

AEC / ELIA Position on further developing the ESF

The ESF is Europe's main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens. In the past funding period, the ESF focused on the following goals:

- A: Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labor mobility
- B: Promoting social inclusion, poverty reduction and all forms of discrimination
- C: Investing in education and vocational training to raise skills and lifelong learning
- D: Improving the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.

These goals are well matched by the European Union's initiative to set up a *European Education Area by 2025*, launched in November 2017 by the European Union. The *European Education Area by 2025* aims at reinforcing the cultural dimension of the European Union and to promote youth participation through the implementation of a new set of principles measures, including a new Youth Strategy and a new Agenda for Culture.

Above all, the contribution that art and artistic education can make to achieving these objectives is:

- to broaden and intensify its existing offerings and
- to make art and artistic education accessible to all members of society in accordance with their cultural needs articulated in free self-determination.

In order to strengthen institutional measures, the AEC and ELIA propose to base the foundation of the EU's education policy on the acronym STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) and to thus to replace STEM by including arts education and cultural participation as indispensable prerequisites to ensuring integral and holistic education of every human being. Art education contributes in a unique way which cannot be replaced by any other educational measure to the development of social and

personality-building skills. In addition, artistic and cultural education make an essential contribution to improving the professional employability of each individual and thus to improving her or his chances on the labor market in all sectors and professional branches. To sum up: To achieve the objectives as expressed in the *European Education Area by 2025*, EU's educational policy should be based on a STEAM agenda whenever curriculum design for schools, teacher training issues and equipping the sector with the necessary finances and infrastructure are concerned.

In addition, we suggest encouraging forms of cooperation between institutions of higher art education and the creative industry through promoting individual projects. On the one hand, there is still a lack of willingness and often of the necessary know-how to provide adequate pedagogical support for internships and practical training on the part of the creative industry. On the other hand, many teachers and representatives of Higher Arts Education Institutions still consider employability issues not to be part of the educational mission of a Higher Arts Education Institution. Closing this gap requires more examples of good practice, to build up the necessary know-how and to sustainably implement entrepreneurship in the curricula. Involving students in this effort is part of the solution, as many good examples (e.g. <http://steamwith.us/HarvardSTEAM.html>) have shown.

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