

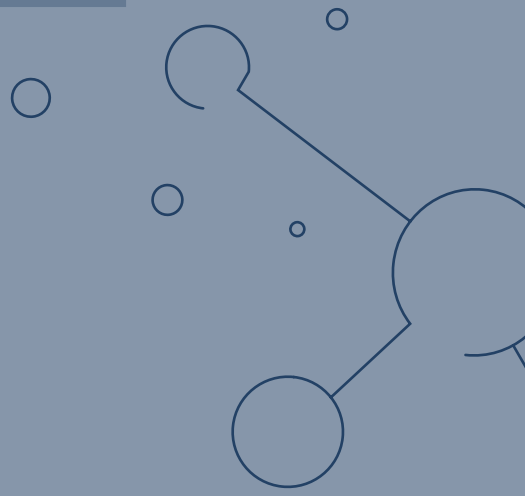
ON
THE
MOVE

The Situation of At-risk and Displaced
Artists and Culture Professionals

SAFE ARTISTS

**European emergency protection,
support and resilience
programme for at-risk artists
and cultural practitioners**

**Volume 4
New Instruments**



Co-funded by
the European Union

On the Move is the international information and advocacy network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, gathering 84 member organisations from 33 countries, representing the interests of 4,130+ members and affiliated organisations in Europe and the world. Since 2002, On the Move provides regular, up-to-date and free information on mobility opportunities, conditions and funding, and advocates for the value of cross-border cultural mobility. Co-funded by the European Union and the French Ministry of Culture, On the Move is implementing an ambitious multi-annual programme to build the capacities of local, regional, national, European and international stakeholders for the sustainable development of our cultural ecosystems.

On the Move regularly commissions researchers to investigate different themes closely related to the network's activities and the work carried out by its members. Reflecting on transversal concerns and key areas of artistic and cultural mobility, the network tries to establish a clearer picture of current movements and trends while formulating policy recommendations.

<http://on-the-move.org>

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Foreword

Artists are fundamental to the vitality, resilience and cultural development of societies and individuals. Their ability to create freely and maintain artistic autonomy is essential, not only for their own well-being but for the wider social, cultural and democratic life of their communities. Exiled and displaced artists have historically played a crucial role in promoting social cohesion, dialogue, democracy, freedom and cultural diversity. They bear witness to social, political and humanitarian realities, and their work continues to reflect and respond to the crises, injustices and challenges facing their societies. It is therefore imperative that artists at risk – whether threatened by armed conflict, persecution, political oppression, or other forms of danger – are able to continue their creative practice and contribute to cultural life.

In November 2024, On the Move embarked on a research-action initiative dedicated to the situation of at-risk and displaced artists and culture professionals.¹ The overarching aim of this project was to identify policies and practices across Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States that provide both immediate and longer-term support, accessibility, and professional continuity for displaced artists and cultural practitioners. This analysis enabled the mapping of existing support schemes, the identification of success factors and structural gaps, and the development of recommendations to assist support organisations and institutions in strengthening monitoring mechanisms, sharing innovative responses, and adapting policies and programmes where necessary.

In this fourth and final volume, On the Move presents a set of proposed instruments – whether newly designed, replicated, upscaled or adapted – aimed at strengthening support for at-risk and displaced artists. Co-designed with relocated artists, researchers and cultural stakeholders, the publication sets out operational recommendations, identifies avenues for the development of existing support schemes, and lays the groundwork for the establishment of new mechanisms.

SAFE ARTISTS has been conceived in response to an increasingly complex protection landscape and to the specific needs of artists and cultural practitioners at risk, as well as the civil society organisations that support them. The programme would be structured around the typical trajectory of a cultural practitioner facing danger, offering tailored support at each stage of risk, displacement and recovery. It would begin with immediate emergency protection, progress towards safe temporary relocation enabling artists to stabilise and regain perspective, and ultimately open access to longer-term pathways through which they could rebuild professional agency, secure dignified livelihoods, and establish new networks.

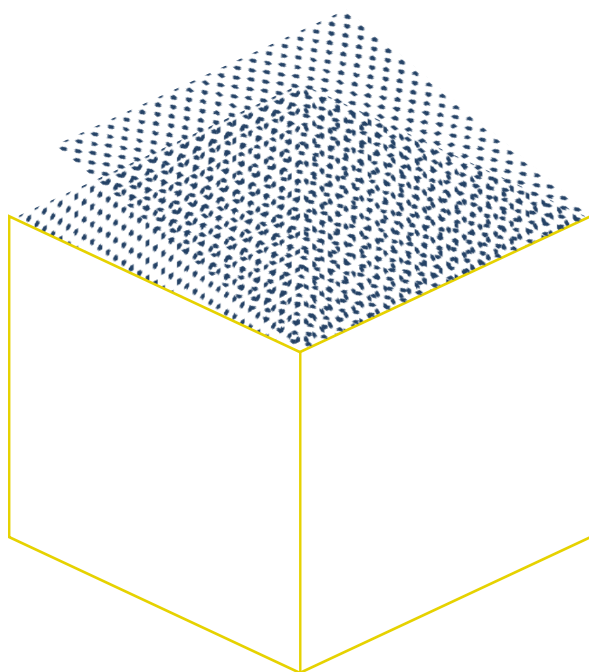
Through this conceptual framework, On the Move seeks to strengthen the case for launching a pilot action to test a new policy instrument aligned with the ambitions of the Culture Compass for Europe and positioned within the future AgoraEU programme.

Yohann Floch

¹ Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volumes 1-4*, On the Move, 2025-2026, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/work/projects/risk-and-displaced-artists-and-culture-professionals>

1/

From Context to Concept



A worsening international environment

In a world marked by war and protracted conflict, rising authoritarianism and militarisation, environmental crisis, and recurring pandemics, threats to artists and cultural practitioners' lives, safety, and ability to work are increasing.² Artists and cultural practitioners are targeted for political content, criticism of power structures, social commentary, or forms of cultural expression deemed unacceptable by authorities or dominant groups. Attacks on artistic freedom take many forms – including censorship, harassment, prosecution, violence, economic suppression, and forced displacement – but they become especially acute in contexts of conflict and repression. Attacks on artistic freedom take multiple forms, including censorship and bans, harassment and threats both online and offline, arrest, imprisonment and prosecution, physical violence and killing, economic suppression and loss of livelihood, and forced displacement due to conflict or repression. Women and LGBTQ artists and cultural practitioners face compounded risks and intersecting forms of discrimination.³

Modern warfare is causing catastrophic destruction to infrastructure including cultural systems. This not only deprives artists from the spaces and institutions that enable their productivity, but also threatens their role as custodians of cultural identity, shared heritage and memory, and hinders their contribution to rebuilding social cohesion and resilience. Artists and cultural practitioners articulate complex social realities, give voice to human vulnerability,

memorialise loss, challenge power, and, critically, help societies imagine alternative futures.

In a context of growing inequality, polarisation and disinformation, artists and cultural practitioners play a vital role in fostering inclusive narratives, creating spaces for pluralism and dialogue, re-weaving fragmented social fabrics, and inspiring creative responses to social injustice.

