

Challenge 2025

Strategy of the European Cultural Foundation 2020-2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY **AMSTERDAM MANIFESTO FOR EUROPE**

Europe is at a crossroad. Division and polarisation are threatening decades of peace and European cooperation. Inequality is eroding the fabric of our societies. Culture and identity are being misused to divide communities.

Rather than creating solutions, Europe is often seen as part of the problem. We forget why the European Union was created in the first place. At the same time, we find it difficult to formulate a new vision, a new utopia for Europe.

We need to create a true European sentiment, a European sense of purpose, a European sense of belonging. With such sentiment a better Europe is possible, but without it Europe is vulnerable to division and disintegration.

In times of uncertainty and unpredictability, in times when core values are being questioned around the world and even in Europe, confirming and living our values openly is an indispensable compass for action.

We believe in a united and peaceful Europe. We believe in the values of cooperation, sharing and solidarity. We believe in democracy and the rule of law. We believe in the power of human dignity and ingenuity. We believe in diversity and freedom. We believe in the power of hope, curiosity and optimism.

What can culture do? Culture can unite Europe. Culture can create spaces for European experience. Culture can celebrate Europe's diversity. Culture can tell the stories of Europe. Culture can imagine a better Europe beyond pie charts and growth rates. Because Europe needs new utopias. Culture can foster a European public space. Culture can save Europe from navel gazing. Culture can demystify digital technology. And culture can provide an antidote to against extremism and division.

Today's times are challenging times. How can we react to these challenges without being simply reactive? How can we work on the future of Europe while also addressing the actual problems of today? But challenging times are also times of opportunity, they create space and urgency for new thinking. Europe needs imagination.

It is not only what we do but how we do it. We must be both strategic and nimble.

We must think before we do. But then we must do. We will empower others. A minimum of 50% of our budget will go to our partners. We are European, in our beautiful diversity, and we are local. Each of our initiatives, whether at local, national or pan-European level, must have a clear European purpose. We will speak a language people actually understand. We will live diversity and not just talk about it. We will experiment and look out for unconventional ideas and approaches.

We need to work together. Seriously. Anything else would be irresponsible. We are committed to do whatever it takes. Let's be more. Join us in defending European unity and in making Europe a better place. For all of us now and for generations to come.

[#AmsterdamManifesto4Europe](#)

PART I: TAKING STOCK

To understand what the challenges of today's Europe are and what culture and philanthropy can do to address them, the European Cultural Foundation went on a tour throughout Europe. Under the motto "What can culture do?" we organised 14 roundtable meetings in Aarhus, Amsterdam, Berlin, Brussels, Cesis, Lisbon, London, Lund, Milan, Rijeka, The Hague, Paris, Timisoara and Torino including a wide range of people in quite different places and settings. In Amsterdam, the ECF staff day became an essential part of the tour. The following is a summary of the key insights from this European tour. They do not claim to be comprehensive. They are, however, the result of a deliberate and consultative process and a good basis for our future work.

A full report, with all the insights gathered from the tour, is attached (see Annex 1).

What does Europe think?

Climate change, digitalisation, societal polarisation, dangerous levels of inequality, conflict and wars. These are all **global challenges** that determine whether and how we will survive the 21st century. The European post-war model of cooperation and interdependence ought to be a perfect example of how to solve these challenges together. Instead the European model is being openly attacked by other global actors, including former allies. And the Europeans themselves are losing confidence in their own success model.

The world seems upside-down, volatile, unstable, unpredictable. We had grown used to a certain sense of predictability, a sense of what tomorrow would bring. This is all gone. We live in **unpredictable times**. At times like these, one needs to be nimble and quick on one's feet. But Europe, with its complicated structures of cooperation and interdependence, is not best suited to nimble footwork.

There is a growing **polarisation of societies** and at the same time a lack of civilised debate. Nationalism is gaining ground in politics, business and media. Divisive nationalism means putting one's own nation first at the expense of others. This has been the root cause of most of Europe's problems in the past and we seem to have forgotten this.

