



IAA Europe Submission to the European Commission's Call for Evidence: "Artificial intelligence strategy for the cultural and creative sectors"

The International Association of Art (IAA) Europe, an umbrella organization for visual artists' associations in Europe, is thankful for the opportunity to contribute to this call for evidence on an artificial intelligence strategy for the cultural and creative sectors in the European Union.

We wholeheartedly welcome the fact that the EU is working on an artificial intelligence strategy for the cultural and creative sectors.

We strongly urge that the cultural value of the arts and the economic value of the creative sector in Europe be given top priority, and that the EU not yield to the interests of the major players in generative AI. Human creativity must remain at the center of the European cultural ecosystem.

Visual artists welcome and use new technologies. We support technical development for the greater good of Europe's societies and economies, where this strengthens cultural and educational institutions and complements creativity. But AI models are not developed in a non-commercial context. They are developed to generate significant income, which, at present, is not rightly allocated.

Artists are currently suffering considerable harm because of generative AI. It severely damages their livelihood, as long as it remains unregulated. This is particularly true of the visual arts sector, which has a very high number of solo self-employed individuals and – compared with other sectors – few intermediary structures.¹ The search for greater discoverability on the one hand, and for better means of monetization on the other, combined with the fact that there are few intermediaries to act as a buffer in negotiations, make the challenges facing visual artists particularly great.

Therefore, safeguarding artists' rights, in particular through copyright, must be at the core of strategies for fostering innovation and competitiveness through collaboration between CCS and European AI developers, the promotion of fair business models and the protection of European creation and original content.

IAA Europe also emphasizes the importance of a significant share of generative AI development taking place within the EU in the future. Adequate infrastructure should be made available within the EU to strengthen European self-sufficiency, including in terms of technological security and cultural significance.

¹ See <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/34da2669-32b4-11f1-be39-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (08.09.2026)

IAA Europe calls for:

- **A new regulatory framework for copyright and AI**, to ensure fair competition and fair models of remuneration, while at the same time preventing the unauthorized use of copyright-protected material. IAA Europe supports an unwaivable right to compensation for past unauthorized scraping and training, alongside a strong licensing market for future uses of copyright-protected works for the training of AI models. Collective Management Organizations can play a substantial role here, with their know-how and experience.
- **Moving beyond "opt-out"**: Exceptions to copyright are originally established to cover non-commercial uses. Developers of AI do not pursue their business for non-commercial purposes. AI training generates significant revenues which are not being properly shared with the artists whose works are used for training. Furthermore, the opt-out mechanism, as outlined in the DSM Directive, resp. under the TDM exception, and declared to be a tool for artists to stop their works from being used for training, is in practice extremely unfavorable for them. For most artists, it is impossible to follow and verify its use effectively. Key principles of authorization, remuneration, and transparency must be upheld. This requires moving beyond the opt-out mechanism towards more sustainable and fair approaches, including requiring explicit, verifiable consent for the use of intellectual property in training GPAI models.
- **Actively reduce the substitution effect**: AI-generated content is flooding the market. The EU can regulate the presence of AI-generated output by endorsing human creation and ensuring remuneration to authors who contribute to AI output. Again, CMOs can play a significant role here, building on their established models and experience to ensure authors' rights.
- **Fair remuneration for artists**: The arts require professional artists who can live by what they create and who can work freely. Remunerating visual artists – just as others are being paid for their work in the arts and in all other economic fields – is an investment in the future of our societies, and in the social, cultural and economic development of Europe. Artists must always be fairly remunerated for the use of their works.
Concerning AI, alongside licensing for future uses, artists must be able to obtain compensation for past unauthorized scraping and training. Strong transparency, auditing and enforcement mechanisms are necessary to ensure that remuneration rights cannot be circumvented. A prerequisite for the demand for fair remuneration is also a strengthening of the right to collective bargaining and the inclusion of artists' associations, Arts Councils and/or collecting societies in the decision processes that are relevant for artistic income.
- **Better working conditions and social protection**: Stronger social protection for artists and cultural workers is essential to competitive and sustainable cultural and creative sectors in Europe. This particularly applies to the field of visual arts, as the majority of the sector works alone as solo self-employed individuals. Of particular significance here, and strongly supported by IAA Europe, are the EU's current efforts to establish a so-called Artists' Charter.
- **Increased cultural funding**. Adequate funding is needed in Europe for cultural project development, leadership training, education, digitization and accessibility. Culture should have dedicated funding lines at European, national and local levels to prevent the prioritization of AI output over human creation.² This is also necessary to support broad access to cultural content through public funding at the different levels, rather than relying on AI development alone to provide such access while compromising the livelihoods of artists by depriving them of an important source of income.

² View also "The art of making a living: On the economic and social situation of visual artists"
https://www.igbk.de/images/news-service/The_art_of_making_a_living_en_2026_bbk_igbk.pdf (08.09.2026)

The International Association of Art (IAA) Europe is a network of about 40 national member organizations within Europe, representing professional visual artists. It is the only European organization dedicated to representing the voice of national artists' associations, thus standing for the authentic perspective of artists as cultural producers and authors of original artworks for more than 20 years. Roughly estimated, IAA Europe, through its member organizations, represents more than 80,000 visual artists throughout Europe.

IAA Europe is also one of the five cultural regions of the International Association of Art (IAA), the largest international non-governmental association of visual artists, founded 1954, with more than 100 member organizations worldwide.

The IAA supports international cooperation free from any aesthetic, political or other bias and aims to improve the economic and social position of artists at the national and international levels. It strives to facilitate the creation of visual artworks in a spirit of universal humanism in communities throughout the world.

<https://iaa-europe.eu/>