

A MANIFESTO
TOWARDS A
EUROPEAN
STRATEGY
FOR CRAFTS
2025

CRAFTING EUROPE



European
Crafts
Alliance

“We call upon European institutions and national decision makers to support the Crafting Europe Manifesto and to work together on this six-point action plan to ensure the survival and development of craft for future generations.”

The European Crafts Alliance members and partners are the voice of millions of craft professionals, studios, and manufacturers across Europe. Craft is a dynamic and diverse sector encompassing hundreds of specialised trades. While widely recognised crafts include textile, fashion, ceramics, glass, metal, jewellery, and woodworking, countless other crafts remain uniquely intertwined with Europe's heritage, territory, culture, and traditions.

In 2019, the Crafting Europe Manifesto was unveiled in Paris with a clear mission: to elevate the visibility of the European crafts sector and encourage policy makers to take action. Since then, significant strides have been made. However, despite some encouraging progress within specific policies, a substantial amount of work still lies ahead.

The sector has faced unprecedented challenges, ranging from the disruptive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to subsequent economic downturns and inflation. Geopolitical uncertainties, including trade tensions and conflicts, have disrupted supply chains and reduced international demand for European crafts. Yet, in the face of adversity, the sector has shown remarkable resilience—adopting digital innovations, tapping into new markets, and advocating for robust, supportive policies.

Navigating the complexities of today's landscape requires a unified and strategic approach. Collaboration among craftspeople, associations, and governments is not merely beneficial but essential to safeguard and nurture Europe's invaluable craft heritage for future generations.

The initial manifesto provided a pivotal platform for European craft professionals, enabling their voices to be heard by the European Commission. Since then, the Commission has demonstrated unwavering support by allocating funds to numerous projects aimed at strengthening craft ecosystems across Europe.

THE ACTION PLAN AIMS TO DELIVER SOLUTIONS THAT WILL

→ ACKNOWLEDGE THE CRAFT SECTOR'S IMPACT

Recognise and celebrate the invaluable contributions of the craft sector to European society, heritage, culture, and the economy, highlighting its role as a cornerstone of our collective identity.

→ CHAMPION HUMAN-CENTRIC CREATIVITY

Promote this vibrant creative sector that nurtures a deep human connection to the world around us, offering a model for sustainable development within local economies.

→ SUPPORT GROWTH THROUGH LEGISLATION

Advocate for robust policies and tailored support mechanisms that empower the craft sector to thrive commercially, ensuring long-term stability and growth.

→ FOSTER EDUCATION AND SKILL TRANSFER

Prioritise the development of tailored training programmes and educational initiatives that not only equip young people with essential craft skills but also facilitate the seamless transfer of knowledge from seasoned artisans to the next generation. This focus on education is crucial for maintaining the sector's sustainability and safeguarding traditional crafts.

→ DRIVE INNOVATION AND EVOLUTION

Stimulate creativity and forward-thinking approaches within the craft sector, ensuring that traditional techniques continue to evolve and adapt to modern contexts.

→ PROMOTE AND PRESERVE CRAFT HERITAGE

Enhance public awareness of the craft sector, underscoring the importance of preserving and protecting Europe's rich craft heritage, which has been carefully passed down through generations.

→ LEVERAGE CRAFTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Highlight and accelerate the craft sector's leading and transformative role in sustainability and the circular economy. Empower craftspeople to maximise their potential in combating climate change, reducing environmental impact, and contributing to both urban and rural development.

→ ADVANCE RESEARCH AND MATERIAL INNOVATION

Position the craft sector at the forefront of research and innovation through material experimentation. Craft workshops should be recognised as unique and sustainable laboratories for research and development, driving new discoveries and practices.

→ REVITALISE LOCAL CRAFT INDUSTRIES

Support the re-establishment and revitalisation of local supply chains and craft industries—such as the wool and silkworm sectors—strengthening local economies and preserving vital elements of our heritage while reducing dependency on global supply chains.

ACTION PLAN

1.

ENSURE REPRESENTATION OF THE CRAFT SECTOR IN ALL ITS DIMENSIONS THROUGH EUROPEAN SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

Advocate for the equal representation of 'craftsperson, artisan, craftworker, craft artist, maker, and manufacturer' within all relevant European programmes (2026-2030), beyond the artistic and creative industries, including sustainability, education, and innovation initiatives. Ensure equality of access to European public funds for craft professionals and their institutions, fostering inclusivity and supporting a diverse range of craft practices.

2.

SUPPORT MEASURES THAT HELP TO BOOST ENTERPRISE AND ACCESS TO MARKETS FOR CRAFT BUSINESSES

Ensure that regulations are appropriate to the scale and specific needs of craft businesses, promoting growth while maintaining the authenticity and quality of traditional craftsmanship. Increase access to professional development opportunities, including digital transformation, market expansion (e.g., e-commerce, international trade), and business skills training. Provide dedicated support for the adoption of innovative practices and technologies, enabling craft businesses to adapt to evolving market demands and contribute to the circular economy.

3.

ADDRESS THE DECLINE IN TRAINING PROVISION AND TRANSMISSION OF SKILLS

Collaborate with European craft institutions and educational establishments to develop targeted training programmes that bridge the gap between master craftspeople and emerging talent. Upskilling and reskilling craftspeople is crucial—not just for their individual growth, but also for the sustainability and evolution of the craft industry as a whole. Establish mentorship and apprenticeship schemes that facilitate the transmission of traditional skills to young people, ensuring the sustainability of the craft sector while enhancing the non-formal education and standardising certification of skills at EU level. Promote educational initiatives that highlight the broader applicability of craft skills in other industries, including construction, heritage restoration, and high-end manufacturing, demonstrating the sector's versatility and economic value.

4.

UNDERTAKE RESEARCH TO IDENTIFY AND QUANTIFY THE ECONOMIC, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL VALUE OF CRAFT TO EUROPE

Work with European partners to create a robust framework for measuring the economic, educational, cultural, and social impact of the craft sector on European society. Promote the creation of a crafts NACE code. Conduct research to quantify the sector's contributions to other industries, emphasising how craft expertise supports fields like architecture, conservation, and sustainable development. Enhance the provision of Geographical Indications (GIs) for crafts, offering protection to traditional techniques and ensuring the economic sustainability of regions known for specific artisanal practices.

5.

PROMOTE THE RECOGNITION AND PROTECTION OF THE CRAFT SECTOR THROUGH LEGISLATION

Advocate for legislation at European and national levels that recognises and protects craft professions, providing a legal framework to support the sector's future. Support the development of legal protections that ensure craft businesses can thrive in both domestic and international markets, preserving Europe's rich cultural heritage.

6.

HOST A EUROPEAN YEAR OF CRAFT

Develop a proposal to designate a 'European Year of Craft' within the 2026-2030 EU programme to raise awareness amongst policymakers, institutions, and the public. Highlight the vital role of crafts in maintaining traditional skills while driving forward new solutions in urban and rural development, climate action, and community resilience.

Support the manifesto at europeancraftsalliance.org



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