

THE EU AND ROMANIA. A PARTNERSHIP TO PROMOTE CULTURE & SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *In the dynamic landscape of sustainable development, culture and cultural heritage are emerging concepts, taking more and more space in the academic literature. In the process of maintaining the balance between past, present and future, it is unrefutably important to understand the connection between cultural protection and promotion and actions towards sustainable development and environmental protection. This article aims to explore the complexities culture orientated actions, while having in consideration the sensitive issues of the permeability of cultural heritage over time. We discuss the relationship between cultural heritage and sustainable development, the actions that the EU takes to ensure cultural sustainability and the partnership between Romania and the EU could improve to maximize the impact on culture and sustainable development.*

Keywords: *European Union, Romania, culture, sustainable development*

Introduction

Cultural heritage is the basis for tourism development in many European countries and further afield. Countries such as Greece, France and Italy are economically dependent on heritage tourism (which was also seen in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Gross Domestic Product of these countries fell dramatically because of travel restrictions and the

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closure of museums and heritage sites).¹ Heritage therefore plays an important role not only in the design and implementation of socio-economic development strategies, but also in sustainable development. Environmental issues facing society have been at the heart of all soft power policies for the last 30 years, and their integration into all socio-economic aspects is no longer new. The European Union is increasingly paying attention to the impact of cultural heritage on sustainable development and has launched a series of cultural funding projects with the main objective of creating “the first climate-neutral continent”.² The ways in which cultural heritage contributes to this EU objective include: the development of sustainable cultural tourism through innovative AR/VR (Artificial and Augmented Reality) technologies; energy efficiency initiatives in heritage buildings; the creation of educational programmes for sustainable heritage management.

Sustainable development is a response to the crisis facing society in terms of the need to protect the environment. Sustainable development is a relatively recent concept, which has emerged and developed over the last 50 years, aiming at long-term economic, social and environmental stability through innovative and integrated methods of protecting and conserving resources for future generations.³ This concept covers several areas: environmental protection, tourism, health, protection of fauna and flora (terrestrial and marine ecosystems), reduction of social disparities and unemployment, poverty eradication, biodiversity, culture, etc.

The purpose of this research is to connect the two elements (cultural heritage and sustainable development), thus providing a new understanding to the concept of cultural sustainability in the framework of European cooperation. The premise of the research is that EU endeavours towards cultural sustainability are essential for the member states, especially Romania and that in the absence of such commitment from the EU, member states would not be able to properly adjust to the increasing requirements in the field (from experts, civil society, and the community as a whole).

¹ World Tourism Organization [https://www.unwto.org/cultural-tourism-covid-19], 9.05.2024.

² European Commission, “Sustainability and Cultural Heritage” [https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/cultural-heritage-in-eu-policies/sustainability-and-cultural-heritage], 9.05.2024.

³ Rachel Emas, „The Concept of Sustainable Development: Definition and Defining Principles” in *Global Sustainable Development Report 2015*, UN [https://asset-pdf.scinapse.io/prod/2184349672/2184349672.pdf], 05.05.2024.

Cultural heritage and sustainable development

Cultural heritage and sustainable development are closely related concepts that are important for the long-term well-being of societies and the planet. While cultural heritage is concerned with the protection and transmission of the cultural heritage inherited from our ancestors as historical evidence of past culture and civilisation, sustainable development is concerned with meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It involves striking a balance between economic, social and environmental factors and ensuring equitable, inclusive and environmentally sound development.

Cultural heritage can play an important role in sustainable development by providing a basis for social and economic development, creating employment opportunities and promoting cultural diversity and social cohesion. For example, cultural tourism can generate income for local communities while promoting the conservation of cultural heritage. In addition, traditional knowledge and practices can be used for sustainable resource management and conservation. At the same time, sustainable development can contribute to heritage conservation. Development projects that take heritage values into account help to preserve historic buildings and landscapes while ensuring a socially and environmentally responsible development process. This process makes the relationship between cultural heritage and sustainable development one of interdependence, with the aim of promoting social, economic and environmental sustainability.

