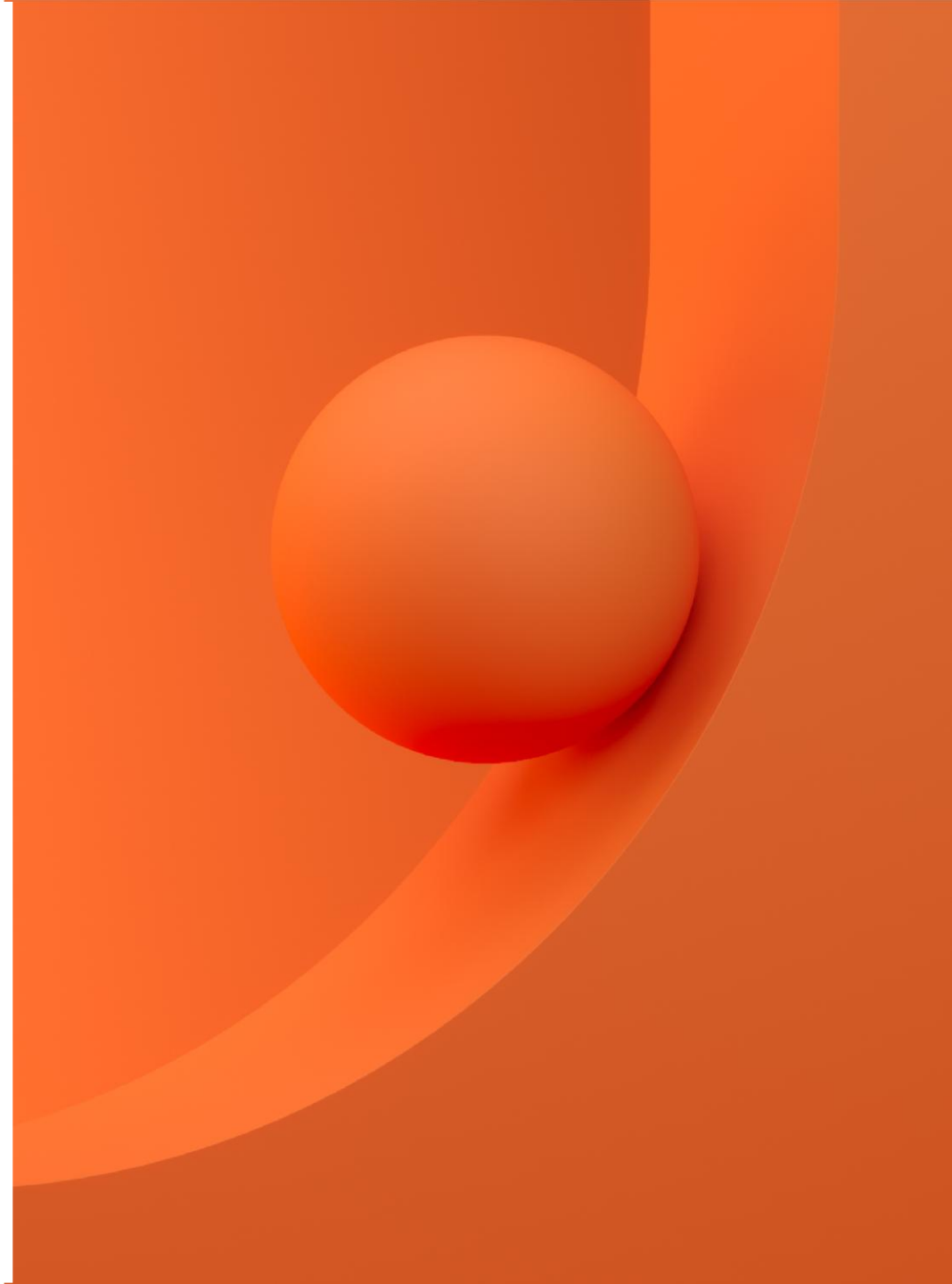
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Culture and Socioeconomic Development:
A Comparative Analysis of EU Countries

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Presented by Neringa Žibaitė · CED 2026 · 29 October 2026



Culture and Economic Development: Why Look Beyond GDP?

