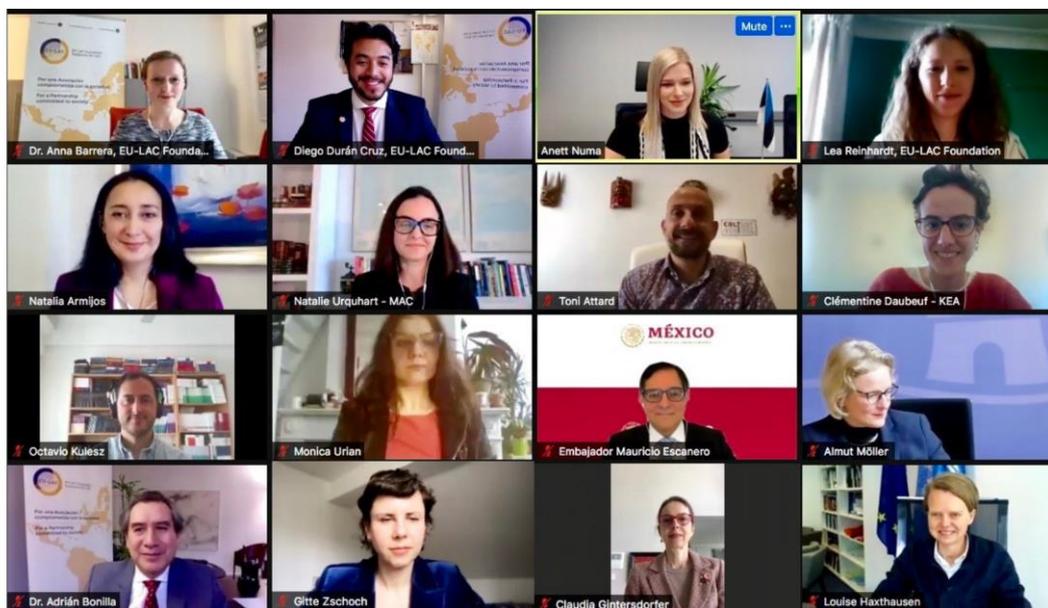# 'Cultural Policies in Times of Digitisation:
Experiences from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean'

Webinar Report of the EU-LAC Foundation held on 4 May 2021

The webinar 'Cultural Policies in Times of Digitisation: Experiences from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean' was organised by the European Union-Latin America and the Caribbean International Foundation (EU-LAC Foundation) on 04 May 2021, in the framework of the 'Europe Week 2021 in Hamburg' (*Europa Woche*), an initiative of the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. The recording of the webinar is available on the website of the EU-LAC Foundation.

The EU-LAC Foundation is an international intergovernmental organisation based in Hamburg, Germany, composed of all the member countries of the European Union (EU), the EU itself, the United Kingdom, and all the Latin American and Caribbean countries that make up the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). Its mission is to strengthen the bi-regional strategic partnership by promoting dialogue and knowledge exchange between civil society and government decision-makers on priority issues for both regions, including culture.

The objective of the webinar was, in the first instance, to provide a space for dialogue between decision-makers in the field of cultural policy and a group of representatives of cultural management organisations from both regions. The event aimed to generate an exchange of challenges, opportunities and promising initiatives at the level of cultural policies, accompanied by a balance of similarities and differences in terms of digitisation and its implications for cultural policies. To this end, it sought to address the challenges and opportunities associated with the digitisation of cultural policies, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as to provide a space for the presentation of best practices in digitisation from both regions.

The format of the event consisted of an opening segment and three thematic sections (1. Similarities and differences, 2. Opportunities and challenges, 3. Best practices) with presentations of about 10 minutes from each panellist. A series of questions from the audience were answered by the experts in the Q&A section during the course of the event.

The webinar was moderated by Anett Numa, Digital Transformation Advisor at e-Estonia. The inaugural panel consisted of Dr Adrian Bonilla, Executive Director of the EU-LAC Foundation, Claudia Gintersdorfer, Head of the Americas Regional Division of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Ambassador Mauricio Escanero, Head of Mission of Mexico to the EU and Representative of the Pro Tempore Presidency of CELAC in charge of Mexico, both in their role as Co-Chairs of the Board of Governors of the EU-LAC Foundation, as well as of Almut Möller, State Secretary of the Senate of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg.

The three thematic sections were structured as follows:
- Similarities and differences:
    - Louise Haxthausen, UNESCO Representative to the EU;
    - Natalia Armijos, Director-General for Culture, Organisation of Iberoamerican States for Education, Science and Culture.
- Opportunities and challenges:
    - Monica Urian, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission
    - Octavio Kulesz, Director of Teseo.
- Best practices:
    - Gitte Zschoch, Director of the EU National Institutes of Culture;
    - Toni Attard, Board Member of the Cultural Policy Makers Network and Founder and Director of Culture Venture;
    - Natalie Urquhart, Executive Committee Member, Museums Association of the Caribbean and Director at National Gallery of the Cayman Islands;
    - Clémentine Daubeuf (Deputy Director of KEA European Affairs).

Opening remarks

Adrián Bonilla inaugurated this webinar by framing it within the framework of the Europe Week, organised by the City of Hamburg, and also within the objectives of the EU-LAC Foundation as an international organisation, which are to build on the strengthening of the bi-regional partnership process between the countries of the European Union (EU) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and to promote mutual knowledge and understanding between societies. Dr Bonilla highlighted the importance of the theme of the seminar – cultural policies in times of digitisation – explaining that it is not only part of the common agenda of the EU and LAC, but that the last year of the pandemic has shown the profound change of the digital era and the transfer of the way of life and interaction between people in a space of use of digital instruments. In this context, issues of access to cultural tools and goods, of participation, as well as other challenges in the whole value chain of the creative and cultural sector are raised for all countries. The relevance of the event from the perspective of the EU-LAC Foundation is to encourage participants to reflect on experiences

and viable alternatives in this area, to identify opportunities, challenges and best practices, and to systematise possible instruments and policies to explore how the areas of digitisation can be democratised at a global level and to boost, accelerate and strengthen the bi-regional relationship.