We also seem to have forgotten why and for what **purpose** the European Union was created in the first place. At the same time, we find it difficult to formulate a new vision, a new utopia for Europe. This memory loss and lack of vision – coupled with egoism, greed and the loss of human dignity – are a big threat to Europe's sense of purpose and its very reason for existing.

There is an increasing separation into echo-chambers of all sorts: physical segregation, rising

inequality, political polarisation. Economic divergence is increasing, and inequalities are visibly rising. Technology is contributing to this trend and is also used systemically to sow anger. **Divisions** are leading to fragmentation between countries and polarisation within societies.

Europe's democratic practice seems unable to deal with the huge number of simultaneous challenges today. Citizens' trust in democratic processes is waning. There is also a persistent threat to the rule of law and liberal **democracies**.

There is a near absence of a truly pan-**European public space**. To make things worse: the public space that does exist has been almost entirely privatised.

Language is still a big barrier for connecting people in Europe. Shared language and understanding are a prerequisite for dealing with different interpretations of history, present and future. And too often we have no idea how to speak to people who have different opinions.

We are faced with **elites** who are failing to address the economic and climate crises or to create a fair system that works for all and not just a few. There is an increasing bitterness among people who do not benefit from the EU and those who do not know how to access its existing opportunities. There is much perceived and real bureaucracy for anyone who wants to work with the EU.

Despite all the above challenges and turbulences, the EU is still there and, one could argue, has shown a relatively high level of **resilience**. This can be considered a sign of maturity for a historically young political venture, which challenges yesterday's concept of the traditional nation state on a daily basis. And despite all the gloom, support for the EU among its citizens is almost at an all-time high and the EU consistently rates well ahead of traditional international actors like the US, Russia, China or India.

What can culture do?

Culture must be free. Europe should stand and fight for cultural freedom in Europe and worldwide. Living our **values** is the best way of defending them.

Culture can create **spaces for European experience**. Culture can provide the spaces that are needed for exchanging diverging views. Culture can break up filter bubbles. Public debate can mitigate the increasing polarisation in society. Culture can bring people together across borders.

Culture can celebrate Europe's **diversity**. Europe is much more than the sum of its parts. It is the constant exchange of its parts. And it has many. It would be hard to find another place in the world where so many languages, cultural practices, collective memories, beliefs and perspectives coexist in such close proximity. There is no distinct way of being European but one: making the most of that variety and diversity.

Culture can tell the **story** of Europe: better, different, new, sexy, provocative. This is not the story of Brussels and economic statistics, but the story of people. The story of Europe is made up of many different stories.

Culture can **imagine** a better Europe beyond pie charts and growth rates. What is our European utopia? What is the next big cultural movement coming out of Europe?

An important tool of culture is the plurality of **languages** (linguistics as well as formats). Working on how we communicate with each other through language is a basic cultural task.

Culture can build **European identities**. Europeans already have many different identities – from national to regional, from city to village, from sports clubs to religion. Their European identities do not replace those other identities but rather complement them. Our European identities are multidimensional and multicultural identities.

Culture can demystify digital **technology**. The digital technological revolution is a central trigger for many of the challenges we face today. Culture should address the risk and side effects of digitalisation too, and make digital technology a force for good (again).

What can philanthropy do?

The current challenges and the sense of urgency in addressing them are forcing philanthropic foundations to **reinvent** themselves. They need to regain trust as a credible instrument of social advancement. This could be an opportunity to establish a new, indigenous European philanthropy.

Philanthropy must invest in the resilience of our society. A clear **value statement** should be the starting point of foundations' programming, especially now that those values are being systemically challenged.

Philanthropy today needs to be both **strategic and agile**. To quote Winston Churchill: "Plans are of little importance, but planning is essential". Philanthropy needs to engage in strategic planning while remaining flexible to adapt when circumstances change.

Foundations should be the first to connect culture and **sustainability**. This includes challenging the current economic narrative but also striving for sustainability in our own operations, including sustainable fund management.

