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CREATIVE FLIP

Final Study

Towards more resilient cultural and creative ecosystems

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CREATIVE FLIP: STRENGTHENING RESILIENCE IN EUROPE'S CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS

Executive summary

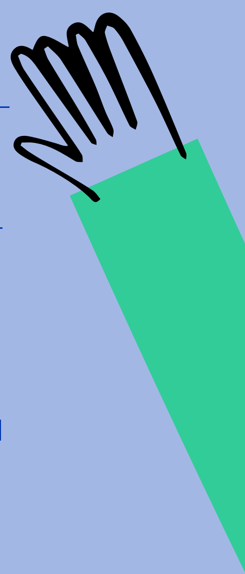
Creative FLIP's final study examines **how the resilience of Europe's cultural and creative sectors** (CCS) **can be understood, assessed, and strengthened in practice**. It addresses the growing discrepancy between the strategic role increasingly assigned to culture in European policy and the structural conditions under which much of the sector continues to operate. It also brings together the main learning from Creative FLIP's activities, tools, case studies, peer exchanges, stakeholder processes and policy work, and considers how these outputs can inform future policy action aimed at unlocking the sector's full potential.

Challenge

The CCS are expected to contribute to competitiveness, innovation, democracy, social cohesion, territorial development, and the green and digital transitions. This wider recognition has not yet been matched by sufficient progress in finance, working conditions, governance, rights protection, or access to knowledge and infrastructure.

The study therefore calls for a more coherent policy approach in which resilience is supported across the ecosystem rather than placed mainly on individual cultural actors.

What the analysis shows



The analysis shows that the main challenges facing the sector are closely interconnected and need to be addressed together:

- **Access to finance** remains uneven and often poorly adapted to the realities of cultural and creative work, particularly for freelancers, micro-organisations, non-profit actors, and community-based initiatives.
- **Working conditions** continue to be shaped by irregular income, weak social protection, fragmented careers, and limited access to collective bargaining and professional development.
- **Intellectual property rights** are under renewed pressure from generative artificial intelligence (AI).
- **Cross-sectoral collaboration** has become more prominent in policy discourse, reflecting the sector's innovation potential, but often remains project-based, short-term, and unequal in practice.
- **Transformation policy**[01] has gained importance at the EU level, while the governance arrangements, funding structures, and evaluation frameworks needed to support culture as a genuine partner in wider societal transitions remain insufficiently developed.

01 Transformation policy means moving cultural policy beyond individual projects and towards a stronger role for culture in wider societal change. This includes digital, ecological, democratic, territorial and social change, and requires closer links between cultural policy, other policy areas, different levels of governance and longer-term investment.

Three Priorities for Strengthening Resilience

Based on the analysis, the study identifies three interrelated priorities for further strengthening CCS resilience which are directly connected to Creative FLIP's experience, providing the basis for policy recommendations.

1. Increase absorption capacity of CCS actors	**2. Build inclusive and durable cross-sectoral ecosystems**	**3. Establish effective cross-policy coordination and governance**
Resilience depends on the ability to access and apply knowledge when needed, not on individual mastery of complex systems.	Cross-sectoral collaboration becomes resilient only when it moves beyond short-term projects.	Many drivers of CCS resilience lie outside cultural policy alone.
Key recommendations directions: — Shift from knowledge provision to knowledge access. — Reduce informational, financial and time barriers to learning. — Embed advisory support, peer learning and practice-based formats into funding structures. — Recognise professional development as part of decent working conditions.	Key recommendations directions: — Support long-term collaboration formats, not only project partnerships. — Strengthen intermediaries (networks, hubs, platforms) as ecosystem builders. — Lower entry barriers for small actors and underrepresented regions. — Ensure that results from experiments and pilots feed back into policy and programme design.	Key recommendations directions: — Create structured and permanent cross-policy dialogue mechanisms. — Build mediation capacity between policy domains with different logics and timelines. — Embed CCS more systematically into green, digital, social and regional policies. — Align evaluation frameworks with cultural, social and long-term value creation.

How should these priorities be implemented? Four horizontal principles

Reduce fragmentation	**Strengthen participation**	**Connect experimentation to scaling**	**Build skills and advisory ecosystems**
Align funding instruments, governance structures and knowledge systems across policy domains and levels.	Systematically involve freelancers, micro-organisations and underrepresented groups in design, implementation and evaluation.	Embed successful pilots and practices into long-term funding programmes and policy frameworks.	Ensure coordinated access to financial, legal, digital and organisational support across the CCS.

➔ *The full list of policy recommendation can be found on pages 30-35.*

What has Creative FLIP contributed?

Creative FLIP has acted as a testing ground for a more systemic approach to resilience by:

— Strengthening absorption capacity through its platform Creatives Unite with its digital tools (*So You Need Money?*, *This Is How We Work*, *MyIP*) and Case studies;
— Enabling inclusive cross-sectoral collaboration through intermediated pilots such as Peer exchange formats, Learning Labs and Communities of Practice;
— Feeding practice-based knowledge into EU policy dialogue, e.g. Cross policy orientation papers and EU-wide conferences.

The study shows that resilience is built not through isolated interventions, but through coherence, continuity and structural follow-through across the ecosystem.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About this study

This final study brings together key insights from Creative FLIP's work on strengthening the resilience of Europe's cultural and creative sectors. It combines an analysis of current structural challenges with an assessment of Creative FLIP's contribution across finance, working conditions, intellectual property, cross-sectoral collaboration and transformation policy.

The study first presents Creative FLIP's impact story, offering a short overview of the project's main outputs and activities. It then examines the current state of the cultural and creative sectors in Europe through a resilience lens. The following chapter looks at how Creative FLIP has contributed to a more resilient CCS ecosystem, before the study sets out policy recommendations and a final conclusion.

The study is intended both to document Creative FLIP's work and to show how it points towards a more coherent and longer-term policy approach for the cultural and creative sectors in Europe.

CREATIVE FLIP'S IMPACT STORY

2019 – 2026: 7.5 years

- **1 Goal**
  to support the cultural and creative sectors by strengthening their long-term resilience and capacity to engage with transformation processes in five key policy are as:

  finance | working conditions | innovation
  learning & cross-sectoral collaborations | intellectual property rights

- **100+ Learning and exchange activities**

- **9 International conferences**

- **1 Platform Creatives Unite**
  A resource platform by and for the sector
  (270.000+ users; 672k+ page views; 3450+ published posts)

- **3 Interactive tools for policymakers and creative professionals**

- **90+ Inspiring case studies on Finance, IPR and Cross-sectoral collaborations**

- **40+ Stakeholder workshops**

- **6 Introductory videos on Finance and IPR**

- **Bringing policy recommendations forward**
  Newest: Creative FLIP Final Study: Towards more resilient cultural and creative ecosystems

Creative FLIP outputs to build on

Finance

- **1 Interactive tool on Creatives Unite**
  So You Need Money? An overview of the different financing sources available to cultural and creative professionals and organisations

- **Multiple communities of practice** on impact investment, Resilience in the CCSI, and Innovation

- **10 Inspiring case studies**

Learning + Cross-sectoral Collaborations

- **3 Transformation Cross-policy Orientation Papers**
  — Culture Spaces & Democracy
  — Green Storytelling through Art, Culture, and Heritage
  — Equipping Creators and Creative professionals for the AI era

- **40 Learning Labs**
  Co-creation projects between schools and CCSI organisations at local level to enhance student's creativity and transversal skills.

- **10 Cross-Sectoral Pioneers projects**
  A five-day cross-sectoral collaborative programme for experimentation and exploration of new possibilities.

- **10 Ambassadors of Good Practice in non-urban areas**
  Peer-to-Peer exchange programme for creative professionals in rural areas, highlighting best practices.

- **50+ Exchanges between creative hubs across Europe**
  (including TWIN HUBS and the Ambassadors of Change)

- **55+ Inspiring case studies on cross-sectoral collaborations**

Working conditions

- **1 Interactive tool on Creatives Unite**
  This Is How We Work: a one-stop-shop resource for up-to-date data on artists' working conditions across the EU.

- Contribution to **Culture Action Europe's Towards the Culture Compass: A Sector Blueprint**, proposing an EU Charter on artists' working conditions

- **Multiple consultation workshops** involving policymakers and stakeholders

Intellectual property rights

- **1 Interactive tool on Creatives Unite**
  My Intellectual Property: A collection of 315 resources on IP from across the EU

- Bi-weekly **IP insights** on social media

- **Multiple Communities of Practice**

- **24 Inspiring case studies**

1. STATE OF THE ART: CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS AND INDUSTRIES IN EUROPE

Europe's cultural and creative sectors (CCS) have gained a more prominent place in EU policy debate in recent years, while their structural vulnerabilities have also become more visible. The sector is now formally positioned as a strategic industrial ecosystem and is increasingly expected to contribute to wider EU priorities, including competitiveness and the green and digital transitions, while policy debates also connect culture to questions of social cohesion, territorial development and democratic life.[02] A significant gap remains between this policy ambition and the conditions under which much of the sector operates.

In this context, resilience has become a central term in European policy discussions on the CCS, yet its meaning and practical implications remain unevenly defined. Increasingly, resilience is framed as an expectation placed upon the sector, requiring it to continue contributing across multiple policy domains despite operating under structurally unstable conditions.[03] Traditional understandings of resilience as recovery or "bouncing back" after disruption are therefore insufficient in a sector shaped by continuous technological, social, ecological and political change.[04] Instead, resilience should be understood as a systemic and dynamic capacity to adapt and transform across interconnected levels of the ecosystem.[05]

In Creative FLIP's work, resilience is understood as the capacity of the CCS ecosystem to absorb shocks, adapt to changing conditions, and transform its structures where necessary, while continuing to generate cultural, social and economic value over time. This shifts the focus from short-term recovery to longer-term systemic viability.

The COVID-19 pandemic made the already existing vulnerabilities in the CCS very visible. Project-based employment, high rates of self-employment, thin financial reserves, weak social protection and very uneven access to finance were well-established features of the sector long before 2020. The 2021 European Parliament study led by IDEA Consult in collaboration with other FLIP colleagues documented this with considerable precision. The crisis affected an already fragile sector, with the strongest impacts falling on those with the least protection. These structural characteristics show that disruption in the CCS is not exceptional but systemic.[06] This reinforces the

02 IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy: Overview and future perspectives* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2024), pp. 13, 15, 52–54; Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on building a European Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Industries Ecosystem*, 2022/C 160/06, OJ C 160, 13 April 2022, pp. 13–16
03 IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 40–41
04 IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe: Crisis Effects and Policy Recommendations* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2021), pp. 83–84; Andrew C. Pratt, *Resilience, locality and the cultural economy*, City, Culture and Society 6, no. 3 (2015): 61–67).
05 IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 83–84; Dorothea Betzler, Ellen Loots and Marek Prokupek, "Arts and culture in transformation: A critical analysis of the national plans for the European Recovery and Resilience Facility," *European Policy Analysis* 10, no. 1 (2024), pp. 2–4; Pratt, "Resilience, locality and the cultural economy," 61–67).
06 IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J, *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, p. 20; KEA European Affairs and European Investment Fund, *Market Analysis of the Cultural and Creative Sectors in Europe* (Luxembourg and Brussels, 2021), p. 35

need to understand resilience not as short-term crisis response but as a longer-term capacity to adapt across labour, financial, institutional and governance dimensions.[07]

The 2024 European Parliament review study argues that CCS resilience needs to be understood through interconnected lenses, including labour markets, finance, regulation, digitalisation, governance and territorial disparities, rather than through the narrower frame of crisis support alone.[08] While the policy framework surrounding the CCS has advanced, it has not yet translated into lasting structural change. Betzler, Loots and Prokupek (2024) found in their analysis of national Recovery and Resilience Facility plans that culture was often mentioned without substantive treatment, with limited resources or well designed measures.[09] Polivtseva's *State of Culture report* (2024) places culture within a wider context of climate, democracy and social fractures and argues for a stronger political understanding of culture's transformative role at a time of overlapping crises.[10]

This tension has become more pronounced since COVID-19, which exposed structural vulnerabilities and also acted as a policy accelerator, positioning the CCS more centrally within EU strategic frameworks, including as one of the 14 industrial ecosystems contributing to the green and digital transitions.[11]

Pratt's work on the cultural economy supports an understanding of resilience as a systemic property shaped by governance arrangements, institutional capacity, and the distribution of risks and resources across the ecosystem as a whole.[12] This systemic understanding implies that resilience in the CCS is distributed across interconnected levels including individuals, organisations and the wider ecosystem, where the strength or weakness of one directly affects the others.[13]

In this context, resilience is increasingly understood not only as the capacity to recover, but also as the capacity to "bounce forward", raising the question of whether CCS actors operate in a context with the conditions and resources needed to take on these expanded strategic roles.[14] From this perspective, an ecosystem can be considered resilient where risk and resources are more evenly distributed, governance is adaptive, and actors have access to the finance, knowledge and infrastructure needed to adjust and evolve.

This chapter examines the current state of play across the five areas central to Creative FLIP's thematic scope: finance, working conditions, intellectual property in relation to artificial intelligence, cross-sectoral collaboration, and transformation policy.

07 De Voldere et al., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 83–84; KEA European Affairs and European Investment Fund, *Market Analysis of the Cultural and Creative Sectors in Europe*, 2021, p. 35
08 De Voldere et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 40–41
09 Betzler, Loots and Prokupek, "Arts and culture in transformation," 2024, pp. 10–14
10 Polivtseva, *State of Culture: Reclaiming the Transformative Power of Culture* (Brussels: Culture Action Europe, 2024), pp. 36–37, 105–106
11 De Voldere et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, p. 15
12 Pratt, "Resilience, locality and the cultural economy," 2015, pp. 61–67
13 IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J, *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 83–84; KEA European Affairs and European Investment Fund, *Market Analysis of the Cultural and Creative Sectors in Europe*, 2021, p. 35; IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 40–41
14 IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 83–84; Pratt, "Resilience, locality and the cultural economy," 61–67

These areas are closely connected, and progress in one area depends on coherent movement across the wider ecosystem.

1.1. Finance

The structural finance gap in European CCS is well documented. The 2016 OMC Working Group report on access to finance set out the core difficulty clearly. CCS operators are predominantly micro-enterprises or self-employed individuals with largely intangible assets, irregular income and a risk profile that do not map well onto standard financial products.[15] The KEA/EIF market analysis and the 2024 European Parliament overview confirm the sector's structural fragility.[16] While financing opportunities range from fully public support to mixed public private income and new financing models arise (see e.g. Dalla Chiesa & Rykkja, 2026)[17], many CCS actors remain locked into short term project funding, with limited scope to develop sustainable long term strategies.