Claudia Gintersdorfer began her intervention by highlighting that the new reality and normality since last year are virtual meetings, as in the case of this webinar, and that this fact shows the ability of the human being to adapt quickly to new circumstances. Gintersdorfer reflected on the question of distance in a digitised world and, particularly in the cultural area, raised the question of who makes up the audience these days. Given the inequalities in benefiting from the impact of digital on society, she believes that the key priority for both cultural policy and digitisation must be the empowerment of all citizens. In her role as EEAS representative, she mentioned the European Commission's new vision and proposals for digital transformation until 2030, called "Shaping Europe's Digital Future", which aims to empower European society with digital solutions that are rooted in common values and help Europe pursue its own path towards a digital transformation that benefits all citizens, creates a fair and competitive economy and contributes to an open, democratic and sustainable society. Another important aspect for the European Commission is the cultural heritage that has been revitalised through new digital technologies and the internet.

Mauricio Escanero framed the importance of the theme of the webinar in the context of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural industry while reiterating the value of culture for humanity. In this new stage of cultural cooperation between EU and LAC societies, he attributed a fundamental role to the bi-regional CELAC-EU partnership. He expressed his pleasure on the participation of important cultural organisations from both regions, as well as the European Commission and other important actors from different academic and civil society spheres in the seminar, as these alliances allow to enhance the work of the EU-LAC Foundation, providing added value to strengthen bi-regional links and the multilateral work of both regions. To conclude, Ambassador Escanero reiterated Mexico's commitment to continue strengthening the CELAC-EU strategic partnership in support of international cooperation.

Almut Möller opened her speech by thanking the EU-LAC Foundation for its participation in the Europe Week and its partnership and friendship with the City of Hamburg. In the context of the pandemic, the confinement and closure of cultural institutions reveals the relevance of cultural space both on a personal and societal level. However, the COVID-19 crisis brings with it rapid changes, the most visible among them being the progress in digitisation. From Hamburg's perspective, digital formats are becoming more and more widespread, practiced and accepted and open up the cultural space for an audience beyond the local one which would not be possible without digitisation. In this respect, she mentioned a few examples from Hamburg: The art museum *Hamburger Kunsthalle* shows an exhibition combining digital tools with cooperation with local theatres and the avant-garde orchestra which shows how the pandemic opens the space for interdisciplinary cooperation that would otherwise not be realised. Another example is the "Digital Benin" project of the Hamburg Museum of Ethnology. Möller emphasised the advantage of digitisation in fostering interdisciplinary work, in addition to its potential to democratise people's access to culture, to ensure the representation of vulnerable groups and minorities in the cultural sphere, as well as its potential to promote diversity in culture. In conclusion, she indicated that

digitisation in cultural policies can help strengthen bi-regional cooperation between the EU and LAC as this webinar is doing.

Introducing the section of the expert presentations, **Anett Numa** summarised the previous interventions by explaining that the pandemic showed that it is necessary to change the way people live and that digital technologies, on the one hand, offer opportunities such as the distribution of culture on a global level and, on the other hand, reveal challenges and difficulties with regard to the impact of the pandemic on value chains and accessibility. There are important differences between EU and LAC countries and regions in terms of digitisation: In 2020, internet penetration was 89% in the EU while in LAC it was only 73%, showing that access to digital tools is not equal in both regions. However, she indicated that remarkable progress was achieved particularly in terms of mobile connectivity in many places. From her perspective in the case of Estonia, one of the most important things for decision-makers is to focus on providing adequate internet access to absolutely everyone. Finally, she addressed the following questions to the panellists of the first section: 1. What are the main similarities and differences within and between the two regions in terms of the degree of digitisation and cultural industries? 2. How is the COVID-19 pandemic affecting this?

Presentations

Section I – Similarities and Differences

Louise Haxthausen, UNESCO Representative to the European Union

Louise Haxthausen began her presentation by highlighting that the theme of the seminar is a current one, on the one hand, because of the COVID-19 crisis that has exponentially accelerated the use of digital technologies in the cultural sector[1] and, on the other hand, because of the European Union's ambitious agenda to create a human-centred digital world (i.e. its programme Digital Europe) around principles such as human rights, sustainability and prosperity. In the UNESCO Culture and Public Policy Newsletter (*Tracker*) to monitor public policy with regard to the UN sustainable development agenda and the whole post-COVID-19 recovery, they noted that cultural digitisation acts as a democratisation tool.

The emergence of new opportunities for online cultural goods and services, both in terms of access and new forms of creativity, and the interactivity of this content demonstrated new opportunities for cultural participation as the lines between artists, cultural institutions and their audience were blurred, resulting in culture being appropriated by all. Finally, it has demonstrated the importance of recognising culture not only as a public good, but also as an essential good that strengthens the resilience of peoples in a phase of adversity.

However, UNESCO also noted that the increase in the exchange of cultural content online has widened access and diversity gaps. For this organisation, it was striking that nearly 80 per cent of

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[1] See the report "Museums in the face of COVID-19".

all websites are accessed in only 10 of the world's 7,000 living languages.[2] The great disparity in digital access and infrastructure threatens to exclude many from the benefits of the digitisation of culture, the divide being not only a matter of geography but also of gender. Thus, only 19% of the population in sub-Saharan Africa has access to the Internet while a large part of the population lives in rural areas. With regard to gender, women have less access to digital skills, jobs and networks, which jeopardises the under-representation of women's online activities.

Haxthausen also addressed the problem of remuneration and authors' rights that can end up deepening inequalities in access to and participation in culture and, on a larger scale, limiting cultural diversity.[3] Considering cultural democratisation on the one hand and cultural deprivation on the other, the accelerated use of digital technologies driven by the COVID-19 crisis is illuminating two important aspects of the state of culture in today's world: a) the power of culture and its essential role for personal and social development, and b) the politics and fragility prevailing in the global cultural ecosystem; two aspects covered by UNESCO's EU co-funded programme [Transcultura: Integrating Cuba, The Caribbean And The European Union Through Culture And Creativity](#).

On a concluding note, Haxthausen offered recommendations for digitisation to become a driver of positive change to fully unlock the potential of culture.

