



The President of the European Council
Donald Tusk
General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union
Rue de la Loi 175
1048 Bruxelles Brussel

Dear President Tusk,

Culture is the foundation of who we are as human beings and of our collective life. The future of the European Union as a shared project is difficult to imagine without the explicit recognition of its cultural dimension.

The Rome declaration of 2017 commits to build a Europe “*where citizens have new opportunities for cultural and social development*” and “*a Union which preserves our cultural heritage and promotes cultural diversity*”. This vision was confirmed at the Gothenburg Leaders’ Summit in November 2017 and by the European Council in December 2017. Networks across all cultural sectors, cultural organisations, artists, activists, academics and policy-makers call **to make culture an integral part of the future of Europe in Sibiu.**

A better Europe needs more culture. Contemporary creation spearheads the reflection on social dynamics and future challenges, opening new avenues forward. The cultural sector has actively participated in the reflection process on the future of Europe leading to Sibiu. We affirm that **Culture and Democracy are not independent one from the other.** A European democratic project needs Culture to produce an open, inclusive, fair and diverse symbolic space. Counteracting the instrumentalisation of culture by Eurosceptic forces and reinforcing EU actions celebrating cultural diversity, in accordance with the core remit of the EU in the cultural field (Art. 167), should be seen as fundamental to build the future of Europe. Cultural actors are ready to be a companion and ally in this endeavour.

In the name of The Association of Finnish Theatres and its members, we call upon the President of the European Council to **include culture as an intrinsic part of Europe’s future.**

In Helsinki, 8 May 2019

Yours Sincerely,

Tommi Saarikivi
Managing Director
The Association of Finnish Theatres

The Association of Finnish Theatres is an interest and employers’ organisation of Finnish professional theatres. We work towards ensuring the operational preconditions of our member theatres and facilitating the making of high-quality theatre in Finland.