

**Call for proposals**



# **Culture of Solidarity Fund**

**Just Transition**

**June-September 2023**

*We invite you to apply for the 2023 edition of the Culture of Solidarity Fund, set up by the European Cultural Foundation. This new call supports European transnational collaborative initiatives that address the theme of just transition and environmental sustainability from a specifically cultural angle.*

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Cultural  
Foundation**

 **Culture of  
Solidarity  
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# Culture for Just Transition

**The recent global health crisis and the ongoing war in Ukraine are teaching Europeans painful but important lessons about the human, economic and environmental costs of unfettered extraction and use of natural resources. More than ever, we need to come to a shared understanding of how to prepare our living environments for the future. This will require us to reset and recalibrate our lives to meet whatever challenges arise in the just transition to living within a socially just and environmentally regenerative society. Among these challenges will be demands for new skills, livelihood opportunities, community revitalisation schemes, nature and land restoration projects in impacted regions, as well as resolutions to Europe's local and global obligations, promises, and commitments that remain unfulfilled. Systemic change is daunting, disruptive, difficult, but necessary in an age of climate mitigation. How do we get all Europeans aligned around what we are going to do to create a better future for all of us?**

Culture is an influential force in shaping values, beliefs and behaviours. A successful transition from resource-intensive lifestyles to more just and sustainable models depends on catalysing systemic change in individual and societal attitudes towards the environment, work, consumerism, and social justice. We live in polarised times, when even minor differences of opinion can cause passions to run high. In this context, culture can help to mediate division, and reinforce a sense of shared purpose and solidarity.

According to the concept of **Just Transition**, a far-reaching transition to low-carbon, nature-positive economies and societies must be fair and equitable to all. It is therefore essential to consider the cultural contexts of different communities and places that define their specific values, needs, struggles and aspirations. Cultural organisations, art institutions, cultural media, community activists, artists and the work of the creative sectors as a whole are powerful public actors for raising questions and building consensus around the need for just transition. They can also play a key role in educating and sensitising the public and private sectors by developing transition strategies that are appropriate and respectful of the needs and concerns of affected citizens and communities.

# What are we looking for?

The call is open to organisations based in Europe and actively engaged in the cultural, creative, or allied sectors. (Please consult the list of eligible countries below.) In keeping with our mission to create solidarity through culture, the Fund specifically welcomes actions in line with the theme of this call that forge European transnational and/or translocal collaborations, and thereby build cross-border alliances of solidarity.

For this edition, we are looking for new ideas and experimental initiatives that address just transition from an inherently cultural angle by:

- **raising public awareness** of the complexities and urgencies of adapting to climate change and other environmental emergencies in a systemic way;
- **reinforcing democratic decision-making processes** against growing political polarisation by creating a safe environment for open communication, candid exchange and respectful dissent on these issues;
- **designing creative solutions** for changing ecosystems;
- **encouraging holistic working approaches** and culture-driven cooperation between public and private stakeholders who are key actors in social and economic transformation.

Please refer to the *What can culture do to further just transition?* segment of this call for further considerations on the role of culture in just transition to inspire applicants in proposing their own take on just transition processes.

# What do we offer?

The Fund has grants available in three amounts:

- up to €10.000
- €10.000 – 20.000
- €20.000 – 30.000

Grants can be used to finance a wide range of activities, from seeding entirely new initiatives to scaling up existing ideas to a European level.

Although co-funding is not a prerequisite for receiving a grant, a balanced budget with diversified resources can significantly improve the feasibility of the project.

Grants can cover production, rent, online co-working and communication tools. They can also be used to cover consultancy, staffing and operational costs. However, it is highly recommended that these do not exceed 80% of the total requested budget unless clearly justifiable.

The project timeline may be up to 12 months. Activities related to the project may not take place before the start date.

**The submission deadline for proposals is Monday, 11 September, 13.00 CEST.**

# Timeline



## Overall eligibility criteria

- Applications must be submitted in English and include a complete budget;
- The call is open to civic, public, or private organisations with legal status that operate in the cultural and creative or other sectors of society, including education and academia, health and social care, environment, human rights, social entrepreneurship, rural development, spatial planning, social entrepreneurship, etc;
- Applicants can be based anywhere in Europe or its immediate neighbourhood. (Please consult the list of eligible countries.) All proposals, however, must address the overall theme of the call, i.e. challenges related to just transition;
- We do not accept proposals submitted by political parties. Our work is strictly non-partisan.

