eNCATC
EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF CULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY

TYPE Original Research
PUBLISHED 01 April 2026
DOI 10.3389/ejcmp.2026.15478

OPEN ACCESS

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RECEIVED 24 August 2025
REVISED 12 February 2026
ACCEPTED 19 February 2026
PUBLISHED 01 April 2026

CITATION
Nehl M (2026) Infrastructuring cultural policy: the case of Creative Europe's "Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities".
Eur. J. Cult. Manag. Policy 16:15478.
doi: 10.3389/ejcmp.2026.15478

Infrastructuring cultural policy: the case of Creative Europe's "Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities"

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Cultural networks play an important role in cultural governance: facilitating cooperation between local and EU policy actors and shaping policymaking processes. The network-led, Creative Europe-financed project *Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities* (CCSC; 2018–2021) experimented with policy co-creation between civic, cultural, and administrative stakeholders, addressing a variously discussed gap between these actors. Asking whether the concerns of cultural actors gain traction in EU-level policymaking, I use discourse analysis of CCSC publications to identify differences in projects stakeholders' problem representations. Underlining the importance of policy co-creation projects as discursive arenas and spaces of encounter, the cultural actors' local perspective problematises responsibility and participation of citizens as contextual and ultimately structural questions. The essential work of local cultural actors in networks is not addressed, and networks themselves recede in CCSC discussions. The paper suggests that future EU cultural policy should more explicitly recognise and support the infrastructural labour that enables soft governance.

KEYWORDS

bottom-up participation, collaboration, cultural networks, cultural policy, discourse analysis, infrastructuring

Introduction

What happens when cultural actors move from the margins of policy consultation to the centre of policymaking? When policy is not about, but by, and for them? This paper examines the Creative Europe-funded project *Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities* (CCSC, 2018–2021), which explored public policymaking practices between the cultural sector and public administrations (Trans Europe Halles, 2025). As a temporary policy arena (Schad-Spindler et al., 2023), CCSC provided a space for local and regional authorities, cultural organisations, and civil society actors to test collaborative policymaking approaches across seven European cities. Projects like this intend channelling contextual and on-the-ground-knowledge to the top of policymaking, hence the paper asks: *to what extent do the concerns of cultural actors gain traction in EU-level policymaking through such collaborative frameworks?* The initial call for projects

(European Commission, 2017: 100) framed the gap between cultural and creative organisations and policymakers as being about communicative relations and the absence of exchange around sector internal knowledge. CCSC aimed to bridge this divide by creating structured arenas, allowing a flow of knowledge, and gaining greater mutual understanding and improved practices in both directions, linking the local with the transnational level of EU-wide policymaking.

CCSC presents the first official policymaking project led and enabled by the network Trans Europe Halles (TEH). It was composed of a consortium of academic, administrative, and cultural actors engaging in the exploration of collaborative policymaking practices through the means of seven urban laboratories (labs). Within the urban lab methodology, policymaking takes shape as locally embedded, situated practice (Durrer et al., 2023) rather than abstract discourse. This paper further suggests understanding the CCSC project as an example of collaborative policymaking in the relational, temporary policy arena enabled through European cultural networks, through the example of TEH. It situates the project in ongoing debates on participatory cultural governance in the apparatus of the European Union (EU) in which cultural networks act as intermediaries. While there is consensus around the importance of networks to connect the local with the transnational policy level (Littoz-Monnet, 2013; Magkou, 2021; Nehl and Landau-Donnelly, 2025), little is known about *how* networks work and how their members active in collaborative policymaking projects, such as CCSC, perceive their position and possibilities to act upon policy.

This paper investigates whether and how CCSC accommodates the needs and conditions of grassroots cultural actors through a Carol Bacchi (2009)-inspired discourse analysis. Framing policymaking and the ongoing activities of various people (cultural actors, organisers, and artists) as *cultural infrastructuring*, the paper specifically asks 1) What problems do stakeholders involved in the CCSC project construct and represent? 2) In what ways do these representations reflect underlying (infra)structural needs and conditions of those stakeholders? and 3) At what moments, and for which stakeholders, do infrastructural conditions emerge through the translation of these needs into concrete policies and practices? The paper is structured as follows: After introducing cultural policymaking as cultural infrastructuring, I elaborate on cultural networks' role in EU policymaking and governance. The methods section introduces Bacchi's (2009) approach to policy as problems and solutions, followed by an abductive analytical process dissecting CCSC publications. The paper shows that bottom-up demands of cultural actors reverberate around problem formulations of a structural *gap*. Second, it reveals how the CCSC project highlights a disconnect between EU-level framings of empowerment and the infrastructural needs exemplified by local cultural actors seeking recognition and systemic support for the work they already do.

Policymaking as cultural infrastructure(ing)

This paper suggests thinking of cultural policymaking as *infrastructuring*. Infrastructure is presented as a figure and practice to think with, allowing understanding of how different scales of policymaking, namely the local and the transnational level, are interconnected, not only in theory, but in practice. Infrastructure as a figure points to the invisible, overlooked, and taken-for-granted structures, facilitating smooth everyday experiences[1]. But infrastructures are never just there; borrowing from [McFarlane and Silver (2017): 463], infrastructure is the "practice of connecting people and things in socio-material relations that sustain urban [and thus cultural] life". Bain and Podmore (2023: 15) define cultural infrastructure as inclusive of "buildings, facilities, spaces, practices, funding and legal frameworks, personal and institutional networks as well as social media sites" supportive of urban culture in local settings. I suggest adding cultural policy as it is, following Ahearne (2009: 144) "prescribing and shaping cultural practices" and thus forming part of infrastructuring as product and process.

The availability of infrastructure components like a discursive policy framework, a building, or a social network alone does not turn into supporting infrastructure without the continuous work of cultural actors (Bain and Podmore, 2023) that enables involvement in policymaking. Cultural actors, such as the members of networks and participants in CCSC, contribute to sustaining cultural networks, meaning they organise their everyday work to make room and capacity to be involved in policymaking in the first place. Infrastructuring as a process thus foregrounds the collective activities through which infrastructures become apparent. Methodologically, an infrastructural approach does not work with a defined object but starts from different actor groups and their infrastructural needs and practices (Volmar, 2023: 63). Further, the approach questions agencies and is sensitive to social positions of power, impacting when and under what conditions infrastructure becomes supportive for some and a burden for others (Star and Ruhleder, 1996; Volmar, 2023).