The EU has responded with dedicated instruments. The Cultural and Creative Sectors Guarantee Facility represented a step forward in recognising the specific financial characteristics of CCS, including intangible assets, irregular revenues and hybrid business models, and its successor arrangements under InvestEU extended this approach through guarantees to lending intermediaries, capacity-building and broader financing support.[18] At the same time, policy debate has increasingly referenced blended and impact oriented approaches, although evidence of systemic change remains uneven.[19] The 2024 European Parliament study highlights that access to finance continues to depend heavily on intermediaries capable of understanding CCS risk profiles.[20] Smaller, community-based, and more peripheral actors therefore remain at risk of being underserved, particularly where loan-based mechanisms are poorly suited to their scale or non-profit orientation.[21]

The Creative FLIP conceptual framework on resilient CCS argues that the challenge is not primarily one of quantity but of design: instruments must be genuinely adapted to non-market, experimental and community-based cultural work, rather than retrofitted from frameworks developed for other sectors. Culture Action Europe has likewise warned that industrial and competitiveness logics can privilege the more commercially legible parts of the sector, while artistically experimental and locally rooted work remains structurally more exposed.[22]

15 European Commission, OMC Working Group on Access to Finance, *Towards More Efficient Financial Ecosystems: Innovative Instruments to Facilitate Access to Finance for the Cultural and Creative Sectors* (Brussels, 2016), pp. 1–4
16 KEA European Affairs and European Investment Fund, *Market Analysis of the Cultural and Creative Sectors in Europe* (Luxembourg and Brussels, 2021), p. 35, 10; IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 38–39
17 Dalla Chiesa, C. and A. Rykkja (Ed.) (2026), 'Cultural Funding and Financing: A Guide to New and Traditional Models in Arts and Culture', Cultural Economics & the Creative Economy Series, Palgrave Macmillan
18 ibid. pp. 24, 39–40
19 ibid pp. 39–40
20 ibid p. 39
21 ibid p. 39
22 Polivtseva, *State of Culture*, 2024, pp. 105–106

The innovation dimension makes this imbalance even clearer. Programmes under Horizon Europe and EIT Culture & Creativity have widened formal access for CCS participation.[23] However, the 2024 Parliament overview also stresses that innovation systems remain insufficiently inclusive and fragmented.[24] The CCS is consistently recognised in policy discourse as a source of innovation, yet this recognition is rarely matched by corresponding access to innovation funding instruments.[25] Limited capacity among micro enterprises and freelancers to navigate financial and innovation ecosystems compounds the problem. Knowledge and expertise exist, but access is fragmented, jargon heavy and poorly tailored to non linear creative careers, underlining the importance of intermediary and advisory support alongside improved instrument design.[26]

1.2. Working Conditions

Working conditions represent another structural challenge across the sector. The 2023 OMC report on the status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals provides a comprehensive EU-level account and points to recurring structural patterns across many European countries. Low and irregular income, fragmented social protection, significant obstacles to cross-border mobility and limited access to collective bargaining characterise the working lives of a large proportion of people employed in CCS across Europe.[27] These are part of how the sector functions and not just marginal exceptions.

The European Labour Authority's 2024 study adds another dimension, showing how non-standard employment and undeclared work are considerably more prevalent in CCS than in the wider economy. This reflects both sector-specific working patterns and mismatches between those patterns and existing regulatory categories.[28] Culture Action Europe's Creative Pulse survey gives concrete expression to what this means in practice: low pay, unpaid work, restricted access to healthcare and pension entitlements, and deteriorating mental health, with particularly pronounced effects among younger workers, those with migrant backgrounds and workers from minority communities.[29] The 2021 European Parliament study further showed that pandemic emergency support, where available, tended to favour established organisations, leaving freelancers and the most precarious workers more exposed.[30]

There has been some policy movement in response. The European Parliament's 2023 resolution on the status of artists called on the Commission and Member States to

23 IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 58–60
24 ibid pp. 13, 71, 87–88
25 ibid pp. 58–60, 71; ekip (2026) "The challenge isn't creativity but connectivity", https://ekipengine.eu/the-challenge-isnt-creativity-but-connectivity/
26 European Commission, OMC Working Group on Access to Finance, *Towards More Efficient Financial Ecosystems*, 2016, pp. 1–4; 10; IDEA Consult et al., EU culture and creative sectors policy, 2024, p. 39
27 Open Method of Coordination Group of EU Member States' Experts, *The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2023), pp. 9–15, 25–33, 67–74
28 European Labour Authority, *Employment characteristics and undeclared work in the cultural and creative sectors* (Brussels, 2024), pp. 15–18, 25–33
29 Martin Clarke et al., *Creative Pulse: A Survey on the Status and Working Conditions of Artists and CCS Sector Professionals in Europe* (Zoetermeer: Panteia and Culture Action Europe, 6 May 2024), pp. 6–7, 15–20, 23.
30 IDEA Consult et al., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 16–18.

strengthen fair remuneration, social protection, collective bargaining and monitoring frameworks.[31] The 2025 Culture Compass also announced the intention to develop an EU Artists Charter, intended as a common reference point for fair working conditions, rights and professional recognition across the sector. However, the EU's direct competence in labour and social protection is limited, and its role is mainly to create political visibility, encourage coordination and support action at Member State level. At national level, Ireland's Basic Income for the Arts pilot and Belgium's revised social security framework for cultural workers provide examples of more structural approaches.[32] These initiatives are significant, but they remain uneven and isolated rather than evidence of broader systemic progress across Europe. The gap is therefore not simply a lack of EU follow-up, but reflects the difficulty of translating EU-level recognition and coordination into concrete improvements at national and sectoral level.[33]

The available evidence indicates that the structural features of CCS, including irregular income, self-employment, small organisational structures and atypical forms of employment, place a disproportionate share of economic and social risk on individual workers.[34] Terms such as flexibility, creative freedom and entrepreneurial spirit can make this sound better than it is. For many people in the CCS, the reality is unstable work with documented effects on income security, social protection and mental wellbeing.[35] Addressing these conditions requires more than cultural funding or targeted artist schemes; it also demands labour law and social protection systems that reflect the realities of cultural work.[36]

Professionalisation and continuous learning are part of this as well. Many cultural workers, particularly those who are self-employed or work in micro-organisations, must navigate complex business, intellectual property and financial matters without proper support. The professional development available to them remains fragmented, often difficult for freelancers to access, and poorly suited to non-linear career paths. Flexible learning formats, peer exchange and structured access to specialist advice are therefore not secondary. They are part of what makes longer-term structural improvement possible.[37]

31 European Parliament, *Resolution of 23 November 2023 with Recommendations to the Commission on the Status of Artists and Conditions in the Cultural and Creative Sectors*, 2022/2209(INL) (Strasbourg, 2023), paras. 1–33, European Commission, A Culture Compass for Europe, COM(2025) 785 final, Brussels, 12 November 2025, p. 13.

32 Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, *Basic Income for the Arts Pilot Scheme: Initial Impact Assessment (6-month)* (Dublin, 2023), pp. 17–18, 21–22, 32–39; *Impact Assessment (First year)* (Dublin, 2024), pp. 22–27, 47–65), Belgian Federal Government, *Royal Decree of 21 March 2024 amending the Royal Decree of 28 November 1969 on Social Security for Workers: New Provisions for Workers in the Cultural Sector, Belgian Official Gazette* (2024), relevant articles and implementing provisions.

33 Open Method of Coordination Group of EU Member States' Experts, The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals, 2023, pp. 67–74; 18 European Parliament, Resolution of 23 November 2023, paras. 1–33; UNESCO, Global Report on Cultural Policies. Culture: The Missing SDG, Paris, UNESCO, 2025, p. 58

34 Culture Action Europe and Panteia, *A Survey on the Status and Working Conditions of Artists and Cultural and Creative Professionals*, 2024, pp. 17–18, 30

35 Culture Action Europe and Panteia, *Creative Pulse: A Survey on the Status and Working Conditions of Artists and Cultural and Creative Professionals*, 2024, pp. 6, 17–18, 30

36 ibid, 2024, pp. 6, 17; European Commission, *The Health and Wellbeing of Professional Musicians and Music Creators in the EU*, 2023, pp. 8, 31

37 Open Method of Coordination Group of EU Member States' Experts, *The status and working conditions of artists and cultural and creative professionals*, 2023, pp. 67–74

1.3. Intellectual Property in Relation to Artificial Intelligence

Intellectual property (IP) has long been a mechanism for creating and allocating value to artistic works, and has frequently been the subject of discussion and dispute. The rapid rise of generative artificial intelligence (AI) has made this terrain more challenging and more contested, raising fundamental questions about whether the existing regulatory framework, including the EU copyright acquis and the 2019 Copyright in the Digital Single Market Directive, remains fit for purpose under these new conditions.[38] The Copyright in the Digital Single Market Directive was adopted before the generative AI boom and introduced the EU's text and data mining framework, which has since become central to disputes about AI training and copyright.[39] At the same time, AI is already reshaping how creative content is produced, distributed and monetised across CCS value chains, functioning both as a disruptive force and, in many cases, as an assistive tool for activities such as localisation, heritage restoration, discovery of works and rights management.[40]

The EU's regulatory response has been ambitious, but it remains contested within the cultural and creative sectors. The Artificial Intelligence Act (2024) established the first comprehensive horizontal framework for AI governance in Europe, including specific obligations on transparency and copyright compliance for providers of general-purpose AI models.[41] The interaction of these obligations with existing EU copyright rules, in particular text and data mining exceptions (TDM), has become a central point of legal and policy debate, with growing evidence of misalignment between current AI training practices and the scope and intent of those exceptions. The General-Purpose AI Code of Practice, published by the Commission in 2025, provides a voluntary implementation pathway, while the European Parliament's Legal Affairs Committee report adopted in 2026 calls for full transparency obligations, fair remuneration mechanisms and effective opt out rights for rightsholders.[42]

The EUIPO's 2025 study on generative AI and copyright identifies key questions for the CCS: whether rightsholders can realistically understand how their works are used in training datasets, whether opt-out mechanisms function in practice, and whether licensing markets can develop in ways that distribute value more evenly rather than

38 European Parliamentary Research Service, *AI and copyright: The training of general-purpose AI* (Brussels, 2025), pp. 1–2; Nicola Lucchi, *Generative AI and Copyright: Training, Creation, Regulation* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2025), pp. 8–10

39 European Parliamentary Research Service, *AI and copyright*, 2025, pp. 1–2; Lucchi, Generative AI and Copyright, pp. 8–10

40 European Commission, Directorate-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technology, *Opportunities and Challenges of Artificial Intelligence Technologies for the Cultural and Creative Sectors* (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022), pp. 29–30, 100–103, 143, 153, 157–158

41 Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence, OJ L, 2024/1689, 12 July 2024, especially Arts 53–55

42 European Commission, The General-Purpose AI Code of Practice (Brussels, 2025), Commission publication and implementation materials, European Parliament, Committee on Legal Affairs, *Report on copyright and generative artificial intelligence – opportunities and challenges*, A10-0019/2026, 25 February 2026, recital M and para. 9; European Parliament, *Resolution of 10 March 2026 on copyright and generative artificial intelligence – opportunities and challenges*, P10_TA(2026)0066, recitals K, M and Y, paras. 12 and 20.

concentrating it in platforms.[43] Earlier Commission findings remain unresolved: rights information across CCS value chains is still fragmented and incomplete, creating major obstacles for licensing, tracking and enforcement, particularly in cross border and digital contexts.[44]

Beyond these structural issues, unresolved legal and ethical questions further complicate the landscape. As generative systems become more deeply embedded in creative processes, distinguishing human from machine contribution becomes increasingly difficult. In parallel, the capacity of AI systems to replicate artistic styles, voices or likenesses raises additional concerns relating to moral and personality rights, including risks of unauthorised commercial exploitation of a creator's identity.[45]

This asymmetry is one of the more significant challenges facing the CCS at present. Large AI developers and major digital platforms have the legal capacity, technical infrastructure, market position and, in some contexts, policy momentum linked to competitiveness agendas to navigate these gaps to their advantage.[46] Individual creators, small cultural enterprises, independent publishers and community organisations generally do not. Creative FLIP's policy work therefore rightly emphasises that formal legal rights must be matched by practical competences, including AI literacy, IP management and an understanding of AI business models, if such rights are to offer real protection rather than remain paper entitlements.[47] Capacity building of this kind is essential but insufficient on its own. As long as data, computational infrastructure and distribution remain concentrated among a small number of global actors, addressing structural imbalance will require not only regulation, but sustained attention to the governance of digital infrastructure and the long term protection of public investment in cultural content.[48]

1.4. Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

Cross-sectoral collaboration has become central to how EU cultural policy frames the role of the CCS. The sector is increasingly present in policy discussions on urban development, climate action, health, education and democratic participation, where it was previously marginal or absent. The 2024 Parliament overview reinforces the case for cultural and creative industries as active and substantial contributors to regional development, social innovation and wider competitiveness agendas.[49] Research on

43 European Union Intellectual Property Office, *The Development of Generative Artificial Intelligence from a Copyright Perspective* (Alicante, 2025), executive brief, pp. 4–7

44 European Commission / DG CNECT, Study on Copyright and New Technologies: *Copyright Data Management and Artificial Intelligence* (Brussels, 2020), pp. 144–145, 165–166, 189; European Parliamentary Research Service, *AI and copyright*, 2025, pp. 1–2

45 Lucchi, *Generative AI and Copyright*, pp. 63, 83, 157; World Intellectual Property Organization, *Generative AI: Navigating Intellectual Property* (Geneva: WIPO, 2024), pp. 13–14; European Parliament, *Resolution of 10 March 2026 on copyright and generative artificial intelligence*, para. 27

46 European Commission, Directorate-General for Competition, *Competition in Generative AI and Virtual Worlds*, Competition Policy Brief No. 3/2024 (Brussels: European Commission, 2024), pp. 2, 7, 10–12; European Parliament, *Resolution of 10 March 2026 on copyright and generative artificial intelligence*, recital AH

47 Amann, *Equipping creators and creative professionals for the AI era*, Creative FLIP Policy Orientations, Issue 3 (Brussels, March 2026

48 European Commission, Directorate-General for Competition, *Competition in Generative AI and Virtual Worlds*, 2024, pp. 3, 10–11

49 IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 58–60, 71

CCS as agents of change in Europe's transitions confirms the basis for this positioning. The sector contributes to both process and product innovation across a range of other fields, and its methods and perspectives offer real value in addressing complex societal challenges.[50]

In institutional terms, the establishment of EIT Culture & Creativity in 2023 brought the CCS formally into the European Institute of Innovation and Technology's Knowledge and Innovation Community framework and created more structured pathways for linking cultural and creative actors with research, education and business partners around shared innovation agendas.[51] Horizon Europe has similarly opened relevant funding lines, particularly in relation to social innovation, cultural heritage and the green and digital transitions.

