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To the European Commission

- *President Ursula VON DER LEYEN*
- *Commissioner Johannes HAHN*

To the European Council, the Council of the European Union and the Member States

- *President Charles MICHEL*
- *Prime Minister Petr FIALA*
- *National Ministers of Finance*
- *National Ministers of Culture*

To our colleagues in the European Parliament

- *Co-Rapporteur Margarida MARQUES*
- *Co-Rapporteur Jan OLBRYCHT*

Brussels, 18 July 2022

Dear Presidents,
Dear Prime Minister,
Dear Commissioner,
Dear Ministers,
Dear Colleagues,

Culture is the backbone of our society and needs political support more than ever. As Commissioner Hahn puts it in the recently published Commission proposal of the 2023 EU budget: “*Culture is and must be at the heart of the European project.*”¹ — We, the members of the Cultural Creators Friendship Group (CCFG), fully agree.

However, we are therefore very concerned that the proposed 2023 annual budget for the Creative Europe programme (325.3 million EUR) means a reduction of 20% compared to the year 2022 (406.5 million EUR).

While we do understand the necessity to stay within the budget allocated to Creative Europe in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), we fear that such a massive budget reduction will bring further harm to the Cultural and Creative Sectors (CCS), which are only slowly starting to blossom again. For our European CCS, the pandemic is by far not over yet. In fact, the long-term consequences of the lockdown will still be felt for years to come. Unfortunately, also the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) turns out to be not too helpful either — calls from the CCS and the European Parliament to earmark at least 2% for culture remain unheard.

It is well-known that the Cultural and Creative Sectors are among those hit the hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic. Cultural venues were the first to be closed and the last to reopen; live

performances were not possible for two years. At the macro-level, the European CCS are an important contributor to the EU's economy, employing about 8.7 million people – approximately 3.8 % of the overall EU employment – and accounting for 4.4 % of the EU's GDP.

Taking into consideration the long-lasting and exceptionally difficult situation of the European Cultural and Creative Sectors as well as their societal, cultural and economic meaning to the European Union, we – the members of the Cultural Creators Friendship Group – call upon you to **adapt the MFF in its mid-term review and increase the overall Creative Europe budget** to allow for a stable continuation of the annual funding and thus avoid any budget reduction.

Kind regards

Rasmus ANDRESEN, Shadow Rapporteur for the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

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Massimiliano SMERIGLIO, Rapporteur for Creative Europe

Salima YENBOU

Marco ZULLO

– Members of the **Cultural Creators Friendship Group*** –

**The Cultural Creators Friendship Group (CCFG) is a group of currently 28 Members of the European Parliament from 6 political groups and 14 different countries. More information at www.CulturalCreators.eu*

¹ Statement of estimates of the European Commission for the financial year 2023 (Preparation of the 2023 Draft Budget), Policy highlights, page 40.