

# European Cultural Foundation

## Work Plan 2022 Compact

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### **INTRODUCTION: THE FUTURE IS NOW!**

We are living through pandemic times. In addition to Covid-19, there is a climate pandemic, a pandemic of inequality, a pandemic of polarisation. These individual pandemics are interconnected and together they are creating unpredictable dynamics. There is no going back to a normality that never existed anyway. We need to learn how to navigate pandemic times. Urgently.

Challenging times are also times of possibilities, invention and opportunities. The crisis has forced responses in record time. Some of those responses were unimaginable before, such as the Eurobond funded EU Recovery Fund. Some of those emergency measures need to be phased out, such as border closures, social distancing and extensive data mining. Some can be kept and evolve, such as more sustainable travel policies and a re-evaluation of global supply chains.

The future is made now and with our initiatives, the European Pavilion, the Europe Challenge, the Culture Deal for Europe, Culture for Climate Action, we are contributing to it. In 2022, we will bring these initiatives together on 9 May, Europe Day, as a curated contribution of ECF and our community to the Conference on the Future of Europe. The future is now.

The ECF Work Plan 2022 will mark the mid-point of our five-year strategic cycle. In 2020/21 we started new initiatives that will be reviewed and adjusted if needed before scaling them further. While we believe the overall themes of our “Challenge 2025” strategy are still relevant, there is room for critical review and upcycling.

The Culture of Solidarity Initiative remains our flexible multi-funder tool for times of uncertainty and cultural recovery. With the experience and lessons of its first five editions, we will improve the impact, quality and representation by focusing on certain themes and geographies, as well as further developing the multiple partnership model. We continue to pursue public funders to come on board and make the Culture of Solidarity Fund part of the Cultural Deal for Europe for which we advocate.

The climate crisis is here and real. It is not a distant theoretical concept. Everyone has to act, now. Culture is a key to negotiating humankind’s response to the climate crisis. Technology will not be enough. It will need culture change. For ECF this does not require a new project but a

holistic response. From 2022 we will be mainstreaming Culture for Climate Action across our whole organisation: programmes, advocacy, communication, operations and finance.

There is urgency in implementing our Sustainable Funding strategy. In 2021 we have developed a good plan but we now need to speed up in implementing it. In 2022 we will invest additional human and financial resources into implementing our Sustainable Funding strategy.

## **WORK PLAN 2022**

- 1. Mission. European Sentiment:** The mission of the European Cultural Foundation is to promote a European sentiment, a shared sense of belonging. We know that our mission is ambitious and ultimately never completely achievable. It is a promise. The Coronavirus crisis is the ultimate test of whether a European sentiment exists and what value it brings to individual Europeans and our societies. In 2022 we will commission a European Sentiment Compass testing the state of the European sentiment.
- 2. Strategic Focus. Experience. Imagine. Share:** Our strategy “Challenge 2025” is based on three programmatic clusters: Experience, Imagine, Share. Europe as a cultural community is connected through people (Experience Europe), through stories (Imagine Europe) and through spaces (Share Europe). While we believe the overall lines of our strategy remain relevant, we constantly review our programmes and adjust if needed before scaling them further.
- 3. Culture of Solidarity:** The Culture of Solidarity Fund is our instrument to deal with continued uncertainty in a flexible manner. With the experience and lessons of its first five editions, we will improve the impact, quality and representation by focusing on certain themes and geographies. We will further develop the multiple partnership model, continue to encourage public funders to come on board and make the Culture of Solidarity Fund a concrete part of the Cultural Deal for Europe.
- 4. Experience Europe:** In pandemic times providing physical people-to-people contacts and European experiences will be even more crucial for revitalising Europe as a shared community. In 2022 we support Generation Europe, a multi-annual experience programme for young Europeans in cooperation with Stiftung Mercator and co-fund and implement a large-scale EU pilot project on cross-border mobility for artists and cultural professionals (i-Portunus) which will prepare the ground for a future Erasmus for Culture.
- 5. Imagine Europe:** We design, develop and fund a portfolio of initiatives that tell the stories of Europe and imagine a better Europe. This includes the European Pavilion network, the Europe Challenge in partnership with European libraries and a platform of stories and narratives on Europe including documentary film and the bi-annual Forum on European

Culture. We will carry out a facility study of a pilot honours scheme for The Everyday Heroes of Europe.

6. **Share Europe:** We develop and fund a portfolio of projects that promote a functioning and safe European public space. This includes European Media Platforms, a project on changing current media narratives of migrant and refugee communities across Europe, a funder coalition for a fair and safe Digital European public space and supporting a multi-funder initiative for enabling safe physical cultural spaces (Vaha, Civitates).
7. **Culture Deal for Europe:** In 2022 we will continue advocating for A Cultural Deal for Europe and its implementation. This involves advocacy for dedicated support and funding for culture in national and European recovery plans as well as making culture an integral part of Europe's future policy and funding.
8. **Europe Day 2022. The Future is Now:** On 9 May 2022, Europe Day, we will bring our future-oriented initiatives together in a high impact event as our curated contribution to the Conference on the Future of Europe.
9. **Culture for Climate Action:** From 2022 we will be mainstreaming Culture for Climate Action across our whole organisation: programmes, advocacy, communication, operations and finance. This includes a Climate Audit of the ECF, a Culture of (Climate) Solidarity edition, climate neutral operations and travel as well as partnering with organisations that show commitment to climate goals/neutrality.
10. **Human centric office culture:** Operationally, our priority is the physical and mental wellbeing of staff, maintaining the foundation's physical and digital operations, mainstreaming the ECF climate pledge across operations and travel and working with the Amsterdam Public Library (OBA) on the move to a new space in Amsterdam Zuid in 2027. We are keeping our digital infrastructure up-to-date and are developing a human centric hybrid office culture.
11. **Sustainable finance:** An organisational priority is to ensure appropriate and sustainable income. ECF has drawn up a plan for sustainable funding with the goal to diversify and increase the current funding base. To this end a high-level investors/donors roundtable is planned as part of our Europe Day event on 9 May 2022.
12. **Mid-term review:** We will carry out a mid-term evaluation of our five-year strategic plan and decide the criteria and process for the evaluation of our Strategy "Challenge 2025".