

The AgoraEU Programme

EU long-term budget: Infosheet

Funding for Democracy: The AgoraEU Programme

Supporting citizen participation, civil society, and European values

What is the AgoraEU Programme?

The European Commission presented the proposal for the new European Union (EU) long-term budget (2028–2034), aiming for a simpler, more focused budget. To achieve this, one key change has been the merging of existing programmes into broader, more coherent ones. The AgoraEU Programme is one of these, which merges the previous Creative Europe Programme and the CERV (Citizens, Equalities, Rights and Values) Programme.

The AgoraEU Programme is built around three strands:

1. Creative Europe – cross-border cultural creation, cooperation and circulation (proposed at €1.8 billion)
2. MEDIA+ – the audiovisual and news media sectors, media freedom and pluralism (proposed at €3.2 billion)
3. CERV+ (Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values) – civil society, rights, equality and citizen participation (proposed at €3.6 billion)

It will cover key areas of action to empower European citizens to take action and build stronger, more resilient societies. It will offer spaces where citizens can gather, create and exchange ideas, freely express their opinions, and understand and appreciate diversity.

Did you know?

The name of the new programme AgoraEU derives from the Greek word “agora”. Coming from the ancient times, “agora” means an open space, where a market was held, or a public place, where people can meet and freely exchange ideas.

The AgoraEU Programme’s main objectives are to:

- promote cultural and linguistic diversity and heritage
- increase the competitiveness of the cultural and creative sectors, in particular the media and audiovisual industries
- safeguard artistic and media freedom
- protect and promote equality, active citizenship, rights and values

Why does it matter?

This merger does not come out of nowhere. It reflects a broader vision the EU has been developing over time, where culture is seen as an enabler of democracy. According to this approach, culture helps create the actual agora: the conditions in which thinking, disagreement, and dialogue can take place and act as a social fabric, holding communities together.

Democracy in the EU is not only about elections, but also about citizens being able to participate in public life, express their views, and influence decision-making. Strengthening democracy requires accessible and effective support systems.

EU context

Today, the EU is facing several crises and challenges: the Russian invasion of Ukraine, democratic backsliding across the EU, the spread of disinformation, climate change, distrust in institutions, and changes in the US' approach to global affairs. For this reason, it was agreed that one of the primary focuses must be on safeguarding democracy in the EU. EU citizens must see that democracy takes their needs into account and delivers effective policies to address them.

How will this be achieved? Through different social and environmental policies, notably the European Democracy Shield, the Civil Society Strategy, the equality strategies, and most importantly financial support through the new long-term budget.

The AgoraEU programme will allow for a stronger connection between three important sectors that make the EU strong and resilient:

1. Cultural creativity and cooperation
2. Independent journalism and news media
3. Democratic participation and the rule of law

What this means for you?

For **organisations**:

- Increased support for organisations working on youth engagement and inclusion.
- Possibility to design hybrid projects that blend culture, media and civic engagement.
- Artistic and creative professionals will have more opportunities to expand their careers across the borders.
- A larger proposed envelope than the current CERV and Creative Europe Programmes combined — though the final figure depends on the ongoing negotiations — and demand is high: in the most recent Creative Europe – Culture call for proposals, only around 10–15% of the 1,663 proposals submitted are expected to be funded.¹

¹

<https://creativesunite.eu/article/culture-action-europe-europa-nostra-let-the-cult-commitee-lead-the-agoraeu>

For **citizens:**

- More opportunities to participate in local and European debates.
- More projects that will work towards strengthening civic engagement.
- Easier access to information on how to get involved in EU initiatives.
- Better protection for local community spaces.
- More diverse, locally produced European movies, series, and news.

What happens next?

AgoraEU is no longer just a proposal on paper; all three EU institutions have now set out positions, and the budget figure is the main point of disagreement.

- **April 2026** – the European Parliament adopted its interim report on the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which serves as its negotiating mandate. It calls for €10.72 billion for AgoraEU, which is €2.14 billion more than what the Commission proposed.
- **May 2026** – the Council of the EU (i.e. consisting of the EU's 27 Member States) agreed on a partial general approach: they signed off on the content of the programme, but bracketed everything with budgetary implications, which is being settled in the wider MFF negotiation. The Council keeps the three-strand structure, adds a new definition of the cultural and creative sectors, treats the audiovisual sector and journalism together as "media industries", and provides for targeted actions in areas such as music, book publishing and libraries.
- **June 2026** – The Cyprus Presidency's first negotiating box with figures puts AgoraEU at €7.295 billion (constant prices); that is around 33% below the European Parliament's position, or roughly €500 million less per year. Note that the three figures above use different price bases (i.e. some use 'constant prices' others use '2025 prices', so they are not directly comparable; what matters is the gap in ambition between the European Parliament and EU Member States.
- **June 2026** – The European Parliament's joint Committees on Culture and Education (CULT) and Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs' (LIBE) draft report by co-rapporteurs Emma Rafowicz (S&D, France) and Alice Kuhnke (Greens/EFA, Sweden), was presented on 3 June 2026, with the deadline for amendments on 11 June. Among other things, it proposes a separate Music strand, safeguards ensuring supported works rest on an identifiable human creative contribution rather than AI, a dedicated objective for artists at risk, and a new AgoraEU Dialogue Platform for beneficiaries and stakeholders.

What to watch out for next:

- **Early October 2026** – the Irish Presidency will table its own negotiating box with updated figures of the overall EU budget;
- **15-16 October 2026** – EU leaders will discuss the MFF at the European Council;
- **October–November 2026** – CULT/LIBE Committee vote and Parliament plenary position on AgoraEU;
- **End of 2026** – target date for an overall MFF agreement;
- **Late 2026–2027** – trilogues between Parliament, Council and Commission

Want to learn more?

- [European Commission's page on the EU budget](#)
- Legislative Train file on AgoraEU:
<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/legislative-train/spotlight-MFF%202028-2034/file-ageraeu>
- Council timeline on the EU's long-term budget:
<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/the-eu-s-long-term-budget-2028-2034/timeline-eu-long-term-budget-2028-2034/>
- [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) – for project applications
- Your [EUROPE DIRECT](#) centre
- Culture Action Europe, *Reading between the strands: AgoraEU after Parliament and Council*
<https://cultureactioneurope.org/advocacy/reading-between-the-strands-ageraeu-after-parliament-and-council/>
- [European Council's Communication](#)
- EPRS briefing *AgoraEU 2028-2034: Funding for culture, media and EU values in the new multiannual financial framework*
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI\(2026\)782660](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/EPRS_BRI(2026)782660)

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