Among the largest movements in the field of sustainable development, environmental protection and circular economy, and the first of these, is the Club of Rome. It was founded in 1968 by a group of eminent personalities from the worlds of science, politics, culture and business who recognised that climate change, environmental, resource and population problems were the result of the irresponsible use of resources. It was the founders of the Club who came up with the idea of "limits to growth", which they and experts from MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) documented, analysed from economic, biological, sociological, anthropological and technological perspectives, and put all these ideas into what is now considered the "Bible" of sustainable development, *The Limits to Growth*, which promotes the idea that our resources are finite, so that infinite economic expansion is not realistic or sustainable. The book outlines the predicament humanity faces

in terms of growth based on depleting resources and excessive consumption and provides an overview of the drivers of this unsustainable growth, as well as alternative measures that can be taken to create a “global steady state”.⁴

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mentions for the first time the cultural objectives promoted by the UN in the context of sustainable development, as objectives and not just cross-cutting objectives (about areas such as education, environment, consumption habits or social inclusion). Paragraph 36, page 13 of the UN Agenda⁵ states:

We pledge to safeguard and promote intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect, and an ethical global citizenship in which responsibilities are shared. We recognize the natural and cultural diversity of the world and believe that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to the process of sustainable development and are indeed essential in this process.⁶

Culture and cultural heritage are also addressed in the agenda in terms of their impact on other key areas in the sustainable development process: inclusiveness (page 21), sustainable economic development (page 24), encouraging local consumption and production (page 27), and tourism (page 32).⁷

Although there is a high level of international interest in the cultural field in the sphere of sustainable development, at national level authorities are trying to maintain the trend without giving depth to the field. For example, in the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania - 2030, in the Chapter “Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development”,⁸ in two paragraphs, some statistical data are mentioned regarding the heritage objects in which investments have been made in recent years and the total number of movable cultural heritage assets.

⁴ Donnela Meadows, Dennis Meadows, Jorgen Randers, *The Limits to Growth. A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*, New York: Universe Books, 1972.

⁵ UN, “Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development”, A/RES/70/1 [<https://sdgs.un.org/>], 13.05.2024.

⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ Department for Sustainable Development of the Government of Romania, “Romania's National Strategy for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 2030”, p. 72 [<https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/Strategia-nationala-pentru-dezvoltarea-durabila-a-Rom%C3%A2niei-2030.pdf>], 11.04.2024.

These statistics are irrelevant if they are not placed in a context that justifies their value in the field of sustainable development. Considering the superficiality with which the cultural domain has been treated in this strategy, it can be said that the “Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development” has not been treated nearly as well as it should have been and that regulations and strategies in this area need significant improvement in order to lead to optimal results.

As urban densification projects often take place in the historic centres of large cities, they can pose challenges for the conservation and protection of cultural heritage.⁹ In this context, a new concept in the field of sustainable development is emerging in the literature: cultural sustainability. The concept of cultural sustainability aims to use elements of cultural economics to draw attention to the role and importance of cultural heritage in the field of sustainable development. By identifying the socio-economic elements of culture that have a direct impact on urban processes, the importance of cultural phenomena and cultural heritage in the sustainable development of urban areas is increasingly emphasised. Urbanisation is an inevitable process, due to population growth, but also to the attractiveness of large cities for young people seeking new opportunities. To strike a balance between the accelerated process of urbanisation and initiatives to protect cultural heritage, the solution proposed by cultural sustainability is to integrate heritage elements or highlight existing ones in the urban densification structure.

EU and cultural sustainability

The European Commission argues that cultural heritage is of significant economic importance, particularly for the cultural and creative sectors surrounding it. At the same time, cultural heritage “is an important resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion, with the potential to revitalise urban and rural areas and promote sustainable tourism.”¹⁰

⁹ Joar Skrede, Sveinung Krokann Berg, „Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development: The Case of Urban Densification” in *The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice*, Taylor and Francis, Vol. 10, no. 1, 2019, pp. 83-102.

¹⁰ European Commission [<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/ro/policies/selected-themes/cultural-heritage>], 15.04.2024.

