

Reflection Paper Summary:

Eu/ropean Perspectives on Circulation and Touring of Artworks and Artists: **Climate Change**



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“We can only solve the global threat of climate change by working with our international partners”

EU Green Deal, 2021



The quote from the EU Green Deal summarizes well the need for enhance cooperation with international partners to achieve on the global challenge of climate change. This reflection paper on “EU/ropean Perspectives on Circulation and Touring of Artworks and Artist: Climate Change” aims at contributing to the debate of how the field of art and culture can best contribute to these objectives. We dedicate special attention to arts funding agencies and how they can develop new policies and frameworks in view of the needs for an enhanced climate protection. This work builds on the analysis of related practices from the European continent.



THE CONTEXT FOR A NEW CULTURE IN BETTER HARMONY WITH THE CLIMATE

The world has disruptively changed in the past decennials. Areas of main transformations include post-pandemic effects, geopolitical turmoil, and pressure on social cohesion. Digital transformation, nationalism and scarce resources further interfere in existing business and cooperation models. These major frameworks of the 21st century influence the social fabric of our societies, the economic value chains, the broad cultural context, and ways of doing things and concluding on many questions. The culture eco-systems are deeply impacted e. g. by the means of staff shortages and shifting of culture budgets due to geopolitical needs. Change implies also new opportunities in culture for example linked to updated cross-sectoral innovation agendas.

This context provides momentum and necessity to reflect on updated cultural policy answers in view of cultural and artistic practices, productions, and touring. Culture and arts have important roles in view of these future scenarios as they are able to connect people, to generate empathy and involvement, and to contribute to new ways of doing in society as well as to innovation in economy. By these means culture is a transversal element impacting and being impacted by all the transformation pathways.

Climate change is one of the major challenges to be tackled in the 21st century.

Climate change is very similar to culture as it concerns all social and economic activities in a transversal way. Based on the current economic and social model, all actions imply also CO₂ emissions. These emissions cause a rise in temperature and by this effect disturb the full water and air circles on Earth. These physical phenomena impact all aspects of life e. g. from water supply for agriculture and food production, to raising sea levels and considerable impact on coastal cities and infrastructures, to more frequent and intense storms with related social, cultural, and economic damage. Humanity needs to considerably reduce and finally eliminate CO₂ emissions. The main question is who must change current practices, to which extent and by which means. This fact concerns – like any other sector – also culture and the arts. Policy and operators need to find new agreements which we could also name as the common development of a new climate culture.

The cultural and creative domains are a broad range of different activities covering sectors as diverse as TV production, cultural heritage sites, independent performing arts and contemporary circus companies, individual visual artists, creative amateur practices, and many other more. CO₂ emissions concern energy production, all kinds of mobility, building infrastructures and houses including their renovation and restauration, agriculture and food production and others.



When further reflecting on touring of artists and circulating of artworks, we can well-detect the different emission-moments during the entire value chain for example from the moment when the agent contacts festival organisers on the other continent to investigate their interest for a booking, to the production of the promotion material, taking the plane, building and equipping the stage, turning the lights on, and interacting with the audience who had also caused a wide range of emissions on their way to the venue.

Urgent action for reducing CO₂ emission is needed - including from culture and the arts.

For the (political, individual) decision if touring of artists and circulation of artworks is still appropriate in view of the emission caused, it would be helpful to have comprehensive data which is not the case in the European context. A related decision could be to start with reducing those activities which cause e. g. most of CO₂ emissions. Another (political, individual) way forward to less emissions could be also to start with those reduction actions which can be done immediately. A third approach would be privileging those reductions which can be most easily implemented. In any case, the earlier action is taken the better for the climate.

The context of cultural production and dissemination equally matters for related decisions. Larger parts of the cultural and creative sectors are dependent on foreign markets as their home markets are too small or not specialised enough. This applies also to the considerable success of (classical, festival, other) cultural tourism and to city tourism.

It can be assumed that significant parts of the cultural and creative eco-systems would considerably suffer from massive travel restrictions to avoid touring. This would badly impact the economic survival of many venues, artists, and cultural operators as well as those many cities and regions depending on cultural tourism. A related reference case of a scenario with zero-travel and touring in culture and the arts became fully visible in the first phase of the 2020-21 pandemic and the complete closing of many national borders. The cultural sectors survived only with massive public support programmes and many individuals in art and culture still suffer (personally, economically, socially) from the pandemic effects on their health and income.

