



The Ghent Manifesto

**A European Policy Forum on Data-Driven
Audience Development in the Cultural and
Creative Sectors**



PREAMBLE:

Over the past decade, the digital revolution, accelerated by events like the COVID-19 pandemic, has brought significant changes to the cultural and creative sectors (CCS), reshaping workflows and audience interactions. Data technology innovations have opened doors to new possibilities in data-driven audience development. Digital tools and data analysis have not only enabled organisations to cultivate meaningful and interactive relationships with their existing audiences but have also allowed them to identify and engage new audiences. This, in turn, may enhance cultural participation, contribute to cultural diversity, the visibility and discoverability of cultural works and unlock potential avenues for new revenue streams.

Digital transformation has become increasingly prominent in European policies, as reflected in initiatives such as the Digital Decade policy programme and the Digital Europe programme. The EU Work Plan for Culture (2023-2026) also emphasises digitalisation as a key aspect, focusing on supporting the CCS in their digital transformation and encouraging broad-scale collaboration.

In line with the shared focus on digitalisation by both the EU and its Member States, through the **Ghent Manifesto**, the Belgian presidency of the Council of the EU is taking the lead in translating this shared ambition into action. Launched on 8 February, this Manifesto calls for structural collaboration on digitalisation among Member States, the Commission and innovative cultural organisations within Europe through the creation of the **European Policy Forum on Data-Driven Audience Development in the Cultural and Creative Sectors**.

With support from the Ministers of Culture representing the Flemish, French and German-speaking Communities, the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU spearheaded the Ghent Manifesto. This initiative invites the Member States, the Commission and cultural organisations to advance audience development through digital means.

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The signatories of the manifesto acknowledge the importance of data-driven audience development for the CCS. They undertake to actively collaborate by becoming members of the European Policy Forum on Data-Driven Audience Development, aiming to:

- + **Build** knowledge development and understanding of data-driven audience development opportunities in the European CCS by sharing policy insights and research findings.
- + **Inform** EU, national and sub-national governments in strategic decision-making on audience data and development policies with regard to the use and exchange of audience data, application of data standards and the development of interoperability of audience data and infrastructure.
- + **Connect** European organisations in the CCS with digital experts and different levels of government to promote interaction and discussions on audience data use and exchange.
- + **Strengthen** innovation and growth in the European CCS by supporting cross-sectoral collaboration and international partnerships in audience data and data infrastructure.
- + **Activate** the digital transformation of EU Member States and cultural organisations less engaged in data-driven audience development by fostering the exchange of best practice, promoting know-how in the cultural and creative sectors, and encouraging partnerships and synergies to support artists and creative professionals where the European dimension can have an added value.