The denial of artists' right to freedom of expression, as guaranteed under the United Nations' Human Rights Instruments,⁴ the European Convention on Human Rights,⁵ and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union,⁶ poses a threat not only to individual artists but to society at large. What is at stake is not only personal safety and artistic freedom, but the capacity of artists to contribute meaningfully to public life. The absence of robust documentation and reporting mechanisms in the field of artistic freedom means that reliable data on the scale of these attacks remains limited. Nonetheless, UN agencies and civil society organisations consistently report thousands of cases worldwide. While such violations were once concentrated primarily in conflict and authoritarian contexts in the Global South, recent years have seen their spread into both nascent and established democracies in the Global North.⁷ Other studies also highlight the sharp rise in online harassment and digital threats as tools for silencing artists.⁸

2 In 2021 alone, over **1,200 attacks** against artists were documented globally, including **39 killings**. See Soraide, R., *Defending Creative Voices – Artists in emergencies – Learning from the safety of journalists*, UNESCO, 2023, available here: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000385265>

3 See 'Chapter 10 Global mandate: safeguarding artistic freedom in law, policy and practice' authored by Andra Matei in UNESCO, *Re/shaping policies for creativity: we share, we act, we build*, UNESCO, 2026, available here: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000397330>

4 See the documents that provide the foundational legal framework for international human rights here: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-listings>

5 Available here: <https://www.echr.coe.int/european-convention-on-human-rights>

6 Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, European Union, 2012, available here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/char_2012/oj/eng

7 See for example the annual report by Freemuse, *State of Artistic Freedom 2025*, 2025, available here: <https://www.freemuse.org/state-of-artistic-freedom-2025>

8 See the 'Chapter 9 Gender equality: not an optional extra' authored by Bridget Conor in UNESCO, *Re/shaping policies for creativity: we share, we act, we build*, UNESCO, 2026, available here: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf00000397330>

Unlike the journalism sector, where relatively well-established mechanisms exist to document threats and provide protection, the ecosystem supporting artists and cultural practitioners at risk remains nascent, fragmented and under-resourced at national, regional and international levels. Recognition of artists as human rights defenders is a relatively recent development. Civil society organisations, including On the Move, alongside UNESCO and UN Special Rapporteurs on artistic freedom and freedom of expression, have repeatedly warned of the insufficiency of existing responses.

These analyses call for holistic, interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, cross-border, and multi-layered approaches that combine immediate emergency assistance with longer-term support enabling artists to heal, regain dignified livelihoods, and re-enter the creative cycle.

This body of work also stresses the importance of exchange and learning between the arts sector, human rights defenders, and the media, and advocates for recognising at-risk artists as human rights defenders, enabling access to broader protection frameworks beyond those dedicated exclusively to culture.

Evidence from grassroots civil society organisations operating in close proximity to high-risk contexts underscores the need for agile, flexible, secure and well-coordinated emergency mechanisms to extract artists from immediate danger. As observed since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, only a small number

of organisations are dedicated specifically to artist protection; most have integrated such activities into wider cultural programmes in response to growing needs. In general, these interventions are often project-based and dependent on international funding with geographically limited priorities, undermining sustainability and leaving many artists without access to protection. In regions such as the Middle East and North Africa, this results in severe protection gaps for artists and cultural practitioners from under-resourced or politically marginalised contexts. While local and regional organisations are often highly effective in needs assessment and short-term relocation within countries or neighbouring regions, they frequently lack the capacity to support longer-term solutions.

As a result, partnerships with peer organisations in safer contexts, primarily in Europe, become essential when displaced artists and cultural practitioners continue to face risk, discrimination, or legal barriers preventing residence, employment, and artistic practice. When relocated from conflict zones to neighbouring countries, they may also face renewed censorship linked to regional political dynamics and allegiances. In this context, sustained cooperation between local protection providers and international civil society organisations enables safer, longer-term pathways for resettlement and professional reintegration. However, the few institutions and autonomous organisations active in this field are themselves increasingly under-resourced, particularly in light of recent reductions in public funding for culture, human rights, cooperation and development, or international relations.

The European context: opportunities and ambitions

The 2023 Council conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists⁹ invite Member States and the European Commission to take both immediate measures to provide a safe haven and adopt a long-term, holistic approach when welcoming at-risk and displaced artists. The conclusions also highlight the necessity to ‘contribute to networking and the exchange of information, best practices, and experiences between Member States and non-state actors supporting at-risk and displaced artists’.

Across the EU, support for at-risk and displaced artists and cultural practitioners remains uneven, fragmented, and often short-term.

While valuable initiatives exist, they are concentrated in a limited number of Member States and frequently rely on emergency measures that have not been embedded into sustainable cultural policies. Access to support is often restricted by structural barriers, including eligibility criteria that favour established, well-connected, or financially secure artists, leaving emerging practitioners and those most vulnerable excluded. Evidence shows that the most resilient and effective mechanisms are those developed in close collaboration with civil society, grassroots organisations, and the arts sector itself. At the same time, many programmes focus narrowly on specific crises or countries of origin, underscoring the need for inclusive frameworks that can be adapted to artists affected by repression and conflict worldwide. A holistic approach – combining emergency relief with long-term career development, psychosocial support, networking, and access to information – is essential to ensure meaningful protection and professional continuity.

At EU level, there is a clear need for strategic leadership that strengthens cross-border coordination, facilitates international mobility and collaboration, and recognises that artistic careers transcend national boundaries. Displaced artists must be supported as autonomous cultural practitioners, not only as mediators or storytellers of migration, and their voices must be systematically integrated into policy design through consultation and research. The EU is uniquely positioned to amplify good practices, foster complementarity between national schemes, and promote artistic freedom as a core European value. This requires moving beyond symbolic commitments towards concrete, coordinated action – both to improve protection mechanisms within the EU and to address the broader conditions that threaten artistic freedom globally.

Such measures would enhance the EU efforts to sustain a world order based on human rights values at times when we are witnessing the erosion of such values and undermining of UN conventions.

Europe is well positioned to be a leader in safeguarding artistic freedom of expression as a key pillar to democratic, human rights based rule. SAFE ARTISTS is not just a programme – it is a commitment to protecting the voices, stories and contributions of those who enrich our cultural heritage. Let us act now to ensure that Europe remains a beacon of artistic freedom and solidarity.

⁹ European Union, Council conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists, 2023, available here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2023_185_R_0009

Towards a new European instrument

The design of SAFE ARTISTS responds to this complex protection landscape and to the specific needs of artists at risk, as well as to the intermediary civil society organisations that support them. The programme would be structured around the typical trajectory of a cultural practitioner at risk, offering tailored support at each stage. It would prioritise immediate emergency protection as a first-step intervention, ensure safe temporary

relocation that allows artists to recover and plan, and ultimately provide access to longer-term safe havens where artists could rebuild agency, secure dignified livelihoods, and establish new professional networks. Across all phases, SAFE ARTISTS would integrate legal, livelihood, psychological, and artistic networking support, enabling artists not only to survive, but to continue creating, contributing, and engaging meaningfully with European societies.

SAFE ARTISTS would achieve the above through three strands of intervention:



Safety Grants

The Safety Grants strand would provide immediate, short-term emergency support to artists and cultural practitioners at risk who face acute and potentially life-threatening situations, focusing on rapid protection needs. Support would be delivered through cooperating intermediary organisations that are legally established in Creative Europe participating countries and have field-level protection capacity. Intermediary organisations would receive lump-sum grants to redistribute immediate relief grants to cover essential services such as legal assistance, emergency mobility, basic subsistence, and psychological and physical health support. The scheme would ensure that artists gain immediate safety, short-term stability, and access to trusted local intermediaries capable of swift action.