At the European Commission level, there is a strong focus on the link between cultural heritage and sustainability, the latter being one of the three pillars on which the Cultural Heritage Action Framework is based. According to the European Commission, linking sustainability and cultural heritage processes has “the potential to enhance social capital, stimulate economic growth and ensure environmental sustainability. Culture and cultural heritage can contribute to achieving inclusive and sustainable development”.¹¹ Within the EU, cultural heritage is considered a priority area, the aim of the European Union in the field of culture being precisely “to respect the richness of its cultural diversity and to ensure the protection and development of Europe’s cultural heritage”. According to a survey carried out by the European Commission in December 2017, more than 8 out of 10 respondents (EU citizens) believe that cultural heritage is important not only for them, but also for their community, region and country, and for the European Union as a whole.¹² The same survey shows that three quarters of EU citizens believe that more budget needs to be allocated to the protection of cultural heritage, while 9 out of 10 respondents believe that in order to better understand the importance of cultural heritage and heritage, young Europeans should study heritage subjects in schools.

From a legislative point of view, the European Union’s action is limited by its consultative role in relation to the Member States in the field of culture. According to the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU, Article 2, paragraph 5, the European Union can only “take action to support, coordinate or supplement the action of Member States”¹³ in certain areas. In Article 6 we see that these sectors include culture. This Treaty contains a section devoted to culture, Title XIII, where Article 167 states: The Union shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.¹⁴ The EU’s interest in

¹¹ *Idem* [<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/cultural-heritage-in-eu-policies/sustainability-and-cultural-heritage>], 10.05.2024.

¹² Eurobarometer, “Cultural Heritage, 2150/466”, 2017 [<https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2150>], 14.04.2024.

¹³ Official Journal of the European Union, “Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Consolidated Version)”, 2016, p. 2 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:9e8d52e1-2c70-11e6-b497-01aa75ed71a1.0020.01/DOC_3&format=PDF], 11.04.2024.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 6.

culture was also evident at the European Council on 14 December 2017 in Brussels, where European leaders were asked, among other things, to:

- Promote student mobility and student participation in cultural and educational activities, including through a 'European student card';
- Use the European Year of Cultural Heritage to raise awareness of the social and economic importance of culture and cultural heritage.¹⁵

At the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Rome, the European Commission proposes on 22 May 2018, A New European Agenda for Culture. It aims to "harness the full potential of culture to help build a fairer and more inclusive Union by supporting innovation, creativity and sustainable growth and jobs".¹⁶

The Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022¹⁷ address the perspective of sustainable development and the role of cultural heritage in it, mentioning its function as a catalyst for sustainable economic, social, environmental, and cultural development in Europe. From this perspective, the creation of an 'ecosystem' supporting artists, performers, and cultural professionals as well as European artistic content is envisaged. A special report by the European Court of Auditors in 2020 analyses public investment and expenditure in the cultural sector, both at national level in the 27 Member States and at European Commission level. This report presents an audit that was carried out with the aim of establishing the effectiveness and sustainability of the European Union's investments in cultural sites, in particular through the use of the main investment fund, the ERDF (European Regional Development Fund).¹⁸ The relevance of this report for our work is that it traces the economic, social and cultural effects

¹⁵ European Council meeting, 14 December 2017, EUCO 19/1/17, p. 4

[<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32223/14-final-conclusions-rev1-ro.pdf>], 11.04.2024.

¹⁶ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 22.5.2018, COM(2018) 267 final [<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0267&from=EN>], 14.04.2024.

¹⁷ Official Journal of the European Union, "Council Conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2019-2022 (2018/C 460/10)", Brussels, 2018, p. 2 [[https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1221\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018XG1221(01)&from=EN)], 18.04.2024.

¹⁸ European Court of Auditors, "Special Report No 08/2020: EU Investments in Cultural Sites: a Topic that Deserves More Focus and Coordination", 2020 [https://www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/SR20_08/SR_Cultural_investments_RO.pdf], 18.04.2024.

of ERDF investments in cultural sites from the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods in the following countries: Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Romania. We will now analyse this report, focusing on Romania and extracting information relevant to the topic.