Furthermore, we have also to understand the broader values of (cultural, artistic) activities for the societies and economies (e. g. the added value of intercontinental encounters to contribute to empathy between populations and to peace).



Sustainability is the compass for a just and smooth transition in art and culture including touring.

Cultural action and artistic practices including touring are not mono-dimensional, but generate and are affected by social, economic, ecological, and cultural impacts¹. The Sustainable Development Goals and in general the concept of sustainability translates well these interdependencies and the need to keep a balanced system. Climate change mitigation actions need to reply to these needs with a systematic and just transformation process.

We can safely assume that a radical answer in the sense of stopping international touring cannot be a sustainable answer for the cultural and creative sectors. The question is how to minimize the CO₂ emissions of touring of artists and circulating of artworks to a maximum. This concerns the whole cultural eco-system, and we provide related insights to initiatives in EU/rope² in this paper.

Artistic & cultural creation have the potential to anchor climate protection within populations.

Beyond these specific considerations and impacts in the creative sectors, the cultural and artistic fields dispose of an additional capacity with great value for a smooth green transition. Good practices in culture and arts can connect people, are able to generate empathy and involvement including outside the centres of the main global metropolises and contribute to new ways of doing in society as well as to innovation in economy. All these elements are also crucial for successfully addressing climate change challenges.

¹ We use the term “sustainability” in this document for those inputs which refer also to concepts beyond the ecological dimension. The terms of “green”, “ecological”, “environmental” are used as synonyms for all references to the ecological transformation in the narrower sense.

² We use the term of “EU/rope” to highlight the fact that we cover in this paper EU countries as well as other European countries like Norway and the UK.



THE LESSONS LEARNT FROM EU/ROPEAN POLICIES AND PRACTICES

The EU provides solid ground for ambitious climate protection including performing arts and touring.

In EU/rope the political frameworks for a green transition in culture are well-set. This applies especially to the EU level and the [EU Green Deal](#) which gains considerable (political, financial) support and the related administrative settings are in place.

On the level of the EU institutions, a considerable effort was made to provide frameworks for exchange of experience as well as to formulate positions for common action(s) on the international scale (e. g. related to the Sustainable Development Goals and Culture). Dedicated staff in the European Commission oversees bringing forward the green and sustainability topics. This is a permanent approach backed by the strong political will of the current European Commission (2019-2024) to implement the EU Green Deal.

Climate change and culture including the performing and touring parts are well-anchored in these initiatives, related scientific and analytical backgrounds as well as management settings in the multilevel governance framework established.

For the funding programmes from the European Union, first improvements towards a more ecological approach could be implemented for the funding period 2021-2027. Main mobility schemes include a requirement and settings to further green travel. The related additional costs are covered by the funding provided to the applicants.

However, the implementation of a full climate protection system in culture proves to be a laborious and complex endeavour.

Networks, updated funding systems and an eco-system approach in a multilevel governance context are brought into place in EU/rope.

While the EU level provides an excellent framework for exchange of experiences and knowledge production, the concrete implementation of climate change mitigation actions is implemented in the context of the member states. When analysing practices in several EU countries plus Norway and the United Kingdom, we can observe frontrunning initiatives related to a new climate-friendly culture around artistic engagement for awareness raising and furthering a whole community of artists oriented towards ecology and eco-systems.



The transversal approach is especially well-visible in very mature and long-lasting initiatives in EU/rope. It means that the moment of mobility or touring is only part of a longer-lasting cultural and artistic production process including activities before and after the actual moment when going on tour. Local mobility is a further element. An integrated approach is also required as CO₂ emissions are caused on all production steps.

Many specific networks are able to bring together stakeholders from different cultural sectors and to voice needs towards policymakers as well as to provide platforms for information and know-how-transfer. They also address the need for statistics and specific data. These initiatives might be sector-specific or transversal and can be on all governance levels. They can be also cross-sectoral involving culture and other sectors.

Furthermore, especially bigger cultural institutions engage so-called sustainability officers and develop action plans and sustainability reports. This structural anchoring of the green transition in the wider culture and arts eco-system has the potential to generate long-term commitment and more efficient transition pathways.

