[The Ukrainian Cultural Sector in Wartimes:
Emergencies – Needs – Measures}

An International Conference and Workshop with Experts from Ukraine

Concise Concluding Statement

Preamble

Hosted in Kyiv by *Goethe-Institut Ukraine* (Kyiv), *Ukraine Art Aid Center e.V.* (Berlin), and the *International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage* (ALIPH, Geneva),

in partnership with the *Ministry for Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine* and the *Federal Foreign Office of Germany*,

supported by *House of Europe* (funded by the *European Union*, implemented by *Goethe-Institut Ukraine),* the *Ernst-von-Siemens Kunststiftung*, and the *Robert Bosch Stiftung*,

attended by numerous international and Ukrainian delegates, notably representing UNESCO, the Delegation of the European Union, major state and independent cultural institutions,

qualified as an official preparatory gathering for the *Ukraine Recovery Conference in Rome* (10-11 July 2025) to carry a clear message: culture and cultural heritage are not peripheral—they are central to recovery,

this conference brought together 63 experts from the cultural sector of Ukraine to assess the needs and prospects of their respective segment – now and in the near future. The organizers were highly committed to convening this gathering in Kyiv to convey the insights and immediate experiences of affected colleagues in Ukraine.

Methodology

Experts came from all over Ukraine and represented different types of organizations, large and small, and various perspectives from different levels of hierarchy. They worked in twelve small groups of about five participants representing the following segments of the Ukrainian cultural sector: Museums, Natural Reserves, Archives, Libraries, Theatres, Monuments and Protected Buildings, Music, Literature, Contemporary Art, Conservation / Restoration of Moveable Heritage, Cultural Networks, Film.

In an afternoon and a morning session (10/11 April), the expert groups – each of them supported by a facilitator – drafted a short statement that described the most pressing needs of their sector, currently and in the foreseeable future, concluding with brief recommendations based on their assessment. These statements were then presented and discussed in the conference's concluding plenary afternoon session. The present conference statement summarizes the condensed result of these workshops. The conference organizers aim to draft a fuller report on the conference in the coming weeks.

The condensed conference statement below is structured into three thematic blocks:
1. Impact of the war since February 2022;
2. Measures to improve the current situation;
3. Future recommendations for restoring the cultural sector.

Each block presents the input from two perspectives:
- C*ulture and creative sectors* – reflecting the overall perspective of the sector, including the human dimension;
- C*ultural heritage* – reflecting specific points related to the preservation of cultural heritage.

Disclaimer: *This statement reflects the voices of Ukrainian experts who participated in the conference. The co-organizers supported an open and independent exchange of perspectives, recognizing the importance of diverse and locally grounded contributions. The content does not necessarily reflect the official views of the organizing or partner institutions.*

Condensed Conference Statement

1. IMPACT OF THE WAR SINCE FEBRUARY 2022

The full-scale war that began in February 2022 has significantly complicated the work within the cultural sector due to various immediate risks and systemic gaps affecting all areas. It has also worsened existing issues within the cultural sector while simultaneously fostering the development of horizontal ties and network solutions. Many institutions have stepped in to perform functions that were once the responsibility of the state. Due to rigid procedures and inadequate state support, organizations have had to address the crisis independently, forge international partnerships, and adapt to new roles and audiences. **Despite a growing cohesion, resource mobilization, and new opportunities, the sector currently faces significant challenges: smaller teams, unstable funding, and excessive workloads hinder continuity and strategic planning.**

Cultural and creative sectors:

1. **The deaths, injuries, and displacement of cultural workers** resulting from the war have led to a loss of personnel, threatening the transfer of knowledge—above all in highly specialized disciplines—and resulting in a depletion of professional expertise at a highly challenging time when the management teams particularly require special competencies.
2. **The independent sector is under greater threat than before the start of the full-scale war**, facing a lack of basic salaries, insufficient funding for programme activities, and no possibilities to obtain exemptions for specialists from mobilization.
3. **Bureaucracy, overregulation, and legal barriers prevent the cultural sector from taking prompt decisions** even when resources are available, particularly in financial management of organisation, property management, and team development.
4. Changes in work formats, institutional isolation, and shifts in audience engagement compel institutions to **reimagine their functions without possessing adequate resources.**
5. **Mental exhaustion and emotional burnout:** all sectors report severe psychological fatigue, team burnout, and a lack of trauma-informed approaches.
6. **Damage of the publishing infrastructure** due to the direct attacks and breaks in the supply chains.
7. **Demand for Ukrainian cultural and creative products is growing, but there are few exportable products**, and sometimes even the technology to create them is lacking. Underdeveloped **copyright and royalty** laws complicate the process of exporting products abroad.

8. **Isolation of frontline regions:** people cannot travel abroad and foreign partners do not visit them, resulting in limited access to culture.
9. **The instrumentalization of victims and suffering** affects the quality of contemporary art and a critical discussion around it.
10. The ongoing colonization and **cultural occupation** of temporarily occupied territories affect both cultural institutions and individuals, yet there are no systemic responses to this problem.

Cultural heritage:

11. **Direct destruction of monuments** due to hostilities and Russia's hybrid attacks on Ukrainian cultural identity, including systematic and targeted destruction of heritage sites, theft of collections, manipulation of narratives, appropriation of Ukrainian culture, and cyberattacks on digital infrastructure.
12. Air and ground attacks, combined with restrictions on energy supplies, exacerbate issues related to **inadequate storage facilities and insecure infrastructure for preserving collections and protecting individuals.** This increases the risk of cultural heritage loss and creates stressful working conditions.
13. The urgent need to update evacuation protocols forces institutions to take risky "gray" decisions or to face paralysis due to **legal concerns**.
14. The absence of accessible specialized registers, **consistent documentation, and a digital infrastructure** hinders the ability to account for losses to the cultural heritage and the overall cultural sector, making coordinated action unfeasible.
15. A lack of explicit coordination **between state and local authorities** has led to a lack of clarity in terms of responsibilities and to inconsistent actions.
16. **Loss of theatrical cultural heritage**: lack of proper recording of the processes involved in creating performances, resulting in the loss of a significant amount of intangible cultural memory. Theatrical art remains unarchived and undocumented.
17. **Film archives outside the heritage support system**: the war has delayed the determination of the status of film archives. There is little attention paid to film heritage, even though it could provide an effective bridge to other countries. Film heritage is unsafe and unprotected, and there is no systematic transfer of knowledge.
18. It is essential to prioritize culture within the **national security policy** as the cultural sector continues to be undervalued despite formal statements indicating otherwise.

2. MEASURES TO IMPROVE THE CURRENT SITUATION

Cultural institutions have implemented several key measures to cope with the current crisis:

Cultural and creative sectors:

1. The war has fostered networking and a **deeper understanding of the interconnectedness** of various players in individual sectors as well as the cultural sector as a whole.
2. The establishment and / or intervention of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has facilitated operational management of funds at state institutions and increased flexibility as an alternative to slow public budget processes.
3. Many institutions have transformed themselves into humanitarian hubs and shelters, providing **safe spaces**, supporting evacuees, and adapting to the realities of crisis conditions.
4. Efforts to promote social cohesion and support vulnerable groups, including

internally displaced persons (IDPs), veterans, and children, have been prioritized, with a focus on **inclusive practices**.

5. International events like film festivals have been organized in Ukraine to attract foreign visitors, giving partners the chance to **witness the situation firsthand** and to strengthen ties with Ukraine.

6. There is a growing desire among organizations to **adopt strategic thinking and assert institutional agency.**

7. **Conscious work with trauma, emotional triggers**, socially important topics are becoming a vital part of programming (esp. in theater, literature and visual arts).

8. **Activities have been adapted to current restrictions** such as blackouts and air raids.