If cultural policymaking and advocacy work in the European context is facilitated by, and thus dependent on, cultural networks (Scioldo, 2024b), the making and maintenance of these networks is important infrastructural work and the backbone of cultural policymaking (Nehl and Landau-Donnelly, 2025). Furthermore, projects such as CCSC are entangled in this work, as they are the reason and context, but also a source of funding for maintaining the network. In other words, if "infrastructure is made and held stable through

1 Typical examples of infrastructures are the internet, water and electricity, public transport, and, of course, visible structures such as bridges.

work and changing ways of connecting" (McFarlane and Silver, 2017: 463), CCSC as a temporary collaborative policymaking project presents one such way and a case through which to understand what this work entails.

Infrastructuring cultural policy unfolds as a relational process, jointly achieved with and through cultural networks and all the actors involved, rather than simply being there (Nehl and Landau-Donnelly, 2025). Cultural infrastructuring carries potential to account for the laboursome tasks, or organising (Cnossen, 2022), cultural actors do alongside their work, such as creating and maintaining locations, materials, social networks, and the relationships between them. Cultural policymaking and cultural infrastructuring processes mutually shape one another, as it requires a degree of organisation to infrastructure, and it needs infrastructure to build policymaking capacity, both of which are being maintained in the networks. Infrastructuring, rather than infrastructure, allows criticising the instrumentality argument, while acknowledging cultural networks as agents worth studying (Magkou, 2021; Scioldo, 2024b). Against this backdrop, the next section outlines key mechanisms in the EU cultural policy context and focuses specifically on the work of networks in linking the local-level actors with the transnational level. It further reviews literature addressing the disconnect between policy and cultural actors and concludes introducing the CCSC project.

Situating local cultural actors in EU policymaking

The possibility for local cultural actors to participate in EU-wide policymaking emerged in the 1980s and 1990s when cultural networks, in which cultural actors organise, gained recognition and a place in the EU's multilevel governance architecture. Policymaking in the network society (Castells, 2009) led to changing language, practices, actors, and places, expressed in a shift from government to governance (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). Characteristic for the European cultural policy arena today is a dynamic between cultural actors at the local level and officials at the EU political level, which shapes EU-specific policymaking mechanisms and programmes (Scioldo, 2024a; Scioldo, 2024b). The EU's role in culture has always been intentionally limited (subsidiary principle), revised treaties like Maastricht (1992) led to culture becoming a 'competency' and the Lisbon treaty (2007) recognised the cultural and creative industries (CCI) as a competitive economic factor and legitimised monitoring and, thus, incentives to intervene *softly*.

So called "soft law" takes the shape of multilevel, network-based processes and resulting recommendations, guidelines, and best practices, crucial in the EU context and its limited competence within culture. Funding programmes like Kaleidoscope, Culture 2000, and, most prominently, *Creative Europe* (CE) support soft policy tools such as cultural networks and linked policymaking projects such as CCSC (Scioldo, 2024b), with the initial purpose to foster European identity and integration (Littoz-Monnet, 2013; Staiger, 2009). The "soft" in cultural policy tools is borrowed from notions of soft power (cf. Nye, 2004 in Ahearne, 2009), enabling governance through persuasion and coordination and shared norms and values. While its counterpart, a treaty, presents "hard law," Maggetti (2015) explains that EU governance relies on "soft law" consisting of "[. . .] non-binding rules that are negotiated through inclusive processes between public and public actors at different levels of decision making [. . .]", (Maggetti, 2015: 255).

These negotiation processes have taken shape through policy coordination tools like "structured dialogues" and the open method of coordination (OMC), following the idea of the Lisbon treaty to foster competitiveness. While article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states EU action in the field of culture should "contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States" respecting their national and regional diversity, the OMC and joint formulation of objectives, measuring instruments, and best practices allowed more strategic involvement in the cultural sphere. Funding programmes such as CE actively shape forms of cooperation and, in doing so, contribute to the continuous reworking of cultural policy discourses (Cram, 2011). Broad and flexible concepts like *creativity* accommodate both commercial and non-commercial activity and the CCI, aligning with the Lisbon Treaty's, competitive agenda (Huijgh and Segers, 2006; Minichbauer, 2011; Littoz-Monnet, 2012).

The CE[2] prioritises the "support [of] cross sectoral transnational policy cooperation [and] support the transferability of results" (European Commission (EC), 2025). In this vein, many networks are granted project funding, and bottom-up needs and demands of cultural actors can be accommodated (Dupin-Meynard and Négrier, 2020).

Despite the intermediary role attributed to cultural networks promising to be the infrastructure that connects local actors to EU-level policymaking, the agency of cultural actors within these processes remains contested. This problem is reflected, among other things, in the discussion of a democratic deficit (Cram, 2011) and a lack of trust (Littoz-Monnet, 2013), adding to a perceived gap between the local and transnational levels, which cultural networks such as TEH aim to bridge. Independent cultural actors, and especially smaller-scale, alternative actors, identify a tension between their situated perspectives and broader policy framings, which risk marginalising the needs of art and cultural production (Littoz-Monnet, 2012: 515). Such discrepancies between policy discourse and the practiced reality of cultural work frequently emerge where top-down,

2 https://culture.ec.europa.eu/creative-europe/cross-sectoral-strand

creative economy arguments prevail, leaving bottom-up practices unequally recognised (McCall, 2019: 180). Policies uninformed by the realities of cultural small-scale producers (Karimnia and Kostourou, 2023) or less central venues (Bell and Orozco, 2020) are perceived as ill-fitting, producing irritation and suspicion (Banks and O'Connor, 2009) and ultimately hindering much needed (and politically wanted) collaboration with diverse cultural actors to address the challenges and transformations of our times.

Even though many cultural networks originate in bottom-up grassroots mobilisations (Delfin, 2012; Littoz-Monnet, 2013; Magkou, 2021; Nehl and Landau-Donnelly, 2025; Scioldo, 2024a; Scioldo 2024b), being a member of networks does not necessarily mean that local cultural actors' diverse voices are heard. Having traced networks' increasing "institutionalisation" over time, Scioldo (2024b: 162) remarks: "Initially envisioned as tools for enhancing participatory policymaking, networks have, paradoxically, contributed to a form of standardisation that mutes dissent, thus complicating the political essence of cultural dialogues within the EU". Research further highlights networks' functions as advocates and support structures for cultural actors (Magkou, 2021; 2024; Laaksonen et al., 2016) and as caring intermediaries (Dent et al., 2024) whose provision of sector-specific observational data underpins their policy relevance. But to what extent do local cultural actors' concerns gain traction in policymaking? Where and how can they be voiced? Against this background, it is important to integrate practitioners' (marginalised) knowledge to make policies match their lifeworld and possibilities. Not including cultural actors' perspectives has moral and ethical consequences, state FitzGibbon and Tsioulakis (2022), who advocate for co-research and fluid boundaries between academia and practitioners.

