

Statement of the Federal Cultural Funds on the 2025 Budget Proposal of the Federal Government

Severe Cuts to Federal Cultural Funds Indicate a lack of consistent and sustainable support for the independent arts and culture scene

Only with the 2024 federal budget did the governing parties fulfill the coalition agreement's goal of sustainably strengthening the Federal Cultural Funds as drivers of innovation. The significant increases in funding were intended to substantively support the independent arts and culture scene through sustained regular funding and new funding modules, following the phasing out of the NEUSTART KULTUR program.

The new 2025 budget proposal by the Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media (BKM) threatens the prospective continuation of this work with drastic cuts: the six Federal Cultural Funds are to receive only about half the funds compared to the 2024 budget.

This is all the more perplexing given that new funding lines and programs have just been developed and announced, some even in collaboration with states, municipalities, or cultural stakeholders. Some are currently still in development. The Federal Cultural Funds also actively and constructively assist in the implementation and enforcement of minimum wage standards in the independent scene, as well as the sustainability and awareness recommendations of the BKM, contributing to their development and refinement.

As independent institutions dedicated to promoting contemporary art and culture, the Federal Cultural Funds fulfill their mandate and play an intermediary role between the federal government and the independent arts, making a significant contribution to innovation and discourse in the arts, diverse aesthetic-artistic positions, and socio-political exchange in times of multiple crises.

Given that the budget of the Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media is fortunately expected to increase overall in the 2025 budget and remains free from cuts, the budgeting of the Federal Cultural Funds appears to be primarily a matter of prioritization. Therefore, the boards and managing directors of the Federal Cultural Funds call on the Federal Commissioner for Culture and the Media and the coalition parties to continue the path they have jointly begun by urgently correcting the 2025 budget to ensure its success.

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