

LEVERAGING THE EU CSOs CULTURAL DEAL FOR EUROPE CAMPAIGN FOR **EU ODA FOR CULTURE** **FOR AFRICA**



ADVOCACY BRIEF

Summary

Creative civil society in Africa says that they have been repeatedly shut out of the process of influencing and shaping the agenda for EU-African relations. The result is a top-down process between political leaders that is disconnected from the needs of local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the constituencies they serve.

With the **Cultural Deal for Europe Campaign** (spearheaded by Culture Action Europe, European Cultural Foundation and Europa Nostra) this needs to change.

The new Cultural Deal for Europe envisioned by our EU CSO counterparts must usher “a fair partnership” of equals.

African CSOs want to be part of drawing up a new EU ODA (Official Development Assistance) for Culture framework, in a bid to overhaul a process which many African CSOs believe is deeply dysfunctional.



This advocacy brief calls for:

- Policy change on EU ODA for Culture
- A seat at the table for African CSOs - access to EU ODA for culture policy dialogue and engagement
- More inclusive existing consultation mechanisms
- Access to sustainable funding.



We urge the African Union and European Union to anchor these four spheres designed to protect and expand civic space and guarantee the right to funding, in the framework of the current Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) as a reminder of their joint mandate and commitment.



Great work. I've repeatedly in UNESCO meetings addressed the need to focus much more on the articles on preferential treatment in the 2005 Convention."

Ole Reitov, Co-founder Freemuse / UNESCO expert on artistic freedom

What's at stake and why we need reforms

Reports on the shrinking of civic space in a number of AU member states.

Artistic Freedom Reports show the extent of attacks on artists and creative freedom in Africa - a negative trend against which CSOs in Africa cannot push back on their own.

Creative civil society need to demand equal and fair access to resources as for mainstream civil society.

Mainstream Civil Society enjoy increased funding in times of crisis while funding for creative civil society continues to be on the decline.

Top-down policy-making is increasingly questioned from the perspective of democratic politics, as is negotiating a new cultural deal for Europe without the involvement of African CSOs.





I see immense value in the demands you are raising here, particularly those related to inclusion of African CSOs in the design and decision making process as well as the call for flexible, institutional funding. We would love to include our support to the list of supporting CSOs. Thank you again for initiating this very important campaign.”

Rama Halaseh, Senior Manager for International Programs, Artists at Risk Connection (ARC)





AU CSOs have only few effective instruments at hand to protect and counter negative trends while the European Parliament aims to strengthen civil society in Europe; voting in favour of proposals to counter the crackdown on civil society in Europe.

While the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) acknowledges the important role of CSOs, their role is still not recognised to its fullest potential; yet CSOs in the AU are essential in promoting, monitoring and protecting fundamental rights and the rule of law - the very principles upon which the JAES is founded - and play an important part in its implementation

The JAES would function entirely differently as a development framework without an enabling civic space; for example, policies and measures that seek to promote the localisation of SDGs through culture can be adopted - (as in Zimbabwe (Bulawayo) and Malawi (Lilongwe) - thanks to awareness-raising campaigns, contributions and actions.

Without CSOs in Africa, dystopian scenarios of corruption going undetected, injustices not brought to court and human rights abuses not being remedied, could become the norm in most African member states.



Action needed

The EU and AU CSOs face similar challenges of shrinking civic spaces. The relationship between them must therefore gradually change, leaning towards a more fair, participatory and inclusive approach.

AU CSOs need effective instruments to protect and counter negative trends and the crackdown on civil society - a comprehensive civil society strategy and civic space index; fair rules, financing and an enabling environment for CSOs across the AU.

AU CSOs call on our EU CSO counterparts to ensure that future ODA for culture for Africa should support CSOs' initiatives.

When democratic principles are under strain and AU state parties values enshrined in the UNDHR are subverted, CSOs must be provided with avenues to effectively engage with, and effectively contribute to, EU decision-making at least through the **Cultural Deal for Europe Campaign**.





I strongly believe in the need to include and reinforce this decolonial message to Europe. I support this initiative in a personal capacity, and invite the entire sector to join us.”

Bjorn Maes





JOINT ANALYSIS | RESPONSE | RESULTS

Areas in which AU
CSOs and EU CSOs
should move forward
together

EU CSO counterparts are uniquely positioned to work collaboratively with CSOs from Africa to deploy political and financial pressure on EU governments to consider increased ODA for Culture particularly to support sustainable systems of governance for culture in fragile states.

Civic dialogue and participation in decision-making processes:



AU and EU consultations should provide sufficient room for CSOs to present their full perspectives and analyses on pertinent issues.



Official channels are needed through which CSOs can request IGOs to open consultations on particular challenges faced by civil society actors, and have a dedicated focal point for CSOs where organisations can refer concerns (i.e., a system of early warning).



The “Have Your Say” system notifications are currently based on a strict set of topics and lack a horizontal approach. This should change.



Easy access is needed to public information on the work of both the AU and EU, which are currently too intricate and labyrinthine to be useful.



Access to financial support:



Easy access is needed to EU programmes to fund the civil society sector, especially for smaller organisations, with less restriction on geographical areas or activities.



The establishment of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme under the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework is a positive development, nevertheless further steps are needed to achieve equal, fair and unrestricted access to all EU funding instruments for CSOs.



The heavy administrative burden that comes with the EU ODA for Culture for Africa should be reduced, and become more flexible and easily dispersible.



CSOs should participate in the design, implementation and monitoring stages of the various funds to make access to EU ODA for Culture for Africa more enabling.

A legal framework protecting civil society:



The AU and EU should take measures to protect civil society against unjust government interference and reverse the trend of restrictions on freedom of assembly, association and expression, and changes in relevant regulatory frameworks which hinder the work of CSOs and put them at risk.



Mechanisms should be established to better monitor member states' interference and restrictions on creative civil society, including legal and policy tools to hold them accountable. These could be a powerful tool for creative civil society in countries where civic space and the right to funding are subjected to unnecessary and disproportionate limitations, and could also strengthen the position of creative civil society in well-established democracies.

Cultural Deal for Europe and the way forward: A Pan African Perspective

With these shared concerns, we, CSOs across the AU and the EU, urge the **Cultural Deal for Europe Campaign** to consider opening up the campaign to participation by like-minded African CSOs on areas of mutual interest with a futuristic view of EU ODA for Culture for Africa.

We believe this will deliver unprecedented outcomes beneficial to the **Cultural Deal for Europe Campaign** and the current and future EU ODA for Culture for Africa.



How You Can Help?

The Nhimbe Trust invites you to join the 'Africa-EU Culture Deal Consortium' in amplifying and delivering this Advocacy Brief to the Cultural Deal for Europe Campaign; and stand open to engage in and cooperate with follow-up actions that may emerge therefrom.



For enquiries OR Expression of Interest to signup please email: info@nhimbe.org



The following individuals and organisations are among those who endorse this initiative :

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|---------------------|---|
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| BELGIUM | Bjorn Maes |
| BELGIUM | Africalia Dorine Rurashitse, Managing Director |
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| TANZANIA | CDEA Ayeta Anne Wangusa, Executive Director |
| TUNISIA | Culture Funding Watch Ouafa Belgacem, CEO and Co-Founder |
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