In many ways we are experiencing a system failure of our Western societies. A large part of the system failure is due to the **elites**, who have exploited the flaws in the current system for their own personal gains. Only in this way can we explain the dramatic increase of inequality in society and the inability to address the climate crisis.

Foundations should continue to invest in **people-to-people experiences**. This is as much about the process as the action. Culture can mitigate the potential impact of Brexit by keeping the exchange of people and ideas between continental Europe and Britain alive and even intensifying it. We need to pay more attention to Central and Eastern Europe, especially when it comes to keeping the dialogue and exchange alive on concrete issues like migration and environmental protection, but also on the values of European cooperation.

Foundations need better participation and representation of a wider group of citizens to reinforce the legitimacy of their work. They need to change the **language** they speak and thus widen the potential of the people they can reach and the impact they can make.

Both foundations and the EU need to **de-bureaucratise** their funding programmes. Funding should be simple, rewarding the idea not the institution, with minimum bureaucracy for the applicants.

Foundations should invest in real **social networks**, both digital and analogue, as a channel of sharing and community building. There is a lot of potential for libraries to become social networks, combining their local communities across Europe.

PART II: WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

Our legacy

The European Cultural Foundation is the **first Foundation with a sole European purpose** and draws on a unique wealth of six and a half decades of experience.

Those who contributed to shaping the beginnings of the Foundation – public figures and intellectuals such as Denis de Rougemont, Robert Schuman or Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands – were all convinced that coal and steel alone were not sufficient to build the Europe they believed in: a united Europe where citizens feel proudly European, a place where they can live, express themselves, work and dream freely, in diversity and yet in harmony. They believed this vision would be achieved by supporting cultural and educational activities of common interest for the creation of a European sentiment through programmes and grants.

By the beginning of the 1960s, the Foundation, now **based in Amsterdam**, had succeeded in securing the funding necessary to accomplish its mission. Bringing together more than 200 international academics – who were commissioned to explore issues related to education, industry, urbanisation, as well as farming and environment – the research project **Plan Europe 2000** remains to date one of the most ambitious programmes ever carried out by the Foundation. Alongside a number of publications and conferences, the project also resulted in the establishment of research institutes across Europe, in fields as diverse as education, media, environment and labour.

The most important institute in relation to the history of the Foundation remains the European Institute of Education and Social Policy in Paris. Together with the European Commission, it started the **Erasmus** Programme for students, which was run by the European Cultural Foundation via its Brussels office until 1995. The Erasmus story attests to the unique role that a private foundation can play in creating common good well beyond its own means and making unexpected alliances that help to dissolve the strict boundaries between public and private. This story also attests to the importance that the foundation always placed on people-to-people **experience**. This was a focal point that proved to be central to the work of the Foundation years before the fall of the Berlin Wall, and increasingly in the prospect of the biggest enlargement of the European Union in 2004. Our connections forged in the Eastern and Southern regions have led to mutual learning processes and the establishment of long-lasting partnerships.

Throughout our history, the role of media and the **public space** has been an important focus for the Foundation's work. Starting with the European broadcasting 'Europa Prize' that we co-initiated in 1987 with the Council of Europe, to the establishment of the European-wide

online portal for culture (LabforCulture), and the programmes dedicated to media activism across Europe, we have striven to contribute to the construction of a truly European public sphere, one in which all voices are represented and heard.

Within the worlds of foundations and philanthropy, the European Cultural Foundation played an important role as well. This was particularly so than when our General Secretary, Raymond Georis, initiated the European Foundation Centre in 1989 – the first **European-wide network for foundations**.

Looking back at what Europe has become since then, both Europe and the Foundation have been remarkable success stories of which one can be rightfully proud. But, as we have seen, today's times are challenging times. The Foundation has to be at its best to live up to its legacy and its still unfulfilled vision.

Our values

In times of uncertainty and unpredictability, a clear set of values provides a yardstick and compass for action. Living our European values is the best way of defending them.