Safe Residencies

The Safe Residencies strand would offer safe-haven artistic residencies allowing artists and cultural practitioners at risk to rest, recover, and reconnect with their creative practice without pressure to produce work. Intermediary organisations in Creative Europe participating countries would

host artists and cultural practitioners and provide them with temporary housing, mobility support, and psychological and physical health services. Residencies would aim to strengthen social connection, reduce isolation, and offer a stable environment where artists could prepare their next professional steps.

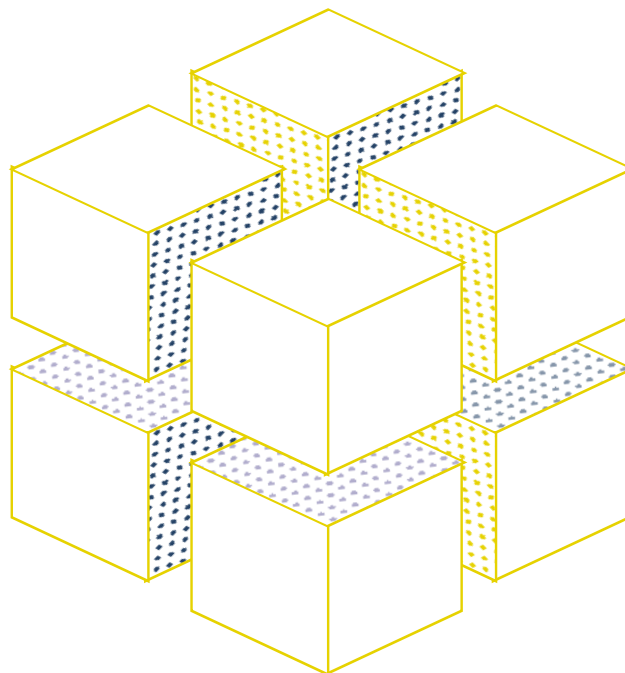


Safe Trajectories

The Safe Trajectories strand would support longer-term stabilisation and bespoke career development for artists and cultural practitioners through one-year placements at IOs in Creative Europe participating countries. Beneficiaries would receive a comprehensive package of services encompassing housing support, legal assistance for visas and work permits (including refugee status, subsidiary or temporary protection), language and cultural training, mental health services, and structured professional development opportunities. This strand would emphasise long-term safety and participation, helping artists build sustainable careers within European cultural ecosystems. It would foster deeper transnational cooperation and long-term community and professional engagement beyond crisis response.

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European Added Value



A structural and transnational challenge requiring coordinated EU-level action

EU added value lies in enabling a coordinated, efficient and systemic response to forced artistic displacement that cannot be achieved through fragmented national or project-based interventions, while ensuring

protection, professional continuity, and responsibility-sharing across Member States. The following section outlines how EU intervention addresses structural, strategic and systemic challenges.



Nature of the challenge: non-linear risk trajectories

Mobility and protection for at-risk and displaced artists and cultural practitioners are not a matter of choice, but responses to acute and evolving risk. As documented in On the Move's 2024-2026 research,¹⁰ artists in such situations experience prolonged instability affecting their ability to continue their artistic practice. These trajectories are rarely linear: artists may require immediate emergency support,

temporary stabilisation, or longer-term frameworks for professional continuity, depending on their circumstances. While the root causes that place artists at risk or compel their displacement lie beyond the scope of cultural policy, their consequences directly affect participation in cultural ecosystems across Europe, shaping access to artistic networks, resources, and professional opportunities.



Limited and uneven action by Member States

The absence of coordinated structures has resulted in a fragmented and uneven landscape of support across the EU where mechanisms are inconsistently distributed and frequently reliant on short-term or ad hoc initiatives. Existing imbalances in cultural mobility provision between European regions are reproduced and intensified in the case of at-risk and displaced artists. Member States demonstrate significantly different levels of political attention, institutional capacity, and willingness to engage with long-term support in this area. These disparities are further compounded by the transnational composition of the Creative Europe framework, which includes both EU Member States and non-EU participating countries. While this participation strengthens cultural cooperation across the EU and neighbouring regions, significant differences exist in the legal,

institutional and funding environments supporting at-risk and displaced artists. In several participating non-EU countries, cultural infrastructures operate within regulatory and governance contexts that provide fewer structural safeguards for independent cultural activity, artistic freedom, and protection mechanisms related to migration and asylum.

These asymmetries affect the availability and safety of support pathways across the Creative Europe area and reinforce the need for coordination at EU level.

Mapping of national cultural policies across the EU¹¹ confirms that sustained and targeted support is concentrated in a limited number of Member States, while many others provide little or no dedicated

¹⁰ Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volumes 1-4*, On the Move, 2025, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/work/projects/risk-and-displaced-artists-and-culture-professionals>

¹¹ Polivtseva, E. and Stambke, F., 'Policy and Practice in the EU: Pathways, Impediments and Patchwork Solutions', in Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volume 2 Cultural Policy Analysis*, On the Move, 2025, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/work/projects/risk-and-displaced-artists-and-culture-professionals>

provision within their cultural policy frameworks. As a result, access to protection, professional opportunities, and longer-term participation depends more on geography, legal status, and institutional context than on needs or risk profiles.

National cultural policies also face inherent structural constraints in responding to forced displacement.

Cultural support instruments are rarely designed to intersect effectively with asylum systems, migration law, or social protection frameworks. This creates a persistent mismatch between artists' legal status and their capacity to access funding, residencies, employment, or professional networks. Research further indicates that many national schemes presuppose stability, pre-existing partnerships, or

professional capital, all conditions that displaced artists often lack upon arrival, generating systemic barriers to access even where support formally exists.¹²

Moreover, displacement trajectories in the cultural sector are often transnational. Artistic careers, networks, and modes of production frequently extend across borders, while artists may move between countries in response to legal status, security conditions, or professional opportunities. Yet national support mechanisms rarely operate in a coordinated cross-border manner. The absence of structured frameworks for coordination, continuity, and responsibility-sharing across Member States reinforces precarity and inequalities, and places disproportionate pressure on a limited number of host countries and civil society actors.



Limited responses from the cultural field

Beyond public authorities, the cultural sector itself has mobilised in response to these needs. However, these efforts remain structurally constrained. Recent sectoral mappings, notably the *On the Move Cultural Mobility Funding Guide – focus on at-risk and displaced artists and culture professionals*,¹³ highlights persistent gaps in existing support. In addition to the limited national responses, support to at-risk and displaced artists and cultural practitioners is sustained through civil society organisations and philanthropic initiatives, often operating with limited resources and without long-term institutional anchoring. Structured pathways that extend beyond emergency assistance remain rare, particularly in

relation to professional stabilisation and continuity of artistic practice. While these actors play a critical role in responding to urgent needs, their interventions frequently remain typically project-based and geographically concentrated.¹⁴

This structural imbalance is also reflected in the actual availability, distribution and continuity of cultural mobility opportunities for at-risk and displaced artists.