Cultural and creative spaces and cities (CCSC)

CCSC was a three-year long CE-funded policy project in the years between 2018 and 2021. Its purpose was to test how cultural actors and public administrations co-create policy that bridges national borders, acting between the local and transnational level in multiple EU countries. It was comprised of a consortium of eleven non-profit and public organisations, led by Trans Europe Halles (TEH), one of the oldest European cultural networks (est. 1983). The project partners were the University of Antwerp, the European Cultural Foundation (ECF), and Timelab Gent. The project methodology was built on the idea of local urban labs, where participating actors define, develop, and test new methods and tools. Responding to the open call for arts organisations and municipal or regional actors, the cultural centres Hablarenarte in Madrid, Spain, Ambasada in Timisoara, Romania, Kaapeli in Helsinki, Finland, the social innovation lab Coboi Lab in Sant boi de Llobregat, Spain, Creative Industries in Kosice (CIKE), Slovakia, and the public administration City of Lund, Sweden, as well as the cultural administration of the Scania region, joined the project. During the 3 years, the local labs worked on their challenges (21 workshops between May and December 2019), organised traineeships and urban explorations, and met and exchanged knowledge in policymaking events and a digital conference in early 2021. While the text-based project outcomes are presented in detail in the next section, among the outcomes are digital services such as a benchmarking system and an online toolkit, as well as a series of graduate and post-graduate educational formats (CCSC, 2025). Stressing commons and bottom-up processes, CCSC presented innovative approaches in regard to both agenda setting and processes [means Scioldo, (2024b): 106] and underlines the significance of the project.

I argue that CCSC exemplifies how networks function as soft governance tools; they mobilise grassroots actors, enable trans local cooperation, and shape discourse around cultural participation and democracy. As such, CCSC constitutes a key case for analysing how cultural networks navigate and shape soft governance processes across the EU's multilevel cultural policy landscape. Positioned as collaborative policy initiative, CCSC also illustrates a typical example of soft EU governance of culture, prompting the central question of how far such projects discursively accommodate the needs of cultural actors. This paper addresses this question using an infrastructural perspective and discourse analysis, as explained below.

Materials and methods

To unpack different stakeholders' problem representations, I draw on critical policy scholarship (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003) and on Carol Bacchi's methodology entitled "What's the problem represented to be?," a short WPR approach (Bacchi, 1999; 2009; Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016). The WPR approach conceptualises policy not as pregiven problems but as a set of problematisations, addressed through six guiding questions (Q1-6, below). These questions foreground how power, knowledge, and discourse are simultaneously shaped by, and productive of, social worlds. From this perspective, policy documents are understood as purposefully produced artefacts through which actors seek to represent problems, solutions, and roles. Therefore, they constitute material in which problem representations manifest and become analysable.

- Q1 Key question: What's the 'problem' represented to be?[3]

3 Q's can be used in any order (cf. Bacchi, 2009).

- Q2 What presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the problem?
- Q3 How has this representation of the problem come about?
- Q4 What is left unproblematic in this problem representation?
- Q5 What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the problem?
- Q6 How/where has this representation of the problem been reproduced, disseminated, and defended?

Combined with the interpretive policy analysis proposed by Hajer and Wagenaar (2003), the approach is sensitive to the perspectives and interpretive frameworks of both analysts and stakeholders. It foregrounds the interlinked knowing and doing and advocates for a practice-orientation (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003: 18) attentive to how policymakers and administrators act in complex, unpredictable situations. From this perspective, policy emerges as deliberative practice taking shape through interactive dialogical processes, embedded in context and emotion (Borén et al., 2021). Such deliberative processes embrace value differences and lead to temporary "workable definitions of problems" (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003: 23) rather than perfect solutions. Practical judgement "evolves slowly, often tentatively and haltingly, through mutual inquiry and mutual discourse with others" (ibid.: 23) and must always be seen as joint effort to stabilise meaning and action in a conflict-ridden, uncertain world.

Framing cultural policy as a dimension of cultural infrastructuring shifts attention to deliberative processes and inherent practices, engaging with policy actors' contexts and processes "attuned to the pluralistic, open-ended, moral-political character of the everyday world" (Wagenaar & Cook, 2003: 141). Again, policies as acts of world-making (Bacchi, 2009; Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003) shape who is visible, what is valued, and how cultural work is sustained. Using the WPR approach shifts the analytical focus to the problem representations *behind* the suggested solutions and considers the places of policymaking (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). Policy problems are thus not separate or external to the policy (making) process, "waiting to be addressed and fixed", but (re)produced alongside the making of policies.

Infrastructurally speaking, the situated processes of policymaking matter, leading me to consider the design of the policymaking process in CCSC as a solution to a problem, in part because collaborative policymaking is not happening in a neutral space but is itself a political, emotionally charged arena (Borén et al., 2021). This arena, albeit temporary, interconnects stakeholders at different levels and in different contexts whose situated practical judgements are likely to be in conflict (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003; Landau, 2019; Landau-Donnelly et al., 2023). Bacchi and Goodwin (2016) urge attending to heterogeneous practices and the contingency in lived realities, which plays into how "things," "people," "places," "organisations," and "problems" are made and remade.

