



Joint declaration by the Trade Union
CGT Culture (France), FP CGIL
MiBACT (Italy) and PCS Culture Group
(United Kingdom)

Culture and cultural public services, our priorities for democracy and the future

The workers from public cultural services, Art & Culture that we represent are facing a real human, economic and social drama caused by the Covid pandemic but also by the politics of austerity and budget cuts. This situation is prompting us to unite our forces to impose far-reaching and now urgent transformations for this sector.

Each of us, on our part and with our own specific characteristics has long supported the idea that Culture and public cultural services are essential for the future and democracy in our societies, in Europe and the World.

The Covid pandemic and its parade of human, economic and social tragedies demand us to join forces in order to enforce profound changes that are now pressing. The crisis we are experiencing is a health and economic crisis of rare violence. But it is first of all a systemic crisis, of a dying model, the capitalist model, a model of development whose damages to cultural development, the environment and living beings can now be compared to an ecocide.

In Europe, years of economic crisis generated reductions in cultural budgets three times higher than in other sectors and, even now, the EU is planning a further 20% cut to cultural spending in the 2021-27 budget programmes. The scenario resulting from the pandemic has created a structural tourism crisis with heavy impacts on the cultural sector and in the cultural and creative industries.

The progressive decline of public cultural policies in favour of private profit models has produced a general phenomenon of wages dumping, precarious work and erosion of workers' rights. Workers have started to pay the price of the crisis with mass redundancies and regressive restructures already in existence and widespread in our countries

As the future is uncertain, it is necessary to renew our demands and practices in order to place the principle of public cultural service at the centre of public policies widening its scope. This is why we want to seize the extraordinary opportunity to build together and democratically, in a spirit of solidarity, a sustainable alternative.

Our struggle against the commodification of Culture and against cultural consumerism must go beyond the borders of our own countries and take on an international dimension of struggle and solidarity in order to defend to defend all workers in public cultural services. We must place our actions in the trajectory of international and solidarity workers' struggles.

At the moment, redundancies, social dumping, precarious work in Italy, Great Britain, France and across Europe have started to attack public sectors and workers in a systematic and recurrent manner. In front of our eyes, thousands of cultural workers are being laid off like in the UK at the Tate, the Southbank Centre, the Victoria & Albert Museums or National Museums Liverpool. These jobs losses are also expected in France and in Italy. Everywhere, precarious work is increasing, attacks on workers' rights attacked and poverty is growing.

Cultural workers cannot be the victims of a crisis created by budget cuts and wrong political choices. Our joint initiative must start from the protection of workers and the demand for job security.

Together, we must reaffirm that Culture is neither merchandise nor a soul surcharge, but it is essential to link up, share and build a just free world, united and happy and it is essential to the social transformation of society and democracy.

To reach those changes, Culture and cultural public services have a fundamental role to play. It is time to imagine cultural public services focused towards citizens, local communities and areas, with all their elements and differences but also their potential. Art and Culture keep us standing, they connect us to the world, they give sense to authentic solidarity, they are essential to the exercise of our freedom and our humanity.

To actively be involved in the development of a cultural democracy means necessarily to campaign for strong public cultural policies, clearly supported by public authorities.

Our three Trade Unions have therefore decided to link up with the struggles ongoing in our own countries and to work and act together:

- **For a transformed and strengthened public cultural service**
- **For cultural democracy**
- **For decent and secure employment and working conditions**
- **For human and budgetary resources really corresponding to the needs and challenges**
- **For a new model of social & cultural development, participatory, supportive and sustainable**
- **Against precarious work, social dumping, privatisation and the shameless exploitation of employees in outsourced companies.**

London, Paris, Rome, 27th of October 2020