

The Culture Compass



Europe for Culture, Culture for Europe

The EU Commissioner Glenn Micallef presented the Culture Compass, a new initiative intended to promote a stronger European culture and increased cohesion, resilience and competitiveness. This comes at a time when Europe is faced with accelerating change in the digital economy and increased friction geopolitically and geoeconomically. The use of soft power in the form of culture can be a useful tool for a more robust continent.

For Malta, the Culture Compass can be an important stepping stone in advancing sustainability, digitalisation and cohesion efforts and is applicable to the business sphere. The Malta Business Bureau (MBB) presents this policy brief to outline the key points of interest and how these can be applied in a Maltese context.

Connecting Culture and Business

1. Education and Youth

The role of young people in this new Compass is not overlooked, especially considering their importance in future economic growth. As young people become more represented in the arts and culture sphere, specific structures can be put in place for more prominent participation in cultural governance and for added entrepreneurial opportunities. This strengthens talent pools for various sectors.

This is supported by an inclusive participation in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) to support an interdisciplinary approach, encouraging more holistic thinking, which is increasingly sought after in the labour market, and reduce brain drain.

2. Improved Well-Being and Inclusion

Cultural engagement and immersion have proven to support improved health and well-being as engagement in local projects increases. This allows for inclusivity and accessibility to become more widespread, also beneficial for individuals living in remote locations and in areas risking depopulation or facing socio-economic challenges, to create greater connectivity between such regions and cultural hubs.

This enhances local economies, stimulates demand for cultural services, and creates new market opportunities in regions facing challenges.

3. Sectoral Overlap

An emphasis on culture calls for increased collaboration amongst various stakeholders, from young to old and from public to private, which can unlock new revenue streams and diversify economies as the multiplier effect is fostered. The representation of cultural and linguistic diversity requires the mobilisation of individuals working in various

sectors and can lead to integrated cultural experiences that enhance value, attracting higher-spending visitors and boosting local businesses.

Culture Driving Sustainability

A deeper appreciation for culture and identity encourages more sustainable behaviour, as the environment and society become increasingly valued.

Highlighting environmental and social challenges can promote greener infrastructural projects supported by heritage safeguarding and landscape management. The adoption of traditional methods of environmental safeguarding, through co-creation with communities, can allow for better climate mitigation and adaptation.

This can be streamlined through investment in digitalisation, as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and social media can facilitate the creation of green projects and share their developments, through increased visibility. However, to safeguard authenticity, the development and governance of AI systems should ensure a fair human-centric and rights-based approach, to avoid harming businesses and jobs.

Navigating The Compass Nationally

The Culture Compass holds significant potential for Malta. The island's rich cultural heritage and strong tourism sector make it particularly relevant for the development of relevant initiatives. Below are initiatives that can be adopted:

- **Align the Culture Compass to the Mediterranean Pact** to position Malta as a strong country globally and in Europe
 - Organise joint festivals and artist residencies.
- Develop **cross-sector collaboration** for a stronger labour market
 - Create partnerships between hospitality, arts and culture (e.g. via corporate sponsorships and co-branding initiatives).
- **Embed cultural competencies** into business strategies
 - Improves employee engagement, creativity, and enhances competitiveness.
- **Upskilling locals** in cultural management and storytelling
 - Helps shape a stronger national identity and share these values abroad.
- Use **digital tools** such as Virtual Reality (VR) to offer immersive experiences.
- **Consider sustainability** in initiatives

- Supports green infrastructure projects that complement Maltese architecture.
- Attracts higher-quality tourism (e.g. eco-tourism), generating positive national spillovers.
- Creates new revenue streams and competitive differentiation, especially as new consumer priorities emerge.

Thus, integrating heritage, digital innovation, and environmental stewardship in Malta will ensure compliance with EU priorities while fostering inclusive growth and resilience across sectors, for a richer culture that is shared across borders and an entertainment industry that flourishes.

The full EU Culture Compass may be accessed [here](#).

Disclaimer: This is a policy brief to create awareness about the legislative proposal and for information purposes. It is not an official position of the Malta Business Bureau.

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