In times where core values are being challenged around the world, in Europe and even inside the EU, stating our values openly is not just an act of marketing and good governance. It is an act of understanding our history, showing attitude and aspiration. Our values are the basis of who we are and what we do.

The European Cultural Foundation believes in a united Europe that works better because of **cooperation, sharing and solidarity**. The Foundation is guided above all by the European common good.

We believe in the **appreciation and celebration of our diversity**. Europe is the product of a culture of exchange. Diversity is a matter of life. It is not always easy to manage but without it, a good life in Europe is not possible and it would be boring. Diversity is a value but it is also a method.

Culture must be free and Europe should stand and fight for cultural freedom in Europe and worldwide.

Out of the ashes of our history we have built a Europe based on **democracy and the rule of law**. We believe this is essential and must not be taken for granted. But equally, democracy needs continued work and imagination.

We believe in the power of **human dignity and ingenuity**, whether as a response to the suffering of people who need our solidarity or as a response to the challenges of unbound technology.

We believe in the **equality** of people and we believe in the equality of opportunities in achieving every individual's best potential.

We believe in **freedom** – in the freedom to express oneself, in the freedom of conscience, the freedom of movement, the freedom of the media, in the freedom to challenge those in power and the freedom to resist regression and destruction.

We believe in the best of people, in the **power of hope, curiosity and optimism**. This alone is not enough, but without it a better world is not possible.

Our vision

The vision of the European Cultural Foundation is a **united Europe** that makes a positive contribution to solving the most pressing problems of our times.

We are first and foremost **a foundation for Europe** that is guided by the European common good.

Culture is the **space** where we in Europe understand how we can live together, understand our identities and feel at home.

Culture is key to building **European identities**. European identities are not exclusive but made of many belongings, inclusive of national, regional and migrant belongings and identities.

Culture is an ongoing **social process** that deals with what people and communities believe they have in common. Culture, cultural work, artistic expression and production are all about 'assigning meaning' and experiencing and living our values on a daily basis.

Culture is the space where **human values** are permanently discussed, challenged and where we need to defend them. It is the space to question, re-think and refine the essential principles we stand for as Europeans. Culture is the field that engages people in experiencing, valuing, shaping and imagining Europe as their common public good.

As a genuine European foundation, which has focused on the role of culture during our rich 65-year history, makes us a **unique actor** in Europe. While, in this sense, we are different from other arts and cultural foundations that have a primarily national or local focus, we work closely with like-minded foundations, including on joint programming.

Europe is **more than the EU**, but the EU is its central societal achievement and its key actor. But the EU is not perfect and needs reform. The European Cultural Foundation will challenge the EU and its member states to live up to the original promise of creating peace, stability and prosperity.

We operate in the context of major global challenges, in particular the **climate and digital** challenge. Europe is no island and has to make a positive contribution to solving the most pressing challenges of our times.

Our mission

The European Cultural Foundation is committed to **promoting a European sentiment** through culture and common experience.

“The European Cultural Foundation was created for the stimulation of the European sentiment, [...], to promote the development and preservation of a feeling of mutual comprehension and democratic solidarity between the peoples of Europe by encouraging cultural and educational activities of common interest.”

Our mission was formulated by our founding fathers in 1954. This mission is as relevant today as it was 65 years ago, possibly even more so. There is a growing polarisation of societies and simultaneously a lack of civilised debate. Economic divergence is increasing and inequalities are visibly rising. These divisions are leading to fragmentation between countries and polarisation within societies. There is the threat of European disintegration. Europe needs to create a renewed European sentiment, a European sense of belonging. By doing so, we can go a long way but without it, Europe is vulnerable to regression and set back.

Therefore, promoting a European sentiment through culture and education will continue to be at the heart of what we do – not out of nostalgia but because, despite everything that has been achieved, a European sentiment is still in short supply.

