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Abstract
The deliverable provides an overview of existing and potential synergies of policies on cultural literacy and arts-based education with other policies fostering intercultural dialogue, creativity, critical thinking and innovation. Findings are based on a comparison of current efforts in creative skills development through arts-based education with EU policies in the areas of economic development, social inclusion, technology, cultural literacy and education prone to enable synergies and complementarities in terms of policies, programmes, practices and funding that are relevant for the development of children and young people. Accordingly, the overview includes a summary of deliverable D2.2, covering seven national reports on arts-based education contexts.

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About CLiViE

The Cultural Literacies' Value in Europe (CLiViE) project develops and applies a Theory of Change (ToC) methodology and Social Return on Investment (SROI) framework to increase our understanding of the value of cultural literacy through arts-based education on social cohesion. It will be delivered through four main phases: it 'maps' arts-based education within the context of cultural literacy learning across different learning environments and over different stages of a young person's education; it 'evaluates' arts-based education to help identify and assess their actual outputs and outcomes; it 'values' arts-based education activities through calculating its impact to further contribute to our understanding of the 'where', 'when', 'what' and 'how' young people's cultural literacies are developed, and differentiated in various learning environments; and it 'practices' pedagogies through developing an innovative set of practices and materials to support art-based educators to develop social justice and inclusion and improve the lives of young people through collaborative pedagogy. It has been designed to meet the three main research outcomes of the work programme topic: the ToC methodology and SROI framework for cultural literacies will directly increase our understanding of the value of cultural literacy on social cohesion; the evidencing of value in arts-based education and the collaborative pedagogy practices in cultural literacy through the co-creation of communities of practice (COPs) and a professional development programme (PDP) for arts educators will support the targeted commissioning of activities that will increase cultural literacy in Europe; and the innovative methodology for data gathering (and engaging) through emotional cartography allows young people to find a voice through more effective initiatives to foster cultural literacy around European cultures. CLiViE is funded under the call topic HORIZON-CL2-2023-HERITAGE-01-07 - Promoting cultural literacy through arts education to foster social inclusion, and brings together a multidisciplinary team from thirteen partners across eight countries:

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STICHTING DEFENCE FOR CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL NEDERLAND - ECPAT NEDERLAND, Netherlands
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1. Introduction

This deliverable (D2.5) provides an overview of existing and potential synergies of policies on cultural literacy and arts-based education with other policies fostering intercultural dialogue, creativity, critical thinking and innovation. The overview focuses on policies that include possibilities to enhance synergies aimed at strengthening social inclusion and aligning collaborative practices across Europe.

A common denominator of EU policies is that they are geared to build a more resilient, competitive, inclusive and democratic Europe. The European Commission's recently published *Competitiveness Compass for the EU*[1] defines priorities for EU policies aimed at closing the 'innovation gap' with other major economies in the current geopolitical context. Based on strategies that will be mentioned further on in this overview, the *Compass* considers skills development as the starting point for most of these policies. Acknowledging the presence of 'vibrant creative and cultural industries' in Europe, it nevertheless concludes a growing need for digital and creative skills and proposes the setup of 'a Union of Skills, focusing on investment, adult and lifelong learning, future-proof skills creation, skill retention, fair mobility, attracting and integrating qualified talents from third countries and the recognition of different types of training to enable people to work across our Union.'[2]

The present overview compares current efforts in creative skills development through arts-based education with EU policies in the areas of **economic development, social inclusion, technology, cultural literacy and education** prone to enable complementarities and synergies in terms of policies, programmes, practices and funding that are relevant for the development of children and young people. A summary of the seven national reports on arts-based education contexts (Deliverable D2.2) is also provided in this overview.

[1] European Commission (2025). *A Competitiveness Compass for the EU*. Communication January 29, 2025.
[2] Ibid., 22.

2. Methodology

This overview identifies existing and potential synergies between policies on cultural literacy and arts-based education and other policies fostering intercultural dialogue, creativity, critical thinking and innovation. Its focus has been on the analysis of grey material, such as policy documents, in the areas of economic development, social inclusion, technology, cultural literacy, and education. A selection of the most relevant and publicly accessible documents in these areas has been listed in the references at the end of this report. In addition to policies developed by the institutions and agencies of the European Union, related partnerships between the EU and the Council of Europe were taken into consideration. The programmatic proposals in these documents have been examined with regard to possible synergies in terms of policies, programmes, practices and funding that are relevant for the development of children and young people. Examples of national policies within the EU have been compared with each other and with national and regional experiences elsewhere. Some of the prevailing literature on active learning, inclusive education, skills development, cultural literacy and social cohesion in the context of arts-based education has been consulted as well.

3. EU Policies

The following overview of EU policies in the areas of economic development, social inclusion, technology, cultural literacy and education looks at existing and possible synergies between components of these policies with policies on cultural literacy and arts-based education.

