



Creators and COVID-19 crisis: GESAC calls on European decision-makers to take urgent action

European culture and European creators are facing unprecedented negative impacts as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Creators who rely on the public performance of their work have seen present and future earnings wiped out as lockdowns take their toll on the economy. Alongside the closure of bars, clubs and other venues, the cancellation of events like concerts and festivals has worsened the situation for those whose livelihoods depend on performance and royalty revenues.

To further exacerbate matters, the production of many films, series and other cultural projects has been postponed or stopped altogether, meaning creators may face economic hardship well into 2021.

The precarious work arrangements of creators makes them particularly vulnerable to economic downturn. Unable to benefit from the safety net afforded by larger companies, dedicated funds on offer for small and medium-sized enterprises or unemployment payments for employees, creators are at risk of being forgotten.

As organisations made by creators for creators, collective management organisations ([CMOs](#)) are providing assistance beyond the professional, helping creators who have been deeply affected on a personal level by this crisis.

All of our 33 member societies are taking action to help their members; providing emergency funds, loans and advance payments. They are also adapting their social and cultural funds - dedicated parts of their revenue¹ used for cultural and social purposes - to address the urgent problems facing music authors, composers and editors.

However, much broader and more sustainable European initiatives must be implemented by the EU institutions and national governments to support the entire sector. A strong and united European response that pays homage to the very foundations of the Union and its core values is needed.

The creative community, of which GESAC represents over 1 million creators, recommends that:

- The Commission specifically mentions the importance of supporting the cultural sector when providing funds to Member States and makes sure that the precarious situation of creators is taken into account in its policy regarding COVID-19;
- Member States make sure that part of the emergency funds provided by the EU is available to creators and the cultural sector;
- Co-legislators swiftly adopt the Multiannual Financial Framework that sets the future funding for culture in Europe, with the necessary increase for our sectors, as proposed by the European Parliament.

¹ in 2018 those funds from GESAC members societies amounted in total to more than three times the EU budget for culture, excluding media

The power of culture, music and art to connect people during difficult times has become ever more apparent on social media. Viral videos have shown how singing and performing together can provide whole neighbourhoods a brief respite from the situation, and bring people together at a time when they are being asked to remain apart.

Creators and the cultural sector are essential aspects of the European project; core to creating a “Europe united in diversity”. But this pandemic has shown just how fragile our ability to promote and perform cultural and creative acts can be.

On behalf of the European community of creators, we ask that European policy-makers take swift and decisive action to protect European creativity and culture.

About GESAC

The European Grouping of Societies of Authors and Composers (GESAC) comprises 33 authors’ societies from all over Europe. Together, we represent over one million creators and rightsholders – from musicians to writers, visual artists to film directors and many more, in the areas of musical, audiovisual, visual arts, and literary and dramatic works.