In practice, however, the reality is much more mixed than the policy language suggests. Betzler, Loots and Prokupek (2024) found in their analysis of national Recovery and Resilience Facility plans (RRF) that culture was often treated superficially in relation to the green and digital transitions. It appeared in the wording of the plans, but was largely missing from governance structures and decision-making processes, and was given only limited dedicated resources.[52] This is not a pattern confined to the RRF. Cross-sectoral collaboration tends to produce genuinely useful outcomes when cultural actors are involved from the outset, with real influence over the design of initiatives. It tends instead to produce administrative overload and mission drift when they are engaged late in the process, invited to deliver on objectives defined by others, and assessed against evaluation criteria that were not developed with cultural work in mind.

Cross-sectoral programmes and funding structures still tend to favour well-resourced organisations in stronger regions. Smaller actors, those in peripheral areas, and organisations with limited administrative capacity continue to face structural barriers that political goodwill alone cannot remove. Cascade funding, dedicated support for underrepresented regions, and stronger intermediary functions that connect sectors and levels of governance are therefore not optional extras. They are necessary if inclusivity is to be real. The matchmaking and brokerage needed to help cultural organisations find relevant partners beyond their own field and build lasting relationships also remains uneven and underdeveloped across the ecosystem.[53]

Practitioners involved in Creative FLIP likewise describe both the opportunities and the tensions of cross-sector partnerships, including pressure to recast cultural work in the language of other policy fields in order to access funding not designed for it.[54] Polivtseva frames this challenge in particularly direct political terms. The CCS should be recognised as an equal partner in shaping Europe's transitions, not treated merely as a communicator or delivery mechanism for agendas developed elsewhere.[55]

50 De Smedt, E. and De Voldere, I., "Shaping Tomorrows: The CCS as Agents of Change in Europe's Transition," *Frontiers in Communication* 10 (2025), pp. 1–13

51 IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 58–60

52 Betzler, Loots and Prokupek, "Arts and culture in transformation," 2024, pp. 10–14

53 IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 71, 87–88

54 Creative FLIP, European Creative Hubs Network, and Goethe-Institut, Creative FLIP: Flipping Perspectives – Maximizing Exchange. Conference Documentation (Brussels: Creative FLIP, 2021)

55 European Commission, A Culture Compass for Europe, COM(2025) 785 final (Brussels, 2025), pp. 3, 13, 17–18

That distinction has practical implications for how cross-sectoral programmes are designed, funded and governed.

1.5. Transformation Policy

Current EU policy increasingly presents the CCS as both a sector requiring support and an active contributor to wider societal change. The Commission's 2025 Culture Compass, the most recent high-level strategic document for culture at EU level, places the cultural and creative sectors within a long-term vision for European society, territorial cohesion and democratic life. It positions culture as part of the transitions Europe must navigate.[56]

This reflects a broader shift in EU cultural policy discourse towards treating culture both as a sector requiring support, and as a cross-cutting contributor to democracy, resilience, competitiveness and societal and environmental transformation.[57]

Creative FLIP's work on transformation policy, developed by Amann, offers a useful framework for thinking about what this means in practice. It points towards a move from reactive, project driven approaches to more collaborative and forward looking cultural policy, in which cultural actors not only adapt to external conditions but help shape wider social, ecological and digital transitions.[58] This is a convincing direction. The difficulty is that the institutional conditions needed to support it are still largely missing.[59] Stable and coherent funding, meaningful representation in strategic planning bodies, and evaluation frameworks that recognise qualitative and long term cultural value are still not consistently in place across most Member States and at EU level.

More broadly, a mismatch remains between increasingly ambitious policy discourse on transformation and the still limited structural conditions available to support it. EU policy documents have become much more sophisticated in how they describe the role of the CCS in European society. But the funding structures, governance arrangements and regulatory frameworks needed to support that vision have not kept pace.[60] Cultural stakeholders are increasingly invited into transition agendas while the conditions needed to sustain their contribution remain only partly in place. That includes fair working conditions, adequate finance, appropriate intellectual property protection, and genuine cross-sector partnership.

What transformation policy ultimately requires, and what the current evidence suggests has not yet been secured, is a political commitment to treating the CCS as a structural part of Europe's future rather than a symbolic one. That means moving beyond project-based logic towards longer-term institutional investment, ensuring cultural voices carry real weight in the governance of digital and ecological transitions as well as international cultural relations. It also means accepting that the value generated by the CCS cannot always be captured by the metrics that currently dominate

56 ibid pp. 3, 13, 17–18

57 ibid; European Parliamentary Research Service, *A New Culture Compass for Europe* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2025), pp. 1, 4–5; Council of the European Union, *Council Resolution on the EU Work Plan for Culture 2023–2026*, OJ C 466, 7 December 2022, pp. 6–8

58 Amann, *From Reaction to Action: Collaborative Transformation Policies in Culture and Beyond for Future-Oriented Policy-Making and Action* (Creative FLIP, 2023), pp. 1–12

59 European Parliamentary Research Service, *A New Culture Compass for Europe*, 2025, pp. 4–5

60 Ibid; European Commission, *A New Culture Compass for Europee*, 2025, p. 3

EU programme evaluation in other fields, and therefore needs to be understood through broader and more appropriate forms of assessment.[61] Tackling institutional fragmentation at EU level will likewise require aligned budgets, co-financing across policy domains, and sustained coordination across governance levels.[62]

Part of this also involves a closer link between how cultural value is described and how it is actually assessed. EU policy still often gives most weight to economic contribution, job creation and competitiveness, while recent frameworks also recognise democracy, cultural rights, social cohesion and long-term community wellbeing as important outcomes of cultural activity.[63] The issue is not that EU policy speaks about culture in different ways, but that these broader cultural and social values are still not fully carried through into evaluation criteria, funding models and governance arrangements. Stronger assessment frameworks are therefore needed if the CCS are to act as genuine partners in Europe's transitions, rather than mainly serving agendas set in other policy fields.

1.6. Conclusion

Significant progress has been made in recent years in recognising the cultural and creative sectors as part of Europe's wider social, economic and democratic future. Since the COVID-19 crisis, working conditions, access to finance, intellectual property, cross-sectoral collaboration and the transformative role of culture have moved more clearly into European policy debate. Creative FLIP has contributed to this by producing evidence, tools, exchanges and practical formats that make these questions more visible and easier to act on.

Taken together, the five areas examined in this chapter also show that the sector still operates under structural conditions that have not fundamentally improved. Financial fragility, labour precarity, uneven exposure to the risks of AI-driven market concentration, limited weight in cross-sectoral partnerships, and the gap between transformation ambitions and governance reality are all now well-documented features of the CCS landscape.[64] These issues are also interconnected. Progress on finance is hard to sustain without better working conditions. The value of stronger copyright protection depends on whether creators have the capacity and institutional support to use it. Cross-sectoral collaboration produces meaningful results only where the conditions for fair partnership are actually in place.

The sector has shown considerable capacity to adapt over the past five years, not least during the pandemic and under the accelerating pressures of digital transformation. It is important, however, to be clear about how much of that adaptation has depended on individual workers and small organisations absorbing insecurity, financial risk and administrative burden that should not fall mainly on them in a well-functioning ecosystem. Understanding resilience as adaptation and transformation rather

61 European Commission, *A New Culture Compass for Europe*, 2025, pp. 3, 13, 17–18; European Parliamentary Research Service, *A New Culture Compass for Europe*, 2025, pp. 1, 4–5
62 European Commission, *A New Culture Compass for Europe*, 2025, pp. 13, 17–18; ibid pp. 4–5
63 European Commission, *A New Culture Compass for Europe*, 2025, pp. 3, 13, 17–18;
64 IDEA Consult et al., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 38–41, 58–60, 71, 87–90; IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 15–20, 83–84; European Labour Authority, *Employment characteristics and undeclared work in the cultural and creative sectors*, 2024, pp. 15–18, 25–33

than endurance makes visible that much of this "resilience" has been carried at the level of individuals rather than supported structurally across the system.[65] To celebrate the sector's resilience without acknowledging this is to normalise conditions that need reform.

Strengthening resilience therefore requires structural change rather than continued reliance on the coping capacity of individuals and small organisations. More secure working conditions better adapted financial instruments, stronger governance coherence, and fairer access to digital and knowledge infrastructures are all part of this. So too is a clearer institutional recognition of the CCS as a structural contributor to Europe's transitions rather than a marginal or symbolic one. Without such shifts, resilience remains an expectation placed on the sector rather than a capacity supported by the system.

Creative FLIP addresses the areas where the structural weaknesses are most acute and where, evidence-based interventions can contribute to system change. The case for this work does not rest on any one area alone. It rests on recognising that finance, working conditions, intellectual property, cross-sectoral collaboration and transformation policy are interdependent. Sustained progress depends on addressing all five coherently and with a clear understanding of the gap that still exists between European ambitions for culture and the conditions in which many European cultural actors actually operate.

2. CREATIVE FLIP'S CONTRIBUTION TO A MORE RESILIENT CCS ECOSYSTEM

Building on the analysis in Chapter 1, this chapter examines how resilience can be operationalised and assessed in practice. Although resilience has become a recurring objective in European cultural policy, practical guidance on how it can be strengthened remains limited. Since Creative FLIP's inception, the project has focused on key structural issues shaping the conditions under which CCS professionals operate – most notably finance, intellectual property rights, learning and skills development, innovation, cross-sectoral collaboration and working conditions. These areas were not initially framed through an explicit resilience lens, but rather as essential conditions for growth and value creation within CCS.

As the project evolved, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, resilience came to be understood as a long-term and systemic capacity: the ability of the CCS ecosystem to absorb shocks, adapt to ongoing change and, where necessary, transform its underlying structures, while continuing to generate cultural, social and economic value over time. This understanding moves beyond short-term recovery or crisis response and reflects the evidence that disruption in the CCS is structural rather than exceptional.

65 IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 83–84; Betzler, Loots and Prokupek, "Arts and culture in transformation," 2024, pp. 2–4; Pratt, "*Resilience, locality and the cultural economy*," 61–67

This chapter outlines how resilience is understood and operationalised within the framework of Creative FLIP and how this informs the development of holistic resilience policy recommendations. Together, these elements provide a basis for explaining how Creative FLIP contributes to the longer-term resilience of CCS professionals, organisations, and the wider ecosystem at European and national levels.

2.1. Operationalising Resilience in the Context of Creative FLIP

Creative FLIP operationalises resilience through an ecosystem-based analytical framework inspired by the Stockholm Resilience Centre's principles and adapted to cultural contexts through the work of the Center for Music Ecosystems.[66] These principles capture features that enable long-term adaptability: diversity in actors and resources, connectivity across sectors and institutions, learning and feedback mechanisms, openness to experimentation, and governance that is polycentric, participatory and responsive.[67]

For the purposes of this study, resilience is operationalised through nine interrelated principles, grouped into two domains:

(1) ecosystem properties and processes (principles 1-5), and

(2) ecosystem governance (principles 6-9).[68]

These principles translate resilience from an abstract objective into a set of analytical lenses through which the CCS ecosystem can be assessed. They emphasise diversity, redundancy, connectivity, the management of slow structural variables and feedback loops, alongside governance capacities such as learning, experimentation, participation and polycentric coordination. Applied to Creative FLIP's core areas, this framework provides a consistent structure for assessing where resilience is strengthening, where it remains weak, and which leverage points matter most for future intervention. It also ensures conceptual continuity between analysis and policy recommendations.

66 EU Council conclusions (2021/C 209/03) invite Member States to enhance resilience through promotion of fairer working conditions, dialogue, training opportunities, SRC, „Applying resilience thinking", p. 3, CME, p. 20
67 Center for Music Ecosystems (CME), *Defining Resilience in Remote Music Ecosystems*, 2022, p. 12
68 ibid, pp. 9-10

The 9 Resilience Principles

Ecosystem properties and processes

Principles focused on managing ecosystem properties through actions required to achieve goals, such as monitoring and implementation. They relate to the nature of system components, the structure of their connections, and system processes. For CCS, components could mean cultural actors, institutions, and organisations, economic models, knowledge sources, sources of funding, etc.

1.	**Maintaining diversity** A greater variety of components within an ecosystem builds resilience, as different components provide different options for acting in response to change or disturbance.
2.	**Maintaining redundancy (capacity)** The existence of multiple components within an ecosystem able perform the same function provides resilience by allowing components to provide "insurance" in the case of loss or failure of others.
3.	**Managing connectivity** Connectivity indicates the way and magnitude by which information and ideas move and interact within an ecosystem and outside of it. Connectivity can help or hinder resilience it can safeguard or help recover from disturbances, prevent disturbance spread, or cause rapid spread of changes.
4.	**Managing slow variables** Slow variables represent the "underlying structures" that impact the ecosystem as a whole, such as economic and political realities, demographic and societal changes, levels of education, etc. Managing these variables entails identifying them and which parts of the ecosystem the impact directly and indirectly.
5.	**Managing feedback loops** Feedback loops are self-reinforcing cycles, either positive or negative, in which a change or disturbance within an ecosystem amplifies or weakens itself over time. Dampening identified feedback loops helps counteract disturbances before a point of no return is reached.

Ecosystem governance

Principles concerned with governing the ecosystem – the social and political process of defining management goals. Governance system is related to adopted worldview, management, trust, understanding, and a facilitating structure.