3.1. Economic Development

In the European Union (EU), economic policies are the responsibility of each member state, but there is considerable multilateral coordination to ensure the alignment with common aims and responsibilities. The Treaty on the Functioning of the EU defines how policy coordination takes place and requires member states to carry out their national economic policies ‘with a view to contributing to the achievement of the objectives of the Union’, which basically are sustainable economic growth and competitiveness by leveraging the EU’s single

market.[3] Economic policy coordination not only includes the broad economic policy guidelines on budgetary, fiscal and monetary measures but also covers the adoption of employment guidelines as part of the European Employment Strategy (EES).

As a response to the 2008 financial crisis, the European Commission established the European Semester, an annual policy coordination framework aimed at identifying and correcting macroeconomic imbalances between EU member states. Its establishment in 2010 led to the integration of the EU's Broad Economic Policy Guidelines and the EU's Employment Guidelines into a single set of Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (IGs), setting employment and social policy priorities based on benchmarking, monitoring and learning rather than legislation.

The European Semester consists of an annual Sustainable Growth Survey, setting out the general economic, employment and social policy priorities for the EU over the next 12 to 18 months, and a Joint Employment Report, which examines key employment and social developments as well as related policy measures in each of the member states, issuing country-specific recommendations for action. Within the European Commission, economic policies are coordinated by the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs (DG ECFIN) and the Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), whereas their employment and social components are coordinated by the DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL). Financial backing is provided by five Structural and Investment Funds of the EU's Cohesion Policy, in particular the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), aimed at reducing economic and social disparities between member states and regions.

Currently, the European Commission's number one priority for economic development is to make the EU more competitive as compared to other major economies, in particular the US and China.[4] The Commission's *Competitiveness Compass for the EU* establishes competitiveness as one of the EU's overarching principles for action, its 'front and centre',

[3] Letta, E. (2024). *Much more than a Market. Speed, Security, Solidarity. Empowering the Single Market to deliver a sustainable future and prosperity for all EU Citizens*. Brussels: European Council.
[4] European Commission (2023). *Single Market at 30* and *Long-term competitiveness of the EU: looking beyond 2030.* Communications March 16, 2023.

emphasising the need to invest in skills in order to boost innovation.[5]

The *Compass* is largely based on a detailed report by former European Central Bank President Mario Draghi, in which the shortage of certain skills, both specific and transversal or 'soft' skills, have been identified as one of the key obstacles to Europe's competitiveness that need to be addressed as a 'strategic priority'.[6] More specifically, the Draghi-report proposes a 'new European skills policy' consisting of the redesign of related strategies, tightening up the allocation of ESF+ funds (see 3.2 of this overview), the revision of curricula, the promotion and reform of vocational education and training, and improvements in the working conditions of teachers.[7]

The European Commission, for its part, included the improvement of 'the access to and quality of early childhood education' in its recommendations to the European Council on the euro area's economic policy for 2025-2026, which aim to 'facilitate the labour market integration of underrepresented groups, in particular women, young people, low-skilled as well as persons with disabilities, and people with a migrant background'.[8]

Assuming a positive correlation between arts-based activities and economic development, the use of arts-related skills, processes and experiences as educational tools not only fosters cultural awareness and job perspectives in the cultural and creative sector, but also serves to stimulate interest and learning in other, non-artistic, disciplines and domains. Implemented consistently, it contributes to the development of the 'soft' skills required to function in teams and develop innovative solutions: creativity, problem-solving, adaptability, out-of-the-box thinking, collaboration, open-mindedness, intercultural skills and the like. Consequently, in terms of employment perspectives, both direct and indirect outcomes are to be considered.

As an economic sector, the EU's cultural and creative industries consist of more than

[5] *Competitiveness Compass*, 2-3.
[6] Draghi, M. (2024). *The future of European competitiveness. Part A: A competitiveness strategy for Europe*. Brussels: European Commission, September 2024, 36-38.
[7] Ibid., *Part B: In-depth analysis and recommendations*, 257-279.
[8] European Commission (2024). *Recommendation for a Council recommendation on the economic policy of the euro area*. Communication December 17, 2024, 8.

1.9 million enterprises with a net turnover of € 448 billion in 2021, generating € 190 billion in value added and employing 8.7 million people, or 3.8% of the total workforce in the EU.[9] These figures are only an indication of the sector's actual size, as the statistics are based on criteria for inclusion that in some cases differ from country to country, particularly with regard to certain 'graphic arts' categories (prepress, postpress, reproduction services related to the printing industry) and professions in the areas of sports and recreation. With an average year on year growth of 2.6% over the past decade, the cultural and creative sector is one of the fastest growing sectors of the European economy. However, parts of its arts and arts-related community depend on subsidies and are frequently operating in precarious circumstances.

Policies promoting culture and arts-education are also consistent with the EU's renewed Industrial Policy Strategy, which highlights the need to upgrade European industry for the digital age by supporting innovation, creativity and skills development while providing a favourable environment for entrepreneurship and supporting the scale-up of dynamic small and medium-sized enterprises.[10]

Obviously, policies facilitating economic development in general and policies in support of the cultural and creative sector in particular imply multiple efforts for the development of appropriate skills. Those fostered by cultural literacy and arts-based education are areas with the potential of enhancing synergies in recommendations, guidelines, funding and implementation as part of policies or policy components more specifically related to social integration, innovation, cultural heritage and education. In that respect, the economic policies of the EU and its member states constitute the overarching framework for those policies.