Further on arts-based initiatives, the countries covered by this reflection paper host some of the more advanced artists-led efforts for more ecological practices in the global arts as well as related to residencies. These are of special interest due to their long-lasting experience and variety of actions taken so far. These link also to the more and more strategic involvement of artists-based actions and projects to the COP conferences.

In addition, it can be observed from the EU/ropean initiatives that the topic of green innovation is addressed to a lesser extent and that the ecological topic might be a challenge for some of the more established creative industries because of preserving attitudes toward the existing economic models.

On the level of support organisations, the funding systems undergo a process of transformation including the launch of new ecological support programmes for green venues and new eligible costs like the higher prices of sustainable mobility options. Most advanced initiative from EU/ropean stakeholders address the issues of just transition in a systematic way to avoid multiple (new) discriminations on the local and international (relations) level.

Engagement for green transition of major global performing and arts markets stakeholders in EU/rope provides potential for green innovation and related updated international cultural relations.

When further analysing four EU/ropean markets including performing, media, and visual arts as well as literature fairs, the added value of transnational networks and funding opportunities becomes visible in practices.

The intermediaries of the different markets engage considerably in these green transition efforts in the wider EU context. Furthermore, the stakeholders use the broad visibility of the major market events like big festival and fairs to raise awareness for the green transition. This approach is backed with a strong movement towards so-called green events including related self-binding charta.

Especially interesting are also touring agencies like Aurora providing with their sustainability hub a comprehensive approach. The whole international touring process is analysed to reduce carbon footprint. This



includes a whole area of local measures, local engagements and international transport, production including related green curatorial practices and co-production settings, the way of producing and transporting stage material, food and marketing purchase decisions and the involvement of audiences in a wider engagement of sustainable touring. The EU Stages project – another interesting case – tests also a zero-carbon-footprint international theatre production by the means of engaging local teams at the places of performances.

Green innovation in EU/rope is rather concentrated on the level of creative industries agencies as well as of individual start-up projects (e. g. for sustainable touring) and the international development of green culture markets has still considerable underexploited development potential. Furthermore, international cultural relations policy options could be further explored.

Good practice examples from EU/rope are manifold and address a wide range of crucial elements for the green transition.

Related good policy and practice examples from EU/rope include the EU multilevel governance systems with the [OMC working environment for green culture policy makers](#), the German [Climate4Culture network](#) as a broad national stakeholder initiative for green transformation, [COAL](#) from Paris and [HIAP](#) from Finland in view of artists-led awareness and [Creative Carbon Scotland](#) as a valuable source for just transition initiatives. The [STAGES EU-project](#) is a good example for delocalised co-production, the [Aurora Nova agency](#) for sustainable touring tools. The funding instruments [Creative Europe](#), [Culture Moves Europe Mobility Programme](#) include ecological features and the [Austrian green infrastructures programme](#) aims at future-proof and ecological venues for cultural production and touring.