6.	**Fostering an understanding** This principle describes the level of knowledge actors have of the ecosystem and its operation. It entails actors recognizing and accepting the unpredictability of functioning within a complex ecosystem, while governance structures account for and managing the system with its complexity, uncertainty, and unpredictability in mind.
7.	**Encouraging learning and experimentation** Learning and experimentation increase resilience through ensuring different types and sources of knowledge are valued and considered while developing solutions, allowing to take calculated risks, revise existing knowledge, enable adaptation, adopt new approaches, behaviours, skills, values, preferences.
8.	**Broadening participation** Active and broad participation and engagement of all relevant stakeholders is essential to building resilience by building relationships, understanding, and trust, legitimizing knowledge and authority, uncovering perspectives. Lowering participation barriers cultivates diversity. The goal is simultaneous top-down and bottom-up governance that ensures participation.
9.	**Promoting polycentric governance** Polycentricity, entails a system comprised of multiple bodies of governance on both horizontal and vertical levels with a well-managed communication and functioning systems, and agendas. This positively influences resilience through enabling collective action throughout the ecosystem in the face of disturbances or changes.

2.2. Assessing the Resilience of the CCS Ecosystem in Europe

During the research process, the Creative FLIP consortium carried out an assessment of sectoral resilience, drawing on partners' extensive expertise and long-standing engagement with the sector and the respective topics. The assessment is grounded in resilience principles and applies them as an analytical lens across the four main areas of Creative FLIP IV: finance, working conditions, intellectual property, and cross-sectoral collaboration. This section presents the overarching conclusions and emerging patterns, while the annex 5.1. contains detailed analyses per domain.

Across the four areas examined – finance, working conditions, intellectual property and cross-sectoral collaboration – the assessment reveals a highly consistent pattern. The European CCS ecosystem demonstrates significant creativity, initiative and experimentation, yet these strengths coexist with systemic fragmentation, uneven capacities and a strong dependence on short-term mechanisms.

Seven key observations emerged from the assessment:

1. Fragmentation remains the core systemic weakness across all domains

Across the four core areas, structural fragmentation consistently undermines system coherence. In finance, working conditions, intellectual property and cross-sectoral collaboration, fragmented frameworks, weak connectivity between actors and uneven access to support structures remain pervasive. Fragmentation creates asymmetry, meaning that only a limited portion of the ecosystem can access opportunities or shape system responses. This, in turn, substantially reduces the sector's adaptive capacity, as access to learning, networks and funding is unevenly distributed.

2. Knowledge and experimentation exist, but absorption and scaling are weak

Emerging tools, platforms, and networks are expanding the availability of knowledge and enabling experimentation, yet the system's capacity to absorb, diffuse and scale these efforts remains limited. Knowledge is still concentrated in specific hubs and regions, while many creators face language barriers, digital divides, and low financial or IP literacy, constraining their ability to access and apply available resources. Experimentation often remains isolated, small-scale and dependent on short-term project funding, with limited pathways for upscaling or long-term embedding. As a result, learning and innovation disproportionately benefit already well-connected actors and struggle to translate into system-wide change, constraining collective learning and ecosystem resilience. A question of how to spread existing knowledge more widely and embed it into mainstream training and support structures remains.

3. Diversity has increased – but it rarely converts into resilience

The CCS displays significant diversity in actors, models, and practices, all requiring divers support frameworks. This need of diversity in frameworks rarely translates into real choice or adaptability. For many creators and micro-organisations, the range of options is more theoretical than practical, as access to funding, social protections, IP tools, or collaboration opportunities remains limited. As a result, diversity becomes a symbolic strength rather than a functional contributor to resilience. The core issue is not the absence of options, but the absence of coordination, knowledge, and structural support that would allow diversity to enhance adaptive capacity.

4. Structural underinvestment and precarity undermine all systems

All topics show a mismatch between deep structural challenges and short-term responses. Underinvestment, weak labour protections, and precarity are long-term structural drivers ("slow variables") that shape system feedback loops and thus resilience.

5. Slow variables are poorly managed across all domains

Across all topics, there is a clear gap between long-standing structural issues and the short-term measures typically used to address them. Financial systems do not resolve persistent underfunding, working conditions remain exposed to political and budgetary fluctuations, and IPR frameworks struggle to keep pace with rapid technological change. Collaboration also remains constrained by mono-sectoral structures that limit systemic solutions. As a result, the CCS is repeatedly forced into crisis-response mode, undermining long-term resilience and deepening existing fragilities.

6. Participation is unequal across the ecosystem

Participation remains weak because freelancers, micro-organisations and marginalised groups are largely absent from policy processes, while existing mechanisms tend to amplify only the voices of well-organised or well-resourced intermediaries. Cross-sector engagement is also limited, further narrowing the range of perspectives included. As a result, participation does not reflect the diversity of those working in the CCS. Ultimately, those most affected by structural vulnerabilities are the least represented in shaping the solutions meant to address them.

7. Governance is polycentric in form, but not in function

Across all four areas of the project, governance structures look polycentric on paper, but do not yet function as mutually reinforcing nodes capable of collective action. Movement is seen and discussed, but coordinators and responsible actors are needed for scaling.

2.3. Three priorities for strengthening CCS ecosystem resilience.

To move from assessment to action, Creative FLIP convened a dedicated focus group in March 2026. Rather than attempting to address every vulnerability identified, the discussion concentrated on identifying leverage points where targeted interventions could generate broader systemic effects.

Three interrelated pathways emerged:

1. Strengthening the knowledge absorption capacity of CCS actors
2. Enabling sustainable and inclusive cross-sectoral networks
3. Strengthening structural collaboration between policy domains and governance levels

Together, this set of pathways can address the core weaknesses identified in the resilience assessment. Each pathway builds on Creative FLIP's concrete experience.

2.3.1. STRENGTHENING THE ABSORPTION CAPACITY OF CCS ACTORS

The assessment highlighted a persistent gap between the availability of knowledge and the capacity of many CCS actors to make use of it. Finance, intellectual property, digitalisation and sustainability are complex and rapidly evolving fields. Expecting creators, freelancers and small organisations to master them comprehensively is unrealistic, especially given the limited time, stability and headspace available to those working under conditions of precarity. From a resilience perspective, what matters instead is the ability to access relevant knowledge when needed, and to identify reliable sources of support. In this sense, knowing who can help is often as important as knowing how to do something oneself.

Focus group discussions confirmed that much existing knowledge remains inaccessible in practice. Information is often fragmented, framed in technical language, or poorly aligned with the realities of non-linear creative careers. As a result, learning and experimentation tend to benefit actors who already possess higher levels of capacity. Participants stressed that knowledge provision should move beyond content delivery and focus more strongly on strengthening networks of peers and trusted advisors.

Creative FLIP addressed this challenge through a combination of documented practice, peer exchange, experiential learning and targeted knowledge tools. Through its case-study work on finance and intellectual property, Creative FLIP illustrated how CCS actors strengthened their resilience by accessing specialised expertise, combining different instruments, and embedding financial or IP knowledge into organisational governance. These cases demonstrate that absorption capacity is not simply a matter of awareness, but depends on the availability of advice, intermediaries and structured decision-making frameworks that allow actors to navigate complexity under real market conditions. A list of all case studies can be found in Annex 5.2.

Creative FLIP in Practice – Strengthening Absorption Capacity through Finance

Case study: Scaling a Purpose Driven Fashion Brand through Investment and Loans (The Knotty Ones, Lithuania)

What is it about?

The Knotty Ones, a Lithuanian fashion brand, demonstrates how purpose-driven businesses can sustainably scale by strategically combining business angel investments and EU-backed loans, while preserving their mission of empowering local artisans.

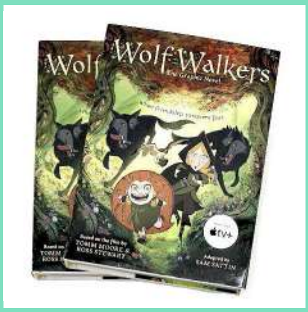
Challenge

Rather than relying on a single financing source, the founders combined different forms of finance over time: business angel investment providing both capital and strategic guidance, followed by an EU backed loan channelled through a specialised financial intermediary. This combination allowed the company to bridge cash flow gaps while maintaining its mission and production model.

Key Takeaways

- Understanding your financial needs is key, whether it's shorter-term financing through loans or longer-term investment from business angels.
- Smart money matters, as the right investors provide guidance, not just capital. Nonetheless: finding investors requires persistence and research.
- Ultimately, diversifying your financing sources, combining loans and investment, enables sustainable worth while.

Creative FLIP in Practice – Strengthening Resilience through Intellectual Property



Case study: Cartoon Saloon: Turning Irish Folklore into Global Success through IP (Ireland)

What is it about?

From a student film inspired by Irish folklore to a multi award-winning global animation studio, Cartoon Saloon has built its success on owning and carefully managing its intellectual property. By combining artistic vision with strategic copyright and licensing, the Irish studio has transformed its stories and characters into a sustainable creative ecosystem that reaches audiences beyond the cinema screen.

Challenge

Independent animation studios often face a difficult balance between creative ambition and financial sustainability. Developing original stories and characters requires substantial resources, while retaining ownership can limit short-term financing options. At the same time, international distribution, licensing and merchandising demand strong IP protection and strategic governance to preserve creative identity and brand integrity as projects scale.

Key Takeaways

– Treat IP as a strategic asset from day one and protect creative works legally while planning long-term commercial uses.
– Maintain strong creative oversight when licensing or merchandising IP within an integrated in-house IP governance scheme.
– Choose collaborators whose values align with the artistic identity of the work.
– Develop multiple revenue streams while keeping key initiatives in-house.

At the same time, Creative FLIP's experience demonstrates the value of low-threshold learning mechanisms. The project tested practice based learning formats that create the conditions for absorption through experience, while also recognising that time and income constraints are a major barrier to participation for many CCS actors. The Learning Labs provided co creation environments where students, educators and CCS organisations jointly worked, linking creative skills development, experimentation and hands-on learning over time, with dedicated support that compensated participation and made sustained engagement feasible. Similarly, peer to peer exchanges under the Ambassadors of Good Practice programme enabled situated learning through direct observation and dialogue, particularly in non urban contexts where access to networks and advisory support is often limited. By covering participation related costs and acknowledging learning time as legitimate work, these formats reduced financial barriers and widened access to knowledge that would otherwise remain out of reach for many professionals.

Creative FLIP in Practice – Strengthening Absorption Capacity through Learning

Case study: WhyWeCraft: Nurturing Young Cultural Sustainability Weavers in Rural Romania (Romania)

What is it about?

The Learning Lab WhyWeCraft®: Cultural Sustainability Beehive is an immersive educational programme empowering children to become cultural sustainability weavers. Students explored their biocultural heritage through creative practices, storytelling, and community engagement.

Challenge

In Pocola, a rural village in Romania's mountains, is the growing risk of cultural and ecological knowledge disappearing as younger generations become disconnected from their heritage. Traditional crafts and practices are often seen as outdated and irrelevant, while migration and lack of opportunities threaten the continuity of local identity. There is an urgent need to reimagine cultural sustainability in a way that resonates with children and their communities.

Key Takeaways

- Biocultural diversity fosters creativity, and resilience, offering creative and sustainable solutions grounded in local knowledge and ecosystems.
- Community custodianship of cultural and ecological systems strengthens policy and practice through care, reciprocity, and traditional knowledge.
- Intersectional, community driven projects enable healing and regeneration by treating local heritage as kin through storytelling, creativity, and shared hope.
- While a single workshop can spark interest, sustained programs are essential for lasting impact and systemic change.
- Children, when given tools, time, and trust, can become powerful agents of cultural and ecological stewardship.

Creative FLIP in Practice – Highlighting Best practices trough Peer-2-Peer exchanges

Case study: Ambassadors of Good Practice – FarmLab x Mountain Makers

What is it about?

In November 2025, four members of the Mountain Makers (Makers des Montagnes), a rural creative association in France, spent five days at FarmLab, a creative farm and cultural initiative in the Styrian Vulkanland in Austria. The exchange was part of the Ambassadors of Good Practice programme, designed to foster peer learning among cultural organisations operating in non-urban contexts.

Challenge

Both organisations are in rural, mountainous environments; this poses great geographical and financial barriers. Moreover, they population of those areas is sparse compared to urban centres. Both hubs work toward local regeneration on a sustainable approach and a hybrid model that combines hands-on activities with creative endeavours.

Key Takeaways

- Low-threshold, replicable models are a concrete example of how a rural hub can become a success tory.
- Hands-on, situated learning can be more effective than formal workshops. Low-cost, DIY, and circular solutions are highly transferable across rural regions.
- Peer exchanges work best when they foster participation, trust, and shared labour, not just knowledge transfer.
- Rural creative organisations benefit greatly from European networks and mobility tools.

Innovation and training vouchers[69] offer another pathway by compensating learning time and lowering the financial risks associated with experimentation. Participants also highlighted the potential of formats inspired by the "living library" concept, where expertise circulates through structured conversations rather than formal training. Such approaches can be supported and scaled through CCS networks and intermediary organisations. Together, these approaches point to the need for policy instruments that create the mental, temporal and financial space required for learning, particularly for freelancers, SMEs and micro-organisations.

Digital platforms such as Creatives Unite address part of this challenge by aggregating resources, tools, case studies and policy debates at European level to give orientation within complex systems. Its tools *This Is How We Work, So You Need Money?* and *My IP* were designed as navigational entry points that collect and translate complex information on working conditions, finance and intellectual property for creative professionals into accessible pathways.

Creative FLIP in Practice - Strengthening Absorption Capacity through Digital Knowledge Tools

MY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

A collection of 315 resources on IP from across the EU

SO YOU NEED MONEY

An overview of the different financing sources available to cultural and creative professionals and organisations

This is HOW we WORK

The one-stop-shop resource for up-to-date data on Artists' working conditions across the EU.

However, participants stressed that platforms alone are insufficient. Without complementary mechanisms that support navigation, interpretation and application, knowledge risks remaining concentrated in already well-connected hubs. Strengthening absorption capacity is therefore a precondition for ensuring that diversity, experimentation and learning translate into adaptive capability across the ecosystem.

Taken together, these examples demonstrate that absorption capacity is not an individual trait but an ecosystem function. By reducing informational barriers, compensating learning time, and translating complexity into usable pathways, Creative FLIP enabled CCS actors to engage proactively with finance, IP and working-conditions frameworks rather than reacting once crises arise.