3.2. Social Inclusion

European social policies aim to promote employment and social inclusion, improve living and working conditions, provide social security and advance gender equality. These policies are

[9] EUROSTAT (2024). *Culture statistics*. *Datasets extracted in May 2024*. Online publications (PDFs). https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Culture_statistics
[10] European Commission (2020). *A New Industrial Strategy for Europe*. Communication March 10, 2020.

generally the competence and responsibility of the individual member states but certain aspects are a shared competence with the EU. The European Parliament and the European Commission can adopt incentive measures to support and complement the actions of the member states in certain areas, such as the fight against social exclusion. They may also define minimum requirements in the form of directives, enabling member states to adopt stricter provisions. Over the years, the EU has come up with a series of instruments including laws, funds and projects to better coordinate and monitor national policies. The EU also encourages its member states to share best practices on issues such as social inclusion, poverty reduction and minimum income.

At the Gothenburg Social Summit in 2017, the EU proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Pillar is structured around three chapters – equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions; social protection and inclusion – and sets out twenty key principles considered essential for a social Europe that is 'strong, just, inclusive and full of opportunity in the 21st century'. 'Education, training and life-long learning' constitute one of these principles.[11]

The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, presented by the European Commission in March 2021, proposes three 'social headline targets' to be achieved in the EU by 2030: at least 78% of the population aged between 20 and 64 should be in employment; at least 60% of adults should receive annual training; and the number of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion should be reduced by at least 15 million, of which at least 5 million should be children.[12] A Social Scoreboard is designed to monitor their evolution in the member states. The Social Scoreboard's core indicators serve as the analytical basis for the Joint Employment Report, which tracks the implementation of EU directives.

As an immediate outcome of the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan, the European Child Guarantee was adopted in June 2021, aiming to ensure that every child in Europe at risk of poverty or social exclusion has free access to basic rights such as healthcare and

[11] European Commission (2016). *Launching a consultation on a European Pillar of Social Rights*. Communication March 8, 2016.
[12] European Commission (2021). *The European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 9-12.

education. Directly linked to similar measures such as the Youth Guarantee and Youth Employment Initiative, it promotes education and employment as the key pathways to achieving social inclusion and has become part of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, which fosters 'engaging', 'connecting' and 'empowering' young people while providing them with the necessary resources to take part in society.[13]

The main instrument supporting the implementation of the European Pillar of Social Rights is the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), providing an essential contribution to the EU's employment, social, education and skills development policies, as well as to structural reforms in these cross-cutting areas. As one of the Structural and Investment Funds under the EU's Cohesion Policy, the ESF+ also supports economic, territorial and social cohesion in the EU, reducing disparities between member states and regions. Support under the ESF+ is supervised by the European Commission but largely managed by the member states. Funding therefore takes place through two distinctive strands: the Shared Management Strand implemented by member states in consultation with the European Commission, with a budget of € 142.7 billion for the period 2021-2027, of which € 95.1 billion from the EU budget; and the Employment and Social Innovation Strand implemented by the Commission with a budget of close to € 762 million for 2021-2027. For 2014-2020, the ESF budget was € 155.8 billion (including € 8.9 billion from the Youth Employment Initiative, since 2021 integrated into the ESF+), supporting close to 65 million participants, of whom about one third – including 6.9 million disadvantaged youth – found a job, were engaged in job searches, gained a qualification or were in education or training.[14]

The ESF+ is flanked by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), supporting national social and economic policies with a budget of € 226 billion for 2021-2027, and with several cultural components via its Interreg projects stimulating territorial cohesion.

ESF+ guidelines specify that member states must dedicate at least 25% of their ESF+ resources to social inclusion measures, such as community-based services, active inclusion measures and targeted support to marginalised groups. Member states with a level of child

[13] European Commission (2018). *Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people: A new EU Youth Strategy*. Communication May 22, 2018.
[14] European Commission (2024). *ESF Synthesis Report of 2022 AIRs*. Brussels: European Commission.

poverty above the EU average (AROPE: 23,4% in 2019) must allocate at least 5% of their ESF+ resources to tackle child poverty. The other member states are also required to allocate an appropriate amount of their ESF+ resources to combat child poverty. Funding under the ESF+ may be used to test or upscale initiatives to improve access to public services or enable more effective use of national, regional, and local budgets. In addition, the ESF+ is meant to be used to develop mainline services and programmes to better reach children at risk of poverty or social exclusion.[15]

EU social policies and their funding are consistent with and complementary to other EU policies aimed at social inclusion, employment, education and innovation. There are strong links between the objectives of the ESF+ and educational and cultural policies in favour of arts-based education, in particular those under the Creative Europe and Erasmus+ programmes (see 3.4 and 3.5 of this overview).

It remains to be seen to which extent these links are being or will be capitalised on in practice.

