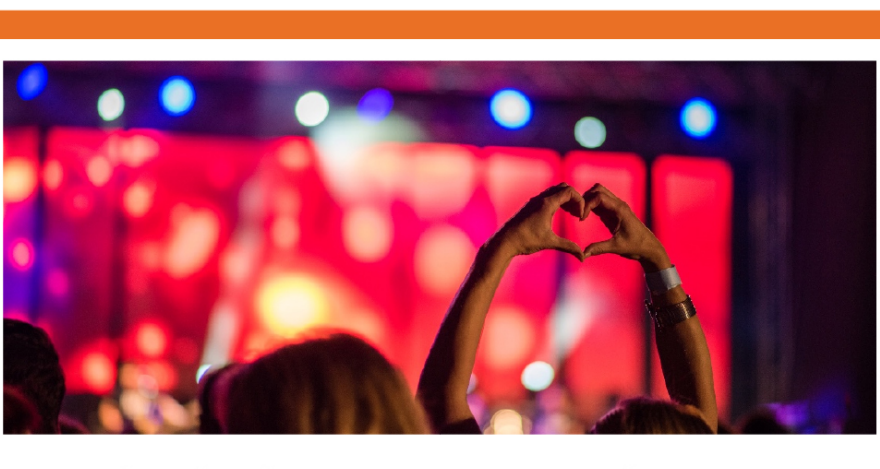
Newsletter #11 2026

EUROPEAN CULTURAL
AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
INNOVATION POLICY PLATFORM
Funded by the European Union



Europe has the pieces. Now we connect them.

Europe does not need another argument for why the cultural and creative industries matter. That argument has been won: the Culture Compass sets the direction, and in June the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission signed a joint declaration committing the institutions to embedding culture across EU policies and funding tools.

What Europe needs now is a way to put the creative and cultural industries to work inside its innovation ecosystems.

Over more than three years, ekip has moved from identifying policy barriers to investigating them with ecosystems, developing recommendations, testing methods and building tools that turn complexity into action. What the work revealed is larger than any single recommendation. Europe already holds most of the capabilities it needs, in creative talent, research, industry, cities and regions, institutions, infrastructure and knowledge. Those capabilities do not consistently work as a connected system.

Following ekip's high-level policy event in Brussels in May, its ten recommendations to the European Commission were consolidated into five strategic recommendations for the Parliament and the Council. Together, they call for the cultural and creative industries to be structurally embedded in European innovation policy.

Five recommendations for the EP and Council

EUROPE HAS THE PIECES.
NOW WE CONNECT THEM.
FROM POLICY TO ACTION
NatLab Main Stage
Ketelhuis, Kastanjelaan 500, Eindhoven, the Netherlands
October 23rd 2026
9:00AM– 1:30PM CET

Since the event in Brussels in May, the ekip Academy, the Prototyping in Cities, interviews with CCI ecosystem policy makers, and the ekip Engine activities with the new policy areas have carried the conversation from what needs to change to how change happens. In October, those strands come together across in Eindhoven.

23 October we will discuss how we go from policy to action.

It is not a results presentation, it is a working session to take the findings forward. We will discuss how an innovation policy platform creates value and competitiveness for Europe, and about who carries each part of it forward. Cities, regions, governments, universities, sector organisations and creative businesses can take what has been built, adapt it to their own realities and use it in their own policy journeys.

The timing is useful. The legal texts and governance of the next generation of European programmes are still being written, and the terms on which the creative and cultural industries sit inside them are still being settled.

The day is organised together with Dutch Design Foundation during Dutch Design Week, which brings more than 2,500 designers and around 300,000 visitors to Eindhoven over nine days.

Welcome to join us in Eindhoven!

Read more and register

Prototyping innovation in cities

ekip Policy areas

Glenn Micallef is putting culture at the heart of Europe's policy agendas.

The EU Commissioner's Culture Compass for Europe, launched in November 2025, has now evolved into a Joint Declaration setting out 12 guiding principles – from artistic freedom and fair working conditions to AI, cultural diversity, sustainability and culture's role in Europe's competitiveness and resilience. It signals a shift towards seeing culture not as a policy silo, but as a strategic part of Europe's future.

The European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union have signed a shared political declaration recognising culture as a strategic priority for the future of Europe. It begins with:

"Europe is a vibrant hub of cultural diversity, renowned for its languages, cultural heritage, artistic expressions, and creative innovations."

From ekip we are happy and anxious to support policy journey across Europe's ecosystems to build capacity for innovation with the CCIs.

