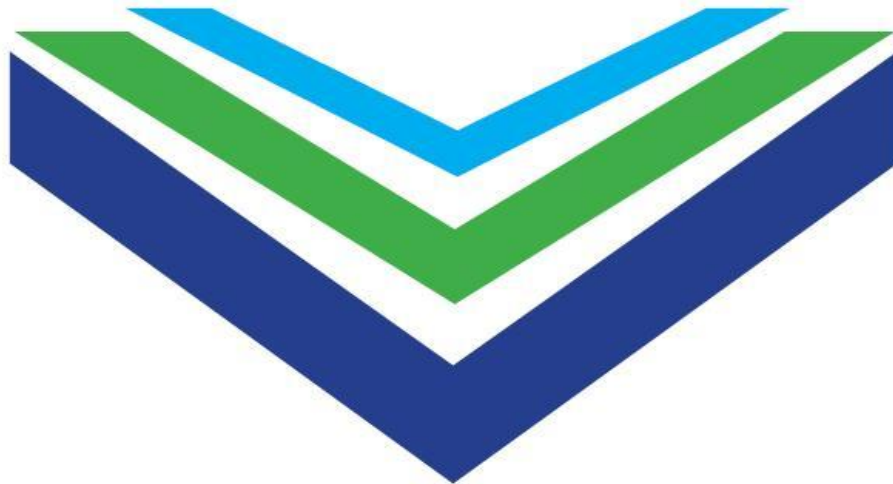


# ACCESS TO CULTURE



**A fundamental right of all citizens**

**Active citizens in Europe through  
Access to Culture**

*“Citizenship cannot be understood without referring to culture [...] A non-cultural citizenship is impossible. To state that an abstract citizenship is possible, beyond or ahead of culture, is to show a complete ignorance of human life”<sup>1</sup>*

## We are...

- [ The Audience Participation Working Group, one of the topic-based working groups of the **Access to Culture Platform** created under the *European Agenda for Culture* (2007);
- [ A civil society platform composed of cultural organisations representing diverse arts, that advocates for Culture as a fundamental right of all citizens;
- [ A platform that formulates priorities for action to place Access to Culture in a key position in all policy areas at local, regional, national and EU level;
- [ A promoter of the legal framework of Access to Culture and nine recommendations developed in the Policy Guidelines of the Access to Culture Platform.

## We advocate that ...

- [ Active citizenship should be a central objective of any democracy;
- [ It is essential to highlight the cultural dimension of the European Union, reflecting cultural diversity of our European societies.
- [ Societies which possess a strong artistic and cultural life see an increase of civic engagement and therefore a strengthening of active citizenship;
- [ Audience participation is the indispensable foundation of creative practice, in the same way that the arts are the cultural DNA of creative industries;
- [ Cultural institutions have to take responsibility for involving citizens as active participants, furthering cohesion and the European integration process.
- [ Communication still needs to be improved among those institutions dealing with citizenship and the cultural sector.

## Our main aims are to...

- [ Advocate for the importance of taking citizens' preoccupations into account in all levels of policy making;
- [ Achieve the recognition of audience participation as a fundamental right and as a stepping stone to gaining political and social objectives such as creative societies, a strong educational system, flourishing cultural industries, intercultural dialogue, foster democracy, and active citizenship ...;
- [ Raise awareness of the legal framework of Access to Culture as a legal instrument to be translated into genuine policies;
- [ Increase communication between policy makers and cultural stakeholders and organisations within the European Union.
- [ Follow up the Access to Culture policies at local, regional, national and EU level with promotions and making proposals for improvement.

## Our approach towards these aims is...

- [ To define **the cultural component of citizenship** and show through the artistic practice why Access to Culture is crucial for the EU's 2020 strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> Generalitat Valenciana, Conselleria d'Educació, "Citizenship and Culture: The Cultural Reinvention of Citizenship" in *Citizenship and Human Rights Education*.

## Why the cultural component of citizenship?

- [ Culture is an inherent part of the human being,- and thus of our societies;
- [ Good practices in the arts demonstrate their key role in society;
- [ The role of citizens and their active participation is fundamental in shaping an inclusive Europe;
- [ Article 11 in the Lisbon Treaty provides a good opportunity for active citizenship through the so-called 'European Citizen's Initiative' (ECI);
- [ Culture is gaining importance in the political field, starting from the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union: Access to Culture as a fundamental right of all citizens.

## Our past...

We worked and produced:

- [ Access to Culture Platform Policy Guidelines, nine recommendations;
- [ Audience Participation Working Group Position Paper; and position papers of two further working groups on creation and creativity and education and learning
- [ Kick off note: Towards a cultural component of citizenship. The role of the citizen in building Europe.

## Our present...

- [ Bringing together members of the Platform, stakeholders in the field and experts to contribute to the reflection process;
- [ Collecting know-how and analysing the current developments of the definition of the cultural component of citizenship;
- [ Define the different layers of citizenship and their cultural components;
- [ Encourage and promote best practices in the cultural sector;
- [ Set up public forums for reflection and exchange on questions concerning culture and citizenship in Europe.

## Our future...

- [ 2011- 2013: 3 year process to develop and present concrete policy recommendations;
- [ Create alliances to set up a code of conduct addressed to different target groups;
- [ Advocate for 2013 – European Year of Citizens Through Culture;
- [ Set up communication and advocacy in the current EU framework of the 2020 Agenda on local, regional, national and European level.

## Our method is based on...

- [ Working group meetings to implement our work plan;
- [ Short-term brief papers with recommendations;
- [ Collection of best practices;
- [ Consultations with civil society through a blog and with experts;
- [ Public forums;
- [ Advocacy and communication in the framework of the Access to Culture Platform.

## What are our current focus topics?

**Based on the Agenda for Culture, Europe's 2020 strategy, Presidency priorities and European years:**  
*Digital Agenda, Youth, Poverty and Social Exclusion, Volunteering, Cohesion, Cultural Tourism, Participation and Democratization*

ACCESS TO CULTURE



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**Access to Culture Platform – Working Group Audience Participation**

Secretariat ACP Platform @ European House for Culture

Place Flagey 18, 1050 Brussels

Belgium

[acpsecretariat@houseforculture.eu](mailto:acpsecretariat@houseforculture.eu)

[www.access-to-culture.eu](http://www.access-to-culture.eu)



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