Our focus & our goals: Experience, Imagine, Share

Today's times are challenging times. We need to respond to today's challenges without being simply reactive. We will work towards a European sentiment in the long term but without losing the battles of today. We are not afraid of being European utopians but we will also provide resistance against regression and division. We will set strategic priorities while also creating room and tools for agile action. We will focus on Europe but will do so with the understanding that Europe must be a force for good in addressing global challenges like the climate crisis and digitalisation. We believe that a healthy dose of optimism will take us a long way but we are not naïve enough to rely on optimism alone.

Our vision is big but we have limited human and financial resources. In order to make an impact, we need to focus and mobilise others to share our vision and goals.

Based on the achievements and lessons from our 65-year history and from what we have learned during our recent strategy tour through Europe, we will focus our human and financial resources over the next five-year period in the following areas: Experience, Imagine and Share.

Experience Europe

Creating a European sense of belonging through cultural and educational exchange of people and common practice

Something essential is missing in Europe, something emotional, some key experiences. European identities consist of many things including common values, common beliefs but also the acceptance and celebration of diversity. European identities are multicultural identities. Europeans have many different identities: from national to regional, from city to village, from sports clubs to religion. Their European identities or sense of European belonging do not need to replace those other belongings but rather complement them.

Culture can bring people together across borders. Sharing common practice and human encounters with people in another country helps Europeans to break through cultural, social and political boundaries. Europe needs to become available as a personal, emotional or professional experience for much larger and more diverse circles of people. Europe needs more fundamental human experiences that reduce stereotypes based on very basic and real people-to-people meetings, as the Erasmus Programme already does for so many students. And investing in people-to-people experiences is also a very concrete way of keeping in contact with people living in authoritarian countries in Europe, and changing things for the better there in the long term.

The European Cultural Foundation will continue to invest in people-to-people experience. It's as much about the process as the action. We need more programmes like Erasmus, at all levels, initiatives that reach out to others, including the under-privileged: anywhere across urban and regional (rural) Europe, to literally everybody.

There is an increasing bitterness among people who feel they are not benefiting from the EU and those who do not know how to access its existing opportunities. A great concern is also the diminishing cultural capital outside the metropolitan areas. Through our people-to-people programmes, we aim to go beyond the big cities to work with existing and new actors in smaller regions, European Capitals of Culture and their surrounding rural regions, etc.

Imagine Europe

Telling the stories of Europe, its heritage and its future, in the most compelling way using all forms of cultural expression

For centuries Europe was governed by war and violence. This was followed by its division and the Cold War. Today Europe is a more peaceful, richer and happier continent than it has ever been. This story is one we can be proud of.

But somehow Europe has lost its cool. For the under-30s, Europe has hardly ever been cool but mostly something that was always associated with some kind of problem. In the process of constant crisis management, it is easy to forget how and why the European Union was created in the first place: peace through sharing. Europe was in fact the first sharing economy long before it became cool. But the focus of telling the story of Europe mainly as the sum of its economic success is in danger of becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. Because once the economy is in trouble the story of Europe is in trouble too.

And that's why the European story needs to be re-told. Particularly in times when one could easily lose faith in the big European picture. Because we need a historical perspective to assess and then negotiate everyday political problems and crises. Without that perspective we'll just keep running on a treadmill of continual crisis management and eventually wonder why we are bothering at all.

Culture can tell the story of Europe. This is not the story of Brussels, but the story of people. The story of Europe consists of many stories. This is its beauty. Artists are storytellers and influencers.

But telling only the story of the European past is not enough. The story of Europe is only as good as it is relevant to the world of today.

Climate change, digitalisation, societal polarisation, dangerous levels of inequality, conflict and wars: these are all global challenges that will determine whether and how we are going to survive the 21st century. These challenges are also opportunities for Europe to unite in order to face a common existential threat together. Europe needs new success stories and new utopias too.

Share Europe

Contributing to a European public space and breaking national filter bubbles

Our awareness of what is going on around us is largely determined by our nationality. We are still trapped in national filter bubbles. We adopt a national perspective on European issues such as migration, the euro, data security, energy, climate change, unemployment and tax evasion, seeing them in terms of national actors and national interests.

