



NEW PUBLIC-PRIVATE INITIATIVE: A CULTURE OF SOLIDARITY FUND

EUROPE'S MOMENT: WHEN IF NOT NOW?

Facing and responding together to the corona pandemic can be a strong European moment. A moment where people understand how important it is to have European friends who support each other, a moment when you share vital information, expertise and supplies, a moment when you realise how a global crisis can be managed much better through cooperation and solidarity.

But so far this has not been a European moment. National leaders have taken the initiative and do whatever it takes to protect their citizens against the virus. Their approaches might differ in terms of public health responses, but they are surprisingly consistent when it comes to protecting the national interest. It is high time for the EU to step-up its action, and devise an initiative of European interest.

Over the last 75 years, Europe has managed to reinvent itself as a collaborative power, a community of citizens and States. This has served us Europeans, and the rest of the world, well. We cannot afford a rollback. We need to do whatever it takes to keep the spirit of European cooperation and solidarity intact. We need to act together.

There is hope. Citizens reach out to each other, practice small and often imaginative human gestures of everyday solidarity. This unites us, across balconies, social networks, cities and countries. It is human hope and shared culture without much ado that makes us feel together and that is all worthwhile! This is the culture of solidarity we ought to grow out of this crisis. This is a European moment, a European moment of solidarity, a European moment of citizens.

Let's grow a European moment of solidarity

During the past few weeks several rapid response interventions in support of the cultural and creative sectors have been announced. All of them are offered by institutions at national or regional levels, and there is a big difference in what public funders are willing to spend in Western and Northern Europe compared to Eastern and Southern Europe. The rift is telling a story of Europe.

But we need another story, and visible action. The EU has made efforts to ease strains on EU-financed organisations and projects (eg. flexibilization) and measures to support arts and culture are underway, but there is no common European initiative or fund supporting cross-sectorial actions that strengthen a European Culture of Solidarity.

To fill this void, the European Cultural Foundation has set up a new **Culture of Solidarity Fund** to support big and small initiatives with the goal to grow a European culture of Solidarity, help artists, cultural workers, civil society at large in a flexible manner in their response to the Corona Crisis and its aftershocks, invest in new imaginative ways of sustaining people-to-people contacts and human interaction across European borders in times of travel restrictions and social distancing.

The Culture of Solidarity Fund is set up as a philanthropic, public-private partnership.

A dedicated European response, the Culture of Solidarity Fund will support creative initiatives and ideas that respond to the corona crisis and its aftershocks through a culture of solidarity. It will:

- expand the notion of Europe as an open, inclusive and shared public space for all, in times of restrictive, national-focused measures and crisis management;
- express and act in concrete solidarity with people, communities across closed borders;
- enable the sharing of experience, knowledge, skills, stories, ideas and resources of practical solidarity across Europe;
- sustain people-to-people interaction beyond European borders when travel restrictions and social distancing are keeping us apart;
- maintain cultural life and social experiences with a European outreach in times of lockdown;
- prepare the ground for a cultural revival of the European idea and project after the crisis.

Fast & flexible

The new Culture of Solidarity Fund aims to answer as flexible as possible to needs, challenges and developments that will emerge and change as the crisis further unfolds. Based on our own new working realities, we know that adaptation and developing new routines and ideas are crucial for coming to terms with this new situation. This is why we will phase financial support made available by the new Culture of Solidarity Fund into multiple short-term submission deadlines and tailor-made support criteria for proposals over the coming months, and throughout the entire year.

Launch: 6 April 2020

Funding opportunity: small (€5.000 – 15.000), medium (€15.000 – 30.000) and larger (€30.000 – 50.000) grants

Scale: depending on investment and solidarity of partners

Designed as a philanthropic, public-private partnership

The Culture of Solidarity Fund is kicked-off by the European Cultural Foundation but designed as a partnership initiative to be scaled with contributions by philanthropic, public and private donors.

To start operations immediately the European Cultural Foundation is providing an initial start-up funding of 1 Million Euros for 2020.

Join us!

CONTACT: European Cultural Foundation, [REDACTED] director: [REDACTED]@culturalfoudantion.eu

OPERATIONS: European Cultural Foundation, [REDACTED], project manager: [REDACTED]@culturalfoundation.eu