

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS

REPORT OF THE OMC (OPEN METHOD OF COORDINATION)
WORKING GROUP OF MEMBER STATES' EXPERTS

1. Introduction and policy background

Women are well represented in the cultural and creative sectors (CCS) and are proven to participate more in culture than men. However, when it comes to their specific situation and role in the CCS, inequalities become apparent – even more when intersectional factors are taken into consideration.

In the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022¹, gender equality in the CCS was selected as one of the priorities for action for the first time. To prepare a report on this topic, national experts from 22 EU Member States² worked together from September 2019 until April 2021 on the basis of their professional expertise.

The political momentum for the work of the group was promising. In autumn 2019, Ursula von der Leyen became the first female president of the European Commission and declared gender equality as one of her priorities. Subsequently, in March 2020, the European Commission presented the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 with key actions and an increased gender perspective for implementation in all EU policies, including culture and media.

2. What are the key challenges?


Women are active as artists and cultural professionals in the CCS. Their equal share in the cultural and creative value chain is essential for cultural diversity and for the CCS to flourish. Promoting gender equality is therefore vital at all levels of the European Union and in recent years this topic has become increasingly prominent on political agendas. Steps have been taken to improve the overall situation of women and there is no doubt that progress has been achieved but it is far from sufficient.

The existing barriers in the CCS present similarities to those prevailing in other economic sectors but the specific working conditions in the CCS drive certain disparities. Although gender inequalities differ across the various sub-sectors and between Member States, women are still faced with many obstacles. They are underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions, they are generally paid much less than men, they lack equal access to creation and production resources, and their work is often less visible and under-recognised. Gender stereotypes are apparent in each sector, as well as across the CCS. Hidden hierarchies and power relations seem to be more prevalent and sexual harassment happens more than the data shows in official statistics. In addition, reliable and systematic data on this issue, as well as on gender inequalities in general, is lacking. Unpaid care work is another central barrier. Women are still societally obligated to perform the majority of unpaid care work, such as childcare, cooking and cleaning. This creates challenges in combining work and family life, and has negative effects on their social security and, in the long run, on their pensions.

¹ Council conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (2018/C 460/10).

² OMC experts were nominated by Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden.





The importance of the CCS for the European economy is increasingly recognised. At the same time, these sectors are often characterised by precarious organisational structures and working practises. Accessing the necessary resources and asserting oneself in the CCS labour market represents a challenge for all workers due to the flexible, project-based and freelance styles of working, as well as the need for self-promotion and frequent travel. However, due to exclusion from central networks, uneven access to resources and the burden of unpaid care work, the conditions are more challenging for women.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 has had a significant impact, both on gender equality in general and on the economic situation of the CCS specifically. The CCS have been among the most hard-hit sectors. According to available studies, both women and men are affected but in different ways. First analyses reveal that women are more severely impacted, exacerbating the already unequal situation.


3. Who should read the report and why?

This report has various target groups. In principle, it is addressed to everyone willing to understand the gender gaps in the CCS, to learn more about their causes and to actively promote gender equality. However, the recommendations are mainly directed to policy-makers at all levels and to the cultural and creative professionals, in particular those in any kind of leadership position (including leading teams, projects, etc.).

4. General recommendations

All recommendations are built on practical experience and good practice examples and stress the need to show clear commitment to achieving gender equality in the CCS. Gender equality strategies without targets and gender equality targets without monitoring are ineffective. Artistic quality and artistic freedom should not be impeded by these measures.

The OMC experts' general recommendations are focused on:

- **ensuring gender equality in the workplace** – it should be a goal in all entities involved in policy-making and those active in the CCS;
 - **gender-sensitive language** – language plays a key role in shaping cultural and social attitudes. Women and men should therefore be referred to explicitly, possibly on the basis of guidelines. These should apply to any type of oral or written communication, both formal and informal;
 - **intersectionality** – any measure should be applied using an intersectional lens, i.e. taking into account overlapping forms of discrimination;
 - **gender mainstreaming** – a gender perspective should be integrated into the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and processes (including legislation and funding programmes) with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination;
 - **gender budgeting** – the needs and interests of women and men should be considered when allocating funds and resources. This implies a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of budgetary and spending processes;
 - **data collection** – collecting, publishing and monitoring data about gender gaps is a pre-condition for any fact-based policy-making. It is necessary to work on a common data methodology and set up initiatives to collect, analyse and publish comparable and relevant data;
 - **role of culture, media, education and research** – given their impact on shaping values and perceptions of reality, these sectors should actively engage in promoting equality and diversity;
 - **COVID crisis** – the recovery from the crisis should be used as an opportunity for transformative change by applying gender-sensitive measures and including the CCS in the recovery process.
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5 Specific recommendations