3.3. Technology

Developing new technologies to 'close the innovation gap' and accelerate the 'twin digital and green transition' is one of the EU's top priorities. In the context of its *Competitiveness Compass*, the European Commission decided to 'work with the European Investment Bank (EIB) Group and private investors to deploy a TechEU investment programme to help bridge the financing gap to support disruptive innovation, strengthen Europe's industrial capacity and scale-up companies which invest in innovative technologies such as AI, clean tech, critical raw materials, energy storage, quantum computing, semiconductors, life sciences, and neurotechnology'.[16]

Accordingly, several EU policies and programmes are supporting research & innovation (R&I), digitalisation, and the development of appropriate skills. The European Research Area (ERA)

[15] European Commission (2024). *Ninth Report on Economic, Social and Territorial Cohesion*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
[16] *Competitiveness Compass*, 5.

was established in 2000 to increase the competitiveness of European research institutions and encourage coordination between national and regional research programmes. Consecutive Framework Programmes for Research and Technological Development have provided financial support until they were renamed Horizon 2020 for the period 2014-2020 and Horizon Europe for 2021-2027. Horizon Europe, the EU's main R&I funding instrument, has a budget of close to € 96 billion for the current period.

Within the framework of the European Research Area, the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) was created in 2008 with a view to stimulating innovation through the creation of highly integrated Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). The KICs bring together representatives from higher education, research, business, public and non-profit organisations in order to produce new innovation models. The EU's CORDIS website provides detailed information on closed and ongoing R&I projects.

In 2021, the European Research Area gained new impetus by linking it to a Pact for Research and Innovation in Europe, determining the fundamental values and principles for R&I in Europe and priority areas for joint action, inviting the member states to prioritise investments and reforms in sync with the ERA priorities, and stressing the significance of synergies between R&I policies with sectoral policies to boost the EU's innovation ecosystem.[17]

The 'twin digital and green transition' policies are underpinned by two comprehensive strategies: the Digital Decade Policy Programme for 2030 and the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age. The Digital Decade Policy Programme includes a number of targets for Europe's digital transformation that are to be achieved by 2030 through an annual cooperation mechanism and framework for multi-country projects. Among these targets, the ones most relevant for the different categories of education are the following: basic digital skills: 80% of adults (from currently 54%); 20 million employed ICT specialists (from 8.9 million) including more women; intensified levels of digitalisation: 90% of SMEs (from 55%); businesses using cloud computing services, big data and artificial intelligence: 75% (from

[17] Cf. European Council (2022). *Prague Declaration on Synergies in the Research and Innovation Funding in Europe*. Prague: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

34%, 14% and 8% respectively).[18] The Digital Decade Policy Programme fits into the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age, with the overall objective of reducing carbon emissions towards 'a climate-neutral Europe by 2050'.[19]

Within the European Commission, R&I policies (including the Horizon Europe funding programme) are coordinated by the Directorate-General Research and Innovation (DG RTD). The Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology (DG CNECT) is responsible for policies aimed at making Europe fit for the digital age. The European Commission has its own research service for policymaking, the Joint Research Centre, a Directorate-General (DG JRC) under the responsibility of the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, who also leads the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC).

Digital transition and technological development policies require the development of skills and competences that may be facilitated by various forms of arts-based learning. Arts-related activities, including arts-based education and cultural heritage programmes, have been quick to adopt digital tools and develop new ones, including VR (virtual reality), AR (augmented reality) and AI (artificial intelligence) applications. Actually, the cultural and creative industries have been among the first industry sectors to replace most of their 'analogue' production processes by integrated and collaborative digital workflows since the late 1980s.[20] Different subsectors of the cultural and creative industries have accumulated years of experience in developing the kind of skills that education systems are now having to cope with.

'Twinning' digital and green transition policies not automatically implies synergies between the two or with other policies.[21] As to possible synergies with policies fostering arts-based education, their contribution to developing digital savviness, for instance, will be different

[18] European Commission (2024). *2030 Digital Decade. Report on the state of the Digital Decade 2024*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
[19] European Commission (2023). *A Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age*. Communication February 1, 2023.
[20] Ernst & Young (2007). *Competitiveness of the European Graphic Industry*. Brussels: European Commission.
[21] Aloisi, A. (2025). *Integrating the EU Twin (Green and Digital) Transition? Synergies, Tensions and Pathways for the Future of Work*. Seville: Joint Research Centre.

from helping to raise awareness on environmental issues.

Notably, the Erasmus+ supported CYCLE project (Circular Economy Competences – Making the Case for Lifelong Learning), recognising the central role that education and awareness play in this transition, already trains trainers in circular economy principles and practices. The EU's New European Bauhaus initiative also tries to connect technological innovation and culture in local communities to favour sustainable development, social inclusion and the reduction of carbon emissions.