## Eligible Countries

- A** Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan
- B** Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria
- C** Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic
- D** Denmark
- E** Egypt, Estonia
- F** Finland, France
- G** Georgia, Germany, Greece
- H** Hungary
- I** Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy
- J** Jordan
- K** Kosovo
- L** Latvia, Lebanon, Libya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg
- M** Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco
- N** The Netherlands, Northern Macedonia, Norway
- P** Palestinian Territories, Poland, Portugal
- R** Romania
- S** San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria
- T** Tunisia, Turkey
- U** Ukraine, the United Kingdom

## Selection criteria & process

All incoming proposals will be assessed based on their

- relevance to the theme of the call and the mission of the Fund to strengthen a Culture of Solidarity in Europe;
- creativity of the proposal;
- feasibility and practical implementation potential;
- impact on the challenge(s) addressed and communities involved.

Applications will be selected by a team of internal and external experts from a wide range of geographic, cultural and professional areas.

Due to the anticipated high volume of applications, we will complete the assessment procedure within 4 to 6 weeks from the submission deadline. It is also for this reason that decisions are final and that, unfortunately, we cannot enter into any extensive correspondence regarding unsuccessful applications afterwards.

**You can find additional information and submit your application via this link:**  
<https://culture-of-solidarity-fund.grantplatform.com/>

*The European Cultural Foundation has several different open calls running in the months of June to September. Accordingly, we encourage you to study the call criteria closely and focus your efforts on the one that is the most relevant and fitting for your initiative.*

# What can culture do to further just transition?

- **Social Justice, equity and rights:** The dependence of our current economic model on fossil fuels has prolonged and sharpened social inequalities and disparities within Europe: income inequality, access to resources, healthcare, and education, as well as security issues and overall quality of life. But the situation is far worse in communities with less influence and power, those outside our borders that extract the resources and provide the goods and services consumed by the world's largest economies in lock-step with corporations. Global economic players continue to ignore the human rights of marginalised communities and violate their lands and cultural heritage, especially in the Global South where colonialism prevails through vested business interests. How can cultural work contribute to a broader recognition not only of social injustices inside Europe but also of Europe's global responsibilities and obligations in relation to climate justice, security policies and postcolonialism?
- **Polarisation of opinions and political radicalisation:** All over Europe, the public discourse around climate change and green transition is increasingly confrontational, ideologically charged, and emotionally triggering, making it virtually impossible for those who believe and those who deny the scientific evidence to engage in meaningful and respectful debate about the future. This is just one, albeit crucial, example of the challenges posed by the polarisation of opinion on complex issues. Not only do seemingly irreconcilable differences of opinion end up stalemating debate, the refusal to cross the divide clears the board for political radicalisation. To maintain the integrity of European democracies and their political institutions, it is vital to open up the discussion so that all ideas and arguments can be understood as having something valuable to bring to the table. What can cultural actors do to ensure that citizens and communities have a say in shaping the transition strategies that directly affect them? What public role could arts institutions play in civic debates around complex technical questions and policy decisions? Will science and technology be enough to prevent climate disasters, or do we also need more holistic, creative, cultural and emotionally engaging ways of dealing with environmental issues?
- **Traditional regional and job-related identities:** Many European localities and professional communities that have traditionally relied on CO2 emitting industries such as coal mining, car manufacturing or intensive farming may have a strong cultural attachment to these activities, especially in more remote, disadvantaged, or rural areas. How can European communities in economically impacted landscapes maintain their cultural rootedness, local heritage and solidarity with the loss of these industries? What cultural measures can be taken to support their transition to communal identities that take pride in their green sensibility and environmental sustainability? What might the ecologically intact, naturally resilient, and biodiverse landscapes they create look like?
- **Employment and job loss:** Transitioning to a sustainable economy often involves job losses due to the closure or downsizing of CO2-emitting industries. This can pose significant cultural challenges to community cohesion and local economies. Ensuring that adequate retraining, job creation, and alternative employment opportunities are available in all parts of Europe is crucial in bringing about just transition. How can the arts, cultural industries, social practices and sustainable development be mobilised to support alternatives to extractive economic models, and make a living wage achievable to everyone?
- **Local knowledge and expertise:** Most fossil fuel-dependent manufacturing and agricultural regions in Europe possess specific knowledge and technological expertise related to their industries. Preserving and utilising this local knowledge maintains a sense of cultural continuity during just transition and can be essential for the success of new sustainable economies. How can technological skills, local knowledge, crafts and traditions be integrated into alternative economic models and social innovation programmes, e.g. in the fields of architecture, design, spatial planning, tourism or ecological research?