Hence it is not surprising that we lack a shared understanding of problems and opportunities, let alone a collaborative approach to finding genuine European solutions. In the long run, our European community will flourish only if supported and controlled by a European public space rather than fragmented national ones.

To make matters worse: the public space has been almost entirely privatised. Europe needs to create European public structures and it needs to better regulate the continent's public space to keep them free from political manipulation and private monopolies.

Culture can create space and spaces for European experience. Culture can provide the meeting space that is needed for exchanging diverging views. Public debate can mitigate the increasing polarisation in society. We need a border-crossing public discourse on societal values as well as a democratisation of digital space. We need a pan-European public discourse by means of culture, including pop culture, to reach people.

Creating and using a European public space does not mean talking about Europe but rather providing a space where exchange, learning, community and collaboration across Europe on the burning issues of our times is possible.

Digital technology can make the world a better place, or destroy it. The digital revolution is a central trigger for many challenges we face today. We cannot but capture the digital space! But we need to make digital technology a force for good (again). Digital needs out to be a human technology.

Of course, attempting to create a European public space is a mammoth task, almost an Apollo project. But there is a lot at stake: identity, democracy, freedom and the future of the European model. This is why we will work with private and public partners to

make the case and create an initiative for a European public space that outlines what is needed, that funds pilot actions and advocates for the EU to invest as a matter of urgency. Europe needs an Airbus style project to create a European public space.

PART III: HOW WE WORK

Our operating principles

How we do things is just as important as what we do. These operating principles guide our work as a foundation and as a responsible citizen.

We are strategic and nimble

The European Cultural Foundation is strategic in following our vision, focused in our programming but also nimble and effective in our day-to-day operations. We work on the basis of a multiannual strategy and budget framework that we adjust and finetune on an annual basis. In addition to our strategic programmes we provide short-term and flexible support for ideas that are outside the box but correspond broadly to our vision and values.

We do and we empower others

We think before we do. But then we do. We develop initiatives in-house (operational) as well as supporting initiatives of others (grant-making). A minimum of 50 per cent of our funding goes to external partners. Whether internal or external, all our foundation resources are invested in achieving our European vision.

We are European and we are local

We are a European foundation. Each of our initiatives, whether at local, national or pan-European level, must have a clear European purpose. We are based in Amsterdam but we work across Europe. Initiatives and programmes may be run on a decentralised basis with strong local partners. We will explore the potential of regional hubs.

We are looking for the next Erasmus

Taking inspiration from our most successful initiative, the Erasmus Programme, we will strive to develop initiatives of similar impact. All initiatives above €500,000 must have the potential to become the next Erasmus.

We are all about partnership and cooperation

We build on our well-established partnerships but we also actively seek out partners that are new to us and even to the foundation world. We aim to create a greater impact beyond our own resources and multiply these resources through co-funding. We seek co-funding for our programmes and make it a requirement in our grant-making (counterpart-funding). We

believe in the urgency and power of joined-up action from European funders (both private and public).

Our special relationship

We share the same founding father as well as our core values with the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds (PBCF). We have a special relationship that we will nurture and develop both in terms of strategic cooperation as well as pragmatic programming where relevant.

Policy matters

We work with policymakers to develop good ideas into policies and to secure sustainable public funding for them. Our advocacy is making a vital contribution to leveraging the impact of our initiatives in the areas where we work.

We are not an island

We recognise that we operate in the context of major global challenges. Within our programmes we contribute to the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and will in particular address the climate and digital challenges, where possible and relevant. In our operations, we will adhere to and invest in the best European climate and digital standards (double dividend). We are working towards being a carbon-neutral organisation by 2025. We believe in the central importance of a European public space. As a foundation we plan to move to a space that reflects this belief and that fits our public-facing mission.

Diversity is more than a buzzword

The appreciation and celebration of diversity is one of our core values. But diversity is also an important element of how we work. As a foundation we invest in diversity at programme level as well as in our operations, including in staff with a variety of cultural, social, ethnic, gender, languages and age backgrounds.