Gender stereotypes

Gender stereotypes are societal norms and expectations that often limit talents and abilities of both girls and boys, as well as limiting women's and men's capacity to develop their artistic and professional careers.

The OMC experts recommend:

- promoting research on the role of stereotypes, role models and representation of women in society by allocating funding to these research topics;
- promoting research on the role of the CCS in shaping the values, attitudes, needs and interests of women and men, and providing funding for respective projects;
- a long-term approach that seeks to adjust the societal norms and values, including with the involvement of education and training institutions. This should start from early childhood throughout schools and universities but also continue in education for adults, such as via workshops and seminars.

Sexual harassment

Contrary to the egalitarian and 'cool' reputation of the CCS, hidden hierarchies, power relations and sexual harassment are far more prevalent than official data suggests.

The OMC experts recommend:

- encouraging reporting and collecting comparable data about sexual harassment across the different CCS;
- investigating and adjusting the regulatory environment and preparing clear, visible and standardised methods/guidelines/code of conducts in order to prevent and combat sexual harassment, including action plans and detailed policies in case of incidents occurring;
- providing easily accessible contact points for anonymous and free support for the victims, both in and outside organisations.

The gender pay gap and equal access to the labour market

Women in the CCS face systemic discrimination, such as unequal pay, sectoral segregation and the obstacles to reach leadership positions. They are challenged by precarious working practices and difficulties maintaining their work-life balance due to (unpaid) care work. This has long-term negative effects on their social security and pensions. Also, marginalised women encounter additional discrimination.

The OMC experts recommend:

- encouraging more data collection on gender employment patterns and on the gender pay gap in the CCS with a focus on freelance artists and workers;
- enforcing the 'equal pay for equal work' principle;
- recognising universal childcare as essential, providing family-friendly opportunities and considering the eligibility of childcare costs in project proposals;
- developing new models of pension benefit structures and promoting mentoring programmes to empower women to benefit from the knowledge of experienced peers.

Access to resources and the art market

In the CCS, women are less visible, achieve less recognition and gain an unequal access to resources. For instance, works by women are underrepresented in museums, there are fewer women amongst the top performing artists in the classical and contemporary music scene, in the digital artistic world as writers, amongst film and TV directors, etc.

The OMC experts recommend:

- promoting gender parity in publicly funded programming and the representation of women's narratives in the CCS;
- collecting and analysing data on the visibility and representation of women in the fields of arts and culture (their participation in programmes and projects, on boards, being nominated and selected for awards, representation in the media, etc.);
- promoting women's visibility and representation across the CCS as well as in educational curricula; developing gender parity targets (from 30% to 50%) for those objectives; applying quotas, where appropriate;
- supporting professional and artistic networks and mentoring initiatives to empower female artists and cultural professionals.

Access to leadership positions and female entrepreneurship

Women encounter a variety of obstacles on the path to decision-making and leadership positions, specifically facing systemic and intersectional discrimination and having to prove more in terms of quality. A critical mass of women and marginalised people, as well as a better business environment for female entrepreneurs, is needed to break down biases and ensure diversity.

The OMC experts recommend:

- carrying out research on gender equality and women in leadership across the CCS;
- employing gender parity in recruitment mechanisms, and promoting a positive female leadership image in society;
- encouraging gender parity in leadership positions through time-bound targets (30-50%) and monitoring the results;
- initiating and funding support schemes, skills training and mentorship programmes dedicated to female entrepreneurship and leadership programmes, and encouraging women in leadership and business positions to act as role models;
- launching prizes for female cultural entrepreneurs.

The full report is available at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policies/selected-themes/gender-equality>

<https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2766/122208>

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