The six WPR questions constitute a heuristic framework (Stevenson et al., 2017) centred on the guiding question "What's the problem represented to be in a specific policy?" (Bacchi, 2009: 2). This framing reminds us of the plurality of problems in policy texts, which are treated as social products comprised of complex constructions (Bacchi and Goodwin, 2016; Prior, 2009; Saldaña, 2016). I apply WPR as follows: I utilise Q1, Q2 primarily, and Q5 and Q6 to complement the analysis. Q3 "How has this representation of the problem come about?" has been addressed in the previous sections of this paper, in the architecture of cultural governance in Europe, where cultural networks and the CCSC project respectively sit. To a smaller but significant degree I engage with Q4 "What is left unproblematic" in the concluding discussion. My standpoint as analyst, decisive in the abductive approach (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012), builds on literature stressing cultural actors' perceptions of cultural policy as not corresponding with their reality (FitzGibbon and Tsioulakis, 2022; McCall, 2019). It further considers how governance is organised and where cultural networks and the work they do (such as leading CCSC) come in, as captured in Q3. In short, the CCSC material, introduced in more detail shortly, allows for a combined analysis informed by 1) Bacchi and Goodwin's (2016) perspective, framing the text as a site where politics happen and 2) Hajer and Wagenaar's (2003) sensitivity to the processes and places of their making. Overall, though, published policy texts are the main data for discourse analysis in the WPR approach, and only the richness of the CCSC process documentation (Table 1) gives insights into the contexts of their making. The following section presents the textual data in detail and elaborates on its preparation for analysis.

Presentation of the data

The data corpus consists of published CCSC project reports, providing an information-rich case of cultural organisations being involved in the policymaking process. The total number of fifteen documents (Table 1) range from conceptual project plans to policy analysis and recommendations, activity reports, and book projects (CCSC, 2025[4]).

Preparing for analysis, I grouped all documents into either "project design," "pre-studies," "empirical ground," or "policy recommendations" (see legend). Documents to set the scene, prior to or early in the project phase, are labelled framework/project design with agenda setting functions. For example, the "Charter of principles," hereafter CoP (2020), functions as a project introduction and elaborates on the original project

4 All CCSC project outputs can be viewed and downloaded here: https://www.spacesandcities.com/publications/

TABLE 1 Overview of documents.

Document name (and abbreviation used in text)	Editor(s)	Date of publication	Type of document
Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities - Charter of principles (CoP)	CCSC researchers (Maria Francesca de Tullio, Pascal Gielen, Hanka Otte)	January 2020	Project outline and political agenda
"Mapping of European cultural and creative spaces" (MoECCS)	Trans Europe Halles and Avril Meehan (intercult – independent european resource center)	January 2020	Mapping, pre-study
"Urban regeneration knowledge base" (urkb)	Yiorgos Papamanousakis (architect and urban development consultant)	March 2020	Pre-study, commissioned by CCSC
"Mapping of EU projects, policies, programmes and networks" (MoEPN)	Miranda Iossifidis (research associate urban planning, newcastle university, UK)	May 2020	Research report, assigned by the European Cultural Foundation
"Values of culture and creativity" (VoCC)	Joost Heinsius (independent consultant; assigned by the European Cultural Foundation)	June 2020	Lecture summary, commissioned by CCSC
"Commons. Between Dreams and Reality" (CBDR)	Maria Francesca de Tullio (researcher)	2020	Book anthology
"The commons as ecosystem for culture" (CEC)	Francesca de Tullio (researcher)	2020	Essay selection, commissioned by CCSC
"Learning labs: Co-creating insights, initiatives and policy" (LLC)	David Ershammar	2020	Report from the urban lab region Skåne
"Policy Analysis and Policy Recommendations" (PAPR)	Marjolein Cremer, Maria Francesca de Tullio, Pascal Gielen, and Violante Torre	2021	Report, commissioned by the European Cultural Foundation
"Reports of the Co-creation policy events" (RCPE)	Ana Sofía Acosta Alvarado, Kitti Baracsi, Camilla Crosta, Julia Gouin, Matina Magkou, Emmanuel Pidoux, Adrian Pleşca, Susana Rocha, Mateja Stanislava Rot	2021	Report, commissioned by the European Cultural Foundation
"Healing culture, reclaiming commons, fostering care: A proposal for EU cultural policies"	Edited by Robert Cirillo and Maria Francesca de Tullio	2021	Book anthology
"Method for tackling City Challenges" (MCC)	Ajuntament de Sant Boi de Llobregat	2021	Report from Coboi urban lab
"Co-creating a culture of participation in europe: Three perspectives on innovation in cultural policies" (CCP)	Bart Grugeon Plana	2021	Project result summaries of the urban labs
"It's not just about opening doors: Three lessons we learned when opening a space for citizens' use" (OD)	Dr. Kai Huotari	n.d.	Report from the urban lab Helsinki
"Lund Urban Lab Report: The Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities Project" (LLR)	Katarina Scott and Birgitta Persson	n.d.	Report from the urban Lab lund

Framework/ project design/agenda.
Pre-studies and conceptual works.
Empirical ground/urban labs.
Policy recommendations.
Colour code Table 1.

application. It presents definitions of the project's key terms and elaborates on the four main principles (culture as a common good, as value of urban commons, as local-level bottom-up practice, and a new basis for the legitimisation of the EU). The document entitled "Values of culture and creativity," VoCC, (2020) contains a transcript of a lecture at the first CCSC meeting in Brussels, delivered by an external advisor of the EC, providing orientation and a call for commitment to CCSC as a "challenging" process.

Further, there are three commissioned pre-studies: "Mapping of European Cultural and Creative Spaces" (MoECCS), "Urban regeneration knowledge base" (Urkb), and "Mapping of EU projects, policies, programmes and networks" (MoEPN). MoECCS lists 2500 cultural and creative organisations in Europe. A fourfold typology differentiates cultural centres, maker spaces, co-working spaces, and creative hubs but lacks an explanation of selection criteria in the typology. The other two "mappings" in report format collect previous EU projects and

TABLE 2 Examples of the WPR approach and versus coding scheme.

Data samples: policy solutions	versus codes as pointers to problematisations	Level of conflict = gaps
"It was futile to expect that any improvements could be made in building a bridge between civil society and the public authorities during the CCSC project. The strategy had to change." (CCP, 2021:16) "Funding mechanisms should allow experimentation, the establishment of relationships with communities and research periods. They should fund processes and not only outputs." (RCPE, 2021: 11)	"Arts vs. system", Arts vs. bureaucracy/us vs. them, bottom-up vs. top-down, Arts practitioners vs. EU commissioners and policy officers, funding vs. no funding/lack of funding, Structural vs. project funding	Systemic and organisational
"[. . .] the necessity of thinking about spaces of encounter between the EU and local level, where the EU learns from the territories and local actors, who can in turn be empowered and play a greater role in EU decisions." (PAPR, 2021: 56)	North vs. south, Here vs. there, Neighbourhood vs. Brussels, Local vs. transnational	Geographic Location-based
"A lack of transparency from public authorities, especially where there is a lack of public record of public/private property in the city, which prevents experimentation on the ground for cultural actors." (PAPR, 2021: 36) "When we come up with new ideas, people often tell us that it is impossible, that no one will support us." (CCP, 2021: 15)	Recognising and acknowledgement vs. overlooking, Expectations vs. experienced reality, Local knowledge vs. transnational expectations, Trust vs. lack of trust	Relations, interrelatedness
"[. . .] neglecting social rights, precarisation, marginalisation and lack of security in many sectors – including the cultural sector – is a major barrier for participation" (PAPR, 2021: 134)	Autonomy vs. instrumentality Intrinsic motivation vs. cost of labour Filling gaps vs. innovating	Functions and conditions

urban regeneration projects to inform the CCSC project. Primarily though, the CCSC project embeds its policy recommendations in the participants experienced local challenges, providing the empirical ground captured in the reports CCP, MCC, LLC, OD, and LLR.