An analysis of international calls for participation published on the On the Move platform between January 2020 and May 2025 shows that less than

12 Ibid. As an example, of the **25 emergency and urgent funding programmes worldwide** that support at-risk arts professionals, **nine** are operated from European Union Member States. However, these initiatives are hosted by only **seven Member States** – namely Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, the Republic of Ireland, Sweden, and the Netherlands. See Floch, Y. and Yeluri, M., *Cultural Mobility Funding Guide – focus on at-risk and displaced artists and culture professionals* in Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volume 4 New Instruments*, On the Move, 2026, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/developing-new-policy-instruments-and-operational-tools-situation-risk-and>

13 Out of the **24 artist-in-residence programmes worldwide** dedicated to at-risk arts professionals, **11 are operated from European Union Member States**. However, these initiatives are hosted by only five Member States – namely Finland, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden. See Floch, Y. and Yeluri, M., *Cultural Mobility Funding Guide – focus on at-risk and displaced artists and culture professionals* in Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volume 4 New Instruments*, On the Move, 2026, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/developing-new-policy-instruments-and-operational-tools-situation-risk-and>

14 Wilson, C. R., 'Chapter 1: At-Risk and Displaced Arts Workers: Analysing On the Move's Database of International Open Calls for Participation' in Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volume 3 Case Studies*, On the Move, 2025, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/protecting-and-supporting-risk-and-displaced-arts-professionals-across-borders>

3% of calls explicitly addressed at-risk or displaced arts workers, with fewer than 2% even partially targeting this group. Moreover, these opportunities were largely concentrated in a small number of countries and predominantly took the form of one-off initiatives, offering limited continuity or longer-term professional support.

This evidence confirms that access to protection and professional opportunities remains scarce, unevenly distributed, and structurally insufficient, reinforcing the need for coordinated EU-level approaches capable of increasing scale, continuity, and geographical balance.



Gaps in existing EU cultural instruments

At the same time, existing EU cultural instruments, including programmes such as Creative Europe or Erasmus+, while essential in supporting artistic mobility and cooperation,¹⁵ are not designed to respond to forced displacement or to provide specialised expertise related to legal protection,

safeguarding, and risk management. As a result, at-risk and displaced artists frequently encounter gaps between available cultural mobility opportunities and the legal, social and professional conditions required to access them.

EU-level coordination best positioned to respond to identified needs

Sectoral analyses also provide important operational insights into the types of support required to respond effectively to forced artistic displacement. Evidence consistently highlights the need to distinguish between emergency assistance, temporary safe haven or residency-based support that enables artists to stabilise their situation, and longer-term measures that support professional continuity and participation in cultural ecosystems.¹⁶

Research further emphasises the importance of working through intermediary organisations as trusted and experienced actors, and of applying flexible, confidential, and risk-sensitive procedures

adapted to the specific vulnerabilities associated with displacement.

Drawing on comparative mappings, typologies of support, and identified good practices, EU-level intervention can therefore build on existing knowledge, strengthen what has proven effective, and address documented shortcomings in a systemic manner.

The cumulative evidence above demonstrates that the conditions for EU action under the principle of subsidiarity, as set out in Article 5(3) of the Treaty

15 See for example the **Creative Europe** funded cooperation projects 'In Ex(ile) Lab' (<https://inexilelab.eu>), 'Culture Helps Solidarity' (<https://insha-osvita.org/en/culture-helps-solidarity-kultura-dopomahaie-solidarnist-hrany-na-proiekt-persh-yi-konkurs>), DECONFINING – Arts, Culture & Policies in Europe & Africa (<https://deconfining.eu>), and 'Rawabet: Participation | Connectivity | Diversity' (<https://ettijahat.org/page/1565?lang=1>) or the **Erasmus+** funded projects 'Access, Advocacy and Active Inclusion' (<https://www.aaa-pathways.eu>) and 'PUZLP – artistes en exil dans les écoles d'art européennes' (<https://andea.fr/evenement/puzlp-artistes-en-exil-dans-les-ecoles-dart-europeenne>).

16 See Yazaji, R., 'Intersecting Temporalities: At-Risk and Displaced Artists in Transition' in Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volume 1 Scoping Review*, On the Move, 2025, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/intersecting-temporalities-risk-and-displaced-artists-transition-volume-1-scoping>

on the Functioning of the European Union¹⁷ are met. Objectives cannot be sufficiently achieved by Member States acting alone, but can be better realised at Union level due to the scale, cross-border nature, or effects of the challenge. While responsibility for culture and cultural mobility primarily lies with Member States, the situation of at-risk and displaced artists and culture professionals reveals the structural limits of purely national responses.

Taken together, these dynamics demonstrate that the challenges faced by at-risk and displaced artists cannot be effectively addressed through isolated national measures, sector-led initiatives, or existing cultural mobility programmes acting independently. They require EU-level coordination capable of reducing fragmentation, enabling cross-border coherence, and complementing national competencies through a shared framework tailored to the specific conditions of forced displacement in the cultural sector. EU-level coordination is therefore required not to impose a single model of support, but to ensure protection, safety, continuity of artistic

practice, and access to professional opportunities across different stages of displacement.

The 2023 Council Conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists¹⁸ recognise the significant role of exiled and displaced artists in promoting freedom of expression, democracy, cultural diversity, and mutual understanding, as well as their importance as witnesses to ongoing events.

However, translating this shared political recognition into concrete, stable and sustainable conditions for artists to continue their work cannot be achieved through national action alone, given the transnational nature of displacement and the uneven capacities of Member States.

The challenge is therefore European in scale and structural in nature, requiring coordinated and multi-level responses that extend beyond isolated measures, sector-led initiatives, or existing cultural mobility instruments.

European action: efficiency, complementarity and shared responsibility

EU-level action enables scale, efficiency and coherence in responding to the situation of at-risk and displaced artists in ways that no single Member State, city, or cultural network can achieve alone. By operating across borders and policy domains, European coordination makes it possible to ensure

more equitable access to safety, protection and professional support, to distribute responsibility more fairly among Member States, and to align cultural action with the legal and social frameworks that shape artists' mobility and working conditions.

17 Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - PART THREE: UNION POLICIES AND INTERNAL ACTIONS - TITLE XIII: CULTURE - Article 167 (ex Article 151 TEC), available here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12008E167>

18 European Union, Council conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists, 2023, available here: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023XG0526\(02\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52023XG0526(02))

At EU level, coordinated action makes it possible to:



Address systemic imbalances across Europe

While only a limited number of countries currently provide dedicated and sustained support for at-risk and displaced artists and cultural practitioners,¹⁹ EU-level coordination can help ensure more equitable access to safety, protection and professional support across all Creative Europe participating countries.



Enable solidarity and responsibility-sharing across borders

EU coordination can foster cooperation, peer exchange, and the mutualisation of expertise and hosting capacity, reducing the concentration of responsibility in a small number of countries and supporting the engagement of displaced artists within diverse European cultural ecosystems.



Ensure complementarity with Member State, regional and local measures

Across Europe, support for artists is delivered through a wide range of EU programmes, national and local measures, and civil-society initiatives, each addressing particular needs or stages of artistic work. However, these schemes are rarely designed to respond to forced displacement as a cross-cutting condition affecting legal status, mobility, livelihoods, and professional continuity simultaneously. EU-level action can therefore add value by linking and strengthening existing provisions, ensuring coherence and continuity across levels while avoiding duplication.



Strengthen policy coherence across sectors

By supporting coordination between Member States, Creative Europe Desks, and Intermediary Organisations, EU-level action can help reduce administrative and structural barriers (e.g. related to legal status, taxation, or access to services) and better align cultural support with broader EU commitments to artistic freedom, diversity and social cohesion. In line with the Council conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists, which call for a long-term, holistic and coordinated approach, EU action can contribute to translating shared political commitments into coherent practices across policy domains and levels of governance.