A Culture Compass for Europe

EU signs first-ever Joint Declaration on culture:
What it means for international cultural relations

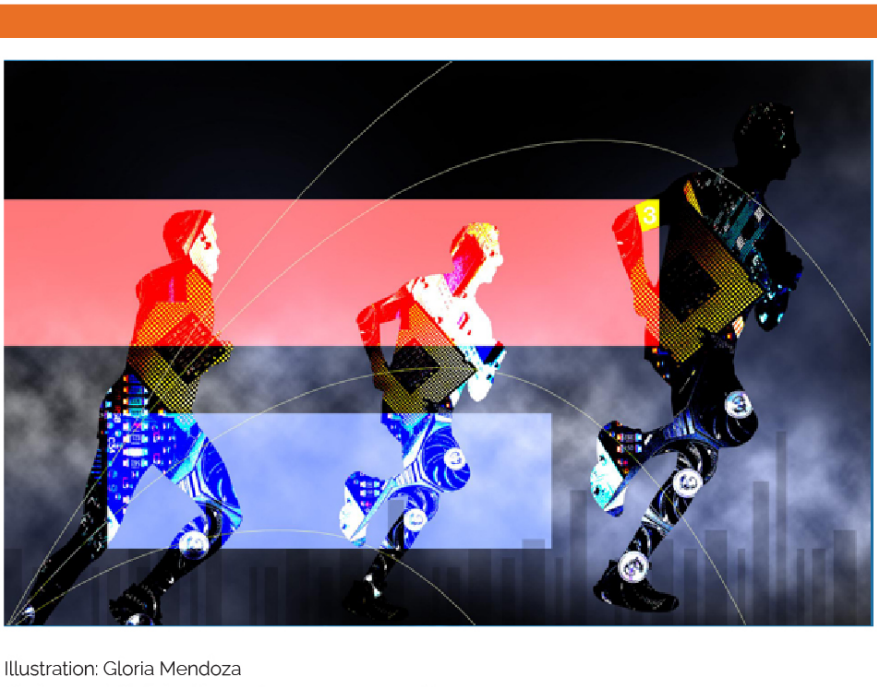


Illustration: Gloria Mendoza

AI and CCI: shaping europe's next step

Across Europe, cultural and creative actors are asking a similar question: how can artificial intelligence be shaped in ways that strengthen creativity, cultural diversity and democratic innovation, rather than narrowing them?

The European Commission's call for evidence on a forthcoming AI Strategy for the Cultural and Creative Sectors offers one answer: it creates a policy window where the sector can show where AI is already helping creativity, where risks are still insufficiently understood, and what fairer conditions, better transparency and better access could look like in practice.

Read full article

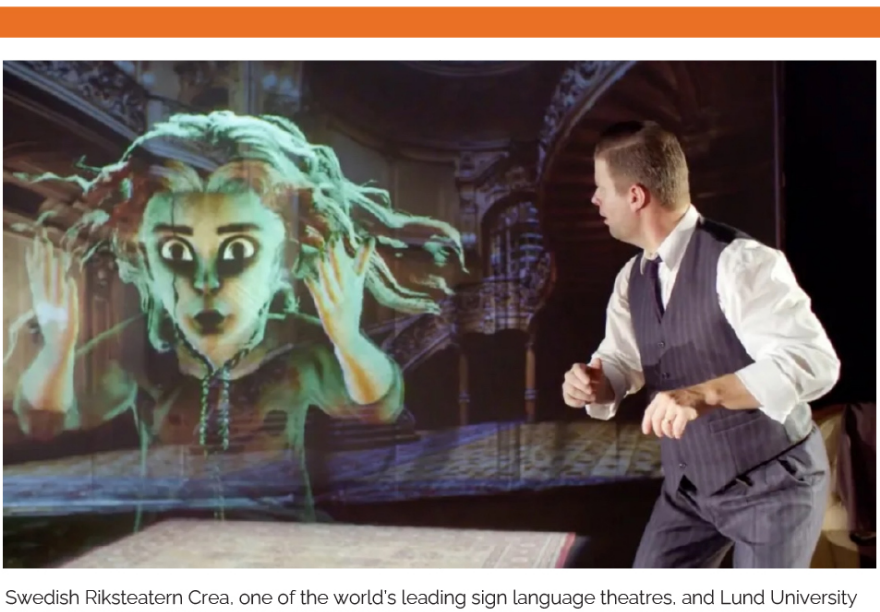
Why a common language for innovation matter

When people from different sectors work together, they do not always mean the same thing by the same words. Common definitions create a shared language that makes collaboration easier, helps ideas travel across sectors and turns policy concepts into practical action.

