



**The call from CGT-Culture and FP CGIL MiC :  
everyone mobilised  
for public cultural services and culture  
Culture and cultural public service:  
priorities for our society  
and our democracy**

The CGT-Culture and the FP CGIL MiC have signed a joint appeal for the cultural public service as part of the European day of action on 13 October for higher wages and pensions, gender equality, a fair ecological transition and public services.

The CGT-Culture and the FP CGIL MiC invite trade union organisations in other countries, particularly in Europe, to join in this call to restore meaning to our work, our professions and our missions, for a genuine cultural policy and a strong cultural public service that meets the demands of our time. They aspire to greater cultural democracy, improved working conditions, working differently and more efficiently, defending jobs, under attack in our sector as elsewhere, purchasing power, social protection and defending the public service threatened by liberal policies of privatisation, austerity and resignation.

In an increasingly closed society, undermined by divisions and the temptation to move towards more authoritarian policies, we affirm that culture and therefore cultural policies and the cultural public service remain essential to building a peaceful and free future.

The CGT-Culture and the FP CGIL MiC call on workers to mobilise strongly on these days of action in every country.

**In France, Italy and Europe,  
let's mobilise for freedoms, wages, jobs, gender, equality,  
public services and in particular the cultural public service.**

**The whole of culture is mobilising and on the streets on 13 October !**

The **CGT-Culture** in France is a trade union of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT). It is made up of eleven trade unions representing the staff of the Ministry of Culture in all its entities: central administration and decentralised departments, departments with national competence, public establishments and bodies under private law carrying out the State's cultural public service missions on national territory. It is the leading representative trade union organisation at the Ministry of Culture and a member of UFSE CGT, the Union Fédérale des Syndicats de l'État.

The **FP CGIL MiC** in Italy represents staff at the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities and is part of the FP CGIL (Fonction Publique CGIL), itself a structure of the CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labour). CGIL's civil service sector is concerned with protecting the men and women who work every day in the central administrations of the State to ensure the rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Constitution.

Paris-Roma, 10 October 2023



## **Culture and cultural public service : priorities for our society and democracy**

We have long supported the idea that culture and cultural public service are essential for the future and democracy of our societies, in Europe and worldwide. Above all, culture is the encounter with others! In a society that is increasingly closed, undermined by divisions and the temptation to move towards more authoritarian policies, we affirm that culture and therefore cultural policies and cultural public service remain essential for building a peaceful and free future.

We fight for a cultural public service project that looks to the future, sheltered from new austerity measures and based on equality and democracy. We are convinced that the emergence of a genuine cultural democracy absolutely depends on the active and intergenerational participation of all social groups. In public cultural policies we must encourage artistic creation, encounter and sharing to renew the imagination, promote emancipation, social cohesion and well-being, and a shared vision that respects cultural diversity. At the same time, it is necessary to promote public policies to ensure the protection and preservation of the existing cultural heritage and its proper enjoyment open to all citizens. This is all the more urgent now that we are witnessing a resurgence of the extreme right everywhere and that nauseating ideas and rhetoric are invading the public, political and media spheres.

Our fight against the commodification of culture and against cultural consumerism must go beyond our borders and take on an international dimension of struggle and solidarity in defence of all workers in public cultural services.

We must join the trajectory of international struggles in solidarity with the workers.

Making public cultural service an essential issue of social progress inevitably leads us to imagine a programmatic approach based on the dignity of cultural workers and the conquest of new rights. In a world plagued by an increasing number of crises and their globalisation, it seemed essential to us to activate two converging levers at the same time: the shared search for a sustainable and responsible alternative to the dominant economic model and the ambition to invent, in a participatory manner, a new model of cultural and social development.

It is from this starting point that we intend to play our full role in the transformation of cultural policies, the strengthening of public cultural service and the growth of cultural democracy at European and international level.

**To this end, our trade unions must work together on the need for a public cultural service and pool the various similar problems.**

While the role of culture is central and decisive for a genuine social transformation oriented towards the future, emancipation, equality, solidarity and fraternity, the cultural public service increasingly clashes with neo-liberal and consumerist policies.

These are based on the commercialisation of the provision of public cultural services, the disempowerment of the state through job cuts, increased precariousness and the abandonment of public functions, continuous reorganisations leading to the deterioration of the service offered to the public, the worsening of working conditions and the exponential increase in its precariousness.

