

Reset! network
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**Reset! Welcomes MEPs
Emma Rafowicz and Alice
Kuhnke's Draft Report
on AgoraEU Making
'Independence' a Pillar of
the New Programme**



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On May 18th, 2026, the draft report on AgoraEU by MEP Emma Rafowicz (S&D, France) and MEP Alice Kuhnke (Greens, Sweden)—answering the European Commission’s proposal formulated in July 2025—was made public.

This draft report represents the Parliament’s position on AgoraEU— the new programme, merging current Creative Europe with its Culture and Media strands and Citizens, Equality, Rights, and Values (CERV)—and it is one marked by ambition. The report is notably exciting because many changes made to the European Commission’s proposal are based on the cultural sector’s own requests and proposals, and clearly includes the notion that Reset! has been pushing for for years—‘independence.’

The Central Position of Independence

With 19 occurrences of the term ‘independence,’ this document is the first institutional one clearly considering the importance of independent cultural players within the larger cultural landscape in Europe.

It recognises the necessity to safeguard cultural organisations’ independence throughout the continent as a way to ensure a stable and democratic political ensemble.

“The Programme should aim to reinforce the independence of production not only as a cultural objective but also as an industrial and strategic priority for the Union, contributing to media pluralism, democratic resilience, and long-term competitiveness.” (Amendment 21, Recital 12, p. 23)

Also, the text enhances the importance of stable and long-term funding for cultural and media organisations to be able to maintain their independence and improve the working conditions of their workers.

“In order to ensure the independence and sustainability of civil society organisations, the Programme should provide for predictable and multiannual award of operating grants.” (Amendment 37, Recital 23, p. 38)

Reinforcement of Artistic Freedom’s Defence

Reset! has long denounced the attempts on artistic freedom in its thorough editorial coverage of independent cultural and media organisations’ situations across Europe and beyond. Its advocacy work reflects the same commitment: contributing to the Culture Compass consultation in March 2025, coordinating Culture Action Europe’s Towards the Culture Compass: A Sector’s Blueprint’s chapter on Artistic Freedom, co-facilitating an Action Group on the topic, and creating a dedicated Working Group in partnership with Trans Europe Halles.

As a network, we welcome positively the recognition of the necessity to hold specific attention to countries and situations where “civic space is shrinking or where civil society organisations face legal, administrative or financial restrictions, the Programme should prioritise support aimed at safeguarding their independence, operational capacity, core infrastructure and legal assistance, such as pro-bono lawyers, and could also support civil society organisations in addressing threats and attacks, such as smear campaigns and strategic lawsuits.”(Amendment 9-37, Recital 23, p. 38)



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This draft report makes the full respect of artistic freedom a condition for each sector to reach stability, and makes the Union also responsible for having making sure it is implemented. This perfectly aligns with Reset! positions on artistic freedom, the recognition of its importance, and its respect—notably defended in Culture Action Europe's Towards the Culture Compass: A Sector Blueprint, Chapter 1 on Artistic Freedom (coordinated by Reset!).

Overall, this draft report on AgoraEU sets a positive sign for the future of European cultural, media, and civil society organisations with an ambitious vision looking towards defending independence, respecting artistic freedom, improving the sector's working conditions, and securing more stable funding.

Reset! welcomes the text as a semantic hit with the use of the term and recognition of 'independence' as a value that needs to be considered, cherished, and always defended.

References

European Parliament's Draft Report on establishing the 'AgoraEU' programme for the period 2028-2034

Reading between the strands: AgoraEU after Parliament and Council, Culture Action Europe, May 29th, 2026



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