

**A letter from Carolin Otto, President of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe  
to the Ministers of Culture of the EU Member States**

Brussels, 14 May 2020

Dear Minister

After the worst of the virus we cannot simply go back to how we were, without consideration. We cannot pretend it didn't happen.

Health, social, environmental and economic reconstruction throughout Europe (and the World) will challenge politics and every one of us.

As Minister for Culture we feel sure that you will agree that this virus is not just health, not just economics, not just politics – it goes deeper and attacks what it means to be human. How can we explore and reflect what has happened, grieve for those that have been lost, reassert our common humanity, and imagine, dream, create anew? This, with the support of our Ministers for Culture, is what artists do.

Art is a mirror to society, a vessel and a tool for use. At its most immediate it entertains and provokes laughter. But it also enhances our spirits, make us feel and think and take a look at "the other side" of things. Music makes us cry or can be a call to dance. Literature, film, television, theatre tell old stories that explain new histories and new stories that challenge. Beauty and excitement, terror and joy; all the things that remind us that we are human, that we survived, separated but more intensely together than we have been for a century.

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Like every other sector of our economies, the arts have been decimated by the virus. Millions of individuals throughout the arts communities, saw their life stop; their work no longer possible. The institutional structures of production, investment, exhibition and distribution of arts and culture have been forced to close their doors, many never to re-open.

Substantial investment in the arts is urgent – to repair, to find new processes, so that we can go back to work. Screenwriters and their organisations have supported our colleagues in the arts and culture community who have made compelling economic and employment arguments in favour of support for our sector. **But we believe that there is also an essential argument for the capacity of culture and the arts, and of storytelling in particular, to provide a connecting vision of a future Europe.**

**As screenwriters we know the essential role which culture and the arts plays, and will continue to play, in each of the member states as we construct and reconstruct our identity as citizens and as Europeans.**

Our European Union is defined by the depth and strength of our culture. We hope that you will not only protect and restore the damaged infrastructure of our cultural diversity but also see the capacity of our art and artists to contribute to the complex process of our recovery.

**We appeal to you, as you make the decisions about political and financial strategies to address the current crisis, to put arts and culture, to put creativity, which is at the heart of our humanity, at the centre of our recovery.**

With best wishes



Carolin Otto

German screenwriter, president of the Federation of Screenwriters in Europe