¹⁹ Of the 60 cultural mobility opportunities targeting (or partially targeting) arts workers at risk listed on the On The Move website between January 2020 and May 2025, most were organised by institutions based in **Germany** (19), followed by **France** (8), **Austria** (7), **Ukraine** (7), **Poland** (6), the **United States of America** (6), **Great Britain** (5), **Denmark** (3), and **Turkey** (3). See Wilson, C., 'Chapter 1: At-Risk and Displaced Arts Workers: Analysing On the Move's Database of International Open Calls for Participation' in Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-Risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volume 3, On the Move*, 2025, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/protecting-and-supporting-risk-and-displaced-arts-professionals-across-borders>

Alignment with EU values, strategic commitments and priorities

EU action in support of at-risk and displaced artists and cultural practitioners is firmly grounded in existing European values, political commitments, and priorities. The protection of artistic freedom, the promotion of cultural diversity, and the defence of fundamental rights are repeatedly affirmed as core principles of the European Union and its Member States.

This commitment is explicitly articulated in the Council conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists, which recognise the important role of artists in the life, development and resilience of society and individuals, underline the significant role of exiled artists in promoting peace, mutual understanding, freedom, democracy, and cultural diversity, and stress the importance of ensuring that at-risk and displaced artists are able to continue their artistic work. The Conclusions call for a long-term and holistic approach to welcoming at-risk and displaced artists and their families, complementing the urgent need for safe havens with opportunities for social and professional engagement, continued artistic activity and visibility, and participation in local cultural life.

This political orientation is reinforced by the European Commission's Culture Compass for Europe²⁰ which frames artistic freedom as a cornerstone of democratic societies and a collective responsibility of the EU and its Member States. The Compass calls for concrete measures, including safe havens, to protect artists at risk and displaced artists through coherent EU policies and frameworks.

Supporting at-risk and displaced artists and culture professionals contributes directly to cultural diversity and engagement by ensuring that voices shaped by displacement, dissent or marginalisation remain present within European cultural life.

As highlighted in the Culture Compass for Europe, safeguarding such diversity of expression is closely linked to democratic resilience, social cohesion, and the capacity of societies to remain open, pluralistic and resistant to exclusionary narratives.

EU engagement in this field is also coherent with its legal and policy framework for culture. Under Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,²¹ the Union is mandated to support and complement Member State action in the cultural field, including through cross-border cooperation and mobility – dimensions that are central to addressing forced displacement in the cultural sector. The EU's ratification of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions further underscores its responsibility to foster conditions in which cultural expressions can be created, disseminated, and accessed freely, including in situations of risk and displacement.²²

Importantly, EU policies increasingly situate culture within broader social, economic and rights-based frameworks. The cultural and creative sectors are characterised by high levels of mobility, self-

20 A Culture Compass for Europe – Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, European Commission, 12 November 2025, available here: <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/document/a-culture-compass-for-europe>

21 Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union – PART THREE: UNION POLICIES AND INTERNAL ACTIONS – TITLE XIII: CULTURE – Article 167 (ex Article 151 TEC), available here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:12008E167>

22 In particular article 8 focusing on measures to protect cultural expressions:

‘1. Without prejudice to the provisions of Articles 5 and 6, a Party may determine the existence of special situations where cultural expressions on its territory are at risk of extinction, under serious threat, or otherwise in need of urgent safeguarding.

2. Parties may take all appropriate measures to protect and preserve cultural expressions in situations referred to in paragraph 1 in a manner consistent with the provisions of this Convention.

3. Parties shall report to the Intergovernmental Committee referred to in Article 23 all measures taken to meet the exigencies of the situation, and the Committee may make appropriate recommendations.’ From the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions, 20 October 2005, available here: <https://www.unesco.org/en/legal-affairs/convention-protection-and-promotion-diversity-cultural-expressions>

employment, and project-based work, making artists and culture workers particularly vulnerable to disruptions caused by forced displacement.²³ Recent EU policy orientations highlight the interdependence between artistic freedom and the social and economic conditions of culture professionals, including access to legal status, fair working conditions, and professional continuity across borders.

At the same time, the EU has positioned itself as a global advocate for artistic freedom and cultural rights. This external credibility depends on the Union's capacity to translate political commitments into concrete and coherent action within its own territory. Supporting at-risk and displaced artists

through coordinated European action strengthens the EU's legitimacy, demonstrating that artistic freedom and cultural diversity are upheld not only as external principles, but as lived realities within Europe.

By aligning protection, mobility and professional support with its fundamental values and long-term objectives, EU action can contribute to a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable European cultural ecosystem: one that recognises displaced artists not only as beneficiaries of protection, but as active contributors to Europe's cultural, democratic and social life.

Generating lasting impact: towards systemic change

EU-level action in support of at-risk and displaced artists and culture professionals has the potential to generate lasting impact beyond individual beneficiaries by strengthening European cultural systems as a whole. Coordinated European intervention can create the conditions for a standing framework that can be activated when needed, moving beyond ad hoc responses by drawing on shared learning, consolidated standards, and established networks. This approach supports not only individual artistic trajectories, but also more coherent policy development and sustained cooperation across the Creative Europe area.

Research and operational studies on cultural mobility and support mechanisms consistently highlight that many of the structural impediments faced by at-risk and displaced artists cannot be effectively addressed through isolated national or project-based responses. The *Operational study: Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe participating countries*²⁴ underlines that key barriers related to mobility, legal status, administrative procedures, and unequal access to support can only be meaningfully bypassed through a cohesive and strategic EU-level approach, capable of addressing existing imbalances and coordinating efforts across countries.

²³ Dowden, S.; Floch, Y. (ed.); Ilić, M.; and Wilson, C. R., *Mental Health, Well-being and International Cultural Mobility. Report and Policy Recommendations*, On the Move, 2024, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/cultural-mobility-flows-mental-health-well-being-and-international-cultural>

²⁴ On the Move, *Operational study: Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries*, i-Portunus / Goethe-Institut, 2019, available here: https://on-the-move.org/sites/default/files/library/2023-03/OTM_iportunus-operational-study_2019.pdf

Beyond its own policy instruments, the EU therefore has a central role to play in facilitating coordination, knowledge exchange, and mutual learning among Member States and intermediary organisations.

By enabling countries to learn from one another, adopt and adapt proven models across different contexts and stages of displacement, and jointly amplify existing good practices, EU action can help move the sector from fragmented and ad hoc responses towards more predictable, transparent and professionalised support frameworks.

Evidence gathered through On the Move's 2024-2026 research-action initiative²⁵ further shows that many effective practices remain localised, under-resourced, or dependent on individual organisations and informal networks. Without mechanisms for European-level consolidation, evaluation and transfer, such practices risk remaining isolated rather than contributing to systemic change. EU coordination creates the conditions for these experiences to be documented, assessed and translated into shared reference

points, guidelines and standards that can inform future policy development and implementation.