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- Cultural and creative sectors contribute to employment, value creation and innovation.
- GDP alone does not capture all social and institutional dimensions of development.
- Comparing multiple indicators reveals different national development profiles.

How are cultural indicators associated with socioeconomic development?

Research Aim and Methodology

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RESEARCH AIM

To examine relationships between cultural indicators and economic and socioeconomic development across EU Member States.

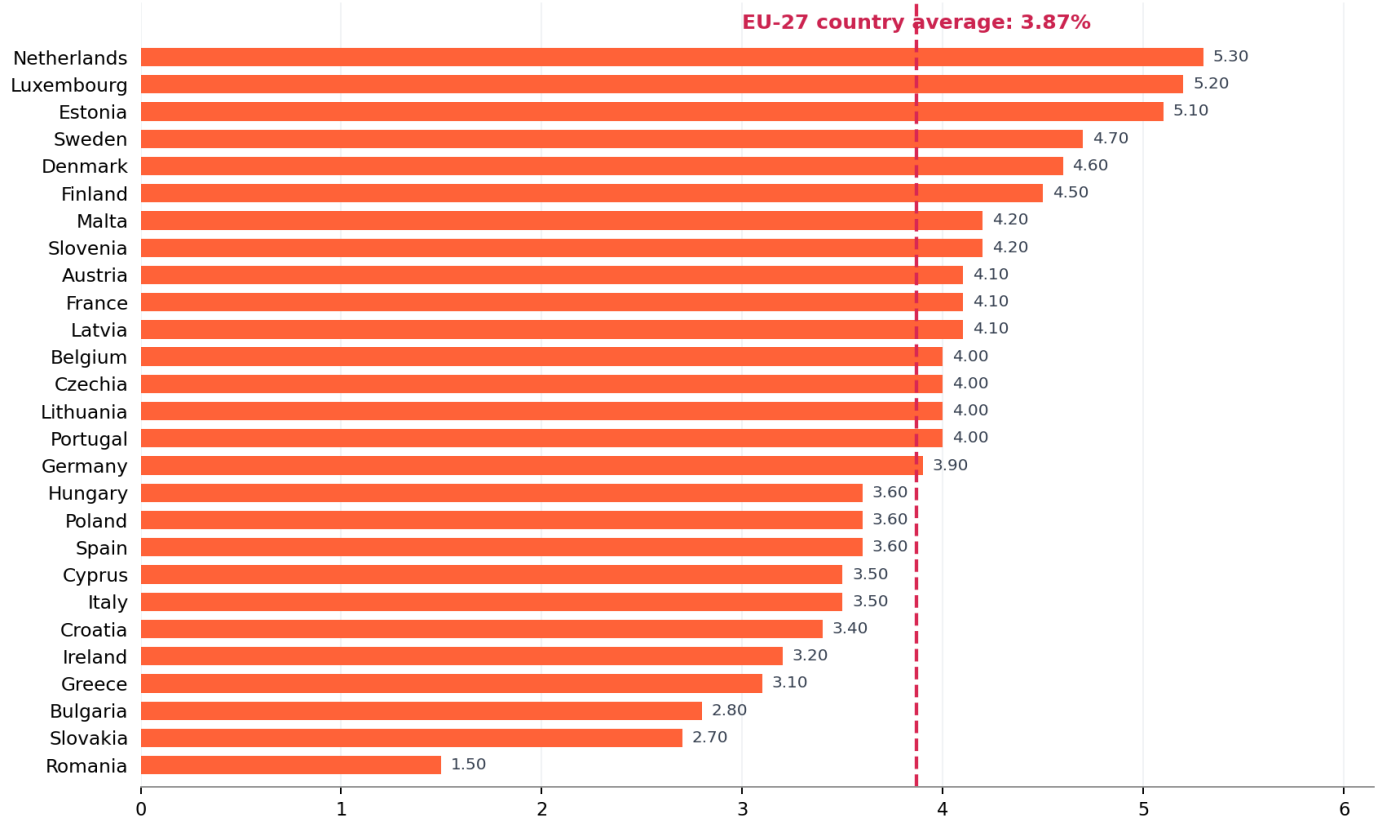
- 27 EU Member States; comparative and descriptive analysis
- Seven cultural, economic, social and institutional indicators
- Exploratory Pearson correlations; Eurostat, OECD and UNDP
- Data from 2022 – 2023, depending on indicator availability