1. Monitoring: There is a need to analyse what works and what does not in order to inform the policy debate to make the cultural sector more resilient and cultural services more inclusive and sustainable.
2. Investment: First in terms of political will and funding in the development of cultural policies that address key aspects and challenges related to digitisation.
3. Investment in skills development: This is essential to close the gender gap and make the digital transformation a force for inclusion.

For further information on current initiatives and projects carried out by UNESCO, in general, and Louise Haxthausen in particular, you may visit the 'References' section by the end of this report.

Natalia Armijos, Director-General for Culture of the Organisation of Ibero-American States

Natalia Armijos based her presentation on data collected in the last year by institutions such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), UNESCO, the Development Bank of Latin America (CAF) and other multinational organisations, including the Evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 on cultural and creative industries: a joint initiative of MERCOSUR, UNESCO, IDB, SEGIB and OEI in 2020, which analyses data and policies in 11 MERCOSUR-related countries[4]. This evaluation reveals that, despite significant progress in broadband coverage in LAC and the large percentage of people who have mobile telephony, the majority of the population is far from having the tools, knowledge and

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[2] Data extracted from the [UNESCO Culture and Public Policy Newsletter, Tracker 2](#).
[3] See 2005 [Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions](#) and the [Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the Convention in the Digital Environment](#).
[4] This report was scheduled to be published by the end of May 2021.

opportunities to make use of digitisation as an engine to improve their living conditions. Despite the fact that practically all urban areas in LAC have mobile broadband coverage and just over 84% have a mobile phone, only 69% of people report using the internet.

For remote work or studies, the main determinant is whether households have access to a fixed broadband service, which reveals profound inequalities: in Chile and Costa Rica more than 85% of households have internet, while in countries such as Bolivia and Guatemala it is less than 25%. With respect to the availability of computers in households, the gap is even wider, ranging from 68% of households owning one in Uruguay to 11% in Haiti. Within countries, inequalities are very marked by the urban-rural dimension, as shown, for example, in Brazil in 2017 when adoption was 65% in urban areas and 33.6% in rural areas.

In addition, the use of the internet is relevant: For the most part, it is used only for basic communication on social networks. CAF's Household Digital Resilience Index shows that the pandemic accelerated and deepened historical and pre-existing difficulties such as informality, labour vulnerability, difficulties in protecting copyrights, the growing digital divide, as well as economic and geographic concentration. It also generated new forms of inequality and inequity, such as the accelerated reconversion of activities, the lack of incentives, training and tools that accompany the transformation of the labour market and that transfer to the digital sphere the inequalities of the face-to-face world.

The study of the impact of COVID-19 on the cultural and creative industries also shows that digitisation, in the context of the pandemic, succeeded and developed faster than before. The migration of artists and people working in creative and cultural industries to virtuality led to a re-engineering of audience development, communication with audiences through social networks and the creation of new audiences. However, the vast majority of artists and creators did not engage in virtual activities to generate economic benefits, but to stay connected with their audience and/or to contribute culture in times of social isolation and sadness.

At present, on the one hand, culture is firmly established in public policy, occupying a central place and a value that it did not have until now. On the other hand, some sectors dispute and resist investment in culture, arguing that these investments take priority and resources away from the areas of direct attention to the health emergency. The consequences are budget cuts, underfunding of public cultural infrastructures and facilities, and lack of social security coverage for those engaged in this activity. The rapid emergence of new forms of creativity and the growth of the digital cultural sector is facing a situation of extreme multitasking that overburdens employers and demands skills and knowledge that they have not necessarily acquired in their education. Natalia Armijos added that, with regard to public-private cooperation, one urgent and fundamental necessity is the allocation of more resources, but another important one is the planning of new synergies between the state, the artistic community, workers and the business sector to generate more stable jobs, higher profits and new activities.

To conclude, Natalia Armijos stressed that it is now a propitious moment to innovate in culture and to promote deep and lasting transformations to prevent the social and economic gap from

deepening significantly if measures of protection and inclusion are not taken for people working in the cultural sector.

In response to a question from the audience regarding the preservation of digital cultural production and the risk of losing a large part of the content because it is not archived in a good way, Armijos added that this is a challenge that must be addressed by the creation of associative and collaborative platforms, and that it is important to analyse to what extent digitisation can be advanced and in which sectors. However, she also stressed that the digital will not replace the in-person, which offers a broader and more personal experience with art.

Section II – Opportunities and challenges

Anett Numa opened the second thematic section of the webinar with the following questions for the panellists: 1. What are the main opportunities and challenges at regional level and in bridging the gap in terms of digitisation? and 2. What are the main advantages and disadvantages of cultural policy-making agencies and actors?

Monica Urian, Policy Officer at the Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission

Monica Urian highlighted, at the beginning of her remarks, that the support of culture and creation in the digital context is a high priority in EU policies and that the process of development in the cultural sector had already started before the pandemic but was accelerated through the crisis. Digitisation brings not only opportunities, for example in terms of artists and their work reaching new audiences and publics, or making cultural heritage more accessible and preserving it for future generations, but also numerous challenges, for instance adaptation processes for the cultural industry, challenges for institutions and professionals in the field of cultural heritage, new skills and infrastructure needs, and new forms of digital consumption of cultural production that have led to changes in value chains with the emergence and consolidation of dominant internet-based players. EU policies aim to maximise these opportunities while addressing the challenges, providing an ecosystem whereby artists and cultural professionals and European productions can thrive.

During the pandemic, the move towards digitisation generated problems for some people. For example, the question of remuneration arose in the case of online content that was often free and used by a large audience, while at the same time offering the opportunity for the same people to maintain contact with their audience. Furthermore, digitization reinforced the contribution of the cultural sector to health, particularly mental health and wellbeing.

Another important aspect, according to Monica Urian, is the strengthening of digital skills. The EU has various programmes for the cultural sector to address challenges and opportunities. She mentioned, for example, the "Creative Europe" programme, which has a strong focus on the digital dimension and aims to facilitate learning among cultural and creative operators on how to better benefit from the advantages of the digital environment. Another example was the "Music Moves Europe" initiative which aims at promoting diversity and competitiveness in the sector. In this

context, the possibility to explore the diversity of European music and its cross-border circulation turned out to be important issues related to digitisation.