Licence to experiment

All foundations claim that their programmes and partners are special and different but, in the end, they are often quite similar. At the same time, there are many ideas and organisations that do not find support because they are too out there, challenging, experimental or daring. We will experiment and look out for unconventional ideas and approaches. We are open to experimental ideas and unsolicited proposals.

Speak a language people understand

We aim to speak a language that is understood by a wide range of people and not just a few insiders. Understandable language, and not only in English, is central to our internal and external communications. We aim to be a “low jargon” foundation.

Less bureaucracy

We strive to make our communication, operations and transactions as efficient, coherent and simple as possible for all parties involved.

We are a good place to work

We work to make Europe a better place. And as an organisation we aim to be a place where people like to work and where this attitude is reflected in how much more we can achieve. We invest in personnel development and facilitate internal and external staff mobility.

Our Programmes

Our programmes build on the rich legacy of the European Cultural Foundation over the past 65 years, in particular the work on exchange activities, on media and the commons and on imagining a better Europe. Our programme outcomes contribute to our mission – a shared European sentiment. We develop multi-annual programmes within our three focus areas and according to our values and operating principles. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Our programmes are developed with methods and tools that best help us to achieve impact. Wherever possible and relevant, we co-design programmes together with partners and co-funders. These tools include open calls for proposals, awards, challenges, advocacy, digital and analogue communication, campaigns and convening face-to-face meetings.

- **Experience Europe**
Creating a European sense of belonging through cultural and educational exchange of people and common practice
- **Imagine Europe**
Telling the stories of Europe, its heritage and its future, in the most compelling way using all forms of cultural expression
- **Share Europe**
Contributing to a European public space and breaking national filter bubbles

Vision & Value Funding: In addition to our strategic programmes we provide short-term and flexible support for ideas that are outside the box but correspond more broadly to our vision and values.

Public Policy

Public Policy is an essential part of our tool kit but it is not a goal in itself. Our Public Policy supports our programmatic goals.

Re-invent European Philanthropy

The current challenges and the sense of urgency are an opportunity for the creation of a philanthropy with a European purpose. Foundation budgets in Europe amount to €60 billion annually. We advocate that at least 1 per cent of those combined annual philanthropic resources is spent on a European purpose.

Culture in EU policies

We are advocating for the swift implementation of the EU's New Agenda for Culture and the preparation of new EU programmes, notably a European mobility scheme for professionals in the cultural and creative sectors. We will advocate to position culture in selected EU internal and external policies, e.g. climate, migration, digital, urban/rural, external relations.

Budget line

We will advocate to secure multi-annual structural funding from the EU within the next EU multi-annual financial framework 2021-2027.

Amsterdam connection

We are a European foundation based in Amsterdam. We are making a concerted effort to make the City of Amsterdam a proud host of the European Cultural Foundation and its European strategy. We want to make the City of Amsterdam a partner in developing a physical public space where the Foundation works with other like-minded European and cultural organisations.

Communication

Communication is an essential part of our tool kit and supports our vision and programmatic goals.

Voice & language

We aim to become a recognisable voice in the discourse on the role of culture in building a better Europe and in our focus areas in particular. Our voice and language must be understandable to a wide audience across all our communication channels, internal and external, avoiding jargon and buzzwords. We will use various communication formats – in particular video, animation, podcasts and other social media formats – and we will also look at the role of popular culture as a resource in making ourselves understood.

Medium

We will develop our website and digital communication into a digital platform using aggregated content from partners and grantees, as well as our own content. We aim to become a cultural influencer platform.

Media partnerships

In order to position our voice in the broader media landscape, we will develop long-term partnerships with media outlets including *De Correspondent*, *AD*, *Politico*, *Zeit Online*, *Le Monde*, *Eurozine*, *Europe Critique*, *Are we Europe*, and we will support relevant events, e.g. IDFA, World Press Photo, and collaborate with venues like Bozar, Tate Modern, Fondazione Feltrinelli, Pakhuis de Zwijger, De Balie.