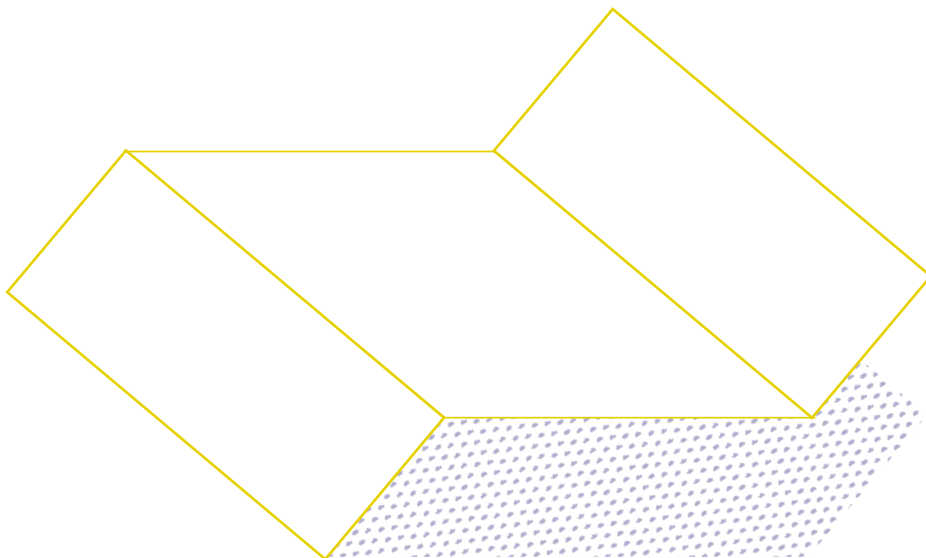
In this sense, the impact of EU action extends beyond the duration of any single programme. By supporting learning processes, strengthening evaluation mechanisms, and fostering efficient alignment between cultural, social and mobility-related policies, European intervention contributes to longer-term structural change. This includes greater policy coherence, improved institutional capacity, and a more balanced distribution of responsibility for supporting at-risk and displaced artists across Europe, in line with the EU's broader commitments to cultural diversity, artistic freedom, and social cohesion.

Taken together, these knock-on effects would strengthen the EU's institutional preparedness and ability to respond coherently and effectively to future situations of artistic risk or displacement, backed by a permanent European mechanism able to activate and reinforce EU action in response to emerging crises.

25 Polivtseva, E. and Stambke, F., 'Policy and Practice in the EU: Pathways, Impediments and Patchwork Solutions' in Floch, Y. (ed.), *The Situation of At-risk and Displaced Artists and Culture Professionals – Volume 2 Cultural Policy Analysis*, On the Move, 2025, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/protecting-and-supporting-risk-and-displaced-arts-professionals-across-borders>

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Designing the Ideal Programme



SAFE ARTISTS would operate through a decentralised cascading grant model grounded in the principle of subsidiarity, which justifies EU intervention where Member States alone cannot adequately address fragmented, unequal and inaccessible systems of support for artists and cultural practitioners at risk. The programme would be designed to combine European-level coordination with locally embedded implementation capacity. Its architecture would rest on three interdependent pillars: the coordinating entity, the intermediary organisations, and the end beneficiaries. Together, these would form a structured yet flexible protection ecosystem capable of responding to acute crises while enabling long-term professional and social stabilisation.

Translating principles into an operational framework

The architecture would enable rapid mobilisation, improve accessibility, enhance cultural responsiveness, and leverage existing local infrastructures. By anchoring implementation within established cultural ecosystems, it would strengthen contextual contribution while dispersing operational responsibility across multiple actors.

Adopting a decentralised framework, through the selection of external entities and consortia via open calls, would be expected to generate strong cost-benefit outcomes. Targeted cultural organisations and networks already operate with experienced teams, established partnerships, and tested working methods. This would reduce duplication of structures at EU level, limit unnecessary administrative layering, and enable faster and more context-sensitive implementation.

However, it must be clearly acknowledged that the administrative costs of such a programme would not be minimal. Supporting at-risk and forcibly displaced artists entails structurally higher coordination, safeguarding, legal and case-management requirements than conventional cultural mobility or cooperation schemes. The administrative allocation would therefore need to reflect the operational intensity and complexity inherent to high-risk protection contexts.

Whilst strategic alignment and oversight would be maintained at EU level, this structure would optimise resource allocation, ensuring that the highest possible proportion of funding is directed to end beneficiaries.

End beneficiaries

The primary end beneficiaries of SAFE ARTISTS would be individual artists and cultural practitioners at risk from any country outside the EU, alongside their immediate family members where relocation requires family inclusion.

Eligible profiles would include artists across all disciplines, cultural journalists, translators, curators, information providers

and community engagement workers, producers, heritage professionals, audiovisual professionals, technical practitioners, and cultural managers.

The programme would recognise the diversity of roles within cultural ecosystems and would not restrict eligibility to narrowly defined artistic categories. In addition to individual applicants, SAFE ARTISTS

would also allow small-scale cultural organisations and collectives at risk to apply for safety grants, where the threat affects an organisation's core team or where collective relocation is necessary to ensure continuity of work. This provision would recognise that in many contexts artistic practice is embedded within small independent structures, such as community media outlets, artist-led spaces, cultural NGOs or informal collectives, and that protection mechanisms must be flexible enough to safeguard both individuals and the ecosystems within which they operate.

Beneficiaries would need to demonstrate credible risk to their life, personal freedom, artistic practice, or professional continuity.

Risk may arise from various factors such as: general circumstances (e.g. armed conflict, civil unrest, low level of artistic freedom); artistic work, actions and/or associations (e.g. due to involvement in political, civic, or social activities grounded in liberal and democratic principles, or due to association with similarly threatened individuals or groups); personal identity (e.g. ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious beliefs); profession (e.g. cultural journalists and information providers); and at-risk artists already within the EU (refugee status, subsidiary or temporary protection).

Evidence could include legal documentation, dismissal notices, court summons documents, imprisonment records, credible threats, censorship attempts, social media posts related to personal activism, documents detailing specific incidents, supporting documentation from humanitarian organisations, witness statements, reports and news articles from reliable journals on relevant conflicts, official evacuation orders, etc. Artists already within the EU under refugee status or with subsidiary or temporary protection would remain eligible where risk persists or professional destabilisation continues.

Beyond protection criteria, SAFE ARTISTS would recognise beneficiaries as cultural actors whose practice contributes to the values of open societies.

Their body of work, professional trajectory or public engagement should demonstrate a commitment to freedom of expression, cultural diversity, dialogue, critical thinking, and respect for fundamental rights. The assessment would not require adherence to any particular political position; rather, it would examine the extent to which the applicant's artistic or cultural practice contributes to democratic cultural life, freedom of expression, and pluralism within their original context.

Coordinating entity

The coordinating entity, whether a single entity or a consortium, would act as the central operational and strategic manager of the programme on behalf of the European Commission. The coordinating entity would be responsible for implementing the overall framework of the programme, establishing eligibility and evaluation criteria, and launching open, transparent calls for the selection of intermediary organisations across the three strands of the programme. It would appoint independent evaluation panels, ensure geographic balance and thematic complementarity among selected intermediary organisations, and formalise contractual agreements

with them. In doing so, the coordinating entity would safeguard the coherence, fairness and integrity of the programme while avoiding centralisation of direct service delivery.

Fund management would be a core function of the coordinating entity. SAFE ARTISTS would operate under a cascading grants mechanism whereby the European Commission would contract the coordinating entity, which in turn would select, fund and monitor intermediary organisations providing direct support to beneficiaries.

The coordinating entity would receive and manage programme funding, transfer resources to intermediary organisations through clearly defined contractual arrangements, monitor administrative cost ceilings, and ensure that the largest possible proportion of funding reaches artists and cultural practitioners at risk. This structure would provide strong financial accountability while preserving decentralised operational autonomy. This model has been tested in several other European initiatives and has proven to be the most robust, resilient and flexible. This framework would also provide the best European added value, as implementing organisations would bring geographical diversity and tailored knowledge of diverse contexts.