Cultural heritage:

9. The inability to coordinate **evacuation plans** with authorities has compelled leaders to search alternative ways to secure cultural assets.

10. **Digitization initiatives** have been launched across various sectors to document cultural heritage. These efforts include photogrammetry, 3D modeling, scanning, and digital accounting of collections, all enhancing the accessibility of cultural assets and creating opportunities for new audiences.

11. **Strengthening international cooperation and partnerships** has led to exhibition projects, technical support, advisory collaborations, and shared experiences, increasing the visibility of Ukrainian institutions on the global stage.

12. Institutions have taken active roles in **memorializing local history and collective memory.**

Innovative Approaches Serving as Models for the Sector

Several original and inventive approaches have emerged that could serve as models for the entire cultural sector:

Cultural and creative sectors:

1. **Mobile spaces and alternative spaces:** libraries and multifunctional hubs have been developed to provide access to cultural products as well as administrative, educational, and medical services.

2. **Project-based approaches:** cultural institutions (eg. state theaters), are beginning to adopt a project-based management approach, thus marking a strategic transformation. This transition lays the foundation for financial independence, innovation, and adaptability.

3. **The emergence/expansion of empathy-based community-building events** and formats (Open Opera and amateurs, Lirum and Zolota Zoria, etc).

4. **Community engagement:** collaborating with communities through patrons, book reading circles, clean-up days, clubs, etc., fosters unity and mutual support during crises.

5. **Cultural Forces:** an example of a platform uniting artists, activists, business, military and international partners to address current challenges through culture.

6. **Generation Ukraine Arte** is a full-cycle programme supporting the creation of Ukrainian feature films and documentaries, including distribution by European public broadcasters (full cycle from pitching to rights clearance). It is a unique, complex, multi-faceted programme. It has a significant impact and therefore deserves support and scaling up.

7. **Field trips of PEN Ukraine** to the frontline areas creating circles of trust and support through literature and using the library infrastructure.

Cultural heritage:

8. **Collaboration with the military:** cooperation with the military is important, particularly for museum workers (documenting the war, replenishing collections, etc.) and, more broadly, for the entire cultural sector. Such interaction emphasizes the importance of culture as an element of the country's security. It is particularly promising to involve military personnel with a background in culture.

9. **Shifts in business support:** the war has led businesses to move from seeking tax benefits to engaging consciously in socially vital processes. Companies are now more actively supporting cultural initiatives to enhance societal sustainability. Ideally, this could lead to enduring partnerships between the cultural sector and private enterprises.

10. **Cooperation among civil society organizations (CSOs):** a growing trend is to swiftly address community needs through collaborative efforts, demonstrating a new spirit of interaction focused on mutual support rather than competition for resources.

Most Effective Types of Support from International Organizations

International organizations have provided particularly effective support through:

1. **Institutional support programmes:** focused on comprehensive assistance rather than separate, additional projects.
2. **Infrastructure grants:** financial support aimed at developing necessary infrastructure.
3. **Fast-track fellowships:** simple reporting requirements helping professionals to enhance their education.
4. **Flexible support programmes:** quick responses without bureaucratic obstacles.
5. **Targeted equipment supply:** provision of essential tools, machinery, generators, packaging, etc.
6. **Combined soft and hard support:** programmes that integrate training, restoration works, and accessibility into a single initiative.
7. **Return programmes:** initiatives designed to help professionals return to their home country.

Least Effective Types of Support

The following approaches have proven ineffective:

8. **Lengthy negotiations and centralization:** programmes characterized by excessive centralization and rigid approaches.
9. **Training programmes without local context:** risk of adopting a "colonial" mentality, ignoring local specifics.
10. **Excessive precautions:** programmes that do not align with the realities of war.
11. **Disproportionate support abroad:** providing more assistance to Ukrainian cultural actors and organizations outside Ukraine than within.
12. **Lack of coordination:** replication of support already provided by other donors or organizations leading to duplication and wasted resources.

3. FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RESTORING THE CULTURAL SECTOR:

To the International Community:

- **Recognize Ukrainian expertise:** understanding Ukraine's unique crisis experience can provide valuable insights to European partners – Ukrainians are willing and ready to share.
- **Foster equal partnerships:** transition from a typical aid recipient model to one of equal partnership between Ukraine, the EU, its member states and other countries.

- **Support Ukrainian culture in Ukraine:** assist cultural sector representatives in Ukraine to assert statehood and independence through their work.
- **Amplify Ukrainian voices:** offer resources and platforms for Ukrainians to share their firsthand war experiences.
- **Integrate Ukrainian culture into European cultural space:** promote Ukrainian literature, cinema, and arts as essential components of European culture.
- **Incorporate Ukraine's experience in curricula:** provide education on Ukrainian history and culture.
- **Encourage foreign collaborations:** increase the number of international colleagues coming to Ukraine and their participation in projects.
- **Reframe Ukraine's image:** actively remove perceptions of Ukraine as a region of Russia or Eurasia (as opposed to Europe), particularly on streaming platforms.

Cooperation Formats:

- Engage Ukrainian experts: involve Ukrainians in **expert groups** and international exhibition projects.
- Consider Ukrainian experience in recovery programmes: include insights from Ukrainians into **recovery plans.**
- Training cooperation in **art education**: develop internship programmes and collaborative efforts in digitization.
- Adapt legislative frameworks: assist in aligning Ukrainian **legislation** with EU standards.
- Direct work with networks and NGOs: **engage with local organizations** rather than relying solely on state institutions.
- Facilitate **international partnerships:** promote various formats of geopolitical alliances and support cooperation with European public broadcasters for better distribution of Ukrainian cultural products.

Support Programmes:

Cultural and creative sectors:

1. Systemic cluster support: focus on long-term, **sustainable programmes for support of people from the sector.**
2. Investment in long-term projects: initiate **institutional support for public and independent organizations** instead of prioritizing project grants.
3. **Support sectoral organizations:** empower organizations that represent cultural sectors, ensuring they can monitor and disseminate findings.
4. Skills development: facilitate programmes with an emphasis on **trauma sensitivity and inclusion.**
5. Film production: offer funding for Ukrainian full-cycle film productions, with **Ukraine retaining the rights.** Development of special risk insurance packages for those filming in Ukraine to promote coproductions.

Cultural heritage:

6. Logistical support for archiving: provide resources for **conservation and restoration efforts.**
7. Establish partnerships across cultures: create **networks** among restorers, museum professionals, and educational exchanges.
8. Integrate modern technologies: incorporate new technologies into restoration processes.
9. Platform creation for **knowledge preservation**: develop tools for data and knowledge conservation.
10. Research grants and **decolonization studies:** expand studies on decolonization and fund relevant research.
11. Address disaster tourism: relevant **international experience is needed** to recognize and explore the phenomenon of disaster tourism.

Recommendations for the Government of Ukraine and Local Authorities:

State security:

- Recognize culture as an integral element of national security.

State legislation and governance:

- Update legislation and simplify the regulatory framework, including **procurement procedures** and deregulation.
- Expand the list of **paid services** that state institutions can offer.
- Update the classification of professions and revise the **tariff scale.**
- Revise the law governing **competitions for leadership positions** in organizations to ensure open competitions.
- Adopt **laws on patronage and public-private partnerships** (PPP) as additional sources of support.
- Create a **Public Council and Museum Council under the Ministry of Culture** to enhance strategic communication and dissemination of results.
- **Reform the network of cultural institutions**, art education, and support for independent initiatives.
- Adapt legislation to allow mixed or **foreign teams** of experts to work in Ukraine, particularly in restoration.
- Impose sanctions on **distributors of Russian content**. Promote the adoption of regulatory acts to ensure that the law restricting the import of books from Russia and Belarus comes into force.