The "Policy Analysis and Policy Recommendations," PAPR, (2021) forms the main project publication. It includes documented outcomes that address EU-level institutions and, primarily, the EC. Cultural organisations are addressed through a 'toolkit' provided on the website and the anthology "Commons. Between Dreams and Reality" CBDR (2020), which assembles empirical and theoretical discussions from the project's associated researchers at the University of Antwerp. Together, these documents constitute the official textual body based on which I ask the research questions: 1) What are the problems that stakeholders involved in the CCSC project construct and represent? 2) In what ways do these representations reflect underlying infrastructural needs and conditions of those stakeholders? and 3) At what moments, and for which stakeholders, do infrastructural conditions emerge through the translation of these needs into concrete policies and practices?

Analytical process

Parallel to sorting the documents, I began an infrastructuring-informed, software-supported abductive coding process. The first rounds of descriptive coding provided an overview and captured all participating actors and revealed actor constellation changes, like the P2P foundation leaving for Timelab, a makerspace to assist the methodological aspects of the project. In later coding, closely linked to WPR Q1 and Q2, the *in vivo* code "art vs. system," in an agenda-setting document (speech at first CCSC meeting in Brussels) (VoCC, 2020), shaped my inquiry. Based on this strong binary construction in the early project data, I continued with so-called "versus coding," which serves policy studies attending to conflicts between individuals, groups, social systems, organisations, phenomena, concepts, or processes. Versus coding is useful for data that "suggests [there are] competing goals within, among, and between participants" (Saldaña, 2016: 137). Moreover, coding has been sensitised by actors' needs (Volmar, 2023) to unpack what the different CCSC stakeholders consider infrastructural. The following sections present the analytical findings. Prior to it, Table 2 lists identified vs. *codes* and an overview of conflicts apparent in data examples, fleshing out how CCSC stakeholders construct, experience, and, hence, problematise the "gap" in various ways.

Results

Unpacking problematisations in cultural and creative spaces and cities

WPR Step one: problem description

Attending to what is said and written, the first analytical step in WPR analysis is the description of the problem. The project title *Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities* sets the scene, pointing to a relationship between cultural *AND* creative spaces *AND* cities. Rather than speaking of a relation as in, for example, spaces *in* cities, the "and" suggests differences

between "Cultural" and "Creative Spaces" and "Cities". The CCSC project proposal seeks to "develop innovative methods for cities and regions to foster collaboration between public administration and the cultural sector, emphasising co-creation in public policy development" while stressing the aim to "restore trust in European Society" and demanding structural change (CoP, 2020: 4). In these formulations linger the following problems: 1) stakeholders disconnection and current lacking or insufficient/outdated methods for collaboration, leading to 2) the cultural sector not being sufficiently involved in public policymaking. This in turn is problematic when "good public policy is co-created" but processes are hindered by a lack of trust "in European Society". The next section expands on how actors' perceptions of the problem are represented.

Problem manifestations

The "disconnect" between cultural actors and administrative bodies in CCSC is articulated as a "gap" that occurs between different stakeholders and levels of governance: "whether at the urban, regional or EU-level, a gap is palpable between public authorities and local cultural initiatives" (CCP, 2021: 3). A sense of detachment appears in perceptions of cultural actors, who report a "feeling of distance from the EU institutions" (PAPR, 2021: 55). The lived experience of this distance "between policy recommendations and the real actions" (LLR, 2021: 7) underlines the need for revised methods to include cultural stakeholders in policymaking. Building on Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003: 21 call for policy analysis grounded in "real-world, conflict-ridden, living communities", CCSC argues that governance models fostering active participation and self-organisation are not merely desirable but necessary to "narrow the gap between citizens and institutions" (CBDR, 2020: 48). Drawn together, CCSC suggests practice-based local engagement as essential to bridging the disconnect experienced by bottom-up local actors and strengthening the democratic legitimacy of cultural policy, a key concern for the EC, top-down. Infrastructuring confirms the absence of cultural actors in policymaking, apparent in this disconnect. The next section unpacks how CCSC suggests mending this.

Problematisations in the project design: urban labs as problem solver?

Policymaking in the network era seeks innovative formats and new sites of policymaking (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). The CCSC project exemplifies this approach through its designation as an "experimental" policymaking project (CoP, 2020: 4), introducing *urban labs* to traditional bureaucratic decision making in arts and cultural policy (Brkić, 2019). Led by TEH in collaboration with the University of Antwerp as research partner and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF) to lead the policymaking, the methodology was co-developed with Timelab Gent. The open project participation call had no criteria and allowed a diversity of participants, including cultural centres (Hablarenarte in Madrid, Spain, Ambasada in Timisoara, Romania, and Kaapeli in Helsinki, Finland), a social innovation lab (Coboi Lab in Sant boi de Llobregat, Spain), the Creative Industries in Kosice (CIKE), Slovakia, and two public administrative actors based in Sweden, working on the local and regional level.