For ekip, this shared language is essential to connecting culture and creativity with innovation policy — and to building a common understanding of how ecosystems can change.

ekip's Core Concepts constitutes an important base for the policy recommendations developed, and for taking them into action.

Core Concepts in ekip



Swedish Riksteatern Crea, one of the world's leading sign language theatres, and Lund University researchers trialled creative new technologies for a multi-dimensional theatre experience.

"Innovation by production"

What if we look at performing arts institutions and actors as innovation environments?

A new ekip white paper highlights the potential source of innovation: the art-production process itself. In performing arts, new knowledge, methods, technologies and ways of working emerge through making and performing – yet many of these outcomes remain invisible to systems built around patents, start-ups and commercial products.

The paper calls for stronger ecosystem support to help art-production-based inventions travel across sectors while preserving artistic autonomy.

Read the White Paper in ekip´s Knowledge Bank

Policy area: New funding models for creativity and innovation

This is the twelfth policy area that ekip has processed in the policy Engine

As CCIs navigate shifting markets, technologies, and social expectations, there is a clear need to rethink how they are financed, moving beyond grant-only approaches toward more flexible and collaborative models.

New Funding Models for Creativity and Innovation the policy area that explores the shift toward diversified income streams, multi-level collaborations, outcome-based investment, financial literacy, and digital monetization tools. From public-private partnerships and social impact funding to blockchain-enabled royalties and platform-based economies, these emerging funding models aim to strengthen financial resilience and create more sustainable ecosystems for creative professionals.

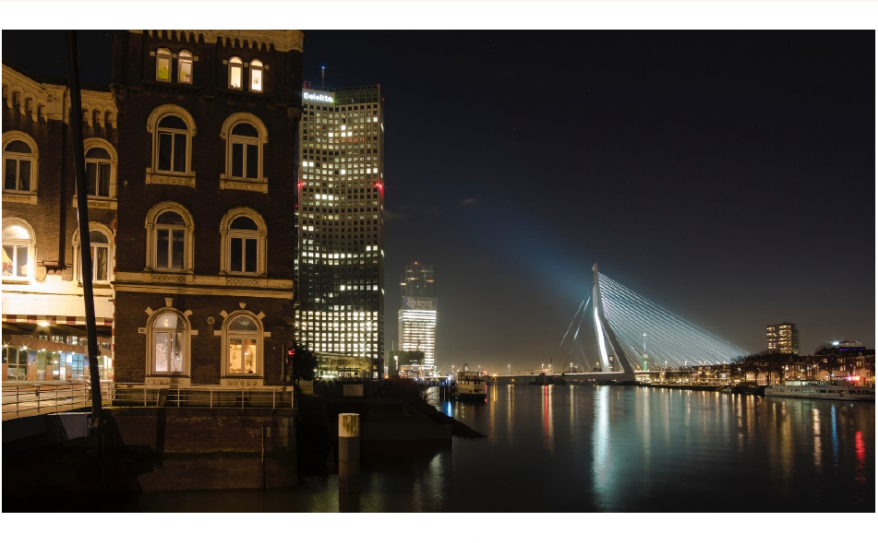
Read ekip´s Policy Poster

Sylvia Amann, founder of the Austrian consultancy inforelais and a veteran cultural policy strategist. Photo: Bodil Malmström

Innovation reshapes cultural and creative industries, opening new funding and business models

Cultural and innovation policy are increasingly interconnected in shaping the future of creative industries. While cultural policy sustains the conditions for cultural production, innovation policy focuses on scalable solutions and economic impact. But the two depend on each other: cultural actors need stable core conditions to engage in innovation, which in turn can help develop new models and revenue streams when systems are aligned.

Read full article



City Case Description: Rotterdam & New Funding Models for Creativity and Innovation

How can cities make funding easier to access for creative practitioners?
In Rotterdam, local stakeholders explored the gaps and complexity in existing support systems, looking at how better guidance, stronger networks, and more targeted funding could help creative organisations and innovators develop over the long term.

Read full report

Europe requires a new approach

Europe needs funding and investment that reflect how innovation happens for the CCIs. ekip proposes eight changes to enable Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) to participate fully in open innovation ecosystems.

Organised through Innovation Ecosystem Building Blocks, the recommendations connect financing with the wider conditions needed for collaboration. The innovation portfolio approach, the Zone Model and the OPSI Model help match support to different activities, partnerships and purposes.

Learn more about ekip´s policy recommendations

Kushtrim Canolli chairs Kosovo's emerging strategy for the creative economy. Photo: Jana Laigo

How can a country build a creative economy from the ground up?

