

**EU-LAC Webinar:
'Cultural Policies in times of Digitisation:
Experiences from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean'
04 May 2021, 16:00-18:00h CEST**

- Concept Note -

In line with its mandate to promote discussions between decision makers and representatives of civil society on priority issues for the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean countries, the EU-LAC Foundation has organised, since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of webinars to share national and regional experiences and shed light upon best practices associated therewith¹. In “year two” of the current pandemic, the EU-LAC Foundation would like to continue this practice and dedicate a webinar to the question of how the tendency towards digitisation in both regions has had an impact on the cultural sector, and specifically, how it has shaped cultural policies of the different countries in the two regions.

The digital age has profoundly changed the ways whereby we live and interact with one another; peoples, societies, countries, and regions alike. The emergence of digital technologies, e.g. the Internet, mobile devices, and social media platforms has - and continues to - revolutionised the means of creating and spreading culture and therefore has had an impact on the entire cultural value chain: from creation to production, distribution, access and participation. Albeit these changes entail a series of challenges, they allow the creation of new cultural expressions in terms of languages and forms of accessibility.

In light of this transition, in recent years, public institutions working in the realm of culture in numerous countries have developed policies and strategies aimed at taking advantage of the opportunities and mitigating associated disadvantages and challenges. The inclusion of digitisation policies has thus become one of the priorities for cultural policy-makers, as they are crucial enablers and drivers of the diversity of cultural expressions.

Indeed, as States became increasingly interested in this topic, the question of digitisation began to be addressed as State policy in several regions, for instance in the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). These advancements have resulted in a better understanding of the necessity for national, regional and multilateral efforts in this regard as keys to fully harnessing the potential of digital culture.

In turn, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed that, despite these endeavours, there are still significant differences between and within countries - and regions - in terms of digitisation to date. These imbalances hinder the transition into digital-based cultural policies and the effectiveness of national

¹ <https://eulacfoundation.org/en/videos-eu-lac-foundation>

and regional strategies thereto. Although there has been acceleration in embracing digital tools as a solution to maintain cultural services and production, several countries and entities still have to adapt and create new forms of cultural experience whilst deepening the necessary transition.

Objectives

This webinar aims to provide a space for dialogue and presentation of challenges and promising initiatives at the level of cultural policies in Latin America and the Caribbean and the European Union. Firstly, it will offer a brief balance of the similarities and differences between both regions regarding digitisation and its implications for cultural digital policies. Secondly, the webinar will address a series of challenges and opportunities associated with the digitisation of cultural policies, especially amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirdly, the webinar will focus on promising digitisation practices from both regions and their potential to be implemented in other countries of these regions.

Format of the Webinar

The webinar will be structured in three sections, each of which will be dedicated to a particular theme:

Section 1 – Similarities and differences:

Despite a series of institutional endeavours at the national and regional levels, differences in terms of the level of digitisation between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean are still observable. The Internet penetration in the EU of over 89% (2020) of the population and in Latin America and the Caribbean of around 73% (2020) shows that access to digital tools is not equal between and within these regions. This entails differentiated cultural policies, but also implies potential for experience sharing as well as collaboration and innovation. Over the last decade, remarkable progress, particularly in terms of mobile connectivity, has been achieved. Experts will therefore address the following question:

- Which are the main similarities and differences within and between both regions in terms of the degree of digitisation in the cultural industries and how is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting this?

Section 2 - Opportunities and challenges:

The second part of this Webinar intends to deepen awareness of the opportunities and challenges that digitisation brings to the cultural sector. The new languages of cultural expression continuously aggravate existing challenges and bring new ones. To mention two examples: the Internet's irruption has changed the way not only cultural services and products are delivered but also how they are produced. There are several difficulties for small, low-income industries to promote and deliver their work despite the emergence of new platforms thereto. Nonetheless, the rationality behind the existence of these challenges also unveils opportunities that States could embrace. Digitisation

democratises people's access to culture and brings new opportunities to interconnect public communication policies with culture. Experts will therefore address the following questions:

- What are the main challenges and opportunities at the regional and bi-regional levels for reducing the gaps in terms of digitisation and which are the main advantages and disadvantages for entities and actors in charge of cultural policy making?
- How to ensure that vulnerable groups and minorities are represented in a digitised cultural sphere and that culture is diverse and inclusive in times of digitisation?

Section 3 - Best practices:

The inclusion of digital policies has recently become one of the priorities in the area of cultural policy making. Digital cultural policies aim to encourage and protect local cultural content and its creation, improve the availability and accessibility of culture, preserve cultural and historic heritage, and attend to cultural, social and economic implications of digital technologies. Since digitisation affects all cultural areas and stages of the value chain, successful cultural policies in a digitised era need to address all cultural instruments. Several governmental entities throughout the EU and LAC, have acquired significant expertise whilst developing tools and policies to embrace digital change and foster partnerships, which promote innovation, adaptation, and exchange of experiences. In this context, experts will address the following questions:

- Which are good practices in countries in the EU and Latin America and the Caribbean of clear and precise regulatory frameworks to promote diversity and pluralism in the digital media?
- Which instruments and projects to digitise cultural products and activities have the potential to strengthen bi-regional cooperation?
- Which existing mechanisms and platforms could be explored so as to share expertise and shed light upon successful initiatives in the field of digitisation between both regions?

Expected results of the Webinar

The Webinar will contribute to the generation of knowledge and the bi-regional exchange of information about opportunities, initiatives and best practices in terms of digitisation in the field of culture at national, sub-regional and bi-regional levels.

After the Webinar, the EU-LAC Foundation will elaborate a report resuming the dialogue held during the webinar and systematising an overview of policies and best practices at the bi-regional level based on the initiatives presented and introduced during the dialogue. This report will be published on the Foundation's website and disseminated through its communication channels as well as distributed among the Foundation's focal points in its 62 members.

Altogether, it is expected that this webinar will contribute to facilitating contacts among agents involved in cultural policies, to strengthening networks between relevant actors from both regions and thus generate valuable input to policy-makers as well as to relevant entities.



Technical instructions

The webinar will take place on May 4th, 2021, between 16.00-18.00 h (CET) via Zoom.

The event will be open for participation - subject to pre-registration in digital platforms - to representatives of all EU-LAC International Foundation members as well as to the general interested public.

The webinar will be held in Spanish and/or English according to the language preference of the panellists. A service of simultaneous interpretation will be provided.

The webinar will be moderated by an experienced facilitator, and guests will receive some guiding questions in advance to prepare their respective presentations. At the end of the presentations, the audience will be able to interact and discuss with the panellists through the Q&A functionality of the platform.

The event will be recorded, and the EU-LAC Foundation will publish videos and a report summarising the discussions held on its website (<https://eulacfoundation.org/en>).

In case of any questions, please contact Diego Durán Cruz ddurancruz@eulacfoundation.org.