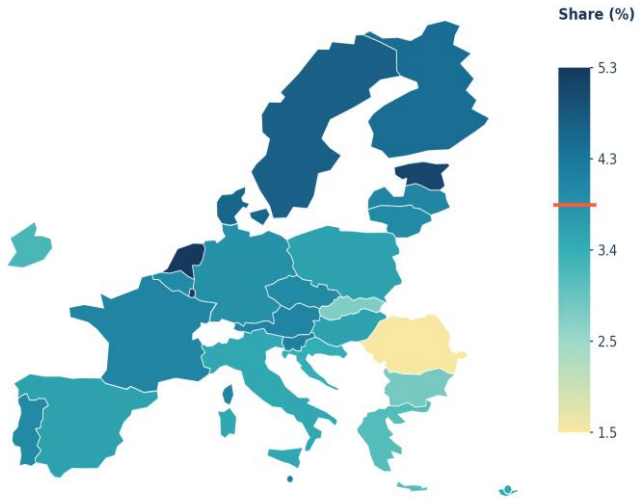
Seven Indicators, Three Dimensions of Development

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CULTURAL	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL / INSTITUTIONAL
• Cultural employment	• Real GDP per capita	• Human Development Index
• Cultural enterprises		• Trust in government
• Cultural enterprises' value added		
• Public expenditure on cultural services		

Cultural Employment Across EU Member States (2023)