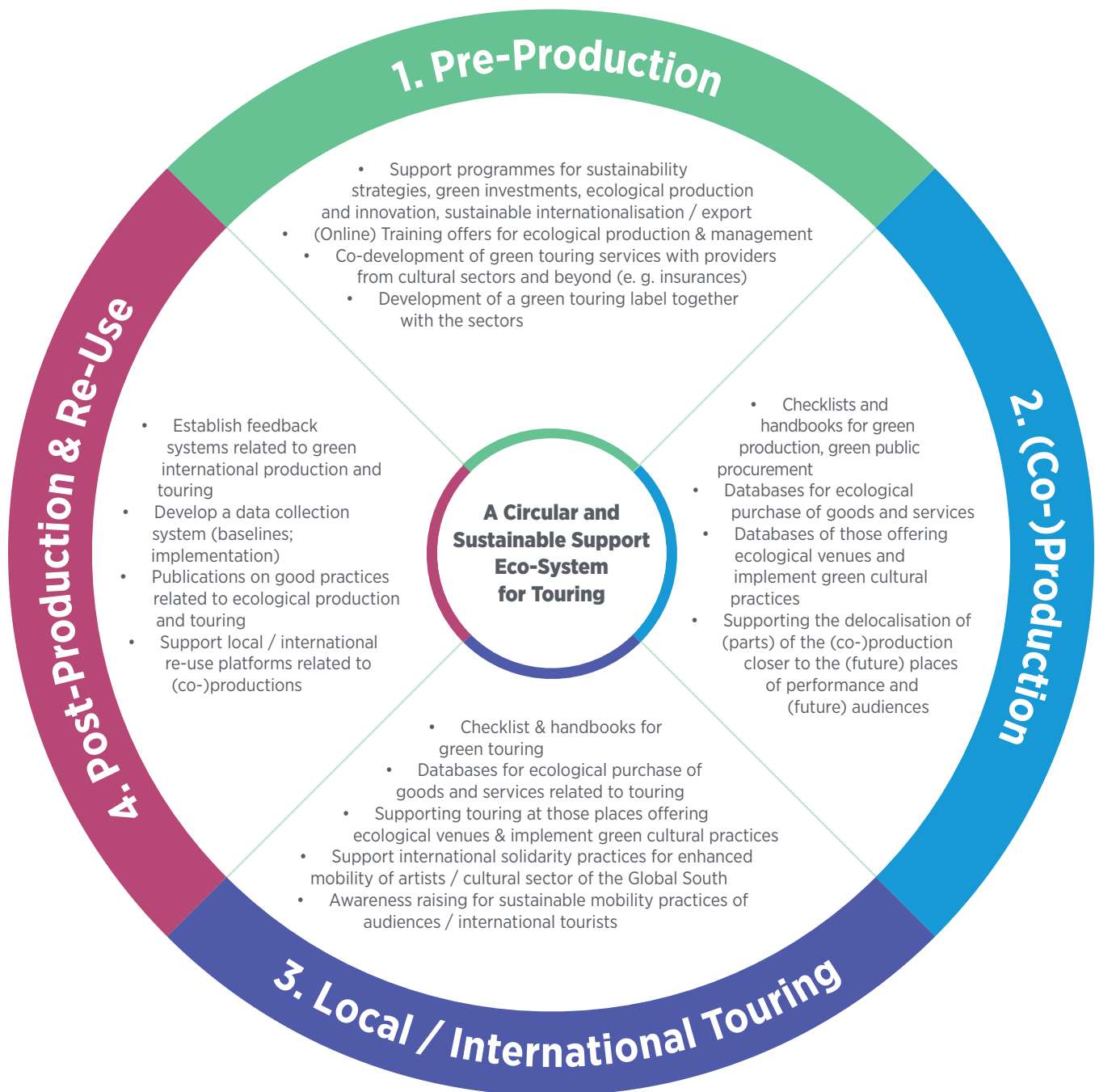


TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AND CIRCULAR SUPPORT ECO-SYSTEM FOR TOURING

Based on the wider context and the analysed background from the European experiences, we must understand the eco-system of touring and how CO₂ emissions can be reduced on all levels of the value chain from pre-production to re-use.



A Circular and Sustainable Support Eco-System-Approach for Touring:





The proposed eco-system approach should be based on an updated value set guiding a just and smooth transition of the support frameworks and related bottom-up stakeholder engagement as well as top-down policy frameworks and commitments.

Values guiding action for a green culture transition.

The proposed updated value-based reference framework for policymakers and actors in the culture eco-system should include the following elements:

The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** provide an appropriate wider framework of orientation of cultural policymakers considering all dimensions of sustainability.

The anchorage of settings for a **just transition** including updated relationships between the Global North and the Global South is a central corner stone to reach the climate change mitigation goals. It must be also considered that not all actors in the cultural system of the Global North dispose of green travel options and that a balanced territorial (cultural) development is important.

The cultural and **artistic dimension of climate change and related awareness raising** are transversal elements with considerable potential to reach out to wider strata of the population as well as to positively influence updated green lifestyles.

Participative international exchanges further the understanding of a common global world and the common challenge of avoiding together the climate change. This approach has the potential to enhance interconnectivity in the sense that the local and the global levels are interrelated.

The digital revolution is an opportunity for international cultural cooperation and a disruptive element for future developments at the same time. **Digital tools** are not climate-neutral, often not sustainable and **should be applied after careful analysis**.