69 Innovation and training vouchers are low-threshold public funding instruments that reduce financial risk by subsidising external expertise, prototyping or accredited training, thereby compensating learning and experimentation time; examples include schemes such as Brussels' Innoviris Innovation Vouchers and Wallonia's Chèques-formation in Belgium, Ireland's Enterprise Ireland Innovation Vouchers, and European-level actions under Erasmus+ supporting skills development, training and mobility. See also: European Commission (2019), Member States' Use of Voucher Schemes, DG CONNECT. https://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/image/document/2019-32/member_states_use_of_voucher_schemes_0D31F683-AA92-B7FF-684433BCBD8A4F3A_61225.pdf

2.3.2. ENABLING SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE CROSS-SECTORAL NETWORKS

The resilience assessment and focus group discussions confirmed that while cultural and creative sector networks are relatively well established and are an important source of knowledge for many small CCS actors, both nationally and at European level, sustained cross-sectoral collaboration remains structurally weak. Climate transition, digitalisation, intellectual property and working conditions all cut across sectoral and policy boundaries, yet collaboration beyond cultural silos tends to remain project-based, short-term, and unevenly accessible. Cross-sectoral engagement often depends on individual initiative, temporary funding, or informal relationships, rather than on stable organisational or governance structures.

A recurring concern across the focus group discussion was unequal access to networks. Freelancers, micro-organisations and actors from underrepresented regions face higher barriers to participation, particularly when collaboration is organised through complex funding instruments or administratively demanding programmes. This pattern was also observed in cross-sector programmes such as Horizon Europe, where CCS actors often struggle to engage in structures designed primarily around academic disciplines or large institutional players. Cascading grant mechanisms were identified as one way of lowering entry barriers, but participants stressed that these require strong intermediaries and long-term coordination capacity to function effectively.

Focus group discussions underscored the importance of intermediaries, such as creative hubs and networks, capable of translating between sectoral logics and sustaining relationships beyond individual projects. Simultaneously, peer-based approaches, territorial workshops and case-based toolkits can help make cross-sector collaboration more accessible and relevant for smaller actors.

Creative FLIP in Practice – Highlighting Best practices trough Cross-Sectoral Collaboration

Case study: From Pixels to Patches: When AI supports sustainable making – Rural Hackers (Spain) x Lotte Van Ermengem (Belgium)

What is it about?
By treating AI as a collaborative tool rather than a competitive threat, two artists, a digital innovator from rural Galicia and a Belgian textile upcycler, developed a methodology that empowers artists to control their creative process, minimise waste, and reimagine sustainable design.

Challenge
Many discussions around artificial intelligence in the creative sector focus on fear or hype rather than practical use. At the same time, most AI tools are proprietary, commercially driven, and difficult for small-scale creatives to access. The challenge was to explore how artists could take control of AI as a tool within their own creative process while maintaining authorship and supporting sustainable making.

Key Takeaways

- Treat IP as a strategic asset from day one and protect creative works legally while planning long-term commercial uses.
- Digital prototyping enables experimentation with reduced material waste.
- Artist-centred, accessible AI tools are essential for sustainable practices.
- Rural contexts can function as strong incubators for creative technology.

Creative FLIP's cross-sectoral pilot format illustrates how collaboration can be made more accessible. Initiatives such as Cross-Sector Pioneers focus on concrete challenges and tangible outcomes such as prototypes, demonstrations, or creative productions, allowing trust and mutual understanding to develop through practice. This design reduced the entry barriers to cross-sector engagement and demonstrated how intermediated collaboration can generate relationships that persist beyond individual projects. By embedding collaboration in shared work, mediated by trusted intermediaries, Creative FLIP helped convert temporary partnerships into transferable practices that can persist beyond individual projects

2.3.3. BUILDING STRUCTURAL COLLABORATION BETWEEN POLICY DOMAINS AND GOVERNANCE LEVELS

The assessment and focus group discussions confirmed that many of the most important drivers of CCS resilience (e.g. greening, digitalisation, IP, working conditions) lie outside cultural policy. While cross-policy collaboration is frequently promoted, it is often experienced as asymmetric, with cultural actors expected to adapt to frameworks defined elsewhere.

Participants emphasised that effective collaboration requires recognition of fundamentally different policy logics, languages and timelines. Without translation and mediation, cross-policy initiatives risk becoming inefficient or symbolic. Structured dialogue, policy learning and dedicated mediation capacities were therefore identified as critical.

The focus group also highlighted the importance of structured dialogue formats that enable regular interaction between policymakers, researchers and practitioners across governance levels. Questions such as who meets whom, where, how often, and with what mandate were seen as critical. Balanced participation is essential, both to avoid competition and domination by stronger policy domains and to reduce the risk of instrumentalising culture for other agendas. Policy conferences organised by Creative FLIP and partners, focus groups and transformation orientation papers examples of such spaces, though participants stressed the need for clearer institutional anchoring and continuity.

Ultimately, the discussions underscored the necessity of political will and budgetary commitment. Policymakers must be enabled to act as infrastructure builders, supporting coordination, experimentation and long-term investment across governance levels. Without this, cross-sectoral collaboration efforts risk remaining fragmented and project-based.

3. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A MORE RESILIENT CCS ECOSYSTEM

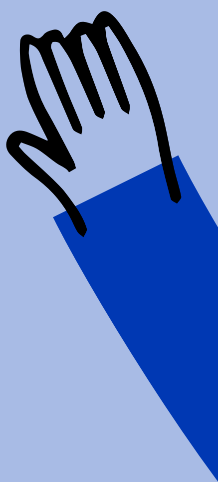
The recommendations set out in this chapter derive directly from the resilience mechanisms identified in Chapter 2 and build on Creative FLIP's piloting of peer-learning, cascade funding, and cross-sector collaboration, demonstrating their scalability at EU level. Next to addressing individual policy gaps, the policy recommendations also focus on overarching challenges such as strengthening absorption capacity, enabling durable collaboration, and improving coordination across policy domains.

They support the positioning of the CCS as a strategic investment area within the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), including through instruments such as AgoraEU, by strengthening ecosystem capacity rather than isolated projects.

To ensure coherence across policy areas, the recommendations should be implemented according to four cross-cutting principles:

– **Reduce fragmentation** by aligning funding instruments, governance structures, and knowledge systems across policy domains and levels.
– **Strengthen participation** by systematically involving freelancers, micro-organisations, and underrepresented groups in programme design, implementation, and evaluation.
– **Connect experimentation to scaling** by embedding successful pilots and practices into funding programmes, policy frameworks, and long-term institutional support.
– **Build skills and advisory ecosystems** by ensuring accessible, coordinated support for financial, legal, digital, and organisational capacities across CCS.

Intermediaries (networks, hubs and platforms) play a central role across all areas, acting as brokers, knowledge translators, and connectors between sectors and governance levels.



STRENGTHEN CAPACITY, SKILLS AND ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURAL ACTORS

Resilience depends on the ability of CCS actors to access, interpret and apply knowledge when needed, rather than on the accumulation of information alone. Policy support should therefore focus on enabling practical navigation of complex (information) systems.

– **Expand cascade funding, micro-grants, innovation and paid participation schemes under Creative Europe/ AgoraEU and national programmes** to create the time, financial space and advisory access needed for learning, experimentation and capacity building.
– **Recognise professional development as part of decent working conditions**, by financially supporting advisory services, mentoring, and peer-learning.

— Step up **investment in transformation skills for CCS actors** – skills on green storytelling, democratic participation, digital and AI literacy, IP, cross-sector collaboration – through Erasmus+, Pact for Skills, Creative Europe/ AgoraEU and national skills programmes. Ensure that support is made accessible to CCS freelancers and micro-organisations

— Financially support **participation in structures peer-to-peer learning mechanisms**, including small-scale exchanges and living library formats as components in Creative Europe / AgoraEU.

— Develop a directory of support, networks and intermediary organisations on EU-level and make the directory searchable by sector and topic, f.e. on Creatives-Unite. Extend the directory to an **EU-wide expert-matching platform,** piloted under Creative Europe/ AgoraEU and scale it after the pilot, enabling CCS actors to access legal, financial, and technical expertise via innovation vouchers (linked to ERDF/ Horizon Europe schemes).

— Ensure that **existing tools, platforms and knowledge resources (e.g. Creatives Unite) are systematically embedded in** EU support structures to avoid further fragmentation and duplication.

BUILD INCLUSIVE, LONG-TERM, AND CROSS-SECTORAL ECOSYSTEMS THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES

Cross-sectoral collaboration is essential for innovation and societal impact, but currently remains short-term, unevenly accessible and weakly embedded in structural frameworks. Policies should therefore focus on enabling long-term, inclusive ecosystems.

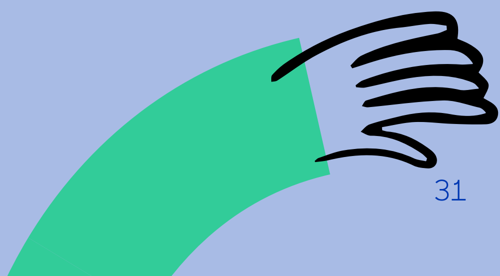
— Invest in accessible, **practice-oriented cross-sectoral matching formats** for **collaboration**, linking CCS with sectors such as health, technology, education and sustainability (via Creative Europe/AgoraEU, Horizon Europe (including New European Bauhaus), Interreg and EIT Culture & Creativity).

— Develop **cascading funds which invest in pilots** of cross-sectoral collaboration, combined with a learning and selection **mechanism that allows successful pilots to access more long term funding to further develop and scale**.

— **Provide stable multi-annual operating funding for CCS intermediaries** under Creative Europe / AgoraEU, as well as bridge-builders that connect culture, science, technology, policy and finance (via Horizon Europe, ERDF), recognising their role in partnership brokerage, regional outreach, knowledge translation and innovation development.

— Incentivise and support intermediaries to further improve access to their services for **underrepresented regions and actors through simplified access schemes**, target calls, and national-level outreach (Creative Europe/ AgoraEU and ERDF).

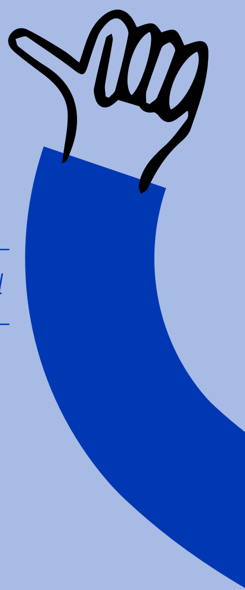
— Enable intermediaries to **feed practice-based knowledge into EU-level policy** dialogue and co-creation processes (structured dialogue, State of Culture re porting, and AgoraEU participatory processes).



ESTABLISH STRUCTURAL CROSS-POLICY COORDINATION AND MEDIATION CAPACITY

Many of the key drivers of CCS resilience, such as digitalisation, working conditions, and environmental transitions, lie outside cultural policy. Strengthening resilience therefore requires coordinated action across policy domains and governance levels.

- Establish **permanent interservice dialogue mechanisms** at EU level (across DG EAC, EMPL, RTD, GROW, CONNECT, SANTE), aligned with the Culture Compass governance framework.
- Provide funding via Erasmus+ and national training and skills development programmes for **developing mediation capacity that can facilitate and support cross-sectoral collaborations.**
- Ensure **inclusive participation of CCS actors in the development of cross-policy initiatives**, including involvement from the design phase and alignment of evaluation criteria with cultural value creation.
- Embed **CCS more systematically into EU transformation agendas**, including Green Deal implementation, digital transformation strategies, regional development policies, innovation policies including Pillar 2 in FP10, Smart Specialisation Strategies and the Competitiveness Fund.
- Integrate **social, cultural, and environmental impact indicators** into programme evaluation (Creative Europe/AgoraEU, Horizon Europe and Cohesion Policy).



ADAPT LABOUR AND SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS TO THE REALITIES OF CULTURAL WORK AND STRENGTHEN FAIR PAY AND OTHER WORKING CONDITIONS.

Persistent precarity, fragmented social protection and weak bargaining power undermine resilience of the sector. Improving working conditions requires a structural and sustained approach across several policy domains, including outside the cultural policy field .

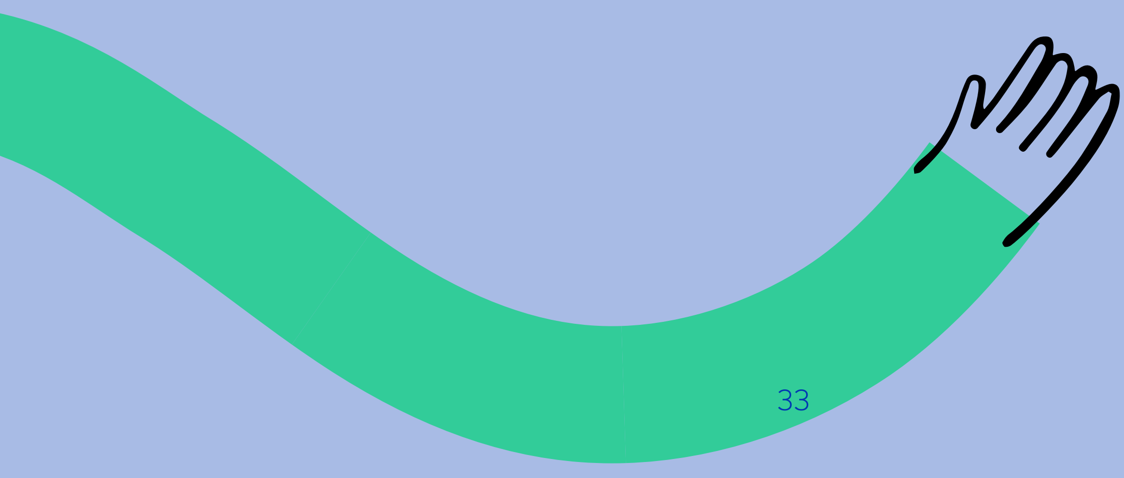
- Promote **fair remuneration standards** by encouraging the development and usage of fair pay standard through collective labour agreements, rate schemes and calculators at the national level. Stimulate **exchange between member states** on fair pay strategies and tools, and make this information available on a dedicated website to inform all stakeholders. Promote **social conditionality through the EU programmes funding** culture, such as Creative Europe and AgoraEU, in line with the EU Artists' Charter.
- Strengthen **fair access to social protection** for all cultural workers, regardless of the type, duration or classification of their working relationship. The European Commission should provide technical support and a space for a sustained peer exchange among Member States on developing and improving social security frameworks for cultural workers. Include these recommendations in the EU Artists' Charter, underpinned by a **multi-year implementation and monitoring programme**, including a **structured dialogue** with the sector and a peer exchange among Member States with a view of operationalising and updating these recommendations.