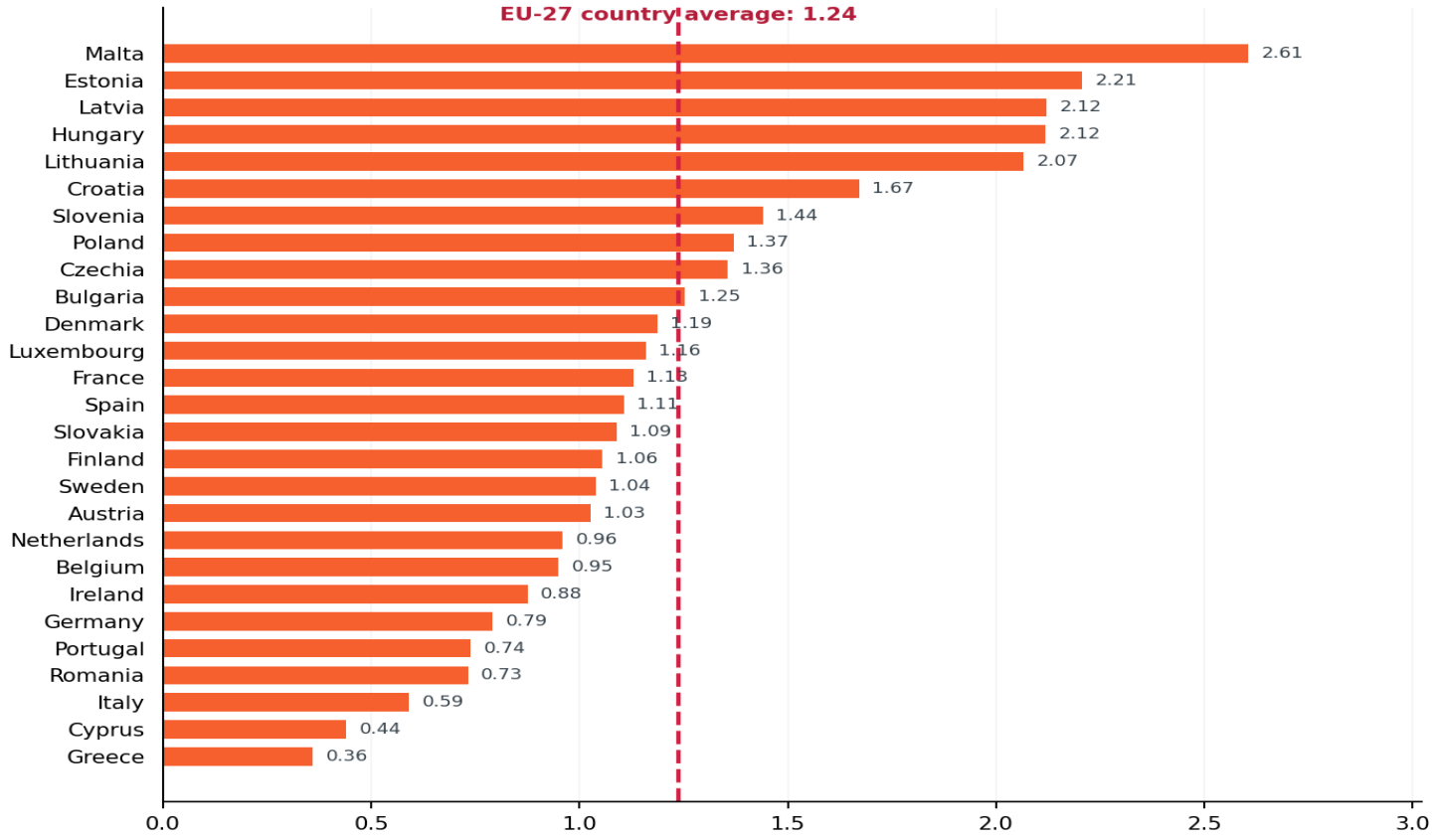
EU-27 country average: 3.87%

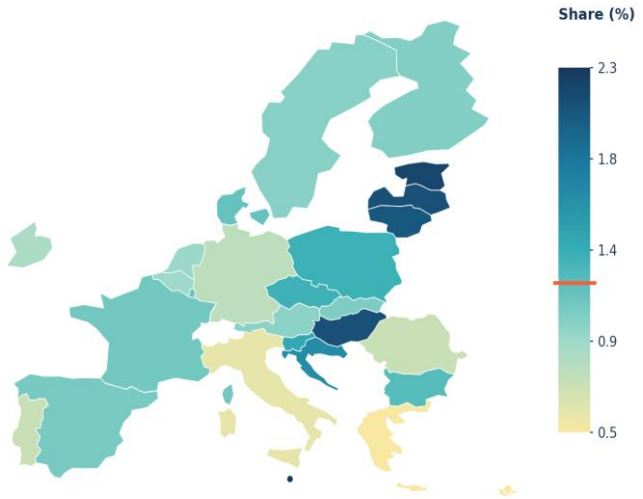
Orange line marks the average

Source: Eurostat. Reference: arithmetic mean of 27 country observations.

Public Expenditure on Cultural Services Across the EU (2023)