All seven participating organisations formed one urban lab each, which would "[. . .] bring together non-governmental cultural organisations and local/regional authorities, as well as other relevant stakeholders in their regions" (CoP, 2020: 3), and formulated a situated challenge to work with. The urban lab format demonstrates infrastructuring potential because, as Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003: 12 note, "interactive policymaking practices are often the first instance where people who share a particular space (whether this is a region or a neighbourhood) actually meet" working together during the project time and potentially beyond. The cultural organisations envisioned working with administrations (Timisoara and Hablarenarte) and the local and regional administrations in Sweden and built relationships with local cultural actors, all with the aim to solve their local challenges and inform transnational policymaking on the premise that the urban lab "process inform[s] and invite[s] broader participation into a policy process" (LLC, 2021: 1). The seven participating organisations each defined a challenge within their local urban lab, creating policy testbeds as sites of potential infrastructural innovation. Infrastructuring foregrounds these practices: the iterative building, maintaining, and adapting of spaces, re-wiring relationships, and discursive frameworks that enable cultural collaboration across institutional and geographical scales. Drawing these points together, the urban labs present spatial solutions to address the widely experienced "gap". At the discursive level, and in response to critiques of the EU's democratic deficit (Cram, 2011), "policymaking gets a new meaning as a constitutive force in creating trust among interdependent people" (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003: 12). Reflecting this, the CCSC charter of principles asserts "we firmly believe that the gap between citizens and institutions can be narrowed, and democratic legitimacy can be strengthened" (CoP, 2020: 7).

Tracing openings for bottom-up perspectives in top-down CCSC project drafting

The EC policy project call (European Commission, 2017) for CCSC presents a broad discursive framework to work with. The call frames the gap between cultural and creative organisations and policymakers as being about communicative relations and the deficiency of exchange around sector internal knowledge. The call states

> "[CCSC] will support transnational exchange of experiences and know-how among cultural and creative organisations and policymakers related to new business and management

> models such as creative hubs, cultural spaces and other actors at local level through peer-to-peer exchanges and learning activities and networking among cultural and creative sectors." (European Commission, 2017: 99)

The reference to 'Business and management models' in the call points to another TEH-led project *Creative Lenses*[5], implicitly targeting TEH as the designated lead for CCSC. The notion of the 'creative hub' reflects the origins of the CE programme's competitiveness agenda, while also serving as a lens to contextualise the diverse practices that constitute hubs and to examine what makes them function (Pratt, 2021). This opens space for negotiating conditions at the local scale. At the same time, the initial call articulates broader societal ambitions, framing culture as a central driver of social development. It proposes "better uses of public spaces for social regeneration through culture and integrated approaches to urban development", alongside "social inclusion and skills development, with a focus on policy experimentation, innovation and new approaches to creative economy" (European Commission, 2017). While these objectives promise intensified dialogue between cultural actors and policymakers, they also implicitly promote culture's added societal value, yet to be exhausted. CCSC stakeholders, however, criticised the blurred distinction between culture and creativity in EU calls. As an ECF representative noted, "We wanted to fill the gap between stakeholders, placing arts and culture at the heart of society, swimming against the current trend of aligning culture with the market economy and reducing culture to mere creativity." (PAPR, 2021: 12) This disconnect between cultural stakeholders, particularly cultural actors and public authorities, and the dominance of instrumental perspectives results in a loss of depth when culture is reduced to an individualised, commodified form of "creativity."

Shaping policy through bottom-up practice

The urban lab methodology required actors to define their own local challenges (MCC, 2021) in alignment with their specific contextual ecosystem. All CCSC policy recommendations stem from these lab experiences, which reflected diverse forms of precarity shaped by structural aspects and political pressures of their respective locations. While initiating bottom-up decision-making as a proposed solution, the CCSC project simultaneously exposed structural issues, as illustrated in the quote

> "Reinvigorating bottom-up decision-making power is a way of reinvigorating EU democracy. However, neglecting social rights, precarisation, marginalisation and lack of security in many sectors – including the cultural sector – is a major barrier for the participation of many cultural actors as well as of a large part of the population." (PAPR, 2021: 134)

CCSC notably reframed local cultural centres as physical sites of policymaking in two ways, namely practically throughout the project time and discursively in the published outcomes, with the aim to of influencing future policy. Continued methodological development by Timelab and Coboi lab served to challenge overarching problem representations, such as the 'democratic deficit' and 'lack of trust' in EU institutions, that are understood as lacking bottom-up participation.

In Sweden, two public administration-led labs aimed to strengthen bottom-up participation, while civil society-initiated labs in Romania and Spain sought recognition from local authorities (CCP, 2021). In Timisoara, relations with the municipality were described as "antagonistic" and as "far from being based on principles of co-creation and participation" (PAPR, 2021: 36). Diverging views on 'active citizenship' created tensions, as local organisers' engagement clashed with conservative municipal structures hampering voluntary bottom-up organisation of social infrastructure (CCP, 2021). Although the city valued cultural actors' social work (including housing projects and integration initiatives), persistent funding volatility and a lack of transparency hindered collaboration and the work and the cultural actors remain in their quest for recognition. To navigate these challenges, actors "avoid[ed] confrontations" worked with "passionate people within" the administration (CCP, 2021: 15).

Rather than framing this as definitive failure, a conflict-oriented perspective would view this as ongoing policy failing inherent to participatory approaches (Landau, 2020). Participatory policymaking as a European proposal represents solutions to different problems. In the South-Eastern context of Timisoara, the administrative reluctance to recognise cultural actors hinders fruitful collaboration, resonating with critiques of neglecting small-scale spaces of production and locally embedded social and cultural life in policymaking (Bell and Orozco, 2020; Comunian, 2011; Karimnia and Kostourou, 2023). Swedish labs, by contrast, faced a reversed dilemma: non-participation was overall problematised as a both a lack of space of encounter and empowerment, with an emphasis on enabling citizens to "play a greater role in EU decisions" (PAPR, 2021: 56).

Representing urban labs and cultural centres as policymaking sites reflects the CCSC project principle: 'culture is the basis for democratic social development' (CoP, 2020). Instead of rejecting their instrumental function and responsibility, the lab leaders, and especially the cultural actors, stress factors currently hindering them to fulfil this function. When citizens resisted this responsibilisation, cultural centres had to take on burdening tasks such as mediation (PAPR, 2021: 48). Recommendations framed "participation [as] proper labour" (PAPR, 2021: 96) but without remuneration. They also warned of exclusions affecting

5 https://www.teh.net/inititatives/creative-business-models-for-creative-organisations/

people and places lacking political recognition, financial stability, or temporal resources, summarised as the "cost of participation" (PAPR, 2021: 50). This underscores the need for policy frameworks to move beyond rhetorical commitments and tangible support towards recognition and compensation for the infrastructural labour performed by local cultural actors as well as cultural networks in sustaining democratic engagement.