Policy cooperation is another pillar: the EU is a supranational organisation and has a supportive and complementary role to the policies and actions of the Member States. It seeks to promote cooperation through "the Open Method of Coordination", which brings together government experts working on a voluntary basis to discuss topical issues for culture and share experiences and practices that can be useful across the Union and beyond. Another important aspect is regulatory intervention to create a sustainable and forward-looking regulatory environment that enables and supports European creativity and access to culture. Some of the legislative reforms for the creative and cultural sector in the EU were made in the framework of the core project to create a European single market also for the digital world, including the modernisation of the European copyright rules and the European audiovisual regulatory framework.

The aforementioned should empower the creative sector to decide on and better negotiate remuneration for the use of their works on digital platforms, as well as benefit individual creators through greater transparency and balanced relationships with their contractual partners. For audiovisual media services, the updated legislation further supports the promotion and visibility of European culture in its diversity in a digital context. These and other reforms ensure a fair online environment for the creative sectors and promote a level playing field which is crucial to strengthen European content and support the EU's core and common values of cultural diversity and media pluralism in the digital context.

Furthermore, Urian referred to the new action plan "Europe's Media in the Digital Decade" which includes several measures to support recovery, transformation and innovation. Among these measures is, for example, a spending for the digital sector of 20% of the total post-COVID-19 recovery expenditure. Other measures aim to harness data and the potential of new immersive technologies and empower European societies by increasing access to content to strengthen media literacy and other important skills-related issues.

Anett Numa asked the next panellist, Octavio Kulesz, how to ensure that minorities were represented in the digital cultural sphere and whether culture was always diverse and inclusive in times of digitisation.

Octavio Kulesz, Director of Teseo

Octavio Kulesz began his intervention by pointing out that no cultural sector has remained unaffected by the pandemic and that some of the changes of this era will surely be irreversible. This situation has exposed the major shortcomings of the past, especially the lack of a digital strategy in many regions of the world. In 2017, Kulesz conducted interviews with actors from the cultural, public and NGO sectors in five Spanish-speaking countries (Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Spain, Mexico) as part of the report "Culture in the digital environment" ("La cultura en el entorno digital") for UNESCO to assess how technologies are influencing artists, cultural industries and audiences and to try to identify the main challenges and opportunities they face in this new

environment. He realised that there were very interesting phenomena in the private and public sector but that these were generally isolated initiatives without a long-term national or regional Latin American vision of a digital culture. It was at this point that the crisis hit the sector and the only actors who could continue to operate when the quarantine began were those who had consolidated their digital presence before.

According to Octavio Kulesz, it is necessary to work in two directions at the moment: On the one hand, in the short term, it is necessary to support more traditional actors who are more affected, especially to ensure that entire cultural fabrics do not disappear. On the other hand, in the long term and throughout the region, it is necessary to develop a digital culture strategy that is comprehensive and sustainable, taking into account current challenges and opportunities. Afterwards, he listed the main challenges and opportunities.

Main challenges:
1. Obstacles - barriers to enjoying the digital:
    a) A good part of LAC does not have access to the internet: This gap slows down any type of activity, from consumption and creation to the deployment of cultural industries in the digital environment;
    b) Huge connectivity disparities between capital cities and the rest of the territory;
    c) Lack of skills: There is an urgent need for different cultural actors everywhere in the value chain to access broader training in terms of digital know-how.
2. Threats - new risks and dangers emerging:
    Many artists and cultural entrepreneurs will face difficulties in reinventing themselves because we are in a Fourth Industrial Revolution that is characterised, among others, by the automation of all life (artificial intelligence, robotisation, internet) and that has great creative potential. The problem will be that the benefits of this creative explosion will certainly not be distributed equally on a global scale and on a country-by-country scale. This may lead to massive job losses in the cultural sector, and large platforms may occupy even larger portions of the market, which may result in irreversible economic concentration.

Opportunities:
1. Addressing the gaps and empowering the creators of local cultural industries could lead to a broader, more dynamic and thriving cultural ecosystem;
2. The successful application of digital technologies could contribute to democratising access and creativity, as well as harnessing the power of a market of more than 600 million people and thus overcoming the traditional obstacles in LAC to becoming a uniform cultural market, such as geographical distances, regulatory differences between countries, and the lack of basic cultural infrastructure within countries.

For further information on current initiatives and projects carried out by Teseo, in general, and Octavio Kulesz in particular, you may visit the 'References' section by the end of this report.

Gitte Zschoch, Director of the EU National Institutes of Culture

Gitte Zschoch opened her presentation by stating her delight that the EU-LAC Foundation is continuing its strong commitment to cultural relations between the Latin American and Caribbean region and Europe and expressed the wish that this will also be translated into concrete actions and joint programmes in the future. At the beginning she introduced the work of the EU National Institutes of Culture (EUNIC) and explained that it is a network of co-creation, i.e. it tries to bring the European dimension to cultural relations that traditionally fall within the competence of the EU member states, whereby each country has its own organisation. EUNIC works together with organisations, cultural professionals and artists all over the world and focuses primarily on people-to-people exchanges, building trust and mutual understanding. Because of the pandemic, the activities were moved to the digital dimension and a time of experimentation began.

There was definitely a shift in thinking about the nature of their work and whether mobility, as it was known, can and should continue to take into account also the sustainable development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, impact on the environment, as well as equity in the wider world. Questions also arose as to which formats could implemented in digitalized ways, under which conditions it could be beneficial to work with the Internet, and in which fields should one go back to physical connections, or in which cases a hybrid format could be used?

Zschoch explained that one of EUNIC's current initiatives is "European Spaces of Culture" in which test new forms of European collaboration with partners on the ground were tested. A project under the name "Triángulo Teatro" that is currently highlighting this initiative and finding a new model for this is implemented in Central America (Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala). Initially, the plan was to undertake capacity building workshops in the theatre sector connecting the professional scenes of the three countries. As this was not possible because of the pandemic, they are currently testing new digital formats, such as capacity building workshops, workshops on internationalisation of these cultural venues, and they are planning a platform for virtual presentations of co-created theatre performances. She recommended a video about Triangulo's "Dionysus Project".