3.4. Cultural Literacy

Cultural literacy is at the heart of the CLiViE project. And EU culture policies are guided by the European Commission's New European Agenda for Culture and a series of multiannual Workplans for Culture. The New European Agenda for Culture provides a framework for cooperation at the European level and develops working methods with member states, civil society organisations and international partners in working groups applying an 'open method of coordination' (OMC). The member states define the priorities, actions and working methods for policy collaboration through the Workplans, which are then adopted by the Council of the European Union. In general, EU culture policies are determined by the recognition that, more than producing purely economic spin-offs, 'cultural activities help build social capital, the glue that holds communities together; they help create trust, tolerance, solidarity and cohesion'.[22]

The EU Workplan for Culture for the period 2023-2026, the fourth since 2014, stipulates 'the importance of mainstreaming the cultural dimension into all relevant policy areas, programmes and initiatives, and the need for increased synergies', specifying that 'cross-sectoral synergies between schools, cultural organisations, civil society and other actors must be established, in order to fully harness the transformative potential of culture for

[22] European Commission (2023). *Culture and Democracy, the evidence. How citizens' participation in cultural activities enhances civic engagement, democracy and social cohesion. Lessons from international research*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

enhancing democracy'.[23] The Workplan aims at reinforcing Europe's cultural and creative sectors; enhancing cultural participation and the role of culture and cultural heritage in society; unleashing the power of culture with regard to climate change; and strengthening the cultural dimension of EU external relations.[24]

The New European Agenda for Culture consists of three strategic areas, with specific objectives corresponding to social, economic and external dimensions:

- Social: harnessing the power of culture and cultural diversity for social cohesion by fostering people's cultural capability by making available a wide range of cultural activities and providing opportunities to participate actively; encouraging the mobility of professionals in the cultural and creative sectors; protecting and promoting Europe's cultural heritage as a shared resource, to raise awareness of Europeans' common history and values and reinforce a sense of common identity.
- Economic: supporting culture-based creativity in education and innovation for jobs and growth by promoting the arts, culture and creative thinking in formal and non-formal education and training at all levels and in lifelong learning; fostering favourable ecosystems for cultural and creative industries, promoting access to finance, innovation capacity, fair remuneration of authors and creators and cross-sectoral cooperation; promoting the skills needed by cultural and creative sectors, including digital, entrepreneurial, and transversal skills.
- External: strengthening the EU's international cultural relations by supporting culture as an engine for sustainable development; promoting culture and intercultural dialogue to strengthen international partnerships; reinforcing cooperation on cultural heritage.[25]

Complementing the EU Workplan for Culture, the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage promotes and puts into practice an integrated and participatory approach to cultural heritage. It aims at setting a common direction for heritage-related activities in EU policies

[23] European Council (2022). Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023-2026. *Official Journal of the European Union*, December 7, 2022, 1-7.
[24] Ibid., 3-4.
[25] European Commission (2018). *A New European Agenda for Culture*. Communication May 22, 2018, 2-8.

and programmes. It seeks to serve as an inspiration for regions and cities in Europe, as well as for cultural heritage organisations and networks when developing their own actions on cultural heritage. In the context of the New European Agenda for Culture, the Framework was prepared through regular exchanges between the EU institutions and member states, civil society organisations, cultural operators and international organisations such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO. It also builds on lessons learned from projects carried out for the European Year of Cultural Heritage, which took place in 2018.[26] One of these was a UNESCO-EU pilot survey on the integration of living heritage in school-based education held in schools affiliated to the UNESCO Associated Schools Network in Europe.[27] In support of cultural heritage initiatives, a Common European Data Space for Cultural Heritage was created in 2021 to accelerate the digitalisation of cultural assets.

In line with the strategic guidelines provided by the New European Agenda for Culture and its consecutive Workplans, the Creative Europe programme aims to promote cultural diversity, cultural heritage and artistic creation by increasing access to culture and cross-border collaboration. The programme provides financial support for projects that enhance the visibility and circulation of European cultural works and improve access to culture, in particular for underrepresented groups. By encouraging cooperation across member states and with the other European countries, it aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the European cultural and creative sectors by supporting these in contributing to sustainable growth, jobs and social cohesion.

The Creative Europe programme is divided in a Culture Strand, a Media Strand and a Cross-sectoral Strand. The Culture Strand supports a wide range of cultural and creative sectors including architecture, cultural heritage, design, literature, publishing, music and the performing arts. The Media Strand mainly supports and promotes Europe's film and audiovisual sector, whereas the purpose of the Cross-sectoral Strand is to reinforce collaboration between different cultural and creative sectors in order to help them address common challenges and develop innovative approaches to content creation, access,

[26] European Commission (2019). *European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage. Commission Staff Working Document*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
[27] UNESCO (2021). *Teaching and Learning with Living Heritage. Pilot Survey on the UNESCO ASPnet Schools in the European Union. Summary of Key Findings*. Paris: UNESCO.

distribution and promotion across cultural, creative and other economic sectors.[28]

The Creative Europe programme has been designed to be consistent and complementary with other EU instruments, in particular Erasmus+, ESF+, ERDF and Horizon Europe. It aims at developing synergies with eight policy areas:

- Education and youth policies, particularly activities aimed at reinforcing all aspects of creativity in education and enhancing individual key competencies;
- Employment and social policies, as defined in the overall EU budget cluster 'Investing in People, Social Cohesion and Values';
- The EU's Rights and Values programme active in the fields of media pluralism, European identity, values and cultural heritage;
- The Digital Europe programme, in particular the digital transformation of the cultural heritage sector and synergies between digital skills development and issues such as media literacy and film education;
- The EU's R&I programme, including Horizon Europe's 'Inclusive, Resilient and Secure Societies' and 'Digital Industry' clusters;
- Regional, urban and rural policies, which are instrumental in promoting the restoration of cultural heritage and supporting cultural and creative industries;
- The Single Market programme, by fostering creative talent, skills development, cross-border cooperation, mobility and cultural tourism;
- External action policies, complementing Creative Europe's cultural activities such as festivals outside EU member states.[29]

Creative Europe's draft budget for 2025 amounts to € 338.3 billion, including € 112 billion for the Culture Strand, € 196 for the Media Strand and € 30.3 billion for the Cross-sectoral Strand, supplemented by € 8.5 billion through the European Commission's DG EAC and € 21.8 billion through DG CNECT.[30] In addition, many of the R&I projects funded under the Horizon Europe

[28] European Commission (2018). *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Creative Europe programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013*. Communication May 30, 2018.
[29] Ibid., 4-6.
[30] European Commission (2024). *2025 Annual Work Programme for the implementation of the Creative Europe Programme*. Brussels: European Commission, 68-71.

programme are already aimed at fostering cultural awareness and safeguarding Europe's cultural heritage, in particular its Cluster 'Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society'.

At the EU Council's 2021 summit in Porto Santo, the Porto Santo Charter was introduced as a comprehensive roadmap fostering cultural democracy. The Charter recognises cultural institutions as educational territories and promotes a concept of cultural citizenship based on pluralism, while outlining the social impact of culture in strengthening democracy. As a guide for policymakers, and in the same vein as the EU's New European Agenda for Culture, the Charter recommends the development of cross-sectoral action plans for education and culture, responding to the challenges and creative potential of a more diverse, inclusive and democratic Europe.[31]

3.5. Education

The European Education Area (EEA) is the current strategic framework for EU cooperation in education and training, following previous frameworks ET 2010 and ET 2020, which established 'inclusive education, equality, equity, non-discrimination and the promotion of civic competences' as priority areas for European cooperation in the field of education and training. The idea to create an EEA was launched together with the Pillar of Social Rights at the Gothenburg Social Summit in 2017. As the essential structure for collaboration between EU member states and key stakeholders in education and training, the EEA focuses on supporting member states with the reforms of their education systems.

Whereas the content and structure of these systems remain the competence of the relevant national and local authorities, the EEA, in synergy with other educational policies (such as the European Skills Agenda, the Digital Education Action Plan, the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area of the so-called Bologna Process), seeks to strengthen policy cooperation across Europe by identifying targets and indicators to guide local policies and encouraging stakeholders' engagement with the framework's initiatives aimed at skills development and inclusive education. Progress towards achieving its objectives is being monitored through the annual Education and Training monitor of the European Semester

[31] GEPAC (2021). *Porto Santo Charter. Culture and the Promotion of Democracy: Towards a European Cultural Citizenship*. Lisbon: GEPAC.

process.[32]

In addition, EEA working groups bring together officials from EU institutions, government officials from EU and other European countries, social partners, and representatives from national and international stakeholder organisations. Working groups have been established under the ET 2010 work programme to implement the Open Method of Coordination in education and training. They are the principal forum for mutual learning and include working groups on early childhood education, schools, vocational education and training, digital education, and equality and values in education and training, among others.

The EEA's strategic priorities for 2021-2030 are:

- Improving quality, equity, inclusion and success for all in education and training;
- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality for all;
- Enhancing competences and motivation in the education profession;
- Reinforcing European higher education;
- Supporting the green and digital transitions in and through education and training.[33]

The following targets have been set to fully realise the EEA:

- The share of low-achieving 15-year-olds in basic skills should be less than 15% by 2030;
- The share of low-achieving eight-graders in computer and information literacy should be less than 15% by 2030;
- At least 96% of children between 3 years old and the starting age for compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education and care by 2030;
- The share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 9% by 2030;
- The share of 25-34 year-olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 45% by 2030;

[32] European Council (2021). Council Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030). *Official Journal of the European Union*, February 26, 2021.
[33] Ibid., 4-7.

- The share of recent VET graduates benefiting from exposure to work-based learning during their vocational education and training should be at least 60% by 2025;
- At least 47% of adults aged 25-64 should have participated in learning during the last 12 months by 2025.[34]

A mid-term report on the achievement and progress of these targets is to be published in the course of 2025.

In the meantime, the European Commission implemented a wide range of initiatives in the context of the EEA, such as the development of a European Toolkit for Schools, an online platform for teachers offering examples of good practices and resources for introducing collaborative approaches in schools to improve inclusivity and provide equal opportunities. Another online tool is the eTwinning platform, aimed at connecting teachers and classrooms across Europe, supporting teacher training courses on citizenship education.

Vocational education and training is supported by the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training, EQAVET, providing common principles and indicators that may help in assessing and improving the quality of VET systems across Europe.

The Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027 is a policy initiative that sets out a common strategy for high-quality, inclusive and accessible digital education in Europe, supporting the adaptation of member states' education and training systems to the digital age. One of its initiatives is the creation of the European Digital Education Hub, an online platform connecting teacher trainers, school representatives and policy makers with the objective of overcoming the current fragmentation of policy, research and implementation practices across Europe.[35]

Among numerous other initiatives, the #BeInclusive EU Sport Awards reward organisations whose work uses the influence of sports to improve social inclusion of disadvantaged people such as ethnic minorities, refugees, migrants, people with disabilities, vulnerable young

[34] Ibid., 15-16.
[35] European Commission (2020). *Digital Education Action Plan 2021-2027. Resetting education and training for the digital age*. Communication September 30, 2020.

people and others.

The main funding instruments for EU education policies are the Erasmus+ and European Social Fund (ESF+) programmes. Over the past 20 years, the Erasmus programme enabled international exchange and mobility for more than 3 million students. With a budget of € 26.2 billion for 2021-2027, Erasmus+ places a strong focus on social inclusion, the green and digital transitions, and stimulating young people's participation in democratic life. In addition to offering study grants, Erasmus+ supports teaching, research, networking and policy debate on EU topics. Most EU funding for organisations in the field of education also comes through the Erasmus+ programme, supporting initiatives and activities that develop innovative policies and practices. Its sports chapter promotes grassroots activities in sports. The Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange platform enables young people in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to engage in intercultural experiences online, as part of their formal and non-formal education.[36]

The Erasmus+ programme is managed by the EU Commission's European Education and Culture Executive Agency, EACEA, which manages funding for education, culture, audiovisual, sports, citizenship and volunteering in conjunction with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (DG EAC). Next to the Erasmus+ programme, the EACEA manages the Creative Europe and a few other programmes, such as the European Solidarity Corps, which offers opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects that benefit communities across Europe. In addition, EACEA supervises the Eurydice network, which produces analysis and comparable data on education systems and policies in Europe, the Youth Wiki, an online encyclopedia of national youth policies across Europe, and certain funding opportunities for pilot projects and preparatory actions.

Funding opportunities related to skills and training are also offered through the Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL), which within the EU Commission has the main responsibility for the ESF+ programme. EU funding programmes

[36] European Commission (2025). *Amendment of 2025 annual work programme "Erasmus+": the Union Programme for Education, Training, Youth and Sport*. Brussels: European Commission, March 5, 2025.

are propped up to some extent by the EIB through two budget lines, 'social and territorial cohesion' and 'accelerate technological innovation and develop human capital', together making up for about half of the total investment commitments of € 95 billion for 2025.

In the EU member states and other European countries, National Agencies for Higher Education, Vocational Education and Training, School Education and Adult Education liaise with the European Commission for the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme. National Agencies are independent legal entities that promote the Erasmus+ programme, select, monitor and evaluate Erasmus+ projects, support participants and applicants, and work with the other National Agencies.

There are strong linkages between EU education policies and other EU policies, in particular those directly geared at European culture and cultural literacy. For example, EU education policies are primarily concerned with cooperation between member states and the development of particular (digital, creative) skills, and less with propositions for the actual integration of the arts and culture in (inclusive) education systems, which is being applied rather differently in each member state. At the level of school curricula, arts-based education is closely linked to collaborative and active learning pedagogies, which, despite an extensive body of literature and research, have hardly been explicitly translated into EU and national policies so far.

In general, the EU institutions consider arts-based education as a driver of cultural awareness, social inclusion and diversity, aimed at fostering a common and cohesive European identity and at developing skills that contribute to making the EU a more competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy.[37] By this logic, there are synergies between the EEA and the New European Agenda for Culture, in particular between the Erasmus+ and ESF+ programmes on the one hand and the Creative Europe programme on the other. In a wider perspective, links with components of the Horizon Europe and ERDF instruments also have the potential to enhance synergies between educational and other policies containing aspects of furthering social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, creativity,

[37] See CLiViE Deliverable D2.1, *Policy overview and best practice report on arts-based education across Europe*.

critical thinking and innovation.

4. National Policies

Deliverable D2.2 provides seven national reports on arts-based education contexts with an overview of each country's policy and pedagogy practices with regard to arts-based education, policies and programmes on promoting social inclusion and tolerance, and scale and scope of its cultural and creative industries and arts sector. The overviews from the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland show that the exposure of children and young people to the arts in formal and informal education varies from country to country, between urban and rural settings, and according to social status.

The education systems of EU member states are very similar. Different approaches to the integration of the arts and culture in primary and secondary education stem from their diverse cultural and historical backgrounds. Two of the sample countries, Germany and Italy, are founding members of the EU, one, Finland, with a Nordic and politically neutral heritage, joined the EU in 1995, and four, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and the Czech Republic, have been part of the Soviet Union or its associated COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance), before joining the EU in 2004.