A centralised web platform would be established and managed by the coordinating entity in order to guarantee General Data Protection Regulation compliance, safety and security management, transparency, harmonised procedures and equal access to information across all participating countries.

The coordinating entity would ensure unified treatment of applications at the framework level, provide clear guidance to applicants, and maintain a coherent digital infrastructure for submission, reporting and communication.

The operational execution of the scheme, including contextual risk assessment, beneficiary selection within the strand allocations, and the direct distribution of grants, would be carried out by the selected intermediary organisations. Intermediary organisations would retain the flexibility to tailor

support to specific legal, administrative and socio-cultural contexts and to deliver assistance in relevant national or regional languages. Through structured reporting from intermediary organisations via the central platform, the coordinating entity would be able to monitor performance and impact while preserving the responsiveness and adaptability that are essential in complex and rapidly evolving risk environments.

Beyond fund management, the coordinating entity would ensure monitoring, quality assurance, and programme evaluation.

It would establish structured reporting cycles, oversee compliance with safeguarding and risk-management standards, and collect both quantitative and qualitative data to measure impact. Intermediary organisations and end beneficiaries would be meaningfully involved in the evaluation process through interviews, surveys, and case studies, ensuring that programme adaptation is informed by lived experience.

The coordinating entity would also play a strategic role in communication, visibility and advocacy.

It would develop programme-level communication tools, ensure compliance with EU visibility requirements, convene learning events, and contribute to policy discussions related to resettlement, cultural mobility, and the status of artists at risk. In this sense, the coordinating entity would function not only as a programme manager but also as a knowledge hub and policy interlocutor at European level.

Intermediary organisations

Operational delivery would rest with the intermediary organisations. These would be pre-existing professional entities established in Creative Europe participating countries and selected through open calls based on demonstrated expertise, infrastructure,

networks and ecosystem capacity. Their embedded position within local, regional or national cultural, legal and administrative systems enables contextual intelligence, linguistic accessibility, and rapid response capacity for at-risk artists and cultural

practitioners. While the coordinating entity would guarantee strategic alignment and oversight, intermediary organisations would provide direct, person-to-person support tailored to the needs of beneficiaries.

Under the Safety Grants strand, intermediary organisations would be responsible for rapid support for artists and cultural practitioners in acute risk situations.

With established expertise in protection mechanisms and field-based intervention, they would provide rapid-response grants to individual artists and cultural practitioners – or, where appropriate, to their organisations – in order to address urgent risks and stabilise critical situations, including support for family members when necessary. These grants would be designed to resolve immediate protection needs and prevent further deterioration of already precarious circumstances. The framework would enable intermediary organisations to act swiftly by mobilising partnerships, protection protocols, and administrative procedures. This would reduce delays that could otherwise jeopardise the safety or well-being of beneficiaries. Through this scheme, end beneficiaries would be afforded immediate protection, short-term stability, and access to trusted local intermediaries capable of providing timely, confidential and context-sensitive support.

Within the Safe Residencies strand, intermediary organisations would facilitate temporary safe havens for artists and cultural practitioners that combine protection with structured recovery and professional continuity.

They would host beneficiaries within structured artist residency programmes, arrange stipends and accommodation, and provide support with the necessary legal and administrative procedures. Access to trauma-informed counselling and peer-support networks would be embedded within the residency framework from the outset, ensuring that psychosocial care is not treated as an optional

add-on but as a core component of the support structure. Beneficiaries would also be offered cultural orientation, opportunities for meaningful exchange with arts professionals, and structured engagement with local communities. This strand would recognise that arrival in a place of safety does not necessarily mark the end of vulnerability. On the contrary, the transition period frequently coincides with delayed trauma responses, disruption of professional and personal identity, and experiences of social isolation. By structurally integrating psychosocial support alongside professional opportunities, the residency model would enable artists to regain stability, rebuild confidence, and sustain their creative practice while gradually re-establishing social and professional networks.

The Safe Trajectories strand would focus on longer-term stabilisation and professional rebuilding for artists and cultural practitioners.

Under this strand, intermediary organisations would operate as consortia based on a coalition model, pooling complementary expertise to provide sustained and structured accompaniment over an extended period. Their support would include assistance with the regularisation of residence status, work permit applications, employment registration, and guidance on taxation and social security systems. The objective would be to move beyond temporary protection towards durable legal and socio-economic stability. The intermediary organisations would also facilitate access to grants, employment pathways, co-production opportunities, and professional networks at local, national and European levels, thereby strengthening beneficiaries' long-term professional positioning. Cultural orientation, language learning, support for family integration, and continued psychosocial care would be fully embedded within this strand, ensuring that legal and economic measures are accompanied by social and emotional stabilisation. This longer-term dimension would acknowledge that rebuilding artistic agency and professional continuity cannot be achieved through short-term safety alone, but requires sustained engagement across legal,

social, psychological and economic domains. By prioritising longer-term participation, this strand would enable artists and cultural practitioners to establish sustainable careers within European cultural ecosystems and foster deeper transnational cooperation, as well as durable community and professional engagement beyond immediate crisis response.

Across all strands, intermediary organisations would be required to operate within a broader ‘protection ecosystem’. They would need to demonstrate structured partnerships with legal experts, trauma-informed mental health professionals, migration specialists, peer support networks, and cultural institutions.

Intermediary organisations are not conceived merely as grant administrators but as ecosystem actors capable of generating broader systemic impact. Selected intermediary organisations would be expected to demonstrate the capacity to extend their reach geographically, including through consortia, regional partnerships or cross-border cooperation, in order to address disparities in support across different regions. They would be encouraged to operate across multiple segments of the cultural and creative sectors, acting also as convenors, facilitators, advocates and technical experts. This versatility would strengthen transnational connections and enhance the programme’s ability to respond to shrinking civic spaces and complex regulatory environments.

At the same time, the framework would recognise that individual intermediary organisations, particularly smaller cultural operators, may not possess all specialised capacities internally. Through these partnerships, intermediary organisations would function as service hubs and information

multipliers, ensuring that end beneficiaries receive comprehensive support even where the IO’s own internal structure is lean.²⁶

Crucially, psychosocial and trauma-informed support would be embedded as a structural component of assistance across strands. Protection is not limited to physical relocation; many artists at risk experience cumulative trauma resulting from persecution, forced displacement, or loss of professional identity. Without structured mental health support, beneficiaries may struggle to rebuild networks, regain agency, or re-engage creatively. Intermediary organisations would therefore ensure access to culturally sensitive counselling and peer-support mechanisms, recognising that psychological recovery is a precondition for restoring artistic agency and sustaining participation in Europe’s cultural ecosystems.

Intermediary organisations would also contribute to the programme’s monitoring system and collect beneficiary experiences gathered via surveys, interviews, and case studies, which would enable the programme to adapt and refine its support mechanisms based on real-world feedback.