An additional project in Cuba "CLIC - Culture to Connect" aims to bridge the gap between Europe and Cuba, boosting Cuban cultural industries and artists through exchange, capacity building, co-creation activities and stimulating innovative and resilient urbanism in Havana. Zschoch highlighted that there is a strong local ownership of the project, which is important for EUNIC, and is a kind of technological connection to the arts. Additionally, some fashion and furniture brands from Cuba have created an online collection called "Global Warming" that focuses on sustainable development and the immersive experience. This collective created a virtual online platform with a series of virtual talks with European designers and a live show under the category of immersive experience that brings together augmented reality, virtual reality and 360° video.

The third project presented by Gitte Zschoch is called "Flash Act" and takes place in Mexico. This project connects art, science and technology to raise awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals. Given the difficulty of reaching communities through digital media, these three projects also reach the public through radio when Internet access is limited in these countries.

For further information on current initiatives and projects carried out by EUNIC, in general, and Gitte Zschoch in particular, you may visit the 'References' section by the end of this report.

Toni Attard, Board Member of the Cultural Policy Makers Network & Founder and Director of Culture Venture

Toni Attard began his intervention with a reflection on how the conversation on cultural policy can be changed or adapted from a pre-pandemic reality to a post-pandemic reality. He also raised the question of whether Malta's national policy really goes back to the roots of cultural policy, which are cultural rights (right to create, right to engage, right to participate). Attard understands digitisation as a tool as much as culture itself and reflects on how this will change the narrative and value proposition of culture.

The last months of the pandemic offered space to rethink this value proposition of culture. He pointed out that, while for a large proportion of people digital events and content served for entertainment because there were no other events due to the confinement, 40% of people in rural areas of the EU still do not have access to broadband connections.

Reframing this conversation in terms of how to update the normative framework, it should first of all be stressed that cultural policy itself can be this normative framework. The problem with cultural policy, according to Attard, is that it tends to be late because it is not as agile as the industry itself. He then posed the question of how cultural policies are currently looking at the issue of digitisation on various levels. First of all, from a sectoral point of view, there are specific measures that really address the needs of a particular sub-sector, such as libraries, heritage, etc. However, policy also conceives digitisation as a process to support participation, i. e. in terms of active ageing, and creative support for people with learning disabilities or improving access through artificial intelligence.

Toni Attard listed some challenges related to cultural policies and digitisation. First, he explained that the monetisation of this hybrid format shift is still relatively poor and very difficult to access and engage. A cultural policy probably cannot solve this problem as a single member state, but requires collectivity from a regional and international point of view. Secondly, he raised the issue of how the artist can also be enabled and supported to not only adapt, but be able to participate in and change this conversation. Finally, he stressed the importance of not thinking of digitisation as a replacement of something, but rather the creation of something new through the crossover of innovation and technologies, such as artificial intelligence and augmented reality. A cultural policy cannot achieve this alone and this is where a lot more crossovers between economy, technology and innovation are required.

In response to a question from the audience about best practices, Toni Attard shared an example of a [digital research and development fund](#) launched by Arts Council Malta as part of the COVID-19 recovery programme.

Natalie Urquhart, Member of the Executive Committee of the Association of Caribbean Museums/ Director, National Gallery of the Cayman Islands

Natalie Urquhart pointed out at the beginning of her presentation that there are huge differences in digitisation practices in the Caribbean and that, despite the increase in the number of digital projects during the pandemic, few previous policies or regular commercial frameworks were developed on a national scale. Nevertheless, many new and interesting models and frameworks have emerged in the region at the level of institution or artistic space. A characteristic problem in the Caribbean is that not all countries have a national cultural policy, and even those that have been implemented recently often have little reference to the digital realm.

Most Caribbean cultural policies focus on heritage preservation and digitisation of archives in libraries, as well as on promoting security around the creation of cultural goods in terms of intellectual property. However, this varies strongly in different countries depending on internet access or digital literacy. Thus, Internet access is very limited, for example, in Haiti, Cuba and Jamaica, but there are exceptions such as Barbados which has launched its Creative Industries Development Act in 2016 and is currently supporting a new national digitisation project that has been launched in 2020/2021. Urquhart gave the example of Jamaica which has just launched a new device policy for UNESCO's International Fund for Cultural Diversity which includes aspects such as the protection of artists and could therefore be a model to be used in the future in many of the countries in the region or internationally.

According to Urquhart, the pandemic significantly transformed the way Caribbean communities create and access cultural resources. In the Caribbean, for instance, it was of great importance that digital content was downloadable to make it more accessible. Institutions in the region had to quickly develop their own cultural policies around intellectual property, processing, collecting and preserving digital data, as well as working directly with communities with shared content.

Urquhart then gave three examples for digital projects from Caribbean cultural institutions. One is the National Museum of Bermuda, which has launched its new programme "[Tracing our roots](#)", a fully digital project that invites Bermudians to explore and honour their family histories through the museum's digital archive. Additionally, what is particularly innovative, is that they are implementing training initiatives for the community to teach how to share video content, how to scan archival documents and how to store those documents through the fully digitised programme.

A second example is the [Virtual Museum of Caribbean Migration and Memory](#), which is an EU-LAC project of the year 2020, and which combines digital and physical exhibits in a hybrid model offering the audience accessibility to previously undocumented stories and resources through an archival system designed across multiple platforms.

The final example is "CATAPULT | A CARIBBEAN ARTS GRANT", an artist-led programme by the Fresh Milk Barbados collective and Creative Kingston. It is a fully digital multipart programme that includes virtual artist residencies, curatorial talks, professional development and deployment of skills and practices for the artists and an e-publication to archive the entire project. In total, artists from 20 different Caribbean countries are involved in this project. What unites the three projects presented is that several of them exist outside national borders and policy frameworks. All have developed initiatives that take into account these multiple linguistic, geographical challenges and different framing needs.

In her conclusion, Natalie Urquhart noted that the rapid transformation during the pandemic facilitated many opportunities for the Caribbean region to break down some of the barriers that exist in the region of a linguistic, geographic, social and, specifically, also different learning points. The crisis also highlighted challenges that urgently need to be addressed, such as digital literacy, equitable access to internet services, broadband and equipment, monetisation, as well as a more collaborative approach to multi-stakeholder policy making that includes government policy makers and stakeholders.

