

Declaration
on Strengthening Cultural Sector Resilience in Ukraine

Ukraine, February 1, 2025

We, Ministers of Culture and Heads of Delegations, as well as the representatives of the Council of Europe, UNESCO, the European Commission, meeting on 1st of February 2025 in Ukraine, at the invitation of Mr. Mykola Tochytskyi, Minister of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine, at the Ukraine Culture Conference: Cooperation for Resilience,

in follow-up of the Vilnius Call for Action on the Recovery of the Culture Sector of Ukraine (Vilnius, Lithuania, 6-7 June 2024),

on the path to Ukraine Recovery Conference 2025 to be held in Rome in July 2025,

pursuant to the principles and values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and the UNESCO Constitution and its Conventions,

recognizing the Russian Federation as an aggressor country waging an open illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine and condemning the actions of the Russian Federation that threaten the cultural heritage and cultural property of Ukraine,

also recognizing the crucial contribution that culture and cultural heritage make to achieving a sustainable society, shaping national identity and fostering social cohesion thus strengthening the national security, driving the economic, social and environmental sustainability

witnessing the substantial increase in the damage to Ukraine's cultural heritage and cultural infrastructure, the losses of Ukraine's cultural and creative sectors and the rising needs for the reconstruction and recovery of the culture sector of Ukraine,

acknowledging the need for joint actions aimed at supporting Ukraine in safeguarding its culture and cultural heritage and preventing cultural erasure,

emphasizing that the post-war recovery of Ukraine should consider culture and cultural heritage as a cross-cutting issue and the core stone that shapes the living environment,

call to following actions:

1. The Ukrainian Heritage Fund should be established in order to support the restoration and preservation of the country's cultural heritage. With over 1,250 cultural heritage sites damaged or destroyed, there is an urgent need for safeguarding efforts addressing both tangible and intangible aspects of Ukraine's cultural heritage.

The Fund should play a pivotal role in financing and supporting the recovery of museums, cultural landmarks, and historical sites, as well as strengthening the social infrastructure necessary to achieve these goals.

2. The Coalition for countering illicit trafficking of cultural goods should be launched aiming at providing a comprehensive framework to safeguard cultural assets during times of conflict or disaster. This coalition should facilitate the development of insurance mechanisms to protect artworks and cultural heritage from damage, theft, or loss. Additionally, it should strengthen international collaboration to counter the illicit trafficking of cultural goods, promoting ethical practices and the preservation of cultural identity globally.

3. The sanctions should be imposed on the cultural sector representatives and organisations of the Russian Federation in order to prevent further violations of the international law in the sphere of cultural heritage protection. The sanctions policy should become an effective mechanism for shaping the new international practice of cultural heritage protection which will enable the implementation of the prevention measures against the violators and introduce the penalties for the violations.

4. The Platform for Recovery – the group of experts who will develop comprehensive guidelines for integrating cultural heritage preservation into the rebuilding process – should be established. Based on the principles of a high-quality Baukultur, the group should focus on strategies for maintaining cultural identity while ensuring sustainable urban development. The guidelines would emphasize balancing architectural, urban, and cultural goals, fostering inclusive and resilient communities in Ukraine in the spirit of Davos Declaration 2018 “Towards a high-quality Baukultur for Europe”.