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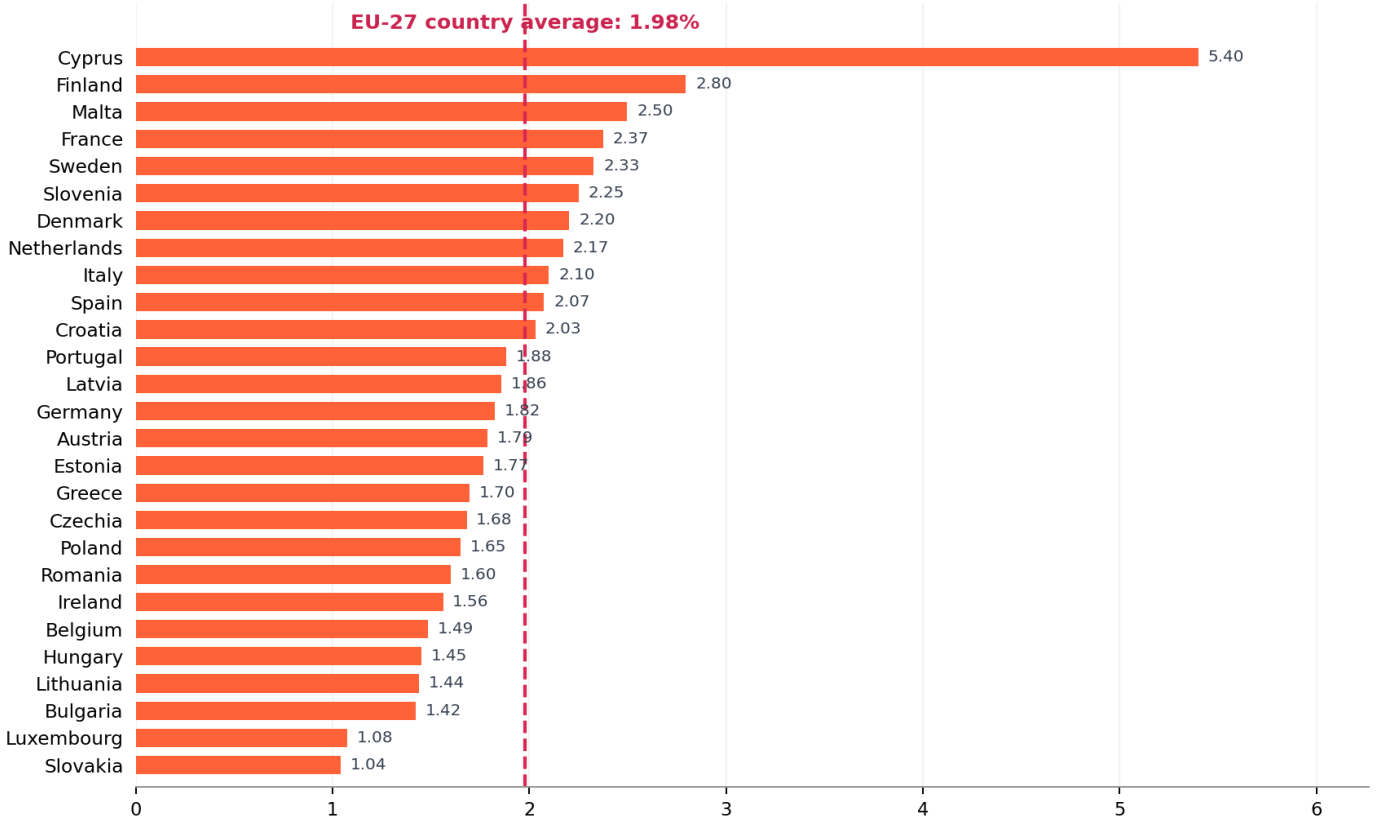
EU-27 country average: 1.24%

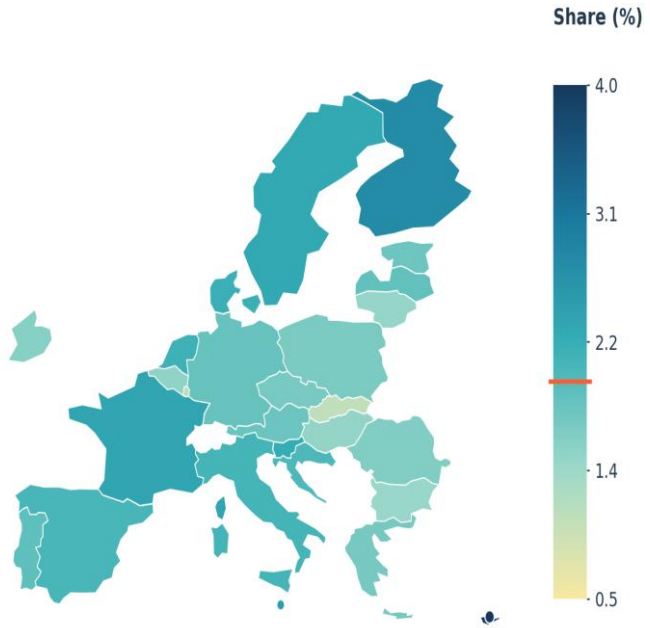
Orange line marks the average

Source: Eurostat. Reference: arithmetic mean of 27 country observations.