For further information on current initiatives and projects carried out by MAC, the National Gallery of the Cayman Islands, or other Caribbean museums, in general, and Natalie Urquhart in particular, you may visit the 'References' section by the end of this report.

Clémentine Daubeuf, Deputy Director of KEA European Affairs

Clémentine Daubeuf began her speech with a reflection on what makes digital cultural policies adapt to the digitisation of society. According to her, these aspects are accessibility, diversity, inclusion, gender and sustainability. She then presented examples of EU projects that show ways to embrace these aspects by experimenting with digitisation. She first mentioned the project "Artsformation" which is a research project in the framework of "Horizon 2020" and tries, in a creative way, to understand and analyse the ways whereby art can reinforce the social, cultural, economic and political benefits of the digital transformation. It focuses on analysing the role of art in digital societies, as well as understanding how civil society mobilises the arts to catalyse social impact and change and participation in digital transformation. In addition, it also has a policy aspect on the question of how artists can shape regulations in digital society and how they can bring their views and insights into the legislative framework for digital transformation.

Another example is "Digital Calligraffiti", a project in Berlin, Germany, which aims to experiment with how to use public space as a cultural space through digital tools, which is especially relevant during the physical distancing in quarantine. The project aims to address how this tool can help marginalised groups to express their feelings and artistic creation on walls that are widely broadcasted on digital platforms. Daubeuf said that this technique has also been replicated in Hong Kong, which also shows how digital tools can bring people from different parts of the world together.

Another example around legislative and regulatory aspects was Colombia's *Ley Naranja*, a creative law, in which a number of digital aspects are mentioned in sub-chapters at the level of infrastructure and how to consolidate the digital infrastructure for the distribution of cultural content, at the level of institutions, as well as at the level of cultural entrepreneurship and how to train cultural entrepreneurs to use digital tools.

Clémentine Daubeuf concluded by stressing the current importance of really understanding what digitalisation means in the whole cultural and creative value chain, as well as the fair remuneration of artists and cultural creators in the digital sphere. Another important aspect is inclusive and democratic digital territories for broader and more inclusive access and literacy through digital tools and digital cultural experience.

For further information on current initiatives and projects carried out by KEA, in general, and Clémentine Daubeuf in particular, you may visit the 'References' section by the end of this report.

Closing remarks

Dr. Adrián Bonilla, Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation

To close the event, Adrián Bonilla referred to the challenges of digitisation in the cultural sector, such as the risk of widening geographical, social and economic gaps through highly differentiated access to media and technological knowledge, as well as the gender gap in terms of access to and use of new technologies. He also highlighted the risk of losing diversity considering that a very high percentage of digital content is created in a very small number of languages, as well as the problem of alterations in the mode of production of art and culture that impact on value chains with important questions about remuneration in the cultural sector.

For Bonilla, it is necessary to increase public investment to guarantee infrastructure and accessibility to improve access to new technologies and the internet, and from his perspective, it is also relevant to promote market visibility and highlight the role of artists as creators and distributors of culture, as well as the importance of designing comprehensive and sustainable cultural strategies and policies.

The EU-LAC Foundation reiterates its gratitude to the City of Hamburg for integrating this event into the programme of the Europe Week 2021 and thanks all those who participated as panellists and attendees in the webinar, as well as those interested in this report.

Report written and translated by Lea Reinhardt, intern at the EU-LAC Foundation
Report revised by Dr Anna Barrera Vivero, EU-LAC Foundation
Edited by Diego Durán Cruz, EU-LAC Foundation

References

Relevant links and contacts of invited panellists

Octavio Kulesz:
- "Cultura, máquinas y plataformas": article by Octavio Kulesz for UNESCO, written in 2018, on the impact of artificial intelligence on the diversity of cultural expressions: https://en.unesco.org/creativity/sites/creativity/files/12igc_inf4_esp.pdf
- "The wolf we feed": https://www.goethe.de/prj/one/en/rme/22100916.html. This is an interview/dialogue that Octavio Kulesz recently held with the Goethe-Institut team, on artificial intelligence in the world of art and culture.
- Teseo website: www.editorialteseo.com

Louise Haxthausen:
- UNESCO Brussels website: https://en.unesco.org/fieldoffice/brussels

Natalie Urquhart:
- E-Mail for MAC's projects: secretariat@caribbeanmuseums.org

Clémentine Daubeuf:
- Ley Naranja, Colombia: https://economianaranja.gov.co/; in particular the policy section with resources in Spanish and English: https://economianaranja.gov.co/politica/
- KEA News: https://keanet.eu/keablog/
- KEA Opinions: https://keanet.eu/opinions/
- KEA on Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn

Information about projects

Gitte Zschoch:
- **Triángulo Teatro:** As a centre piece was planned a physical theatre tour throughout Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, turned into activities online due to the pandemic. Five local theatre companies and collaborating European dramaturgists were selected to participate and to co-produce plays. The virtual activities included 1. Knowledge sharing – with a series of five virtual conversations "Dramaturgia contemporánea" on Facebook on how the companies were handling the pandemic situation and challenges they face preparing the plays from a distance; 2. Gender – with the online course "Las Mujeres Contamos" on Zoom, aiming to recognize the voice of female theatrical creators in the region who still face underrepresentation in the sector; 3. Internationalisation – with the three-session workshop "Horizontes" on Zoom supporting 14 theatre professionals with practical tools to gain skills for the internationalization of their theatrical projects in the future; and 4. Archive and Knowledge Sharing via Internet and Radio – a virtual presentation of the theatre performances "Triángulo Teatro" performed on stage or on the streets and recorded to be published on a dedicated digital platform (online in May) and broadcasted by community radio stations in the region.