- Encourage Member States to **develop a level playing field between different labour statuses** such as self-employed / freelance, employed / contractor, intermittent, and hybrid status. One pathway is **introducing a tailored employment / social protection status** for artists. Member States should proactively learn from each other's experiments and best practices, through an ongoing and structured peer-to-peer dialogue, and with guidance and technical support from the European Commission under the EU Artists' Charter.
- **Fund practical implementation tools and advisory services** by expanding legal advice, information about policies, regulatory frameworks and labour rights (This is how we work on Creatives Unite), and collective representation support, co-funded via EU programmes (ESF+).

REDESIGN FUNDING AND INNOVATION SYSTEMS FOR CCS REALITIES

Existing funding and innovation systems often remain poorly adapted to the structural characteristics of CCS and their innovation needs. Reform should focus on accessibility of innovation funding, diversity of funding sources, and integration with innovation support services.

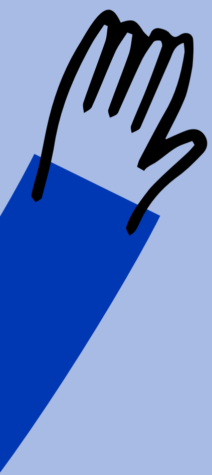
- **Expand and simplify funding instruments**, particularly for micro-organisations and freelancers, by scaling cascade funding, micro-grants, lump sums, and simplified access schemes under Creative Europe / AgoraEU and Horizon Europe.
- **Pilot CCS micro-investment facility** under InvestEU and AgoraEU, supporting early-stage innovation and capacity-building, both at individual organisation level as at ecosystem level (e.g. city level prototyping, portfolio-based support for groups of CCS micro-firms rather than only individual scale-ups).
- **Revise the definition of innovation** by integrating practice-based, social, audience-driven, human-centred and cross-sector innovation models in Creative Europe / AgoraEU and Horizon Europe.
- **Fund practice-based innovation formats under Horizon Europe, tailored to the CCS:** scale labs, pilot projects, and collaborative experimentation models.
- **Ensure balanced funding portfolios that are inclusive to CCS** by engaging non-profit, experimental and community-led actors in programme design (EU + Member States).
- **Strengthen blended finance tools** by expanding tools such as InvestEU, Media Invest, CCS Guarantee Facility, and link them with advisory support (cf. recommendations on strengthening capacity).



STRENGTHEN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY SYSTEMS IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

The rise of generative AI and platform economies has intensified existing structural imbalances in IP systems. Resilience requires not only legal frameworks, but also effective infrastructure, transparency and capacity to act.

- **Strengthen EU-level IP literacy for CCS** through sector-specific, accessible and multilingual training programmes which may include IP-relevant elements in contracts, licensing, enforcement and revenue sharing.
- **Support effective implementation of EU IP frameworks**, including AI Act and DSM Directive, through practical guidance, standards and support tools for CCS actors.
- **Increase discoverability and interoperability of IP rights information and standards** by further promoting relevant tools, databases, platforms and cross-sector data sharing mechanisms (e.g, Europeana and EUIPO tools, My IP tool on Creatives Unite, etc.).
- **Improve access to practical IP support, cross-border enforcement and funding mechanisms** (e.g. European and international IP Helpdesks, EUIPO pro bono support and the SME Fund, etc.), and expand their target audience to creative SMEs and freelancers.
- **Encourage experimentation** with IP-based business models, open licences, collective licensing and other alternative rights-management approaches for example through pilot projects and creative hubs (Digital Europe and Horizon Europe programmes).
- **Strengthen feedback loops** between creators, intermediaries and EU policymakers to improve coordination across CCS actors and EU, national and sectoral IP governance bodies.

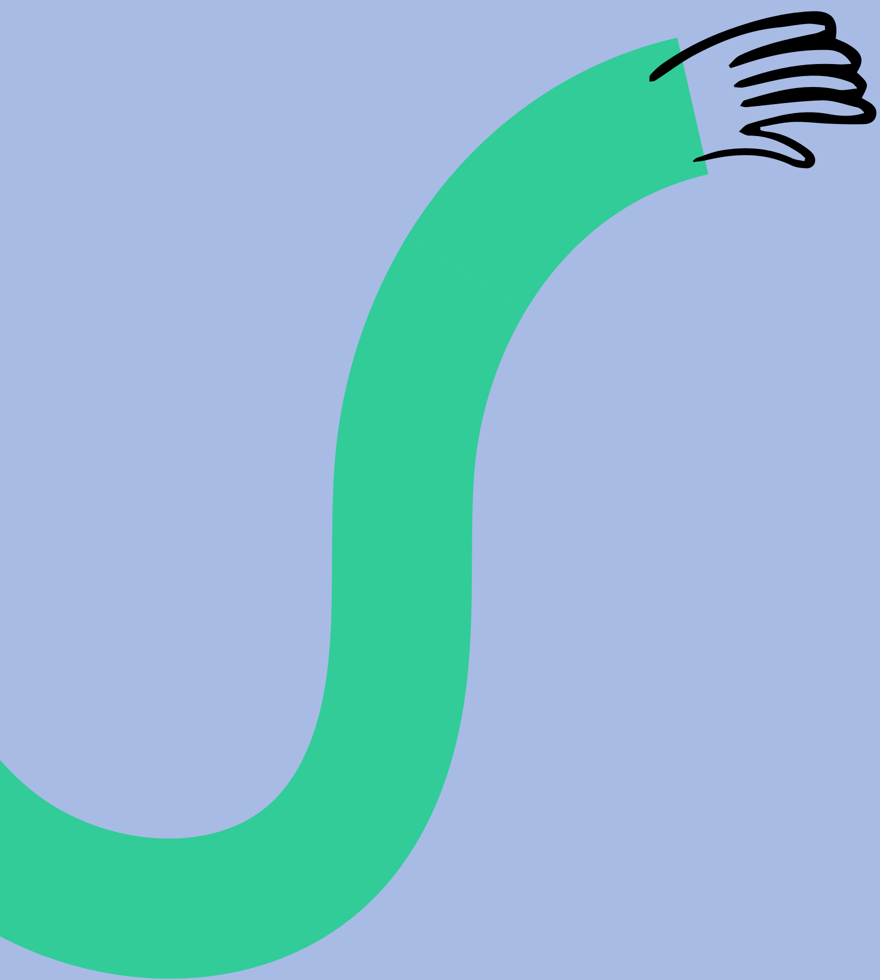


SUPPORT CULTURE-BASED TRANSFORMATION PROCESSES

The CCS plays a key role in shaping societal transformation, not only by communicating change, but by creating spaces, methods and practices through which people can imagine, test and negotiate different futures. Culture-based transformation requires structural support that enables cultural actors to contribute as equal partners to democratic renewal, ecological transition, digital change and social cohesion.

- **Fund culture-based interaction spaces (physical and digital)** that support inclusive participation, dialogue and collective sense-making in transformation processes, with particular attention to marginalised and underrepresented groups. These spaces should enable cultural actors, citizens, policymakers, researchers and other sectors to work together on shared societal challenges.
- **Pilot a "Culture & Democracy" action in Creative Europe / AgoraEU**, supporting cross-border cultural dialogue projects, art-based civic participation formats, community-led cultural practices and experimental approaches that strengthen democratic engagement, trust and social cohesion.

- **Support safe and democratic digital cultural spaces**, including exploration of EU-level quality labels, public or cooperative digital infrastructures, and alignment with wider EU digital policy frameworks. These spaces should strengthen cultural participation, pluralism, discoverability and trustworthy online environments.
- **Embed green storytelling and culture-based climate engagement** as funded actions under Creative Europe / AgoraEU and Horizon Europe, including cross-sector projects between culture, environment, agriculture, education, innovation and local communities. These actions should support behavioural change, ecological imagination and locally grounded transition practices.
- **Invest in training for CCS that develop the necessary skills to actively participate in societal transformation processes** (e.g. skills on green storytelling, AI skills,...) via Erasmus+, Pact for Skills, and Creative Europe capacity-building actions.
- **Ensure that culture-based transformation actions are assessed through broader value frameworks**, integrating cultural, social, democratic, environmental and long-term community outcomes rather than relying mainly on economic or short-term output indicators. Evaluation should capture processes such as trust-building, participation, learning, behavioural change and strengthened local capacity.



4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the cultural and creative sectors have gained a stronger and more visible place in European policy over recent years. Since the COVID-19 crisis, issues such as working conditions, access to finance, intellectual property, cross-sectoral collaboration and the wider contribution of culture to society have received greater attention. This has also translated into policy initiatives, new funding approaches and practical experimentation across the sector. Creative FLIP has been part of this development by testing formats, building tools, supporting exchanges and bringing sector knowledge into policy dialogue.[70]

At the same time, this progress remains uneven, and the conditions needed for the CCS to fulfil its wider role are still not sufficiently strong. Many cultural and creative actors continue to work under fragile financial, social and organisational conditions, while collaboration across sectors and policy domains often remains project-based and difficult to sustain. Resilience should therefore be understood as a forward-looking strategy, not only as the ability to withstand pressure, but as the creation of conditions that allow culture to play its full role in European society.[71]

The recommendations presented here build on Creative FLIP's practical experience and on the resilience assessment carried out in the project. They are intended as a stimulus for policymakers at European, national and local levels to go beyond existing plans and strategies, and to strengthen the conditions that allow cultural and creative ecosystems to grow, connect and contribute over time.

The study also makes clear that these structural pressures are closely connected. Financial fragility is closely tied to poor working conditions. The effectiveness of intellectual property rights in the age of AI depends on access to legal, technical, and organisational capacity as well as regulation. Cross-sectoral collaboration becomes meaningful only when cultural actors take part as equal partners rather than as symbolic additions or delivery agents for agendas defined elsewhere. Transformation policy, meanwhile, requires aligned funding, coherent governance, and evaluation frameworks able to recognise the kinds of value culture actually produces.[72]

The resilience of the CCS is therefore a governance question cutting across labour markets, finance systems, digital infrastructure, innovation policy, education, territorial development, and democratic life. Its contribution lies in connecting finance, intellectual property, working conditions, and cross-sectoral collaboration, and treating these as connected parts of a wider ecosystem. That is one of the clearest findings of this study. Fragmented responses will not do, because the pressures themselves are not fragmented.

Creative FLIP has shown something else that is equally important. Useful policy development in this field does not begin only with abstract institutional design. It begins with

70 IDEA Consult, imec-SMIT-VUB, KUL-CiTIP, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 75–79; IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 83–84.
71 Ibid.
72 IDEA Consult, imec-SMIT-VUB, KUL-CiTIP, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 39–51, 87–90; IDEA Consult, Goethe-Institut, Amann S. and Heinsius J., *Cultural and Creative Sectors in Post-COVID-19 Europe*, 2021, pp. 102–108.

careful attention to the actual conditions under which creators, cultural professionals, intermediaries, and organisations work. It requires formats that connect policy thinking with practice, peer learning with structural analysis, and experimentation with the realities of implementation. In that respect, Creative FLIP has served not only as a project, but as a testing ground for more grounded and connected forms of European cultural policy.[73]

The resilience lens used in this study helps show more clearly where change is needed. Across the areas examined in Creative FLIP's analytical work, the same pattern appears. Diversity exists, but does not reliably translate into adaptive capacity. Knowledge exists, but is not evenly accessible. Innovation is happening, but is often trapped in pilots without routes to scale. Governance is polycentric in form, but still too fragmented in practice. Participation is regularly affirmed in principle, yet those most exposed to structural vulnerability remain too seldom represented in shaping the response. This is not a lack of activity. It is a lack of coherence, continuity, and structural follow-through.

The recommendations set out in this study point towards a different policy logic. They call for stronger absorption capacity among cultural actors, more inclusive and sustainable cross-sectoral networks, and more serious collaboration across policy domains and levels of governance. They also underline the need for progress in areas too often treated as secondary to cultural policy itself, namely labour protection, rights management in the AI environment, more suitable finance and innovation instruments, and more appropriate ways of assessing value. Taken together, these are not marginal adjustments. They amount to a call for a more mature policy framework for the cultural and creative sectors in Europe.[74]

Such a framework would begin from a basic recognition that culture is not only a beneficiary of public support, nor merely a communication layer for other policy priorities. It forms part of the social, democratic, and imaginative infrastructure through which Europe responds to uncertainty and shapes its future. If that role is to be taken seriously, then the terms on which cultural work is financed, regulated, protected, and represented must also be treated as matters of structural importance rather than optional refinement.

The question, then, is not whether the CCS can continue to adapt. Clearly it can, and does. The more pressing question is whether European and national policy frameworks are willing to match that capacity with conditions that make adaptation sustainable, fair, and more widely shared. Without such a shift, resilience will continue to be demanded from those least equipped to carry it, and the sector's contribution to Europe's wider transitions will remain limited by avoidable systemic weakness.

Europe does not need more evidence that culture matters. That case has already been made, repeatedly and convincingly. What is now needed is greater consistency between what the CCS is asked to do and the conditions under which it is expected to do it. That means moving beyond short-term correction and project logic towards longer-term institutional thinking. It means recognising that resilience is not secured through rhetoric, but through the distribution of risk, resources, rights, knowl-

73 Amann, *From Reaction to Action*, 2023, pp. 32–35
74 IDEA Consult, imec-SMIT-VUB, KUL-CiTIP, Amann S. and Heinsius J.,*EU culture and creative sectors policy*, 2024, pp. 87–90, 102–103; Amann, *From Reaction to Action*, 2023, pp. 34–35.

edge, and decision-making power across the ecosystem. It requires first bold culture policy visions deeply anchored in the 21st century – a real shift of paradigm and second related operational implementation plans.