People:

- Amend legislation in the field of **reservation from mobilisation** to retain key specialists, especially in niche fields.
- Establish **decent working conditions** for cultural workers, including safety, security, proper equipment and fair salaries.
- Provide **health insurance and psychological assistance** alongside salaries for those in the sector.
- Introduce awards, scholarships, and support programs to **recognize and motivate individuals.**
- Develop vocational education programs for **restorers** specializing in immovable monuments.
- **Adapt** to changes in communities and audiences, with a focus on inclusion and trauma-informed approaches.
- Prioritize **audience development** as a strategic area of work.
- Provide systemic support for **veterans' initiatives.**
- Address the educational needs of **people in frontline regions** who are forced to focus on limited offers provided by the existing cultural actors.
- Implement skills development programs that include **trauma-sensitive approaches and promote inclusion.**

Support Programmes:

Cultural and creative sectors:

1. Amend the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation (UCF) law to support **long-term projects and infrastructure grants.**
2. Develop **institutional** support for independent creators, including theaters.
3. Create support programmes for **relocated** institutions, such as libraries, including housing assistance for employees.
4. Design **thoughtful** sector support programmes, such as a system for purchasing and distributing Ukrainian books.
5. **Support industry associations and intermediary institutions** by establishing an Institute of Music, and resuming the work of the National Commission for the Return of Cultural Property to Ukraine, establishing an arm's length institution to lobby and promote the interests of the film sector.
6. Support **programmes for independent artists** (open and closed artist databases, platforms, scholarships, e.g., Western States Arts Federation in the USA).

7. Empower the local cultural centers' capacity to collect **local collections of contemporary art.** Secure contemporary art collections that are already being collected (National Arts Museums in Kyiv, Odesa, Khmelnytskyy, Mystetskyi Arsenal and others).

8. Establish an **interagency structure focused on cultural heritage**, reporting to the Cabinet of Ministers.
9. Build **dual-purpose storage facilities and depositories for heritage preservation** and create conditions in existing facilities.
10. Facilitate the management of a **special budget fund for operational use by state organizations.**
11. Implement a system for **cataloguing and alternative storage**, including the possibility of storing information on servers abroad.
12. Ensure access to stored items and **allow museum workers to visit locations to where collections have been evacuated.**
13. Launch pilot projects in individual communities based on cultural heritage.
14. Research the phenomenon of **disaster tourism** and gather relevant experience.

Spaces and infrastructure:

- Ensure the availability of **safe spaces** for cultural events (music, theater, etc.), especially in regions outside the capital, and expand specialized infrastructure for music and film.
- **Rethink communal cultural infrastructure** in a way that serves the relevant needs of the local communities (esp. libraries, houses of culture and local cinemas).
- Address the need for specialized **cultural media** and professional criticism.

Cross-sectoral cooperation:

- Implement **dual education** initiatives, for example in the library sector.
- Expand **decolonization training programmes**.
- Create platforms for **intersectoral interaction** and synchronization within the industry.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Working in wartime demands extraordinary resilience. All efforts to halt Russian aggression, to ensure accountability, and to prevent future violence must remain central. "Recovery" must be understood through a culturally sensitive lens—one that rethinks outdated systems and embraces thoughtful restoration of heritage and public spaces. As Ukraine moves toward EU integration, the task is not only to rebuild, but to co-create new institutions, align with European standards, document lived experience, and shape a future where Ukrainian culture is a cornerstone of both national renewal and European identity.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