- **CLIC – Culture to Connect:** The project focusses on music, cinema, design, virtual arts, architecture and urbanism. Duration 2020-2021, Budget 100K. Due to the pandemic, the project team has focused on generating digital content and creating a digital platform for exchanges. In 2020, the project supported initiatives in the five areas sustainable design, film, music, performing arts, heritage and urbanism with the following initiatives:
    1. **CALENTAMIENTO GLOBAL (Global Warming):** 9 of the most avant-gardist Cuban fashion and furniture brands have joined to create the joint collection online "Global Warming", with a focus on sustainable development and immersive experience. The collective has created an online virtual platform with a series of virtual talks with European designers and a live show under the category of "immersive experience" bringing together augmented reality, virtual reality and 360 video to critically address global consumerism and deterioration of our planet.
    2. **INCUBANDO:** 12 young Cuban producers and directors working on their debut film have participated in a week of online training and networking workshops with European filmmakers, scriptwriters and producers, among which Oscar-nominated director Hubert Sauper.
    3. **PRIMERA BASE:** 3 debuting Cuban bands (Raúlito Prieto, Los Monos Lácteos and Kill the Party), winners of the Primera Base Music Contest, have produced and launched their singles on online music platforms and received integral training on self-management and online marketing.
    4. **INTELIGENCIAS COLECTIVAS CUBA:** an online platform to identify, research and scale constructive solutions that are the results of processes of collective intelligent and emergent heritage. The platform has also hosted 3 online sessions with Cuban and European researchers.
    5. **RÉQUIEM SIÁ KARÁ:** Spanish choreographer Susana Pous living and working in Cuba - and Mi Compañía, the company she directs in Cuba -, French-Tunisian choreographer Radhouanne El Meddeb and Italian composer Matteo Franceschini have co-created a piece of contemporary dance during a month long face-to-face residency at the beginning of 2021 in la Havana.
- **Flash ACT:** The project "Flash ACT" by the EUNIC cluster was born during the pandemic and is co-financed through the EUNIC Cluster Fund Call 2020 – support to local cultural sectors. The project was initiated by EUNIC Mexico, but brings together partners and EUNIC members in Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama. This project aims to generate a multidisciplinary international network supported through a virtual platform, in order to promote new initiatives around artistic creation and scientific dissemination, as well as to raise awareness about the SDGs (Flash ACT addresses specifically SDG 4, Target 4.7 and SDG 17, Target 17.6) through creative exchanges and critical thinking. The project is divided into three stages:
    1. **Flash ACT LAB** (48h) – identified through an open call 25 transnational, multidisciplinary and multigenerational teams (of 4 participants each) were formed and took part in an online exchange at the end of March to co-create an artistic project proposal.
    2. **Flash ACT ENCOUNTERS** – the top 5 teams shortlisted through an international jury will receive support (grants of 3000 EUR each) and will have 3 months (April-June)

to finalize their project ideas. During this period, they participate in three "Encuentros" (three weekends) where they will have workshops and advisory sessions with experts in art, science and technology.

3. **Flash Festival** (July) – the 5 teams present the results of their work to an international jury in a virtual event. The winning team will have the possibility to show their project in a national or international online festival.

Natalie Urquhart:

- MACs digital COVID-19 response programme: https://caribbeanmuseums.com/virtual-program/
- First ever virtual Pan-Carribean art exhibition (including online resources, workshops and webinars):https://caribbeanmuseums.com/collecting-our-voices-in-the-caribbean-diaspora-covid/
- The National Gallery of the Cayman Islands developed virtual tours, special digital exhibitions, and Artist Talks series as part of its wider COVID-19 digitization programme:
    1. **Virtual tours:** https://www.nationalgallery.org.ky/see/virtual-tours/
    2. **Exhibition** "Art Under Lockdown": It is an online exhibition intended to spotlight the creativity of artists and members of the public who have turned to making art as a means of expression during the current COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 87 artists submitted work in response to the Open Call, ranging from student work by children as young as 12, entries by part-time artists and hobbyists, as well as submissions by professional artists, many of whom feature prominently in NGCI's permanent collection. In the spirit of inclusivity and community all submitted entries were accepted, resulting in an eclecticism of theme and subject matter. The featured artworks consequently reflect the many different ways the community has responded to the pandemic: from moments of quiet introspection and feelings of isolation and fear, to a yearning for nature and the outdoors, through to expressions of gratitude, solidarity and social justice.
    3. **Exhibition "2020 Vision":** https://www.nationalgallery.org.ky/whats-on/exhibitions/2020-vision/
    4. **Artist Talks series:** https://www.nationalgallery.org.ky/blog/ (scroll for artist talks in lockdown).
- **Central Bank Museum of Trinidad and Tobago – "Museums for Equity: Diversity and Inclusion":** In the framework of the International Museum Day (IMD), which could not take place as usual with public events and exhibitions in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Central Bank Museum created its very first Virtual Exhibition. As a way to share the museum space with the community, the Museum asked the community to express through photography what this year's theme "Museums for Equity: Diversity and Inclusion" meant to them. This virtual photography exhibition features 29 artists from all over Trinidad and Tobago who vary in age and skillset. The photographs in this exhibition include snapshots of human and nonhuman life from places and cultures both locally and globally. Not only does the art itself represent diversity and inclusion, but the Central Bank Museum's use of community artists also works to make museums more equitable spaces.