In each of the seven sample countries, culture, in particular cultural heritage, is high on the agenda of government policies. So are policies aimed at tolerance and social inclusion. The integration of the arts and culture into national education policies, albeit officially conceded, is still weak in most cases, especially in formal education. In primary and secondary schools, arts are part of the curriculum, but time spent on arts classes does not exceed a few hours per week, with a decreasing tendency in upper secondary and vocational education. Moreover, art is often taught as a separate topic, limited to the history and canon of art, without the perspective of developing creative and social skills. Access to culture and cultural awareness are mainly fostered by extra-curricular activities such as visits to museums, historical sites or cultural events.

However, arts schools, informal arts-based education and grassroots cultural activities are

flourishing in each of the sample countries. National and local government policies actively support the arts outside the general education system, including private and public schools (both vocational and in higher education) offering courses in the visual or performing arts and organisations involved in informal arts-based education or other cultural activities. The bulk of financial support is provided by national and local authorities, but in many cases aligned with EU policies and the various EU funding programmes. In several cases, cross-border initiatives independent of EU programmes were initiated by local government institutions and non-governmental organisations.

In each of the case study countries, the cultural and creative industries constitute important (albeit fragmented) economic sectors, valued as such by their respective governments. Due to historically uneven political and economic development, their main characteristics (film, audiovisual, software, publishing etc) are different from country to country, but government policies are mostly in line with corresponding EU policies, in particular with regard to R&I, lifelong learning, and the development of digital skills. Gender equality, social justice and the inclusion of vulnerable groups are also references entering more and more into the equation. The development of Europe's cultural and creative industries is perhaps the strongest incentive to close skills development gaps in school curricula and implement more coherent arts-based education practices.

5. Conclusions

The EU education policies related to the promotion of cultural literacy and arts education are consistent with several other European and national policies aimed at social inclusion and fostering intercultural dialogue, creativity, critical thinking and innovation. Cross-sectoral synergies exist (already or potentially) between the following policy frameworks and programmes. For example, **economic development policies**, as defined in the European Commission's Competitive Compass, European Employment Strategy and other strategy documents and supported by the Structural and Investment Funds of the EU Cohesion Policy. Together with the guiding and monitoring instruments of the European Semester's coordination process they are geared to build a more resilient, competitive, inclusive and democratic Europe. Skills development has been identified as one of the priorities in this

context, with an important part to be played by the cultural and creative industries as an economic sector.

In addition, there are **social policies** aimed at promoting employment and social inclusion, improving living and working conditions, providing social security and advancing gender equality. The European Pillar of Social Rights has been built around twenty key principles considered essential for social cohesion, and 'education, training and life-long learning' constitutes one of these principles. Its Action Plan led to the adoption of a European Child Guarantee aimed at ensuring that every child at risk of poverty or social exclusion has free access to basic rights such as healthcare and education. It has become part of the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027, which fosters 'engaging', 'connecting' and 'empowering' young people while providing them with the necessary resources to take part in society. The EU's social policies are supported by two Structural and Investment Funds of the EU's Cohesion Policy, the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

In parallel, EU policies fostering the **development of new technologies** in order to 'close the innovation gap' and accelerate the 'twin digital and green transition' as one of the EU's top priorities underpinned by skills development and Research and Innovation (R&I). The ERA has been established to increase the competitiveness of European research institutions and encourage coordination between national and regional research programmes. These are mainly supported by the Horizon Europe programme. Similarly, the Digital Decade Policy Programm includes a number of targets for Europe's digital transformation to be achieved by 2030, among which the promotion of digital skills and digitalisation as part of the Green Deal Industrial Plan for the Net-Zero Age, aimed at reducing carbon emissions for a climate-neutral Europe by 2050.

Relevant EU **culture policies**, guided by the European Commission's New European Agenda for Culture and a series of multiannual Workplans for Culture also need to be taken into account. These are complemented by the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, promoting an integrated and participatory approach to cultural heritage. EU culture policies are supported financially by the Creative Europe programme in close collaboration with other funding instruments such as Erasmus+, ESF+, ERDF and Horizon Europe. From the

outset, the Creative Europe programme aims at developing synergies with education and youth policies, employment and social policies, R&I policies, regional, urban and rural policies, the EU's Single Market, Rights and Values and Digital Europe programmes and external action policies.

Finally, **education policies** within the EEA as the strategic framework for EU cooperation in education and training, aimed at skills development and inclusive education and with links to other educational policies such as the European Skills Agenda, the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area of the so-called Bologna Process. Progress towards achieving its objectives is being monitored through the annual Education and Training monitor of the European Semester process. Relevant EEA initiatives include the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EQAVET), the Digital Education Action Plan and online platforms such as the European Toolkit for Schools, eTwinning, and the European Digital Education Hub. The main funding instruments for EU education policies are the Erasmus+ and European Social Fund (ESF+) programmes.

Overall, there are strong linkages between these policies, strengthened by the coordination of most of the EU funding instruments. National government policies also point at synergies between education, culture and other policies concerned with the development of creative skills and their implications for social inclusion, especially where policies are accompanied by the allocation of financial resources. Specifically, when it comes to the focus of the CLiViE project on arts-based education there remain enormous opportunities to better align some of these policies and initiatives to ensure joined up thinking and value for money. However, the main challenge remains their practical implementation on the ground.

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