



UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity

<https://ukccd.org/>

Evidence to the House of Lords Committee Enquiry:

Resetting relations with the EU.

March 31 2025

The UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity, UKCCD, is the UK's leading civil society network supporting UNESCO's groundbreaking Convention on Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 2005. UKCCD acts as a consultative partner to UNESCO-UK and the UK government on the implementation of the aims and obligations of the treaty, which became legal in this country in March 2008. UKCCD is a founder member of the International Federation, IFCCD, which links over 600 creator and cultural organisations worldwide. Through this network we seek to optimize national policy to safeguard and enhance local, inclusive and pluralistic production and for freedom of access for citizens to the full range and diversity of content/work both on and off-line.

1 Re-joining Creative Europe

An opportunity for the government to

- Improve political, economic and cultural relations with the EU
- grow the creative industries
- prevent any EU action in response to any UK/US agreement

One of the Labour government's significant priorities is to nurture closer relations with our European partners. Re-joining this programme would bring not only enormous economic and cultural benefit, it would bring significant political benefit. It would also be a deeply symbolic move and would signal that we wish to work closely and collaboratively with our EU partners for mutual benefit.

Such a move would also signal that the UK views the EU as a primary partner for cultural/creative industry collaboration. This is especially important at a time when the UK is talking to the US on a potential "digital" agreement which our EU partners will be following with interest.

Re-joining Creative Europe would also show how serious a Labour government is about growing the economy in one of the most important sectors for the future of the country's economic growth and soft power across the world.

The government's other top priority is to grow the economy. The cultural and creative sectors figure hugely in the UK economy. Before Brexit and Covid, our creative industries contributed over 4% to GDP and over £100 billion to the economy. They were in surplus with the EU and the rest of world. However, they lost 31% of their turnover during the pandemic. They depend on economic and cultural exchange, partnership, mobility, work experience within Europe which are part of creative industries' R and D.

In 2018 UK received £160 million from Creative Europe. This is more than the combined figure for last year's core funding grant to the British Film Institute (£23 million) and to the UK Global Screen Fund (£100 million). We were also the top beneficiary of the media programme. The Conservative Government's promise to replace this funding has not materialised and UK creative industries remain today the poorer for it.

The Creative Europe programme (CE) is the European Commission's programme for providing support to the cultural and audio-visual sectors through 2 strands : Culture and MEDIA programmes. The UK was a major beneficiary of both strands in the past.

Membership of Creative Europe is open to "third countries". This means that the UK can re-join as a "third country", without re-joining the single market, the customs union or indeed the EU. Membership will above all assist in improving the growth and competitiveness of all our creative industries.

An independent report by SQW, "The Impact of Creative Europe in the UK 2014-20", and published by Creative Europe Desk UK, reveals the value delivered by the programme which built skills and confidence among the creative, cultural and audio-visual sectors through its funding, network-building and training schemes. The full technical report features a detailed survey results from hundreds of beneficiaries.

These impacts are in addition to over €100 million of support to the UK's cultural, creative and audio-visual sectors. View the Creative Europe Desk UK website: <http://www.creativeeuropeuk.eu>

The European Commission considers the film and audiovisual (AV) sector as vital to safeguarding Europe's cultural diversity and sovereignty. Therefore, through its **MEDIA programme** strand, it supports the development, distribution and promotion of high-quality European works (including films, TV series, documentaries, video games and immersive content) with the aim of enhancing the competitiveness of the European AV industry at the global level.

The Brexit terms have also meant that our film industry, which exported more than any other EU country to the rest of the European continent, has lost access to the EU MEDIA programme which is an integral part of the Creative Europe programme. British film makers were big beneficiaries of the MEDIA programme. The government

has created a Global Film Fund instead of us re-joining the CE's MEDIA programme which underpinned much British/European independent film production, distribution and cinema showings across the EU. *Slumdog Millionaire* and *The King's Speech*, for example, received at least €750 K each to aid their distribution across the EU.

From 2014 to 2019, 9% of all admissions and 16% of all European film admissions in the **Europa Cinemas network** across Europe were for British films. MEDIA awarded money to the Europa Cinemas project to support cinemas showing non-national European films. 47 UK cinemas with 104 screens have been members of the Europa Cinemas network during the period of 2014 to 2019. They are spread across 33 towns and cities in the four nations. 70% of them are outside of London.

In addition, there were more than 38.2 million admissions for British films in this period among the cinemas of the Europa Cinemas network – with 84% of those admissions reported outside the UK. UK films are often present in the top performing films in the network. 2019 saw *The Favourite*, *Downton Abbey*, *Yesterday*, *Rocketman* and *Sorry We Missed You* all make the top 10.

The Culture strand of the Creative Europe programme supports a wide range of cultural and creative sectors including among others: architecture; cultural heritage; design; literature and publishing; music; performing arts. This strand encourages cooperation and exchanges among cultural organisations and artists within Europe and beyond. Creative Europe aims to: foster artistic creation and innovation; support the promotion and the distribution of European content across Europe and beyond; help artists find creation and performance opportunities across borders, stimulate the digital and environmental transition of the European Culture and Creative Sectors.

One of our most treasured assets is our culture. The UK is home to diverse cultures, cultures that once, when we were members of the EU Creative Europe programme, meant that UK cultural projects were a part of 43% of all Creative Europe projects. The UK partnered with over 1000 partners in 5 years in 37 different countries. The positive social, cultural, economic and soft power effect of that should not be underestimated.

There has been little criticism of the UK government's decision not to re-join the Creative Europe programme as a "third country". This contrasts sharply with the UK/EU trade agreement allowing for continued UK scientist participation in EU Horizon programmes and now full membership.

On behalf of UK Coalition for Cultural Diversity

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