The report analyses, amongst other things, three projects funded by the ERDF in Romania, which aim to restore and protect heritage sites, through the Regional Operational Programme, Priority Axis 5. Improvement of the urban environment and conservation, protection and sustainable use of cultural heritage (in the 2014-2020 financial year), respectively Regional Operational Programme, Priority Axis 5. Sustainable development and promotion of tourism (in the financial year 2007-2013). The three projects analysed are: Moldovița Monastery, Buzău County Museum and Bucharest Patriarchate Palace.¹⁹

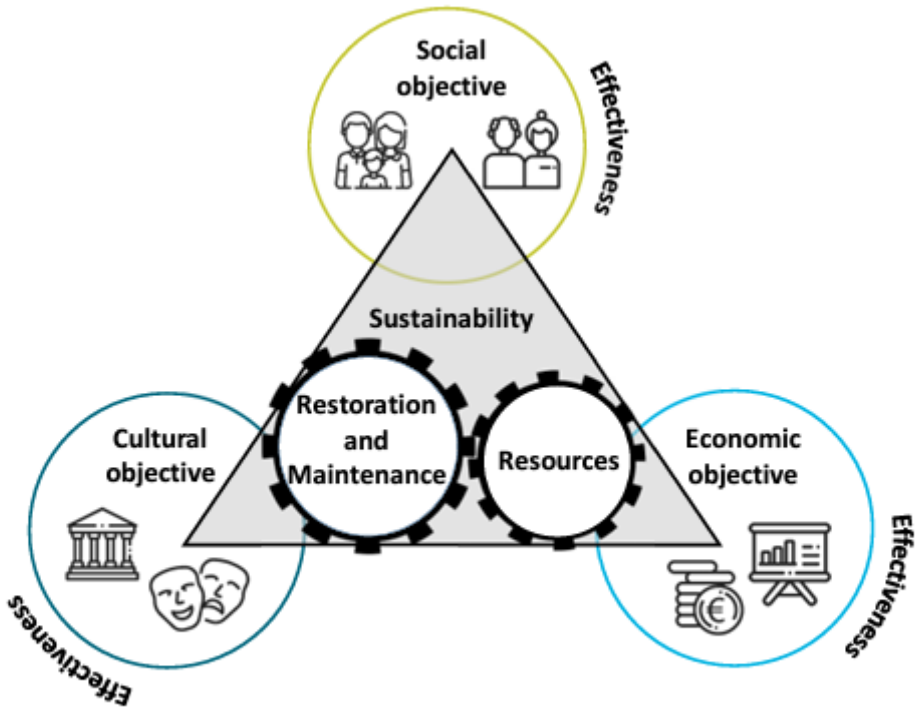
The conclusions that are drawn in the report based on the audit, and which cover all the countries audited, include:

- The funds allocated by the European Union for culture are too little compared to the real needs. The only programme dedicated exclusively to culture is “Creative Europe”, with a budget of €209 million/year in the 2014-2020 financial year. For comparison, the annual maintenance costs of the Paris National Opera alone amounted to €200.8 million in 2018.

- The European Commission’s initiatives to promote heritage sites, although numerous, are not backed up by adequate funding mechanisms. Diversification of funding sources is therefore essential to adapt to real needs in the field of cultural heritage protection.

- A contradictory effect has been identified in terms of the results of project implementation, in that although implementation contributes to the achievement of all three development objectives and ensures the economic sustainability of the heritage site, it can adversely affect its conservation (e.g. excessive and unsustainable growth in tourism, overcrowding) which can lead to the deterioration of an ancient heritage object, by affecting the environment but also the structure of the heritage object, which is in some cases very sensitive to natural or created adverse factors. In this respect, the European Court of Auditors proposes an interconnectivity model that shows the link between the effectiveness and sustainability of a project for cultural sites:

¹⁹ *Ibidem.*



Source: ECA.

Figure 1. The European Court of Auditors' model of interconnectivity between effectiveness and sustainability

An important aspect of reports such as this one is that they propose conclusions and recommendations, which are then presented to the Commission, and the Commission has to take a position on them. In the case of the report presented, the recommendations to the Commission include (but are not limited to): improving the current strategic framework for culture within the limits of the powers conferred by the Treaties, strengthening the financial sustainability of cultural sites funded by the ERDF and adopting clearer measures for the conservation of heritage sites.

In line with the inter-institutional procedure, the report also includes the European Commission's response to the recommendations received and shows how the two institutions are working together to achieve the best results and to disseminate at European and national level strategies to improve the management of cultural sites. In this case, the Commission accepts all the Court's recommendations, with the caveat that through the ERDF, it can only fund the conservation of sites at risk if they are included in a national or regional development strategy.