It is recognised that working with artists in crisis contexts places considerable demands on implementing teams, both operationally and emotionally. The coordinating entity would therefore commit to actively facilitating coordination across the network of intermediary organisations and to creating structured opportunities for mutual learning, exchange and professional development. This would include peer-to-peer dialogue within the IO network, shared reflection on sensitive or complex cases, and collective learning on topics such as trauma-informed approaches, safeguarding, and

26 For example, the Mobility Information Points – organisations that help artists and culture professionals with the administrative issues of cross-border mobility – provided 154 consultations for issues related to artists at-risk in 2025 (6.1% of the total consultations provided by 10 MIPs). As reported in *Cultural Mobility Flows Report, Mobility Information Points at Work 2025*, **17.4% of consultations involving permanent relocation were with artists at risk**. The most common nationalities of these artists were **Iranian, Russian, Lebanese, Syrian, Turkish and Belarussian**. This indicates that there is a need for more support on the complex issues related to artists at risk, even in cases where there are established schemes on a European level to support those coming from countries such as Ukraine. See Ellingsworth, J., *Cultural Mobility Flows: Mobility Information Points at Work 2025, On the Move, 2026*, available here: <https://on-the-move.org/resources/library/cultural-mobility-flows-mobility-information-points-work-2025>

organisational self-care. Intermediary organisations would also have access to knowledge resources and practical tools developed collaboratively throughout the programme.

For organisations that are new to this field in particular, the networked support framework would aim to strengthen capacity progressively during implementation, rather than imposing full specialisation as a prerequisite for participation.

Intermediary organisations would be expected to engage actively with the programme's capacity-building offer and to take part in regular online discussions addressing operational challenges. These exchanges would focus on practical matters and evolving regulatory frameworks, including visa procedures, taxation, social security requirements and other administrative obligations, thereby reinforcing the collective competence and resilience of the organisations involved.

Glossary

Cultural and creative sectors:

'(a) whose activities, many of which have potential to generate innovation and jobs in particular from intellectual property:

- (i) are based on cultural values and artistic and other individual or collective creative expressions; and
- (ii) include the development, the creation, the production, the dissemination and the preservation of goods and services which embody cultural, artistic or other creative expressions, as well as related functions such as education or management;

(b) irrespective of:

- (i) whether the activities of those sectors are market-oriented or non-market-oriented;
- (ii) the type of structure that carries out those activities; and
- (iii) how that structure is financed;

those sectors include, inter alia, architecture, archives, libraries and museums, artistic crafts, audiovisual (including film, television, video games and multimedia), tangible and intangible cultural heritage, design (including fashion design), festivals, music, literature, performing arts (including theatre and dance), books and publishing, radio, and visual arts.²⁷

At-risk artists and cultural practitioners:

The definition of 'artist' is to be understood widely, including all professionals within the cultural and creative sectors.²⁸

The term cultural practitioner refers to individuals whose work contributes to the creation, preservation, mediation, or dissemination of culture, including practices that may not be formally recognised or contractually established within UN, European or national policy and statistical frameworks. This terminology reflects the diversity and informality of cultural work across countries, where no unified or statutory definition of 'professional artist' may exist. An at-risk artist or cultural practitioner is understood as a person engaged in artistic or cultural work whose ability to continue that work is directly threatened by circumstances such as armed conflict, persecution, oppression, or other severe violations of fundamental freedoms, in line with the 2023 Council conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists.²⁹ The term encompasses individuals in diverse legal and mobility situations, including those seeking protection, living in exile, or experiencing forced or constrained mobility, without replacing or redefining legal categories under asylum or migration law.

27 Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013, available here: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/818/oj>

28 Article 2 of Regulation (EU) 2021/818 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 establishing the Creative Europe Programme (2021 to 2027) and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1295/2013, available here: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/818/oj/eng>

29 European Union, Council conclusions on at-risk and displaced artists, 2023, available here: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=oj:JOC_2023_185_R_0009

About the researchers

Toni Attard is a cultural strategist, artistic director, and creative producer from Malta. He is the founder and director of Culture Venture, a consultancy, research and training firm for the cultural and creative sectors, and the founder and artistic director of Udjenja, an arts production company. Formerly the Director of Strategy at Arts Council Malta, Toni co-authored Malta's National Cultural Policies and the Creative Economy Strategy. He currently contributes to several European and international cultural initiatives, serving as an international expert for the selection and monitoring of European Capitals of Culture.

Yohann Floch is the Director of Operations at On the Move, the international network dedicated to artistic and cultural mobility, and the Director of FACE, a resource platform that facilitates European capacity-building programmes in the contemporary performing arts field. Throughout his career, Yohann has designed, coordinated, and contributed to numerous European cooperation projects and pilot international collaborations while working for independent arts organisations and cultural institutions. He serves governmental bodies and private foundations as external expert and leads or co-authors cultural policy reports. Previously, Yohann held various leadership positions, including Secretary General of the European Dancehouse Network, Director of Skåne's International Resource Office, Coordinator of Dansehallerne's Nordic dance network, and Coordinator of the Circostrada network.

Mykhailo Glubokyi is the Development Director of IZOLYATSIA, a platform for cultural initiatives in Ukraine. Founded in Donetsk, the organisation was relocated to Kyiv after the Russian invasion, and has become a symbol of resilience in the Ukrainian cultural sector. Mykhailo has been part of the foundation since 2011, developing participatory, site-specific cultural projects in industrial spaces. He has been a board member of Trans Europe Halles since 2021, and was involved in the Creative Europe mobility programme i-Portunus. Since 2019, his work has focused on local communities, cultural decentralisation, and international collaboration. He has also been involved in developing the IZONE creative hub and programmes.

Martina Hájková is a lawyer and cultural manager currently working with the Association of Professional Theatres of the Czech Republic, the Czech National Theatre, and NIK – the Czech Institute for Culture (on InfoPoint NIK). Alongside her technical and theoretical knowledge, she has particularly rich experience in the practical realities of work in the cultural sector, which she passes on to art school students who are preparing to transition into practice. As part of her PhD studies she is focusing on the current issues of international cooperation in the performing arts in the context of the posting of workers, social security, and international taxation.

Laila Hourani is a cultural leader and novelist with over 25 years' experience in arts, culture and media development, intercultural relations, narrative practice, and partnership-building for social impact. Based in Norway since 2021, she works as an independent expert and has provided consultancy services to several international and Arab organisations and initiatives, including Freemuse, the International Resource for Impact and Storytelling (IRIS), Culture Resource, Untold Stories and L'Art Rue.

Previously, Laila served as Programme Director at the Norwegian artistic rights organisation MIMETA; as Senior Programme Officer for Arts, Culture and Media at the Ford Foundation's MENA office in Egypt; as MENA Regional Director for Creativity and Mutuality at the British Council in Syria; and as Information and Communication Assistant at UNICEF Syria.

Laila is a Salzburg Global Seminar Fellow and a UNESCO-certified Freedom of Expression expert trainer. She has served as a board and jury member for key regional organisations, including Cultural Resource (Al Mawred Al Thaqafi), Action for Hope, Ettijahat – Independent Culture, the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), Masahat, the Anna Lindh Foundation's Citizens for Dialogue Programme, and the Zurich University of the Arts' Centre for Creative Economies. Her debut novel, *Baoh*, was published in 2009 by Al-Adab in Lebanon.

Milica Ilić is a cultural worker with extensive experience in transnational cooperation within contemporary performing arts. She is particularly invested in exploring organisational practices in the arts sector that are grounded in equity and solidarity. Milica supports the strategic development of cooperation projects and actively contributes to the transnational arts scene as a trainer, educator, researcher and evaluator. She has authored and co-authored numerous articles, policy papers, and analyses.

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