Part of a series of portraits on Europe's creatives, this story follows Kushtrim Canolli's journey from lawyer to policy-maker, exploring how he is connecting culture, innovation, digitalisation, and economic development to design a new model for Kosovo's creative future.

Read the article "From creative economy to creative growth"

Read our five portraits of the Europe´s creative

Four things Europe needs to get right on the creative industries, and one that is still missing

Europe is losing the technology race, but it still leads on creativity. China used to recruit European engineers. Now it recruits European designers. And that's where value is moving. Europe's financing systems have not followed it.

Read Michalis Stangos, investor, entrepreneur, and ecosystem builder, reflections on how we redesign Europe's innovation ecosystems.

Read the article

News

Kaunas in Lithuania where the World Open Innovation Conference is taking place.

When open innovation meets the swarm

How can cities move from talking about innovation with the Creatives to actually making it happen? At the World Open Innovation Conference 2026, taking place in Kaunas on 4–5 November, ekip will present its city prototyping and portfolio approach as an Open Innovation practice.

Under the title When Open Innovation Meets the Swarm: ekip City Prototyping as a Model for Collective Open Innovation with Cultural and Creative Industries, ekip will show how cultural and creative industries can bring new forms of collaboration, experimentation and problem-solving into innovation ecosystems.

The practice explores how an ecosystem can support and work with a diverse "swarm" (see Core Concepts of ekip) of Creatives starting out in a shared challenge with a joint innovation portfolio scope. Open Innovation as a norm in ecosystems will enable multi-stakeholder collaborations needed to have Creatives engaged in joint innovation work cross sectors and disciplines.

Read more and register

A shared space for creativity and policy

From the outset, ekip has been keen to meet the cultural and creative sectors where they already gather. Across Europe, the ekip Engine has been fuelled by activities connected to existing CCI events – listening, exchanging ideas and bringing the voices of the sector into the policy process.

Creative FLIP has been an important part of this journey. The collaboration has created opportunities to connect policy discussions with people working on the ground, with back-to-back events bringing together the ekip Policy Corner, Policy Lab and Creative FLIP. These encounters have provided a valuable space for dialogue between policy, research and the creative sectors – and helped both initiatives learn from each other.

Creative FLIP's final conference publication on resilience looks at the role of finance, reflects on the work carried out through FLIP and highlights the challenges that still need to be addressed. Together, these insights contribute to a wider conversation about how Europe can create stronger conditions for cultural and creative sectors to thrive and also create innovations.

Read full report: Towards more resilient cultural and creative ecosystems

Upcoming events

CITY PROTOTYPING
ON POLICY
INNOVATION IN CCIs
INFRASTRUCTURE
Braga, Portugal
September 24th 2026

The Braga workshop will address innovative policies that can help utilize urban infrastructure for cultural and creative industries (CCIs), while exploring how policy innovation can support cross-sector and cross-policy collaboration, and enable sustainable growth of CCIs within the Braga context.

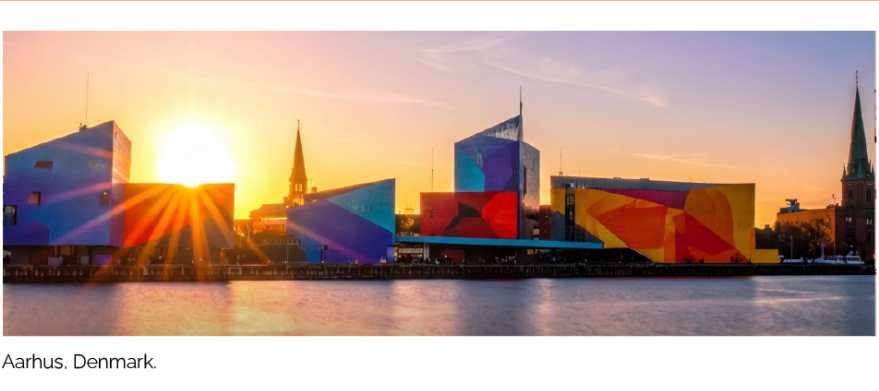
Read more and register

ENCATC Congress 2026
23-25 September 2026, Nice, France

Sharing insights, building connections at ENCATC

ekip will take part in the ENCATC Congress, contributing to discussions on the future of cultural and creative industries in Europe.

The event brings together researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to exchange insights on innovation, collaboration, and emerging policy directions. Through its participation, ekip will share experiences and perspectives on how cultural and creative industries can strengthen Europe's innovation ecosystems and societal resilience.



