

A pluralistic and innovative vision of culture key to strengthening European identity



□□ □Culture should be on a more prominent position on the EU's political agenda, and the next multiannual EU budget should provide adequate support for cities and regions in the management, use and development of cultural heritage, the European Committee of the Regions argues in an opinion prepared by Vincenzo Bianco (IT/PES), Member of Catania Municipal Council.

Mr Bianco's [opinion](#), which will be adopted at the CoR plenary session on 12 February, underlines that culture must not be seen as just a sector-specific policy and calls on to recognise its contribution to economic, social and territorial cohesion in Europe. Moreover, a broad understanding of culture and Europe's cultural diversity, going beyond solely the conservation and protection of tangible heritage, consolidates European citizenship and drives forward integration and social inclusion. Therefore, it is important to strengthen synergies between culture and other policies such as tourism, regional policy, education, youth and R&D.

The CoR fully acknowledges the contribution of culture and cultural diversity to sustainable development, as recognised in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and pledges to work at local and regional level to reach this goal. It further recommends promoting the use of cultural resources, particularly among the younger generations, developing integrated lifelong education and training policies and encouraging local communities to take part in cultural initiatives. These include promoting sustainable cultural tourism, supporting the protection and physical safeguarding of cultural heritage and building up basic cultural products, such as public library services.

Mr Bianco's opinion also invites regions and cities in Europe, as well as regional cultural heritage organisations and networks, to develop wide-reaching and effective actions and strategic plans on promoting and capitalising on cultural heritage. Since cultural heritage goes beyond borders, it points to the importance of cross-border and inter-regional cooperation in the field of culture.

"Culture is our past, our present and our future. A pluralistic and innovative vision of culture, involving the citizens more actively in cultural growth processes, is key to European integration. Local and regional authorities play a major role in promoting and capitalising on the artistic and cultural life of their communities. As such, these authorities should have access to appropriate resources and be empowered through innovative local and regional strategies having a strong territorial development component", Mr Bianco says.

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