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Centre for Contemporary Art

ERSTE Stiftung

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Networks of Cooperation: Sustainable Structures for Ukrainian Cultural Actors in Europe & Beyond

Kunsthaus Graz

as well as other venues

Joint initiative of Office Ukraine (Vienna/tranzit.at and Graz/rotor), the Austrian Federal Ministry of Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport (BMWKMS), Creative Europe Desk Austria, in cooperation with Kunsthaus Graz, Creative Europe Desk Ukraine, and the Institute for Human Sciences.

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GRAZ DECLARATION

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN–UKRAINIAN CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

Outcomes of the conference discussion
Graz, 2026

CONTEXT

From 15–16 October 2026, the conference *Networks of Cooperation: Sustainable Structures for Ukrainian Cultural Actors in Europe and Beyond* took place at Kunsthaus Graz in Austria, organized by Office Ukraine – Support for Ukrainian Artists, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport, and the Creative Europe Desk Austria, in cooperation with Kunsthaus Graz, Creative Desk Ukraine, and the Institute for Human Sciences.

The conference brought together more than 130 representatives from Ukrainian and European cultural institutions, organisations and networks, funding bodies and policymakers, researchers and experts, artists and cultural professionals. In the framework of working groups, roundtables and plenary sessions, the conference participants reflected on the question of how to transform short term support of the Ukrainian cultural sector into durable, structural cooperation. The Graz Declaration is a compressed summary of the conference's findings and recommendations. A detailed report will be published after the conference.

FROM EMERGENCY SUPPORT TO SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Ukrainian artists, cultural workers and institutions have continued their work amid war, displacement and destruction. While European solidarity has enabled vital emergency support, the next step is to move from short-term aid towards durable institutional relationships, predictable funding, and sustained access to European infrastructures. Culture is a vital catalyst for Ukraine's EU integration. Ukraine has been participating in the EU's Creative Europe programme since 2015, establishing a foundation for long-standing engagement in European cultural cooperation. Ukrainian cultural actors are therefore not newcomers to the European cultural landscape, but established partners with expertise, creative capacity, and valuable contributions to make. Building on this foundation means moving towards genuine cooperation, in which Ukrainian actors participate as equal partners and co-creators of Europe's shared cultural future. In recognition of the support provided to date by the European Commission, funding institutions in Europe, and cultural sector initiatives, we call for this support to be continued and strengthened in the future EU programme through sustainable funding and long-term commitment.

CHALLENGES THAT REQUIRE COLLECTIVE ACTION

The conference identifies interconnected obstacles: artistic creation and cultural management in times of war including the destruction of cultural infrastructure, displacement and the systematic silencing of Ukraine's cultural community; precarious, project-based funding; impaired access to resources

and decision-making; complex administrative and mobility requirements; fragmented networks; and disparities between established institutions and smaller or independent initiatives. Funding narrowly tied to war, trauma and displacement can also restrict the diversity of Ukrainian cultural expression. Mobility must not become a condition of participation for those who cannot, or choose not to, leave their place of work or residence.

THE CONFERENCE PROPOSES FOUR PRIORITIES

1. IMPLEMENT RESILIENT & FLEXIBLE FUNDING FRAMEWORKS

Public authorities, foundations and cultural institutions should develop multiannual, adaptable commitments that sustain artists and cultural professionals, organisations and partnerships. Flexible budget and timeline adjustments help organizations maintain continuity amidst unpredictable security or infrastructure changes. Thus, the importance of applying the ›force majeure‹ clause should be emphasised. Infrastructure costs, fair remuneration, local cultural production and continuity during changing security conditions must be recognised as legitimate needs.

2. ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS & MEANINGFUL REPRESENTATION

Broadening the scope of support to include the full diversity of Ukraine's contemporary artistic practices is essential. Providing accessible pathways for individual artists and involving Ukrainian expertise in the design and evaluation of cultural national and European programmes including Creative Europe will foster more inclusive partnerships based on shared responsibility and equal participation.

3. BUILD PARTNERSHIPS AND CONNECT NETWORKS

Governments, municipalities, institutions, universities and European cultural and civil-society networks should connect existing initiatives and invest in lasting cooperation across borders. Shared programming, co-commissioning, institutional partnerships and cooperation between organisations in Ukraine and Ukrainian initiatives abroad should be based on shared authorship, responsibility and resources.

4. FOSTER RECIPROCAL CAPACITY BUILDING & MOBILITY

Residencies and fellowships remain important, but should be complemented by flexible, hybrid, remote, local and shorter-term formats. This exchange must be reciprocal: European partners can learn from Ukrainian expertise in cultural resilience, self-organisation, public engagement and institution-building, while supporting cooperation within Ukraine whenever conditions permit.

CALL TO ACTION: COMMITMENTS FOR 2027–2030

The conference *Networks of Cooperation* calls on European and Ukrainian public authorities, governments acting bilaterally and multilaterally, cities and regions, artists, cultural professionals and independent cultural initiatives, universities, foundations, professional associations and civil-society networks to turn these principles into shared commitments.

The conference proposes that partners commit to longer funding horizons; fair access for individuals and smaller organisations; sustainable European partnerships; support for cultural work in Ukraine and in displacement; reciprocal exchange and Capacity Building. These commitments should inform concrete programmes and cooperation agreements between 2027 and 2030, with opportunities to review progress together.

OUR SHARED OBJECTIVE IS TO BUILD AN EQUAL EUROPEAN CULTURAL SPACE TOGETHER.