other than human" such as the intrinsic right of fish in a river to thrive independently of human needs. Living in nature refers to the importance of nature as the setting for people's sense of place and identity. Living as nature sees the natural world as a physical, mental and spiritual part of oneself.

(IPBES 2022)

EU policy: towards an integral approach

All three existential crises – climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss – demand action at all levels of society and at all levels of government: local, regional, national, European and global. The EU must play a leading role. It alone has the political, legal and financial power to secure an EU-wide, integral approach. As this chapter has argued, the cultural and creative sectors can play an essential role by greening themselves and by nurturing public awareness and empowerment. Culture must therefore be an integral part of the EU's climate strategy. At the moment it is not, as a closer look at EU policy reveals.

European governments have agreed to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by 55% in 2030 and to be fully climate neutral by 2050. The EU will support this flagship policy with up to €550 billion from its multi-annual budget (2021–2027) and the Next Generation EU instrument. If additional funds from national and private sources are included, total funding for the Green Deal could even amount to a colossal €1 trillion. Yet the cultural and creative sectors will only have access to a minor part.

To the sector's disappointment the Commission did not include spending targets for culture in its proposal for the €750 billion EU Recovery and Resilience Fund. This left EU governments free to decide. Of the 22 national plans endorsed by the Council (by March 2022), only seven contain extra spending for culture (Austria, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Slovakia). A major opportunity to mobilise the cultural and creative sectors for a greener Europe has been missed.

In principle, the cultural and creative sectors have access to 21 separate financial instruments under the regular EU budget, each with its own rules and procedures, but access to the structural funds is restricted to geographical areas covered by the respective instruments, which differ by country.

Under the Creative Europe Programme, €814 million is available for culture in the period 2021–2027 – a fair amount, but less than 0.1% of the overall multi-annual budget (€1.074 billion in 2018 prices). Creative Europe currently supports 22 cultural projects with an environmental focus, such as ACT (Art, Climate and Transition), TAKING CARE (museums) and Green Europe Experience. The EU budget also provides funding via Horizon 2020, which supports several climate-related heritage research projects, and via Erasmus+, but precise amounts for culture have not been earmarked under these programmes.

In 2020, Commission President Von der Leyen called for a New European Bauhaus as part of the EU's drive for a circular economy. She described it as “a co-creation space where architects, artists, students, engineers, designers work together”. Faced with the task to interpret the proposal, one year later the Commission services opted for a co-creation phase with interested parties (European Commission 2021). Although the initiative opens a perspective for cultural projects related to the built environment, the extent to which all cultural and creative sectors will benefit is still unclear. Culture Action Europe protested that culture does not seem to be an equal partner in the NEB. It urged the Commission to include artists, cultural and creative workers from all cultural sectors – also beyond the heritage, design and architecture domains – as well as non-tangible art forms such as digital creation, as key interlocutors and equal partners (Culture Action Europe 2022). A European Parliament study concludes that “there is still a clear gap when it comes to what can be envisaged, defined and represented as NEB” (European Parliamentary Research Service 2022).

Funding, too, remains an issue. Because the New European Bauhaus was not foreseen in the Commission's proposal for the Multi-Annual Financial Framework 2021–2027, its budget has to be assembled annually from various sources. At €85 million (2021–2022), the budget is plainly insufficient for the New European Bauhaus to pass as “the soul of the European Green Deal”, as the Commission President called it.

The problem with current policies runs even deeper. EU cultural policy and EU climate policy still largely operate as separate silos with limited interaction. Synergies are too often left unexplored. No Commissioner takes charge of coordination. The capstone, an integrated approach, is missing.

Due to the lack of a comprehensive approach, inconsistencies between the two policies are left unaddressed. While the environmental arm of the Commission urges citizens, companies and civil society organisations to cut emissions caused by travelling, its cultural counterpart invests in policies to promote the mobility of artists and other cultural professionals (Culture Moves Europe). Leading European cultural associations complain they cannot find funding to green their touring and distribution practices (IETM, EFA, EAIPA, EDN, ETC and Circostrada 2020). The Commission does not collect data on the environmental footprint of Creative Europe, as the Parliament pointed out (Farreng 2020).

An integrated, holistic approach would allow the EU to guide the cultural sector towards common measuring practices, creating order in the chaos of incompatible sectoral and national carbon calculators. It would ensure that culture is included in the Climate Contracts at the heart of the Commission's plan to have 100 climate-neutral cities in the EU by 2030. And it would, at long last, ensure that culture is recognised as a driver of EU development policy to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (De Vries 2019). By uniting Europe's fragmented cultural and creative sectors in a coalition of stakeholders – a Cultural Climate Coalition – the Commission could ensure the necessary support on the ground (De Vries 2021).

The OECD, in a characteristically thorough analysis of the creative economy, came to a clear conclusion. To fully reap the benefits from cultural and creative sectors, it said, governments should “mainstream culture as an integral part of wider policy agendas, such as social cohesion, innovation, health and well-being, the environment and sustainable local development” (OECD 2022b). In view of the urgency of the climate, pollution and biodiversity crises the logical starting point for the EU should be obvious.

Conclusion

Humanity's ecological footprint is unsustainable. The world, as UN Secretary-General Guterres has warned, is on fire. Unless effective steps are taken to cut pollution, restore nature and counter climate change, the damage in terms of loss of life and well-being will be irreversible. The challenge is essentially cultural: we need to fundamentally change the way we think, feel and act. This chapter has explored some of the ways for culture to make a difference.

The difficulties, however, should not be underestimated. Many artists and cultural institutions lead a precarious existence at the best of times and recovery post-COVID has been slow. How realistic is it to expect them to put climate policy at the top of their agenda? Some cultural institutions may find it particularly challenging to reduce their carbon emissions. Most major museums, art galleries and heritage sites depend on foreign visitors and policy-makers actively to promote cultural tourism. To bring down travel-induced carbon emissions, current business models may need revisiting. The film industry faces a similar dilemma: although climate change has been the subject

of documentaries such as Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), studios have been accused of ignoring the theme in feature films for fear of alienating audiences (Barber 2020). Sometimes also cultural characteristics stand in the way. Cultural institutions are not immune to institutional conservatism, and not all artists take an interest in socially engaged art or climate change, or both. Others prefer "performative activism" to impactful audience engagement. And will cultural and environmental policy-makers be ready to end their path dependency – the habit of working largely along separate tracks?

In spite of such difficulties, there is no reason for pessimism. The trend is positive: more and more cultural organisations, artists and institutions are introducing climate policies. Some national governments are breaking down their silos: for the first time Germany's federal culture budget contains a section on culture and climate. EU ministers have created an Open Method of Coordination expert group on culture and sustainable development. Commission President Von der Leyen's New European Bauhaus shows that the EU is capable of thinking out of the box. The missing link, as this chapter has argued, is an integral approach that unites practitioners and policy-makers across the different sectors, both nationally and at EU level. Combating climate change is perhaps the foremost issue of our time. Culture must be part of the journey.

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