The European Union is trying, through a wide range of projects and proposals, to promote cultural heritage and highlight its importance in the context of sustainable development. Among the projects implemented by the European Union Institutions in this respect are:

- Horizon Europe - whose main objective is the development of innovative technologies for sustainable development and economic growth. Through Cluster 2 - Culture, Creativity and Social Inclusion, the programme aims to promote and protect cultural heritage and contribute to the social, economic and cultural adaptation of society to contemporary changes.²⁰

- COSME - European Programme for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, which provides young entrepreneurs with a favourable environment for developing creative ideas and promoting entrepreneurial culture.²¹

- European Cultural Routes - a project developed by the Council of Europe, joined by the European Commission and the World Tourism Organisation, which aims to promote European cultural heritage destinations by creating thematic routes linking heritage sites in different European countries.²²

- European Cultural Capitals - a project developed by the European Commission to promote Europe's cultural diversity and richness, with the aim of increasing citizens' sense of belonging to European and national culture.²³

²⁰ Horizon Europe, "Work Programme 2021-2022. 5. Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society", European Commission Decision 2975, 2022, p. 6 [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-5-culture-creativity-and-inclusive-society_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf], 18.04.2024.

²¹ COSME - Europe's programme for small and medium-sized enterprises [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/cosme_en], 18.04.2024.

²² European Cultural Routes [<https://www.coe.int/en/web/cultural-routes>], 18.04.2024.

²³ European Capitals of Culture [<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/policies/culture-in-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-of-culture>], 18.04.2024.

- CulturEU - Through programmes such as Creative Europe, ERASMUS+ and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme, which funds projects to restore, protect and promote cultural heritage in order to enrich culture in the Member States.²⁴

Although the European Union only has a consultative role in policies for the promotion and protection of cultural heritage, its actions and investments in the protection and promotion of the national cultural heritage far exceed the efforts of national authorities. For example, in 2022, the AFCN (Administration of the National Cultural Fund) financed cultural projects worth a total of 13 million lei. Of this amount, only 1.8 million was for the promotion and protection of cultural heritage.²⁵

Creating synergy at national and European level

When it comes to cultural indicators, Romania has set important milestones for itself. According to the UNESCO National Culture Profile, the proactive role of the Government's Department of Sustainable Development is positioning Romania as a regional hub for sustainable development. After its first implementation in 2018 within the framework of the UNESCO project Culture for Development Indicators Suite (CDIS), the National Strategy for Sustainable Development of Romania 2030 (NSSDR 2030) was adopted, which includes a special chapter dedicated to culture, entitled The Cultural Dimension of Sustainable Development.²⁶ It is not surprising, therefore, that Romania is committed to a close relationship with the EU, especially considering that most investments, both in the protection of cultural heritage and in sustainable development in Romania, are made with European money. Since accession, according to the Minister of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Tourism, Romania has accessed almost €90 billion. If we subtract Romania's contribution to the EU budget from this, we are left with a return of over €60 billion.²⁷ When it comes to culture, European investment includes, but is not

²⁴ CulturEU [<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/funding/cultureu-funding-guide>], 18.04.2024.

²⁵ AFCN, "Call for Cultural Projects, Session II" [<https://www.afcn.ro/media/Anunt%20lansare%20concur%20proiecte%20sesiunea%20II%202022.pdf>], 18.04.2024.

²⁶ UNESCO, "National Culture Profile of Romania" [<https://whc.unesco.org/en/activities/1275/>], 13.05.2024.

²⁷ Profit.ro, "De la intrarea în UE, România a accesat 89,4 miliarde de euro. Ce sumă rămâne după scăderea contribuțiilor statului la Uniune" [<https://www.profit.ro/stiri/economie/de-la->

confined to, the organisation of cultural events, cultural digitization projects,²⁸ cultural heritage conservation and sustainable preservation.²⁹

The European Green Deal is the European Commission's roadmap for making the EU's economy sustainable. Buildings, including historical and cultural ones, are a crucial element of this initiative because they account for 40% of all energy consumption and 36% of EU greenhouse gas emissions.³⁰

It is crucial for Romania to align its policies and practices with those of other EU nations. This alignment is a necessary step towards bridging the current gap and enhancing the country's ability to foster sustainable development via cultural initiatives. The digital divide, which denotes limited resource accessibility for a significant portion of the population, underscores the need for digitisation. Digitisation emerges as a feasible strategy to augment cultural access and consumption, particularly in rural communities.³¹