Aarhus, Denmark.

What happens when europe's cultural heritage innovators meet the people shaping its creative future?

Time Machine Connect 2026 brings together the Time Machine Organisation (TMO) and EIT Culture & Creativity communities in Aarhus to explore how cultural heritage data, digital technologies and creative expertise can come together to create new opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

Date: 30 Sept – 01 Oct 2026 Venue: Godsbanen, Aarhus (DK) Participation: Free-of-charge but registration required.

Read more and register

ARoS Aarhus Art Museum in Denmark. Photo: iStockphoto

If you are part of the cultural and creative sectors and industries (CCSI) in the Nordic or Baltic region, consider clearing your diary for 1 and 2 October 2026.

EIT Culture & Creativity is bringing its Regional Hub North Open Day to Aarhus, Denmark

offering an opportunity to connect with the wider community shaping the sector's future: funders, founders, researchers, policymakers, and others. Attendees will also have the chance to see some of the city's creative ventures first-hand.

Read more and register

Each year, Dutch Design Week turns Eindhoven into a stage for bold ideas in public space. Photo: Ronald Smits

23 October ekip will be co-arranging an event in three parts at Dutch Design week with CLICKNL, Dutch Design Foundation and BNO

We will bring people together from the Creatives, Governments and Academia, in a European dialogue "from policy to action", a tailored tour at the DD venue area, and a network party.

Learn more and register

Want to engage with ekip?

ekip
EUROPEAN CULTURAL
AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
INNOVATION POLICY PLATFORM

POLICY & INNOVATION MAGAZINE

Funded by the European Union

Europe redesigns innovation ecosystems

THE EKIP ENGINE EXPLAINED

CITY CASES: LUND, ROTTERDAM, KOŠICE

POLICY INSIGHTS ON DEEP TECH & FASHION

TOOLS FOR BUILDING OPEN INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

New magazine about ekip. Enjoy reading.

In this issue, discover why Europe's innovation ecosystem needs a creative reset—and why creatives are the missing piece.

Explore how ekip works as an engine, making open innovation a default practice rather than an exception.

Learn from real-world cases where the system is already in action, connecting CCI with industry, research, and policy.

And look ahead to the future of cultural and creative industries—and what they can unlock across Europe.

Knowledge Bank

The *ekip* Knowledge Bank is an online repository for policymakers, researchers, investors, and changemakers to shape effective innovation strategies for and with the Cultural and Creative Industries. It supports innovation policy design, implementation, and evaluation, mobilising stakeholders and bridging policy and practice across Europe's open innovation ecosystems.

Innovation doesn't just happen, it needs to be made.

The ekip Knowledge Bank is Europe's go-to platform for tools, case studies, and insights that put Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs) at the center of policy transformation.

Designed for policymakers, funders, creative and cultural practitioners, and innovation actors, the Knowledge Bank helps cut through the noise, bridge fragmented approaches, and support evidence-based innovation policies.

Explore the ekip Knowledge Bank now: knowledge-bank.ekipengine.eu

We welcome contributions that advance understanding and practice around innovation in and with Cultural and Creative Industries (CCIs). You can submit your contribution here.

Interesting in ekip´s previous newsletter on AI and Cultural and Creative Industries, New European Bauhaus, Immersive Media, Craft-led Innovation and Platformisation of the Music Industry?

Discover how Europe's Culture and Creative Industries are unlocking open innovation.

Read our previous newsletters

EKIP ACADEMY:
BUILDING OPEN INNOVATION
ECOSYSTEMS FOR CULTURAL
& CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
FUTURE STORY AND BACKCASTING

ekip Academy in Tallinn in June 2026. Photo: Bodil Malmström

ekip is a Horizon Europe initiative designed to revolutionise innovation policies for Cultural and Creative Industries (CCI).

The 18 partners of ekip bring specific competences to the Innovation Policy Platform.

The process of formulating policies is compared to an engine where the data is analysed, prioritized and processed.

ekip will map and categorize 100 policy areas and process at least 13 of them through the whole engine and create recommendations. More than 40 CCI network and organizations across Europe are engaged by defining and giving the engine data about our selected policy areas.

This initiative ensures that supportive ecosystems develop a capacity to handle complex multi-stakeholder innovation processes needed to realize more innovative CCIs in Europe and the behavioral change they drive towards a more green, inclusive and digital Europe

We will equip Europe with all the potential CCIs offer for its future

The ekip Innovation Policy Platform in three parts: How can you be involved? What do we produce? How do we work?

See the full Partners list

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