Creative FLIP has helped articulate that shift with both clarity and practical intelligence. Its value lies in linking immediate sectoral challenges to longer-term structural questions, while also showing possible ways forward through experimentation, peer exchange, sector-policy dialogue and practical tools. The task now is to take this work further, so that resilience becomes a shared policy responsibility and the cultural and creative sectors are better able to play their full role in Europe's social, democratic, economic and cultural future.[75]

75 Amann, *From Reaction to Action*, 2023, pp. 33–35.

5. ANNEXES

5.1. Resilience Ecosystems Assessment

Intellectual Property Rights

Resilience principle	+	–	overall assessment
Maintaining diversity *A greater variety of components within an ecosystem builds resilience, as different components provide different options for acting in response to change or disturbance.*	The EU hosts a highly diverse creative ecosystem with a wide mix of sub-sectors, IP-intensive SMEs, and varied business models, maintaining diverse IP pratices. A broad toolbox of IP rights (copyright, design, trademarks, geographical indications, unregistered designs, orphan works exceptions) supports different types of creative outputs. EUIPO, WIPO, Europeana, Creative Europe and national IP offices contribute to visibility and preservation of cultural diversity. Many CCSI actors increasingly combine different IP rights in their portfolios, which strengthens creative plurality and market choice.	Despite this diversity, IP use is uneven across subsectors and users, e.g. some CCSIs, individual actors/freelancers are still weakly represented in IP filings or do not use IP efficiently (even with unintentional bad practices). Many creators still lack IP awareness, and are not aware of their IP options, or rely solely on copyright by default (even sometimes without knowing it). The diversity of IP practices (good and bad) by creatives tend to complexify its approach, use and practices by newcomers. Fragmentation across Europe persists: some national legislations related to IP may differ (especially from the copyright perspective). Overly complex systems, fragmented access to support services and language barriers deter small and independent creators from registering and/or enforcing their rights, which leads to limited protection and exploitation of Europe's cultural diversity. From the revenue-making aspect, skills gaps prevent effective diversification.	
Maintaining redundancy (capacity) *The existence of multiple components within an ecosystem able to perform the same function provides resilience by allowing components to provide "insurance" in the case of loss or failure of others.*	Growing awareness of the digital transition, AI-generated content, and platform economies have triggered policy updates (Copyright in the Digital Single Market Directive, AI Act). Structural discussions on fair remuneration and data ownership are now central to EU cultural policy. EUIPO SME Fund and Creative Europe grants financial and advisory support diversification to increase the IP capacities of the European CCSIs. The cumulation of IP rights on a piece of work enables a stronger way to protect and enforce creators' rights.	Redundancy is weak among micro-firms and independent creators who often rely on a single income source, usually copyright. Legal and financial capacity to maintain multiple IP titles remains limited. Some subsectors, such as crafts and performing arts, underuse available IP tools. Lack of insurance-like mechanisms for IP infringement, limited access to enforcement, low levels of contract literacy reduce resilience as well as the ignorance of the cumulation of IP rights are factors affecting an effective or efficient use of the IP system.	

partly existing | not existing

Managing connectivity *Connectivity indicates the way and magnitude by which information and ideas move and interact within an ecosystem and outside of it. Connectivity can help or hinder resilience – it can safeguard or help recover from disturbances, prevent disturbance spread, or cause rapid spread of changes*	EU Networks, incentives and projects such as the Creative FLIP, Creatives Unite, the European IP Helpdesk, Enterprise Europe Network Sector Groups, the Europeana Community, European Creative Hubs Networks, etc. along with national and supra-national IP offices and organisations (such as the EUIPO, WIPO, national copyright and IP offices) enable knowledge exchange and IP awareness raising between creators, intermediaries and IP institutions. CMOs help in facilitating IP management and licensing across MS, especially for music and audiovisual sectors. Digital infrastructure supports EU-wide dissemination of creative content, and platforms such as Europeana strengthen visibility. Databases and tools such as the EUIPO's TMview, DesignView, Orphan Works offer transparent, accessible rights information across MS, supporting searchable connectivity. The current level of availability of information through the different networks ease the way to identify potential infringement of a creator's work, enabling them to enforce their IP rights.	Connectivity remains uneven across subsectors: Cross-border licensing is still complex because of unsynchronised rules especially in the filed of copyright. Contract practices differ across some MS, creating legal friction. Many SMEs lack access to EU-level matchmaking, legal expertise, and distribution networks due to low level of connectivity expecially in the eastern European MS although they have vast cultural and creative practices. Data interoperability amongst the CMOs in some MS is limited leading to inconsistent rights information and hindered reuse. Many intermediaries (galleries, distributors, digital platforms) lack transparent mechanisms for royalty distribution or data sharing. High transaction costs discourage creators from exploiting IP across borders and legal aid and pro bono services remain limited, particularly in the periphery and among freelancers. This is also valid for enforcement of IP rights.	
Managing slow variables *Slow variables represent the "underlying structures" that impact the ecosystem as a whole, such as economic and political realities, demographic and societal changes, levels of education, etc. Managing these variables entails identifying them and which parts of the ecosystem are impacted directly and indirectly.*	The EU framework offers long-term protection through copyright, design, trademarks and geographical indications (with the new introduction of the protection for non-food products), supporting stable value creation over time through Europe-wide and well-established legislations. Institutions such as EUIPO, WIPO, and national IP offices provide structural continuity. The new AI Act introduce rules that gradually adapt to technological change. Many cultural heritage institutions are digitising collections, which helps manage long-term preservation and access. IP awareness and education at school is currently improving slowly.	Creative sectors evolve much faster than legislative cycles and the adaptation of IP rights frameworks to new forms of creativity (AI, blockchain, NFTs) lags behind practice leading to regulatory lag. The duration of copyright and related rights sometimes creates friction with reuse and innovation. Slow adaptation of contracting practices, limited standardisation of metadata, and uneven digital capacity across sectors weaken long-term resilience. Many small CCSI actors lack the resources to manage long-term IP maintenance.	

Managing feedback loops *Feedback loops are self-reinforcing cycles, either positive or negative, in which a change or disturbance within an ecosystem amplifies or weakens itself over time. Dampening identified feedback loops helps counteract disturbances before a point of no return is reached.*	The EU has structured feedback mechanisms: stakeholder consultations, EUIPO observatory reports, Creative Europe monitoring, and sector studies enable feedback between creators, policymakers, and intermediaries. Some CMOs and rights organisations regularly collect usage data from platforms, enabling creators to understand market dynamics. Increasing digital traceability strengthens positive feedback loops.	Feedback loops are still fragmented and still weakly institutionalised in some of the MS. Feedback from micro-creators rarely reaches EU-level policymaking, and even when consultations lead to sectoral improvements, the benefits are not widely communicated or promoted which discourages individual creators from participating in future feedback processes. The influence of lobby groups at EU level also weakens frequently the position of creatives.	
Fostering an understanding *This principle describes the level of knowledge actors have of the ecosystem and its operation. It entails actors recognizing and accepting the unpredictability of functioning within a complex ecosystem, while governance structures account for and managing the system with its complexity, uncertainty, and unpredictability in mind.*	There is strong EU-level commitment to IP awareness, through training programmes organised by EUIPO, IP networks and EU projects. At national scale, IP education for CCSIs is expanding through local clusters, hubs, incubators and university programmes. The SME Fund and IP Scan services, WIPO Clip, numerous guides and publications developed by national and international initiatives, the Creative FLIP's My IP Tool, etc. support basic understanding of IP needs and showcase good practices to inspire the creatives. Creative professionals increasingly recognise IP as a business asset, not only a legal tool.	IP rights literacy remains uneven, especially among micro-enterprises, freelancers, emerging artists and craftspeople. Many creators still view IP as a complex, costly, overly bureaucratic, or irrelevant tool. Awareness of contracts, licensing terms, and enforcement options is low. Sector-specific non-English guidance is still limited and poor especially in some MS. Language barriers and inconsistent training quality across MS reduce accessibility. Facilitators and educators often underestimate the need for practical, sector-specific IP education and overload their training programmes with legal requirements which discourage creatives to join such schemes.	
Encouraging learning and experimentation *Learning and experimentation increase resilience through ensuring different types and sources of knowledge are valued and considered while developing solutions, allowing to take calculated risks, revise existing knowledge, enable adaptation, adopt new approaches, behaviours, skills, values, preferences.*	EU programmes and creative hubs increasingly promote experimentation with IP-based business models, collaborative licensing and open innovation. Alternative rights-management approaches, such as blockchain certification, smart contracts and open licences, are being tested through pilot programmes and EU-funded projects (e.g. the Scene project). The Creative FLIP Learning Labs provide strong best-practice examples, combining capacity building with practical experimentation in IP use. Open-source and open-access movements encourage hybrid models of ownership and sharing encouraging experimentation and shared learning.	Experimentation is constrained by limited access to legal guidance and unfamiliarity with not easy-to-understand tools, such as NFTs. Uneven digital maturity and lack of prototyping support in some MS reduce sector-wide learning. Many creators avoid experimenting with licensing, collective arrangements or new technologies. Many pilot projects remain isolated or weakly promoted amongst the European creatives. As short term and non sustainable actions, such initiatives have a very limited impact.	

Broadening participation *Active and broad participation and engagement of all relevant stakeholders is essential to building resilience by building relationships, understanding, and trust, legitimizing knowledge and authority, uncovering perspectives. Lowering participation barriers cultivates diversity. The goal is simultaneous top-down and bottom-up governance that ensures participation.*	EU policies increasingly recognise the diversity of CCSI actors, including SMEs, freelancers, cultural heritage institutions and minorities. EU initiatives and projects such as the EIT Culture & Creativity, the European IP Helpdesk, Worth Partnership project, Creative FLIP and others broaden access to IP support. Gender and inclusion considerations appear more frequently in funding and policy frameworks. Awareness campaigns, open-source communities, and Creative Commons initiatives democratise access to IP tools. Some CMOs are revising membership rules to include independent artists and digital creators.	Participation remains unequal: women, minorities, freelancers, migrants, rural communities and small craftspeople often lack access to IP services and finance. Decision-making processes at EU level and within CMOs are often opaque and dominated by large rights holders and lobbies. High administrative burden limits participation in EU funding. IP services are often concentrated in urban centres, leaving regional disparities. Language barriers and digital-skills gaps further restrict inclusion.	
Promoting polycentric governance *Polycentricity, entails a system comprised of multiple bodies of governance on both horizontal and vertical levels with a well-managed communication and functioning systems, and agendas. This positively influences resilience through enabling collective action throughout the ecosystem in the face of disturbances or changes.*	EU, supranational and national-level coordination among the EC, EUIPO, WIPO, national offices, CMOs, cultural ministries and European platforms, networks and hubs fosters alignment between national systems, while pilots and projects like Creative FLIP bridge cultural and legal domains. Multi-level cooperation across ministries (e.g., culture, economy, digital affairs) across the MS is improving in the field of policy coherence. There is a growing trend towards harmonisation, especially in enforcement and digital rights.	Governance remains fragmented, as competences and responsibilities are distributed across ministries and agencies, sometimes without clear coordination which leads to overlaps and gaps. Especially small actors struggle to navigate this multi-layered governance landscape. Some subsectors, such as crafts, performing arts and cultural heritage, lack clear IP governance mechanisms at EU level. Implementation of directives varies significantly between Member States, and IP rights enforcement levels differ widely, with no unified EU-wide dispute-resolution mechanism or consistently accessible support for cross-border enforcement, limiting effective protection for creators operating across markets.	

Finance

Resilience principle	+	–	overall assessment
Maintaining diversity	There are multiple financing sources: EU programmes (Creative Europe, Horizon Europe), national funds, regional/local cultural budgets, philanthropic foundations, crowdfunding, and some private sponsorship. At least on paper there is quite some diversity.	Heavy reliance remains on public subsidies that are primarily short-term and project-oriented limited private financiers involved in tailored services to CCS weak presence of blended finance tools.	
Maintaining redundancy (capacity)		Many organisations depend on a single dominant funding source (e.g. municipal subsidy or project-based EU grant). Safety nets (insurance, social funds, microcredit) are weakly developed.	
Managing connectivity	Creative FLIP itself (through SYNM online tool) but also sector networks (IETM, On the Move, ...), intermediaries (Cultuurloket, Cultuur+Ondernemen,...), Creative Europe desks, ... facilitate knowledge on (specific types of) finance.	Connections between the CCS and mainstream finance sector (banks, (impact) investors) are also still very limited. Integrating financial knowledge in education curricula is also still limited, especially on other types of finance beyond public funding.	
Managing slow variables	Growing recognition at EU level of structural underfinancing and precarious labour.	Despite growing recognition, short-term project funding remains dominant, with little structural finance. No structural transformations visible in the CCS finance ecosystem that addresses the structural underfinancing (on the contrary, rather increasing pressure of budget cuts for culture).	
Managing feedback loops			
Fostering an understanding	Over the years, several studies have been done that build knowledge on CCS financing (needs): crowdfunding4culture, impact investing feasibility report,...	Financial literacy within CCS actors remains low. Banks/investors often misunderstand CCS specificities (intangible assets, non-linear returns). Policymakers underestimate long-term structural needs. Access to financial knowledge flows – especially on other types of finance than public funding – is still concentrated in a limited group of organisations and fragmented.	

Encouraging learning and experimentation	Some experiments: impact investment pilots (e.g. stichting DOEN), social economy integration, new cooperative models. Creative FLIP: SYNM, publication of case studies to inspire, workshops (e.g. at CSW 2025) Initiatives from Cyanotypes, KIC Culture & Creativity?	Learning and experimentation is fragmented public funding for culture is rather risk averse; is not supportive to innovate CCS finance few scaling mechanisms for successful pilots.	
Broadening participation		Participation in building strong CCS finance ecosystems is still unequal, especially for non-standard workers, micro-organisations, ... Participation of CCS actors in designing funding mechanisms in other policy domains (e.g. innovation) that also fit CCS actors is very limited (non-existent).	
Promoting polycentric governance		Lack of cross-policy domain alignment (culture vs. economic vs. innovation vs. social affairs) > lack of matching finance sources Large diversity in (regional/national) CCS finance ecosystems across Europe, also depending on existing governance structures.	

Working conditions

Resilience principle	+	–	overall assessment
Maintaining diversity	There is an enormous diversity in national working conditions systems. Different systems can be inspirational to other countries. In the light of each country's history of cultural policy, social structure and economic development it is logical that systems are adapted to their context.	Each country has its own system with very limited choices for artists, especially in precarious conditions. On the EU-level this diversity in working conditions makes it hard to establish norms for fair working conditions and harmonize them, especially in the absence of a clear legal competence. There is a lack of coordination and crisis response systems. It is not clear which components provide the best options in times of abrupt changes. There is an overview of all the different systems (This is how we work), but there is no coordinated and sustained exchange between member states on the trajectory to improvement of working conditions. Maintaining diversity without sacrificing the needs of workers needs continuous information, coordination and clarity.	