In order to obtain this alignment, there are a few steps we can recommend, from a management perspective, which would allow Romania to create the wanted synergy and cohesion level with the EU. First, using proper project management tools and instruments, Romania can make full/better use of the various EU funds available for cultural and sustainable development projects. This includes funds like the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), and the European Social Fund (ESF). These funds can be used to finance projects that promote cultural heritage, sustainable tourism, green energy, and other sustainable development goals. Second, Romania can collaborate with other EU

intrarea-in-ue-romania-a-accesat-89-4-miliarde-de-euro-ce-suma-ramane-dupa-scaderea-contributiilor-statului-la-uniune-21475464], 14.05.2024.

²⁸ Adriana Dumitran, Cristina Marinescu, „Participarea Bibliotecii Naționale a României la Proiecte culturale europene: Proiectul ENRICH. Manuscriptorium (2008 - 2009) Proiectul REDISCOVER (2009 - 2010” in *Revista Transilvania*, Issue 5/6, 2013, pp. 74-77.

²⁹ Anca Dodescu, „Restoration and Sustainable Valorization of Cultural Heritage and Regional Policy in North-West Region of Romania. Case Study Revitalization of the Oradea Fortress” in *The Annals of the University of Oradea, Economic Sciences*, Tom XXII, 2014, pp. 195-203.

³⁰ European Commission, “Sustainability and Cultural Heritage”

[<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/cultural-heritage-in-eu-policies/sustainability-and-cultural-heritage>], 13.04.2024.

³¹ Mina Fanea-Ivanovici, „Culture as a Prerequisite for Sustainable Development. An Investigation into the Process of Cultural Content Digitisation in Romania” in *Sustainability*, 2018, vol. 10, no. 6, pp. 1859-1876.

countries on projects that promote sustainable development. This could involve sharing best practices, conducting joint research, and implementing pilot projects. Such collaboration can lead to innovative solutions that benefit both Romania and the EU. Third, to effectively manage and implement EU-funded projects, Romania needs to strengthen its institutional capacity. This involves improving the administrative and technical skills of the staff involved in project management, as well as enhancing the transparency and accountability of the institutions involved. Also, engaging civil society is crucial for ensuring the success of cultural and sustainable development initiatives. Non-governmental organizations, community groups, and citizens can provide valuable input and help to ensure that projects meet the needs of the local community.

Lastly, from a management perspective, it is important to note that continuous improvement is a key element to use the insights gained from each project to continuously improve the management process. This could involve enhancing the skills and knowledge of the people involved in the process, improving the project management methodology, and strengthening the relationships with EU partners.

Conclusions

Cultural heritage plays an important role in sustainable development. The 2030 Agenda adopted by the UN General Assembly for the first time integrates the role of culture, through cultural heritage and creativity, as an enabler of sustainable development across the Sustainable Development Goals. Cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, can significantly contribute to sustainable development in its various dimensions. Culture is also at the heart of development policies, ensuring people-centred, inclusive, and equitable development. Protecting and promoting culture directly contributes to many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including safe and sustainable cities, decent work, and economic growth, reducing inequalities, the environment, promoting gender equality, and peaceful and inclusive societies. In the EU, over 300,000 people are employed in the cultural heritage sector, and 7.8 million jobs are indirectly linked to heritage.³²

³² European Commission, "EU Policy for Cultural Heritage"

[<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/cultural-heritage/eu-policy-for-cultural-heritage>], 16.05.2024.

The European Union plays an extensive role in promoting cultural heritage and sustainability in its Member States. It anchors the role of culture, through cultural heritage and creativity, as an enabler of sustainable development in the Sustainable Development Goals. It is also committed to preserving and enhancing Europe's cultural heritage through various policies and programmes. Sustainability is also among the five pillars of the Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage, which highlights its potential to enhance social capital, boost economic growth and ensure environmental sustainability.

At the same time, the EU is taking action and leading the way to become the first climate neutral continent. The EU recognises that cultural heritage can play a key role in promoting peace, democracy and sustainable development by fostering tolerance, intercultural dialogue and social cohesion.

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