

Concept Note

The impact of Russia's full-scale war of aggression on the culture sector of Ukraine has been devastating, including for historic cities, cultural sites and built heritage, as well as for cultural institutions, museums and collections, the creative sector and the practice and transmission of intangible cultural heritage, that are at the heart of social cohesion.

As of 10 April 2024, UNESCO has verified the damage to 351 cultural sites (129 religious sites, 157 buildings of historical and/or artistic interest, 31 museums, 19 monuments, 14 libraries, 1 archive). Further, the third cycle of Ukraine Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment (RDNA3) identified 4,779 cultural and tourism assets destroyed or damaged. As of 31 December 2023, the total cost of damage to the sector was estimated at US\$3.49 billion. The losses in the sector, including revenue losses from tourism, arts, entertainment, and recreation, cultural and creative industries, cultural education, debris removal, and valued asset protection, are estimated at US\$19.6 billion. Over the next 10 years (2024–2033), the total needs for recovery and reconstruction, including service delivery restoration, amount to US\$8.94 billion. Against the key urgent actions that have been identified to amount to US\$197 million for 2024, the Government's immediate priorities are focused on funding physical infrastructure and can only cover US\$6 million.

Since the beginning of the war in February 2022, there has been a considerable mobilization among the international community in support of the culture sector of Ukraine.

The Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine has defined six priority areas for support of the culture sector: (i) monitoring, assessment, and documentation of damage to cultural heritage of Ukraine; (ii) reconstruction and recovery of cultural heritage of Ukraine; (iii) revival of institutional capacity of cultural institutions and cultural education; (iv) strengthening cultural and creative industries of Ukraine; (v) strengthening resilience through culture; (vi) digital transformation of cultural heritage management, developing of digital infrastructure, creation of digital cultural heritage inventories for integration and interoperability with international databases.

These six areas have also been the focus areas of the international coordination efforts through the International Coordination Meetings for Culture in Ukraine and the dedicated working groups convened by the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine and UNESCO to take stock of the impact of the war on the culture sector, better coordinate various efforts and initiatives underway, avoid duplication and seek synergies, as well as to jointly develop an *Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine*.

It responds to the priorities of the Government of Ukraine, in particular, those of the *Recovery and Development Plan for Ukraine* presented at the Lugano Conference on the Recovery of Ukraine in 2022.

The international conference *Towards the Recovery of the Culture Sector of Ukraine* will also respond to the needs identified in the Culture and Tourism chapter of the Third Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment and will be aligned with the seven principles of the [Lugano Declaration](#): 1) partnership, 2) reform focus, 3) transparency, accountability and rule of law, 4) democratic participation, 5) multistakeholder engagement, 6) gender equality and inclusion, 7) sustainability, and complement other meetings of the Ukraine Recovery Conference cycle.

The international conference *Towards the Recovery of the Culture Sector of Ukraine* hosted by the Republic of Lithuania in close cooperation with Ukraine, and in partnership with UNESCO would aim to:

- raise awareness about the impact of the war on the culture sector and mobilize support to put culture at the centre of reconstruction and recovery plans in Ukraine;
- generate international support for stabilization and recovery from the effects of the war, including through emergency assistance to address immediate needs and so as to help the country prepare for recovery, seizing the opportunity to transform the culture sector;
- highlight the specific cultural domains and regions of Ukraine that require further international assistance;
- contribute to the larger recovery planning for Ukraine, and feed into the discussions to be held at the Ukraine Recovery Conference 2024, organized in Berlin on 10 and 11 June 2024.

The discussions of the Conference will be organized into two sessions. The First session will aim to take stock of the impact of the war on the culture sector and is expected to result in better coordinated efforts and initiatives underway, as well as to present the updated *Action Plan for Culture in Ukraine*.

The Second session will be co-chaired by the Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and high-level representative of the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine. It will aim to provide a platform for high level representatives to share their insights and/or announce concrete pledges towards the recovery of the culture sector of Ukraine.

At the end of the Conference, the adoption of the document *Vilnius Call for Action on the Recovery of the Culture Sector of Ukraine* is foreseen.

Expected participation

The Conference will bring together high-level Government representatives, as well as technical partners from the international community, international organizations, private sector and civil society, including cultural and creative industries.