Cultural Enterprises' Value Added Across the EU (2022)

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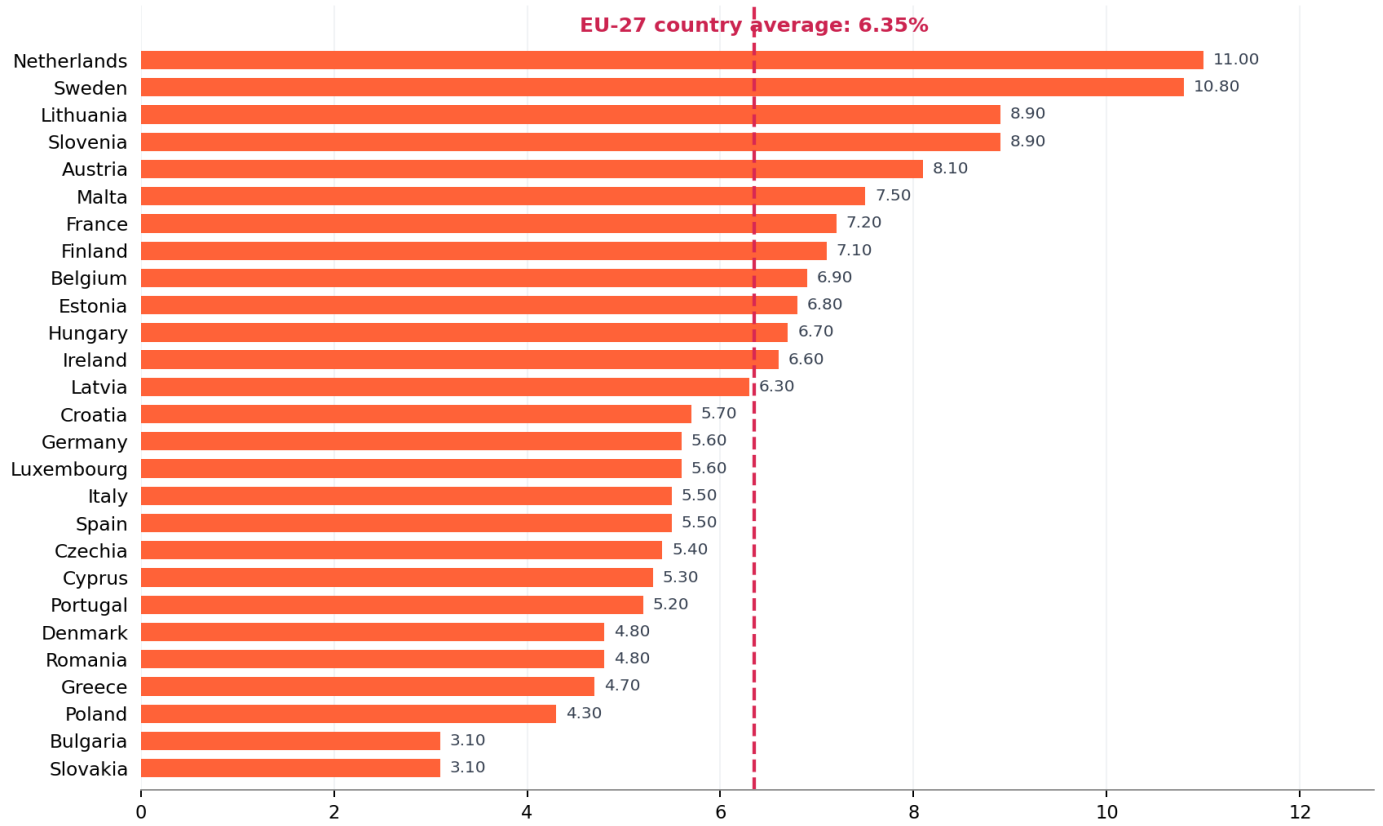