Reciprocal reinforcement by cross-sectoral exchanges involving culture and other sectors is required to further integrated solutions for a better protection of the climate. This can be well-illustrated with the availability or not of sustainable transport options at different places on the globe.

Time matters! Rapid and good action for the climate protection is better than perfect instruments which can be only rolled-out in several years. Simple and fast actions should be combined with strategic approaches for a sustainable transformation of the whole eco-system.



Political dimensions of a new Climate Culture.

Updated policy frameworks comprise top-down policies, integrated approaches with engaged stakeholders as well as the understanding of the value chain implications:

A top-down political commitment backed with solid budgetary frames and high-level engagement from (cultural) policy and administration as well as staff specifically dedicated to the topic(s) is advantageous. The EU provides a related good practice for further reference.

The bottom-up ecological movements from all areas of the cultural and artistic eco-systems including those with a special focus on touring and mobility have already emerged and should be systematically involved. This global phenomenon is a favourable condition for all related policy initiatives.

The whole value chain is concerned and should receive due attention related to political strategies and action plans. The creation process needs to become more ecological as well as production activities, the dissemination and consumption phases.

The proposed eco-systemic approach provides also **interesting ground for enhanced and updated international cultural cooperation initiatives by the means of intercontinentally integrated systems with reduced impacts on climate change.**

Structural support for more ecological cultural and artistic practices.

Support structures could consider a wide range of actions to accelerate the green transition in culture including touring:

New and established (international, arts-based) intermediaries and global markets encounters can provide platforms for green culture communities. The establishment and running of such (international) structures should be supported.

The conclusion of new Global South-Global North partnerships to contribute to a just transition path on all governance levels. This implies the understanding that the Global South requires enhanced mobility and touring perspectives to cope with the persisting injustices in the current global system.

The funding of artistic practices with special ecological dimensions due to their content and ways of production as well as green touring are of special importance for support structures. Furthermore, green arts and culture (content; tools) is an additional selling element.

Green innovation and experimentation from arts and culture including the development of tools for ecological touring like green hybrid productions should be funded. This implies also cross-sectoral cooperation. It is also an investment in growing (international; national) markets.



A systematic update of existing (touring, circulation) funding programmes is required by screening the different implementation steps of (typical) projects and identifying those activities which can be implemented in a more ecological manner.

Elaborating reference data on emission-reduction options in the value chains in the cultural and creative sectors can be valuable guiding instruments on a strategic level for support structures.

The green transition also requires action from cultural organisations beyond funding structures. The following measures could be envisaged and backed with (funding; other) instruments from the support structures:

Cultural organisations including those involved in touring and circulation must **update their working methods to CO₂ reduced practices** and invest in **greener buildings. Dedicated staff** as sustainability (sustainable touring) officers are a good starting point for a systematic climate protection approach. The funding of the staff and the **development of integrative sustainable development strategies** for (public/private) organisations and administrations can considerably accelerate the required transformation processes. Furthermore, investments in **ecological equipment and renovation** are crucial for the cultural sector to dispose of venues operational in the long run including those for touring artists to perform.



THE AUTHOR

Sylvia AMANN is director of [inforelais](#) (Austria) - tailored services for culture and creative industries (policy) developments. The former chair of the EU creative industries expert group OMC is dedicated to innovative European policies for culture. Beyond innovation, Sylvia's recent research work for the European Parliament was focussed on policy support measures to overcome the Covid-19 crisis in the cultural and creative sectors and she publishes on ecological and other transformation-oriented cultural policies. She works as expert for Agenda 21 Culture Pilot Cities Programme, assisted the Urban Lab of Europe, and was panel member of the European Capitals of Culture and UNESCO Creative Cities. Sylvia works globally based on her experiences in major EU and territorial initiatives and strategic policies.

Related to culture and ecology: Since her studies, inter alia in environmental economics, Sylvia deals intensively with ecology. She works as an expert for the global UCLG city program, which aligns its actions with the UN goals for sustainable development, has set up a worldwide database of eco-projects in the field of culture and the serious game "More than a 100 Green Cultural Dreams" to develop action plans for a green cultural sector. inforelais is member of the global Climate Heritage Network and a signatory of the German Declaration of Sustainability in Culture.