Our Story

We will continue to develop the “Story of the European Cultural Foundation” – an innovative archive project connecting our history to some of Europe’s milestones, past, present and future. It provides an infrastructure for the progressive disclosure of our archives for the academic and wider public.

Operations (Human Resources, Facilities & IT)

Our Operations ensure that the Foundation has the appropriate structures, human resources as well as technical and office facilities to function professionally and to be able to achieve our vision.

Clear management structure

There are five departments (Programmes, Public Policy, Communication, Operations, Finance) led by five managers. Together with the Director, the five Heads of Departments make up the Management Team. The Heads of Departments structure their teams according to tasks, skills and budgets.

A good place to work

We aim to be a good place to work. The goal is to match human resources skills, tasks and projects based on a clear, transparent and honest appraisal system. We encourage the continuous learning and development of our staff and strive for an open working culture in which taking initiative and a can-do mentality are essential. Maintaining and improving a good diversity of professional, social, cultural, gender and age background is an important success factor for our organisation and a priority for our HR policy.

Make our foundation a public house

Our office should reflect our vision and goals. We plan to move our office to a more public, visible and accessible space, ideally as part of a community with like-minded organisations.

Facilities

We will update our office and facilities to suit our vision and the 21st century. In particular our IT infrastructure is regularly updated based on European standards and on European servers.

Data security

Data protection and privacy are critical for the Foundation. We have put an Information Security Policy in place to guarantee the availability, integrity and confidentiality of critical information systems. All relevant processes and databases are regularly updated to make sure that the Foundation is in full compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Sustainable finance

Our Finance team ensure that the Foundation has the appropriate financial resources, accountable and transparent processes and budget control.

Income

The income of the European Cultural Foundation is based on five income sources:

1. Dutch lottery funding via the Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds (PBCF)
2. Co-funding from EU and other public funding
3. Co-funding from other philanthropic foundations
4. Other private funding
5. Securities portfolio (for overhead funding only).

Our goal is to diversify and increase our current income substantially and sustainably.

Over a five-year period – based on a conservative income estimate from the Dutch lotteries via PBCF and securities – our income is estimated to be €30 million. Taking this as a starting point, our goal is to leverage this income from our sources to reach €100 million over five years. Leveraged funding for our purpose and programmes could be directly via our own budget (co-funding) or indirectly through other organisations (counterpart-funding). The criteria for measuring leverage and its impact will be drawn up and annually assessed by an independent accounting body. This is a huge challenge but it is possible and necessary if we want to have an impact in the context of today's Europe.

Developing new private income sources is a big challenge but this offers many opportunities. We will further develop our current income sources including more targeted partner raising and making the case for EU core funding. We will also experiment with new income sources, e.g. project and campaign-based funding, impact investment, fee on Mobility Climate Compensation Fund, and do so in an entrepreneurial and opportunistic way.

Climate & social responsibility

We have agreed investment principles for our Securities Portfolio that adhere to the environmental, societal and corporate governance standards of the UN Global Compact and Goede Doelen Nederland.

Spending

We are an operational and grant-making foundation. A minimum of 50 per cent of our budget will be spent via external partners. This share may vary from programme to programme, depending on how best to achieve our programmatic goals. Whether internal or external, all foundation resources will be invested for public European benefit.

Multi-annual financial framework

As a matter of sound planning and clarity, we work on the basis of a multi-annual budget framework. In this way we will be able to make multi-annual commitments and attract respective co-funding. We will draw up annual work plans and budgets in line with our multi-annual strategic and budget framework.

Our base budget for 2020-2025 is €30 million. Taking this as a starting point, our goal is to leverage this income from public and private co-funding to reach €100 million over five years.

Efficient work

We strive to make our financial processes and transactions as efficient, coherent and simple as possible for all parties involved. We aim to be a good partner to work with. We will check through annual anonymous partner surveys to make sure we are living up to this challenge.

Annex 1:

What can culture do? Summary of insights from the European Tour 2019