Economic models based on tourism hyper-frequency are leading to urban gentrification, labour market deregulation and job insecurity, all of which raise questions about the social role of cultural policies.

The rise of the extreme right in European countries and around the world is an undeniable fact.

In Europe, in particular, we are experiencing a serious social and cultural crisis. Reactionary forces and the extreme right are taking advantage of the malaise of societies at the end of their tether and the unrest of their populations to engage in a cultural identity battle, based on nationalistic, discriminatory, xenophobic and intolerant impulses towards all diversity.

This demonstrates the political and democratic consequences of the construction of a Europe focused almost exclusively on economics and largely inspired by ultraliberal ideology. On the other hand, we can clearly see the vital importance of fighting for a social and cultural Europe and a public cultural service across the continent.

We reiterate that the parties of the extreme right, which unfortunately are more and more flanked by a conservative and populist right, go against the interests of the world of work. A look at their programmes shows that workers have everything to lose by taking this dead-end road.

Throughout history, and in many countries today, those who claim to follow this ideology have suppressed and are suppressing trade union and democratic freedoms, undermining social guarantees, dividing workers and breaking solidarity.

Everywhere in the world, the extreme right, focusing its agenda on hatred and denouncing pre-packaged scapegoats responsible for all evils and crises, exonerates employers and the truly responsible by abusing people's legitimate social anger.

The racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic far right is always the worst enemy of workers, strikes and trade unions.

When it comes to discrimination, it is also the enemy of women's rights, LGBTQ+ people, all democratic freedoms and peace.

On the contrary, we carry and will carry universal values of solidarity, brotherhood and equality among workers, regardless of their status, origin, nationality, philosophical or religious views.

Fighting for genuine cultural democratisation and a cultural democracy open to the free and creative expression of cultures in the richness and fullness of their diversity is inseparable from the struggle for the development of a fully civic society.

We demand that workers in the public cultural services regain the social dignity of their work and be encouraged to work together in a renewed and horizontal cooperation in the service of all citizens and Culture.

In order to maintain and develop the very diverse work and skills of the professions, we call for the implementation of real strategies for the development of public professional skills.

This must take place through a policy of strengthening the civil service, preserving and enhancing professional skills, eliminating precarious employment by introducing decent contracts, and reinternalising public missions, especially those of expertise and preventive evaluation of interventions to protect the cultural heritage and the safety of goods and people. The same wage and regulatory rights must correspond to equal work; this must also be the regulating principle of the labour market.

But the involvement of cultural operators must not stop there. It must be pursued with the institutional actors of culture, professionals, artists, associations and users, in a more open and democratic way.

There is an urgent need to encourage the development of cultural spaces that have a civic sense, are shared and guarantee cultural rights. These cultural spaces in the heart of cities, as well as in the suburbs, must contribute to combating cultural segregation and promoting cultural democracy.

Once again this year, the summer has highlighted the dramatic consequences of climate change and the need for a socially just ecological transition. We are all concerned. The impact of this just ecological transition is manifold, affecting activities, working conditions, professions, jobs, qualifications and skills. To meet this major challenge, we need to provide immediate solutions, anticipate the impacts and prepare the necessary investments, secure the jobs of workers and involve them in the choices that affect them.

Technological developments often call into question acquired social rights instead of promoting social progress, as illustrated by the strike by scriptwriters and authors in the United States, who are demanding clear limits on the use of artificial intelligence, in addition to an increase in their salaries. These developments must be a tool to help workers create, not replace them, and must be accompanied by strict supervision and new rights.

Work must be recognised and revalued as a creator of culture and its heritage must be reconsidered: work in culture is a living heritage, tangible and intangible, as well as a tool for preserving the collective memory of communities, workers, struggles and social achievements.

#### **That is why we demand:**

- **a transformed and strengthened public cultural service;**
- **build the conceptual framework and conditions for the development of a cultural democracy;**
- **employment and stable and decent working conditions;**
- **maintain and develop skills and knowledge;**
- **salary increases commensurate with the required levels of professionalism;**
- **human and budgetary resources commensurate with the challenges and needs;**
- **a new model of social and cultural development that is participatory, supportive and sustainable;**
- **resolute and permanent action against job insecurity, social dumping, privatisation in all its forms and the shameless exploitation of the employees of service providers.**

**In France, Italy, the UK and across Europe, let's mobilise for freedoms, wages, jobs, gender equality and public services, especially public cultural services.**

Paris-Roma, 10 October 2023