Problematisations about *how* to close the gap highlighted responsibilisations of different actors and positioned local urban labs as key sites of activate citizen participation. As the CCSC recommendations assert, "Bottom-up participatory decision-making is not a luxury, but a necessity in finding solutions for the European challenges we face" (PAPR, 2021: 135). Yet these overlooked and unaccounted costs of participation leave local actors misunderstood and dissatisfied. In a follow-up report on a CCSC event in June 2020, researchers stressed that

> "Cultural organisations do not have the capacity to intervene on any other scale than their own local scene. It is important that EU institutions find a way to come to them instead of expecting local organisations to go to the EU. The issue of intermediary agencies has been reported several times in conversations; however, the message and the edge of a project proposal is often altered and lost when passing through a long chain. We cannot assume it is easy or desirable to scale up from the local to the global level or that these scales are often intertwined." (RCPE, 2021: 13)

This statement exposes the limitations of the participation imperative and the responsibilisation it entails. While most networks have emerged as instruments through bottom-up organisation and top-down EU governance (Scioldo, 2024a; 2024b), they cannot eliminate the democratic deficit alone. Interface projects such as CCSC, which scrutinise the dynamics between top-down and bottom-up policymaking, involve active citizen-organisations, show where networks themselves reach their limits, and call on EU institutions to become present and effective in local contexts beyond Brussels.

"At what moments, and for which stakeholders, do infrastructural conditions emerge through the translation of needs into concrete policies and practices?" In this context, locally embedded cultural centres gained legitimacy as they were reframed through different problematisations. Together, the 'participation imperative' (PAPR, 2021: 47) and the previously addressed limitations of responsibilising or instrumentalising bottom-up actors strengthen the argument for cultural centres as necessary and legitimate sites of policymaking. To illustrate how problematisations and policy solutions are shaped by spatial constructions, Bacchi and Goodwin (2016: 99) explain "For "Europe" to become a "place," "it" had (and has) to be known. And, to become the kind of "place" it is, as we experience it today, it had (and has) to be known in certain ways." For policymaking to align with the realities of cultural work on the ground, EU policymakers must experience the Europe they aim to serve through situated engagement in local contexts.

How CCSC problematised cultural centres as sites of policymaking is illustrated through arguments of "spatial proximity" as a solution to the gap, perceived as both "distance" and a lack of understanding between "arts" and the bureaucratic "system" (VoCC, 2020: 2). The Charta of Principles (CoP, 2020: 5) states "We value cultural spaces, since they play a vital role in the development of culture and its artistic manifestations, while stimulating the participation of communities." Co-creation is presented as dependent on mutual forms of interaction, positioning cultural and creative not only as the specific locations for participatory processes to unfold but also as the productive contexts for experimentation (VoCC) to inspire public administrative work. "Shared spatial settings" in local contexts are proposed as straightforward means to create "trust" and overcome the problem of the "art world-bureaucracy divide" (VoCC, 2020: 2f.). As [Ansell and Gash (2007): 558] argue, "face-to-face dialogue is a necessary but not sufficient condition for collaboration," from a relational perspective, sharing space fosters exchange and, ultimately, trust. These new infrastructural conditions, based on co-presence in a local setting of a cultural centre, were tested during the project. Representing the municipal participants view, the recommendations feature the following quote: "The sharing of a working space with a public body representative was an effective way of developing an understanding of the other's perspective and of learning how to align both parties' objectives into a common strategy" (PAPR 2021:36).

A second conceptual lens used to problematise (inter) relationships in the cultural sector is ecology. Drawing on this metaphor, the CCSC policy analysis and recommendations (PAPR, 2021: 34) propose "to understand policymaking as an ecosystem in which cultural representatives and public servants come together and work in non-competitive, horizontal, and collaborative ways to provide solutions to urban problems. As in an ecosystem, every actor has a role which is in balance with those of others". Taking this metaphor seriously requires not only examining 'symbiotic relations' but also addressing competition for resources, developing possibilities of regulation to enable such idea(l)s of caring encounters.

Having tested collaborative policymaking in the urban labs, CCSC identified a need for alternative governance that emphasises collaboration, mutual care, and self-organisation while tackling precarity and the erosion of public cultural infrastructure. This need is compounded by a lack of recognition and the insufficient distinction between arts- and cultural- and creative practices in current EU policy discourse, a concern that CCSC participants frequently problematise. To

address these challenges, the Charta of Principles asserts "Culture also needs its autonomy and its connection to society. We believe culture is only sustainable if it is institutionally and socially protected from precariousness and uncertainty" (CoP, 2020: 5). In response, CCSC researchers propose "commoning" as an alternative form of governance (ibid.) to protect culture. Commoning, understood as collaborative, bottom-up organising, or socially embedded governance "is the act of creating, constructing and maintaining shared resources and reclaiming "the commons," which are the cultural and natural resources accessible to all" (CoP, 2020: 3). As the next paragraph shows, commoning infrastructures differently across contexts.

Some TEH members apply commoning practices as a countercultural approach "against austerity, privatisation of urban space, and the withdrawal of public cultural support" (Magkou et al., 2025a: 13). The authors argue for taking commoning practices seriously as "frameworks to understand the relationship between communities, urban spaces, culture, democracy and policy" (ibid.). The notion of "culturing commoning culture" (CBDR, 2020) calls for rethinking structures to avoid foreclosing collaboration and instead provide local bottom-up knowledge to inform policy. Berlant (2016) cautions that the commons risk glossing over differences and urges engagement with uncertainties, emphasising that politics necessarily involve unresolved tensions and shifting conditions of fairness. The interplay between autonomy, participation, and commoning and how these tensions are navigated were further problematised in the context of the urban labs. The policy recommendations warn "that the role of the commons as a methodology can easily fall flat when not accompanied by two other necessary steps forward, both at the local and EU-level: funding and recognition" (PAPR, 2021: 41).

A commoning solution implies recognising actors as commoners who collectively define the rules of the game, the *what* and the *how* of participation, which varies across Europe and its cultural political contexts (Magkou et al., 2025b). The Sweden-based arts organisations highlighted how experiences of collaboration challenge the ideal of artistic autonomy: "How could we as artists and cultural actors keep our autonomy and use our resources effectively when we are asked to join more and more co-creative processes with public agencies?" (LLC, 2020: 4) In CCSC materials, commoning is represented as a promising strategy, yet it leaves tensions between autonomy and expectations to collaborate open to negotiation. As a policy officer summarised, "the commons could only apply to Southern European contexts, as the Swedish reliance on individual talent and entrepreneurship was interpreted as clashing with the more bottom-up and grassroots perspectives on culture in cities. The CCSC project thus worked to overcome misinterpretations about the commons both at the local and EU-level" (PAPR, 2021: 40).