Maintaining redundancy (capacity)		Concerning working conditions there is a great lack of redundancy since neither in the MS nor at EU-level there are enough institutions guarding and improving working conditions. There is too much reliance on small artists organisations to lobby for better working conditions, both on national as on the EU-level.	
Managing connectivity	For the first time there is an overview on different legal and policy frameworks on working conditions in cultural and creative sectors for all 27 MS within the tool This is how we work on Creatives Unite. This provides basic information for comparison and inspiration. This tool a follow-up to the OMC-report on working conditions. The EU-workshop on social security, the EU high-level roundtable and European cultural networks all contribute. This is a minimal version of an ecosystem.	The EU and the member states should take the lead in not only collecting information on working conditions from the MS to be available but also actively communicate, spread and transfer, through regular mutual learning workshops for MS, and also in exchanges with other actors within the ecosystem (national intermediaries, artists organisations, unions, etc) on both national and EU-level to bring (positive) changes to light and provide active feedback on developments on national and EU-level (link to no 5).	
Managing slow variables	The topic of working conditions has been on the agenda for a long time as a constant variable, but has recently (since Covid) acquired a much higher place on the agenda, in the European Parliament, within the Commission and in many MS. This has led to many new initiatives.	The cultural sector (and thus its working conditions) is under pressure from budget cuts and political changes, which divert attention away from culture. Undervaluation of the arts and their societal contribution is a strong and continuous undercurrent. To counter that undercurrent and recent pressures, it is a necessity to keep continuously telling the story of the values of arts and culture. The story should have a stable core but can also be adapted to current political and economic pressures. The story has to include the need for better working conditions at all times to keep it high on the agenda.	
Managing feedback loops	The sector and its lobbying campaigns manage to keep working conditions on the agenda to keep the feedback loop on policy developments working.	One feedback loop exists of cultural funding budget cuts which affect the income situation of artists who are less able to produce art or reduce their art working hours or leave the sector. In survival mode there is less time and energy to advocate for fairer working conditions. Another is the threat to artistic freedom which subsequently threatens the quality of art and enforces self-censure, which diminishes the fruits of art for society. These feedback loops might reinforce themselves unless they are countered with both legal measures and campaigns.	

Fostering an understanding	There has grown more understanding and knowledge of the working conditions in the past years, both on the EU-level and at many national levels. As a result, working conditions have become a fixed item on the agenda.	The cultural sector is fragmented concerning working conditions because of all the national differences in systems of f.e. labour relations and social security and the limited competences on EU-level. Most of their representational bodies, such as associations and unions, might have a good understanding of what is at stake, but are quite small and lack power. This requires new governance systems which connect national and EU-levels. Connecting all these parts, overcoming the fragmentation and raising the level of understanding of the whole ecosystem is paramount to strengthen the resilience of the sector.	
Encouraging learning and experimentation	Artists are usually by nature experimenters and learn through practice when it concerns their art or develop visions for the future. There are movements that experiment with working conditions such as the commons or other communal experiments.	Graduating from art schools artists are often not prepared to set up a business practice where they are able to negotiate fair working conditions. Many artists, especially self-employed, are on the wrong side of the power balance when negotiating wages and fees. In the course of their career, they need more opportunities to learn to negotiate fair practice and advocate better working conditions.	
Broadening participation .	There are many networks and (sub) sector organisations participating and investing in relationships and understanding.	On the EU-level participation from the sector is usually limited to a number of EU-networks which consult their members. There are no wider participatory mechanisms which involve a more diverse population of artists and cultural workers. Concerning working conditions there is a general lack of knowledge on how to ensure bottom-up feedback and involvement	
Promoting polycentric governance	There is already quite a polycentric level of governance in the sector, to the degree that there is a multitude of networks and organisations that advocate for their own group.	There is a lack of effective governance caused by the fragmentation of the sector, both in small and micro businesses and organisations and in advocacy. This prevents coordinated collective action in times of disturbance and change. Establishing a strong and resilient communication and governance system would be a large step forward.	

Cross-sectoral collaboration

Resilience principle	+	–	overall assessment
Maintaining diversity	Cross-sectoral collaboration in CCS increasingly involves partnerships with education, technology, sustainability, health, and social innovation fields. EU programmes (Creative Europe, Horizon Europe, New European Bauhaus, Erasmus+) encourage interdisciplinary cooperation. The diversity of actors (artists, designers, researchers, urban planners, NGOs, SMEs) enriches innovation and mutual learning.	Collaboration remains uneven across Europe and concentrated in large urban centers or well-funded hubs. Sectors still operate in silos, and cross-disciplinary literacy is limited. Many collaborations are short-lived or project-based, lacking continuity or shared vocabulary.	
Maintaining redundancy (capacity)	The existence of multiple intermediary structures (networks, labs, hubs, universities, incubators) ensures that collaboration continues even when individual initiatives end. Networks like ECHN, Trans Europe Halles, and CCI Labs provide "insurance" through knowledge sharing and matchmaking.	Many regions lack intermediaries or support schemes for cross-sectoral work. When one collaboration mechanism fails (e.g. a funding programme ends), few alternatives exist. Capacity to sustain partnerships without external funding remains weak.	
Managing connectivity	European and national platforms (e.g. Creatives Unite, Culture Action Europe, Creative FLIP's SYNM tool) foster information flows and matchmaking across disciplines. Increasing participation in cross-sectoral events (festivals, innovation labs, policy forums) strengthens transdisciplinary networks.	Connections between CCS and other sectors (industry, academia, public administration) remain partial. Collaboration tools are fragmented and often language- or context-bound. Communication gaps and unequal access to knowledge hinder scalability.	
Managing slow variables	Structural awareness is growing that complex societal challenges (green transition, digitalisation, inclusion) require cross-sectoral responses. The New European Bauhaus promotes long-term culture-based innovation models.	Despite policy recognition, institutional structures, funding, and education systems are still mono-sectoral. Rigid frameworks, academic hierarchies, and policy compartmentalisation slow systemic integration.	
Managing feedback loops	Emerging ecosystems (living labs, city alliances, interdisciplinary residencies) create iterative processes where collaboration outcomes feed policy and education reforms. Peer learning among projects strengthens adaptive capacity.	Feedback mechanisms are not yet formalised. Lessons learned from cross-sectoral pilots rarely influence mainstream policies or curricula. Evaluation frameworks fail to capture intangible results such as trust, mutual understanding, or collective creativity.	

Fostering an understanding	Awareness is increasing about the value of transdisciplinary approaches in innovation and societal transformation. Studies and mappings (e.g. "Cross Innovation", "Cultural Creative Spillovers in Europe") help conceptualise collaboration dynamics.	Still limited understanding of each other's working cultures, metrics, and timelines. Misalignment of expectations (e.g. business ROI vs. cultural value) often undermines partnerships. Knowledge remains fragmented and concentrated in few organisations. This requires new governance systems which connect national and EU-levels. Connecting all these parts, overcoming the fragmentation and raising the level of understanding of the whole ecosystem is paramount to strengthen the resilience of the sector.	
Encouraging learning and experimentation	Cross-sectoral experimentation is expanding through residencies, living labs, and challenge-based learning programmes (e.g. S+T+ARTS, BauTopia, Design for Policy). These pilots foster mutual learning and risk-taking.	Experimentation remains dependent on temporary project funding. Risk-averse institutions discourage long-term testing. Few scaling or replication mechanisms exist to transform experiments into lasting structures.	
Broadening participation.	Grassroots collaborations, citizen science, and community-driven initiatives involve new stakeholders (citizens, local administrations, educators). Inclusion of non-CCS actors strengthens legitimacy and social impact.	Participation gaps persist, especially among small CCS actors and peripheral regions. Large institutions dominate cross-sectoral funding and visibility. Participation requires resources and capacities many creatives lack.	
Promoting polycentric governance	Multi-level governance models (EU, national, regional, and local) begin to align cultural and innovation policies. Platforms like EIT Culture & Creativity promote co-governance between public, private, and civil actors.	Policy silos still prevail: cultural, innovation, education, and industrial policies operate separately. Coordination mechanisms are weak, and overlapping agendas cause confusion rather than synergy.	

5.2. List of Case Studies

FINANCE

Music Innovation Hub Italy:
Engaging Impact Investors in Your Strategy To Realize Transformative Change in Music (Italy)

Maksym ErisTavi:
From Insight to Impact: Powering Quality Journalism with Audience Data (Ukraine)

The Knotty Ones:
Scaling a Purpose-Driven Fashion Brand: Growth Through Investment and Loans (Lithuania)

Bildsturz Kollektiv:
How a Mental Health Film Project Reimagined Funding and Community Impact (Germany)

The Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp:
Tokenisation of Art as a Service to the Public (Belgium)

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

INNOVATIVE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY APPROACHES

The Scene Project:
Reinventing Film Licensing through Blockchain and Smart Contracts (Greece)

Atelier Riforma:
Upcycling Garments, Upcycling Success (Italy)

Vienna Textile Lab:
Bio-colouring textiles with a solid IP strategy (Austria)

Lorenzo Ceccotti:
An IP storyteller through illustrations (Italy)

Benoit Theunissen:
From Analogue Roots to Digital Rights (Belgium)

RESILIENCE THROUGH INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Rural Hackers:
Reimagine Intellectual Property as Creative Community Goods (Spain)

Essemme Studio:
Crafting Identity and Creating Costumer Trust through IP (Italy)

Scripor Alphabet:
The Braille of Colours (Romania)

Des Caiola:
Where Tradition meets Innovation (Italy)

Vivalangues:
When a Teacher Meets the Copyright Ecosystem of Publishing (Belgium)

Transparent:
Turning Creativity into IP Asset (Sweden)

Serge Ecker:
When Melusina Reappears (Luxembourg)

Demagog Studio:
Building a Universe Where IP Connects Everything (Serbia)

Cartoon Saloon:
Turning Irish Folklore Into Global Success Through IP (Ireland)

Inno Studio (Playtiles):
Inventing the Future of Mobile Gaming (France)

TRANSFORMATION POLICY

CREATIVE FLIP (CULTURE) POLICY ORIENTATION ON:
Culture Spaces & Democracy

1. Third Places – Houses of Culture and Exchange Furthering Democracy
2. IN SITU: (UN)COMMON PLACES furthering cultural rights and democracy

CREATIVE FLIP (CULTURE) POLICY ORIENTATION ON:
Green Storytelling through Art, Culture, and Heritage

1. MOIN Film Fund supports Green Transformation and Storytelling
2. PERMA(CULTURE): Green Storytelling in the European Capital of Culture Budweis 2028

CREATIVE FLIP (CULTURE) POLICY ORIENTATION ON:
Equipping creators and creative professionals for the AI era

1. How the Europeana Academy Is Training Europe's Cultural Heritage Sector for the Digital Age (Netherlands)
2. CYANOTYPES: Strategic Digital and AI-Related Skills for Creative Futures (Belgium)

GREENING

HBKsaar:
Designing for a Regenerative Economy (Germany)

Revoltech:
Turning Hemp Waste into Leather's Replacement (Germany)

Rut Turró:
Embedding Accessibility into the Heart of Garment Design (Spain)

KONTEJNER:
Reanimating a Void Through Bio-Art and Sensory Practice (Croatia)

Fashion Green Hub:
How Fashion Green Hub Proved That Sustainability Creates Jobs (France)

LAMA:
Culture-led regeneration in rural Tuscany (Italy)

Lottozero:
Modernising Italy's Textile Heart With Innovation, Sustainable Methods and Inclusion (Italy)

Triple:
Architecture Design for Healthy and Ecological Co-Working Spaces in Madrid (Spain)

HOPE HOME · НАДІЯ
Rebuilding War-Torn Ukraine with Renewable, Community-Led Materials

LEARNING LABS

By MARTIS:
Modular Sweaters and the Puzzle of Infinite Possibilities (Slovenia)

Magbago:
How Magbago's Learning Lab redefines a vocational training on Fashion & Design (Bosnia & Herzegovina)

Creative Spark:
Fashion Forward CCC (Coláiste Chú Chulainn) (Ireland)

Back to Eco:
Denim Remix – Rethinking Fashion in Barcelona (Spain)

Fashion Revolution Polska:
From Cement Dust to Bioplastics – How Polish Students Are Rethinking Waste Through Fashion and Construction (Poland)

Carnica Institut:
Rewoven Realities – Learning about Sustainability through Design & Performance (Slovenia)

Veronika Persché:
Tight-Knit - Create a Sustainable Fashion Future (Austria)

WhyWeCraft:
Nurturing Young Cultural Sustainability Weavers in Rural Romania (Romania)

studio WOUW:
Upcycling & Natural Dyeing – an educational journey through Colour, Craft & Community (Belgium)

Illustrious Lab & Studio Abi:
BLISS LLab – Bridging Learning in Sustainable Styles (France)

CROSS SECTORAL PIONEERS

Mateja Rot x Nikos Vandoros:
A Stone That Speaks, A Space That Listens (Slovenia – Greece)

Artem Konevskikh x Marina Orlova:
Rehearsing Conversations Between Humans and AI (Austria – Netherlands)

Kitti Baracsi x Giovanni di Sera:
Finding a Collective Voice (Germany – Portugal)

Yoryos Styl x Håkan Lidbo:
When AI co-creation needs time, not just ideas (Greece – Sweden)

Martyna Chojnacka x Giovanni Sabelli Fioretti:
Choreographing AI, Audience, and Live Performance (Germany – Italy)

Lia Carreira x Daníel Eldjárn Vilhjálmsson:
When Cultural Collections Become Sites of Making (Potugal – Iceland)

Joshua Ng x Francesco Sabaini:
Listening to the City Through Machines (Italy – Sweden)

Elvira Crois x Bob Lundgreen:
Exploring Geological Heritage through Virtual Reality (Belgium – Denmark)

Ignacio Márquez x Lotte Van Ermengem:
When AI supports sustainable making (Spain – Belgium)

AMBASSADORS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Valmiermuiža Association of Culture x Pazin City Museum:
A Living Cultural Ecosystem (Latvia – Croatia)

Spazio Nour x Nástupište 1-12:
How Spazio Nour Turns Heritage into Community (Belgium – Slovakia)

Museumsverein Klostertal x Teach Siamsa Finuge:
A Community-Led Heritage Model (Austria – Ireland)

Mayo County Council x La Finestra Community Hub:
Culture as Infrastructure (Ireland – Italy)

Maajaam x La Rivoluzione delle Seppie:
Where Art, Technology and Rural Life Meet (Estonia – Italy)

Anykščiai Art Incubator x REON:
Growing a Cultural Ecosystem in Rural Lithuania (Lithuania – Greece)

FarmLab x Makers des Montagnes:
From Small Farm to Open Creative Hub (Austria – France)

Cherimus x Cotranspose:
Rooted in Place, Open to Exchange (Italy – Greece)

Sende x Cultural Centre Schule:
A Living Model of Rural Cultural Practice (Spain – Czech Republic)

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