[MUSEUMS]	1	Yuliya Lytvynets	National Art Museum of Ukraine
	2	Maria Roshko	Dmytro Yavornytsky National Historical Museum of Dnipro
	3	Vira Yarova	Kharkiv Art Museum
	4	Zhanna Klochko	Sumy Regional Museum of Local Lore
	5	Viktoriya Vodopyan	Zaporizhzhia Regional Museum of Local Lore
	6	Yuliya Vaganova	Khanenko Museum
[RESERVES]	1	Nelya Kukovalska	Sophia Kyivs'ka National Reserve
	2	Oksana Povyakel	National Museum of Folk Architecture and Life of Ukraine "Pyrohovo"
	3	Nataliya Rebrova	National architectural and historical reserve "Ancient Chernihiv"
	4	Svitlana Okhrimenko	Khortytsia National Reserve
	5	Ihor Korost	Bilsk Historical and Cultural Reserve
	6	Maksim Ostapenko	National preserve "Kyiv-Pechersk lavra"
[ARCHIVES]	1	Oleksandr Lashko	State Archival Service of Ukraine
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	3	Iryna Lopushynska	State Archives of Kherson Oblast
	4	Anastasiya Kholyavka	Urban Media Archive, Center for Urban History, Lviv
	5	Vitalii Sosnytskyi	State Archives of Kharkiv Oblast
[LIBRARIES]	1	Svitlana Kravchenko	Ukrainian Library Association
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	3	Valentyna Yaroshchuk	Rivne Regional Universal Scientific Library
	4	Valentyna Kalchenko	Sumy Regional Scientific Library
	5	Nataliia Rozkolupa	Yaroslav Mudryi National Library of Ukraine
	6	Iryna Shestopal	National Childrens' Library of Ukraine
[THEATRES]	1	Valeriia Tiagun	National Academic Ukrainian Drama Theatre named after Maria Zankovetska
	2	Tamara Trunova	Kyiv Academic Drama and Comedy Theater on the left bank of the Dnipro River
	3	Anastasiia Haishenets	Kyiv National Academic Drama Theatre named after Ivan Franko.
	4	Veronika Skliarova	Parade-fest
	5	Tetiana Holubova	Nafta Theatre, Kharkiv

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	2	Kateryna Goncharova	World Monuments Fund, WMF
	3	Andrii Hryvniak	Skeiron
	4	Vasyl Rozhko	HeMo: Ukrainian Heritage Monitoring Lab
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[MUSIC]	1	Olha Kononenko	National House of Organ and Chamber Music of Ukraine
	2	Bohdan Sehin	Lviv National Philharmonic named after Myroslav Skoryk.
	3	Yuliia Nikolaievska	Kharkiv I. P. Kotlyarevsky National University of Arts.
	4	Oleksii Bondarenko	Liroom Media
	5	Anna Gadetska	Open Opera Ukraine
[LITERATURE]	1	Tetiana Pylypchuk	Kharkiv Literary Museum
	2	Olena Odynoka	Ukrainian Book Institute
	3	Yuliya Kozlovets	International Book Arsenal Festival
	4	Olha Petryshyn	Ukrainian Institute
	5	Oksana Khmelovska	Chytomo
[CONTEMPORARY ART]	1	Alyona Karavay	Contemporary art exhibition space "Assortment Room"
	2	Bozhena Pelenska	Jam Factory
	3	Nataliia Ivanova	Yermilov Center for Contemporary Art
	4	Andrii Palash	DCCC, Kultura Medialna
[CONSERVATION / RESTORATION OF MOVABLE HERITAGE]	1	Svitlana Strelnikova	National Research and Restoration Center of Ukraine
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	6	Olha Dolinska	Khmelnytskyi Regional Art Museum

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	4	Valentyna Bochkovska	Ukrainian Cultural Foundation
	5	Olha Honchar	Museum Crisis Center
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	2	Nadia Parfan	Takflix
	3	Natalia Movshovych	Suspilne
	4	Denys Ivanov	Arthouse Traffic
	5	Andriy Khalpakhchi	Molodist Film Festival

[Partners & Funders}

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Funded by the European Union

Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine

Robert Bosch Stiftung

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UKRAINE-Förderlinie

UkraineRecovery Conference
10-11 July 2025 - Rome, Italy