Discussion

This paper framed policymaking as infrastructuring practice; as a spatial and relational process through which relationships, spaces, and discourses are iteratively shaped and rebuilt (Hajer and Wagenaar, 2003). It approached policy as a set of solutions to problem representations by cultural actors, local and regional cultural administrations, and EU policy officers involved in this process (Bacchi, 2009), using the TEH-led, CE-funded policymaking project *Cultural and Creative Spaces and Cities* (2018–2021) as a case. Shedding light on policymaking in the EU cultural field, networks operate within a dynamic interface shaped by bottom-up and top-down processes of cultural organisations and EU administration (Scioldo, 2024b). Rather than evaluating whether the project's ambitions (collaboration and participation) were achieved, the paper examined stakeholders' different problematisations of a perceived "gap" and analysed how their needs were represented in CCSC policy documents and reports. While not all problematisations amount to conflicts, a problem can quickly become a conflict when solutions (and those who formulate them) ignore its root causes or, in the worst case, exacerbate them.

Framing the CCSC process as infrastructuring has highlighted the differential agentic positions of e.g. policymakers at the EU level in contrast to artists and cultural workers as policymakers (Woddis, 2014). The CCSC outcomes brought tensions around the *participation* imperative in the European political sphere to the fore (Bonet and Négrier, 2018; Dupin-Meynard and Négrier, 2020). While top-down representations of the gap as "democratic deficit" present "empowerment of citizens" as the solution (CoP, 2020: 7), cultural actors call for a structural change, including the recognition of their knowledge and remuneration for their work and other aspects captured as the "cost of participation" (PAPR, 2021: 50). These two problematisations of a 'gap' are exemplary for the CCSC project: the urban lab-based methodology places bottom-up perspectives at the core of policymaking, legitimising local cultural centres as sites of policymaking and articulating bottom-up critique. Yet, when project calls originate top-down and implicitly responsibilise local actors to fix "democratic deficits" through voluntary engagement, the impression sticks that networks and the cultural centres they mobilise remain instrumental soft governance tools.

Overall, CCSC aimed to rethink how locally embedded cultural activity can play an active role in local, regional, and EU-wide policymaking. The fourth WPR question asks, "What is left unproblematic in the problem representation?" While CCSC addressed the concerns of local cultural actors, organisers, and policymakers across administrative levels and geographical contexts, it is noteworthy that the perspective of TEH as the facilitator of the CCSC process is not further addressed in the CCSC outcomes. The project outcomes problematise how cultural centres carry additional burdens when citizens cannot or do not wish to participate voluntarily (cf. PAPR, 2021: 48). This raises

critical questions: What does it mean when the targeted actors, in this case cultural centres, do not participate? What kinds of responsibilities fall on networks acting as intermediaries and facilitators of such projects? And what resources does a network like TEH require to fulfil its role as versatile intermediary?

Infrastructuring cultural policy emphasises the importance of participation. The above analysis revealed a discursive sidelining of TEH's central role as facilitating intermediary and advocate of participating cultural actors. But when does a network lose its capacity as a soft governance mechanism? What challenges and needs did the facilitation of the CCSC process cause for TEH as lead organisation and coordinator? Within the infrastructuring heuristic, it is perhaps not surprising that the work of facilitation remains invisible, especially in officially published reports. Yet, the networks' needs, as well as the risks and benefits entangled in the interdependency of cultural networks with large EU-funded projects, call for attention in further scholarly work, especially since CE, the most important funding body for networks, can no longer be taken for granted, as it is being integrated into the new *AgoraEU* funding (2028–2034).

Returning to the paper's initial framing of cultural networks as infrastructural promise for local cultural actors' voices to be heard in collaborative cultural policymaking, the analysis of CCSC demonstrates how networks function as an important intermediary, but their understanding as soft governance mechanisms may obscure or displace structural social needs. While EU-level cultural governance mechanisms like coordination, dialogue, project funding, guidelines, and recommendations (and participatory rhetoric) strategically involve cultural actors through networks, the conditions enabling cultural actors' participation (such as stable funding, legal recognition, and labour conditions) are located outside these frameworks. The problematisations reveal that the disjuncture between empowerment discourse and lived precarity (in some but not all CCSC stakeholders' contexts) renders participation costly and uneven. Are soft governance tools alone sufficient when they fail tackling structural conditions? Networks like TEH operate at the threshold between enabling participation and absorbing the frictions of soft governance. CCSC shows that policymaking involving cultural actors depends not only on discursive openness or participatory design but on material conditions, institutional recognition, and sustained support. When these conditions are absent, the promise of networks' instrumental function within EU governance is limited, although it carries the transformative potential to provide the infrastructure for bottom-up policymaking.

Lastly, sustaining bottom-up cultural engagement and democratic participation requires more than empowering EU policy. It calls for enabling frameworks that integrate implicit cultural needs into explicitly social cultural policy frameworks, and the *Homes of Commons* is one proposal on the horizon. While commoning and its potential legal anchoring in cultural governance processes in the EU were not central in this paper, since they were neither part of the initial (top-down) project call nor a bottom-up proposal, they were integrated through the participating research team[6]. Commoning functions as vehicle of critique and springboard for future policymaking: it brings together interdependent actors and pushes for solutions, while acknowledging that CCSC ultimately constituted a temporary policy arena to problematise the interrelationships and inherent difficulties. In doing so, CCSC counteracts the loss of meaning and conciseness that can arise when discourses oscillate between bottom-up actors and top-down policymaking (Scioldo, 2024b), representing, in Hajer and Wagenaar (2003) terms, the different stakeholders' problems and how they sit in messy real-world settings. This underscores the need for future EU cultural policy to move beyond temporary arenas and improve structural conditions for participation, recognition, and care.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Author contributions

All authors listed have made a substantial, direct, and intellectual contribution to the work and approved it for publication.

Funding

The author(s) declared that financial support was not received for this work and/or its publication.

Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared that this work was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Generative AI statement

The author(s) declared that generative AI was used in the creation of this manuscript. In the final stages of manuscript

6 For a summary and reflections on the CCSC project proposal regarding the commons, see De Tullio et al. (2025).

preparation I have, used ChatGPT4o to improve the language flow in some instances.

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