

**Viviane Hoffmann at CCS Ecosystems conference
“FLIPping the Odds”
29 January, Brussels (La Vallée)**

***Title:* Bringing cultural and creative ecosystems to the next level**

***Event:* "Financing, Innovation, Entrepreneurship and wider Ecosystem support for Cultural and Creative Industries
"FLIPping the Odds"**

***Date and Location:* 29 January, Brussels (La Vallée creative hub, Molenbeek)**

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear representatives of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, dear colleagues from the European Parliament,

It is a privilege to open this 2nd day of discussions on ecosystems for cultural and creative sectors. Today's session is co-organised by the European Commission and the members of the EU pilot project "Creative FLIP".

I would like to thank the creative hub "La Vallée" for welcoming us. I am impressed to see how this industrial heritage building, dating from the 19th century, in the heart of Molenbeek was

transformed into a creative space for young entrepreneurs and creators. The transformation of a place where former generations worked into a forward-looking creative concept is a perfect illustration of the motto of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, which was: “where the past meets the future”.

It is an inspiring place to talk about present and future challenges for cultural and creative industries, about their added value in building stronger, more inclusive societies, in supporting people to make use of their creative talents, in fostering cultural diversity and innovation and in creating quality jobs in our cities and rural areas.

Today’s discussions are dedicated to innovation ecosystems in which artists and their projects can develop and succeed, in particular through policy support and access to finance.

The importance of creative ecosystems was at the heart of our discussions at the European Creative Industries Summit, in Helsinki last September. The discussion with many of you has continued since then. The European institutions have in the meantime started a new policy cycle.

It is a timely moment to take stock. How did the work progress? How can we bring our discussion – and our work - on cultural and creative ecosystems **to the next level?**

At the European Union level, we continue building on the Commission's New European Agenda for Culture, the Council Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022, as well as on the results of our policy cooperation with the Member States experts through the so-called Open Method of Coordination.

We gathered valuable insights from the work of civil society and from our dialogue with the sector representatives via "Voices of Culture".

Now is the time to use this input, assess where we are, review what has been done so far, and discuss measures for future work at European level, as foreseen by the Council Work Plan for Culture, to **help shape the cultural and creative ecosystems of the future.**

Ecosystems can only develop if there is **cooperation and dialogue.** Music, literature, the performing arts, architecture, fashion – these sectors inspire each other and they often have to tackle similar challenges, for example rapidly changing technologies.

I am very happy to see here today many policy-makers, colleagues from many European Commission departments,

together with cultural and creative sector professionals. This kind of dialogue across sectors and policy areas is essential.

I am also happy to see many local and regional representatives at today's conference. Cultural and creative ecosystems are key in sustaining and rejuvenating the social, economic and cultural life in cities and regions.

Increasing the capacity of cultural and creative sectors locally and regionally means boosting these sectors where they are closest to people. This is why the Commission puts so much emphasis on mutual learning between cities, towns and regions.

Concrete examples of our support to local authorities and cultural operators are *"Culture for Cities and Regions"*, *"Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities"*. We also helped to set up the *"European Creative Hubs Network"*, which is represented here today and in which La Vallée is closely involved.

Last week, we launched a new initiative *"Cultural Heritage in Action: Sharing solutions in European cities and regions"*, as a follow up to the European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage. This new project, which is financed by the Creative Europe programme, showcases cultural heritage practices at local level and enables local authorities to learn from each other. It is foreseen that more than 100 cities and regions across Europe will get involved through specific calls for sharing

practices and participating in study visits, which will be made later this year.

We will also soon be launching a new initiative with the **OECD** on maximising the impact of culture for local development. A series of activities for urban and regional authorities will be organised and will look at the local dimension of cultural participation, cultural employment and cultural enterprises – also in close collaboration with Eurostat.

Smart specialisation strategies, also have a key role to play as they help regions address changing socio-economic realities – you will be talking more about this later today.

Let me also congratulate and wish all the success to this year's *European Capitals of Culture* : Galway in Ireland and Rijeka in Croatia. Being a European Capital of Culture has led many cities to invest successfully in culture, creating jobs and promoting social inclusion. And they can lead to new ways of working together, as you can see from the example of ECBN, the **European Creative Business Network**, which is represented here today.

Finally, culture **requires resources** to thrive: as you know, the Commission has proposed a 30% increase in funding of the new Creative Europe programme for the next 7 years (from 1,46 bn EUR to **1,85 bn**) to provide more opportunities for

cooperation. This is particularly important for cultural and creative professionals who work in smaller structures.

Yet, successful ecosystems need to stand on diversified resources and cannot rely solely on public funds to grow.

That is why the European Union has created the **Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee** Facility to make the access to bank loans easier for SMEs in the cultural and creative sectors. Funding for **over 1300 companies** in the cultural and creative sectors across Europe has been provided so far!

In the new funding period starting next year, this Guarantee Facility will be incorporated into the **Invest-EU** programme. We see this as an excellent opportunity to bring the current Guarantee to the next level, building on its current success.

Cultural and Creative Industries can also benefit from the **Erasmus** programme's cooperation projects and some of the creative hubs here today have been participating in Erasmus actions, for example the Italian hubs **Matera Hub** and **Warehouse**.

To complete the picture, let me also mention that the proposal for the future programme for research and innovation, **Horizon Europe** includes a specific area of work dedicated to cultural heritage and Cultural and Creative Industries.

The Commission also proposed a new **Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC)** dedicated to supporting innovation ecosystems in the Cultural and Creative Industries under the European Institute of Innovation & Technology.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am sure that today we will be able to gather many new ideas for the future. Supporting professionals, supporting smaller artistic, cultural and creative structures is essential if we want to make the most of our most valuable resource: people, and their creativity. We can find new ways to support them, connect them to each other and strengthen their connection to their local and regional environments.

To me, this means **bringing cultural and creative ecosystems to the next level**, where each artist or cultural professional will find the best possible environment to turn their talent into creations. We are counting on your input to make this work. I thank you for your attention and I wish you a stimulating and fruitful debate.