- **National Art Gallery of The Bahamas – "Refuge":** The exhibition features stories, visions and inspirations by local artist emerging in the aftermath of the devastation of The Bahamas by Hurricane Dorian in 2019. This project also led NAGB staff to explore the mission of the museum even further and what it means to be a socially responsible institution in the age of climate crisis. As the country works to regroup, reconcile and rebuild – now and into the future – the NAGB commits to providing a safe space for all who rise within the nation's borders to heal, be seen and heard through creating. Although *Refuge* wasn't initially envisioned as a digital experience, as it coincided with the move COVID-19 related lockdown, NAGB explored creative ways to ensure the public access to the exhibition continued while the museum was closed.
    - Virtual tour about the artworks: https://nagb.org.bs/events-and-exhibitions/2019/12/19/refuge
    - Exhibition „Timelines 1950-2007: Video Tour": https://vimeo.com/401503398
- **National Museum of Bermuda – "United Together":** *United Together* is the National Museum of Bermuda's swift reply to the pandemic that dovetails with the Department of Education's call for content and the community's thirst for more historical knowledge. The campaign, which is currently under development, invites the community to upload photos and stories about their experiences in lockdown to Facebook, Instagram or Twitter using the hashtag #UnitedTogetherBDA or tag the National Museum of Bermuda; or submitting them via email. Museum staff will review all submissions and content will then be curated into an online exhibition documenting how the pandemic has impacted lives in Bermuda.
- **MAC Member Museums – digital strategies:**
    1. **Les Fruits de Mer (LFDM):** It is an association based in St Martin who run several cultural initiatives including Amuseum Naturalis, a free museum of the nature, history and culture of St. Martin and the wider Caribbean. It has launched a free home learning programme when the pandemic started to support teachers, parents and kids. On an online platform they upload daily collections of books, activities, videos and more. Its Heritage Backup program is building an archive of stories from their community, before and during the lockdown, in an effort to document, preserve and share personal heritage for current and future generations. The program information includes bilingual resources for easily recording and sharing personal histories from home while people stay home to protect their community. While the program was designed for St. Martin, that it can be adapted for other institutions.
    2. **National Museum of Bermuda (NMB):** The NMB launched a new online programme in an effort to stay connected during these challenging times. "At Home with History" will provide learning, literacy support and fun activities for students, families and life-long learners. Virtual tools and online programming mean that anyone with an internet connection can stay connected with NMB and continue to learn and better understand Bermuda's rich and diverse history. A 360 virtual tour of The Hall of History is available which can be accessed on all computer, tablet, and mobile devices. Created by Brandon Hull of HullFilm, this 360 panoramic of the impressive 1,000 square foot mural by

local artist Graham Foster uses cutting edge technology allowing visitors to explore 500 years of Bermuda history from anywhere.

3. **Masterworks Museum of Bermuda Art:** The [Museum](#) has launched "[Art on Zoom](#)" as a way of helping the community make sense of the crisis and to stay connected. Staff provide online art demonstrations three times a week focusing on accessible, creative projects using any medium available at home.

4. **[Museo Kura Hulanda](#)** & **[Museo Kas di Pali Maishi](#):** Both museums have closed due to the pandemic but continue working on core business including the updating of administration, archiving and funding proposals.

5. **National Gallery of the Cayman Islands:** The [National Gallery](#) has five virtual exhibitions available via it's website; one of them is "[Island of Women – Life at Home During Our Maritime Years](#)". The museum also offers for teachers and families downloadable lesson plans and activity sheets that include information about art history and local artists, with suggested [art activities](#). The National Gallery also used the lockdown period to move the majority of the [museum's art collection](#) onto the NGCI website complete with artist bios and artwork descriptions.

6. **Vizcaya Museum and Gardes:** The [Museum](#) in Miami has closed during lockdown but continued essential preservation and maintenance. The museum released also a number of free online resources, i.e. Vizcaya Virtual Tour. Its [online content](#) also features several video performances and lectures.

7. **Perez Art Museum Miami:** The [Museum](#) offers [online resources](#) on the Hecksher Digital Education Portal, which include classroom curriculum lesson plans, classroom slide presentations and fun Family Art-making, Activities. The Digital Museum page hosts over 200 Virtual Tours, Art Talks, and Videos where visitors can virtually explore the museum's galleries and select artworks with artists, curators, and even members of the PAMMily as guides. Teachers can also book virtual tours with their classes.

Anett Numa

Named the most advanced digital society in the world by [Wired](#), with a large number of online services accessible online for about 20 years, Estonia has had the provision of fast and stable internet connection as a fundamental strategy since the early days of its independence. Since then, Estonia has been working extremely hard to provide a fast connection everywhere around the country. By the latest statistics- 99% families who have children also have access to internet. When the pandemic hit the world and every sector had to switch over to remote working and offer also their products and services online, it was not a science fiction to us. Most of the companies were used to have efficiently working platforms. However, this was a challenge to our cultural sector. Since no one would have guessed that the only way to organise a concert or exhibition was to do that over virtual platforms. But surprisingly, the switch happened quicker than we expected- many artists organised events, concert and were sold out in days. This was obviously very positive. It just takes some time for people to get used to it, but many surveys showed that it was somehow refreshing to Estonians. Our recommendation is to keep investing into raising awareness of

possibilities of increasing visibility and also to make sure everyone has an easy access to internet. That is essential.

For further information, visit the website of e-estonia.

Programme

Opening 16:00-16:20h CEST	**Opening remarks** • **Dr Adrián Bonilla**, Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation • **Claudia Gintersdorfer**, Head of Americas Regional Division, European External Action Service • **Mauricio Escanero**, Head of Mission of Mexico to the EU • **Almut Möller,** State Secretary, Senate of Hamburg • **Moderation:** Anett Numa, Digital Transformation Adviser at e-Estonia e-estonia@eas.ee
EU-LAC Webinar Section I 16:20-16:40h CEST	**Similarities and differences** • **Louise Haxthausen**, Representative of UNESCO to the EU brussels@unesco.org • **Natalia Armijos,** Director-General for Culture, Organisation of Ibero-American States cultura@oei.int
EU-LAC Webinar Section II	**Opportunities and challenges**

16:40-17:00h CEST	• **Monica Urian**, Policy Officer, Directorate-General for Education, Culture, Youth and Sport, European Commission Monica.URIAN@ec.europa.eu • **Octavio Kulesz**, Director, Teseo ok@editorialteseo.com
EU-LAC Webinar Section III 17:00-17:30h CEST	**Best practices** • **Gitte Zschoch,** Director, EU National Institutes for Culture gitte.zschoch@eunicglobal.eu • **Toni Attard,** Board Member, Network of Cultural Policy Designers & Founder and Director at Culture Venture toni@cultureventure.org • **Natalie Urquhart,** Executive Committee Member, Museums Association of the Caribbean & Director, National Gallery of the Cayman Islands director@nationalgallery.org.ky • **Clémentine Daubeuf,** Associate Director, KEA European Affairs cdaubeuf@keanet.eu
Q&A 17:30-17:55h CEST	**Discussion with the participating audience**
Closing 17:55-18:00h CEST	**Closing remarks and survey of satisfaction** • **Dr Adrián Bonilla**, Executive Director, EU-LAC Foundation