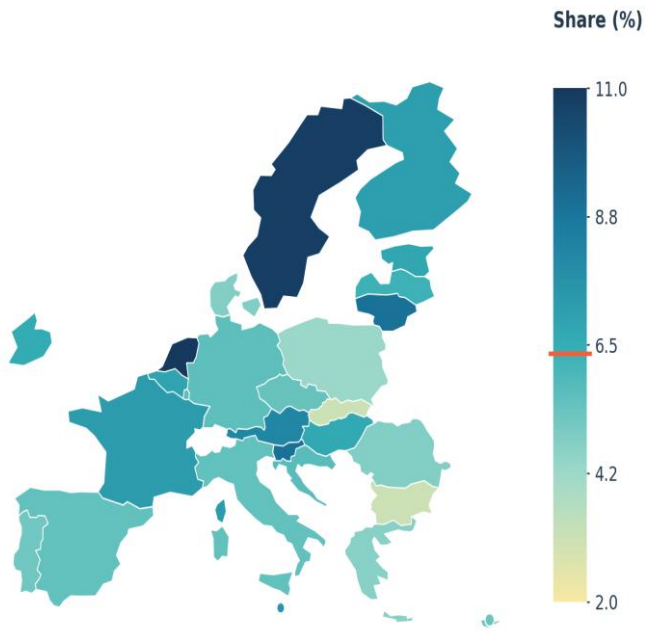
EU-27 country average: 1.98%

Orange line marks the average

Source: Eurostat. Reference: arithmetic mean of 27 country observations.

Cultural Enterprises Across EU Member States (2022)



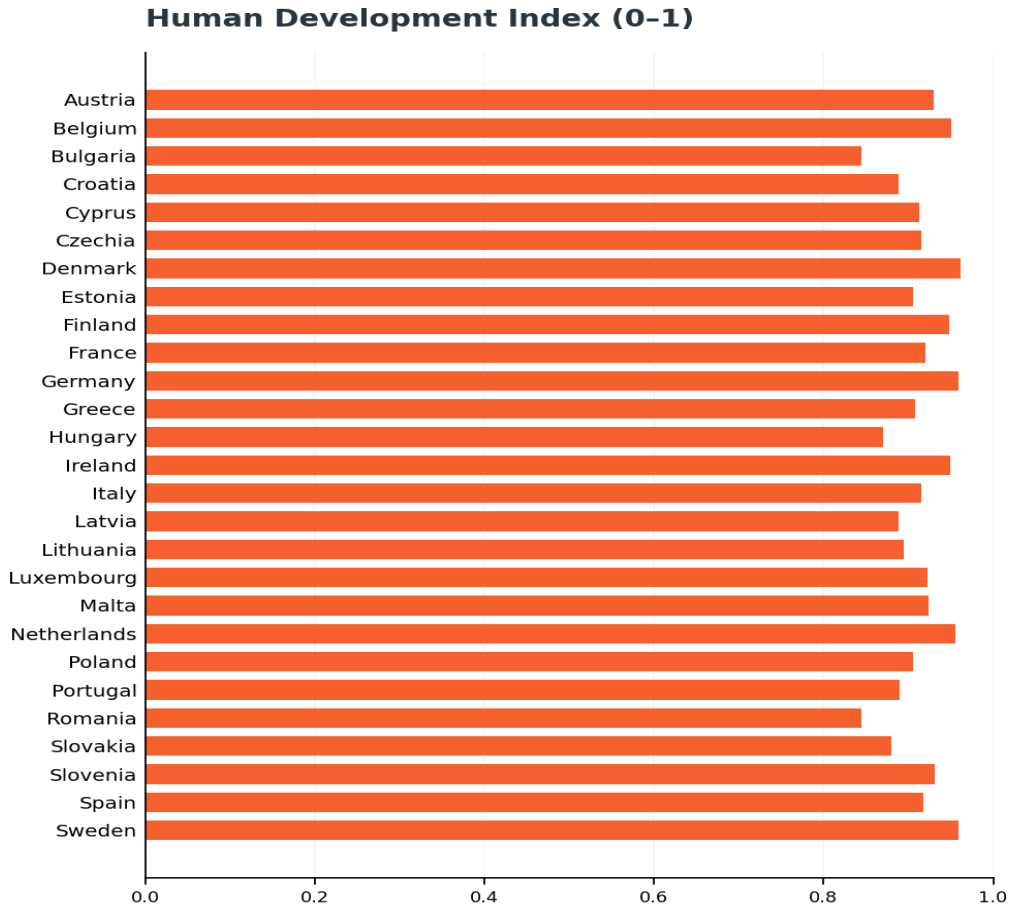


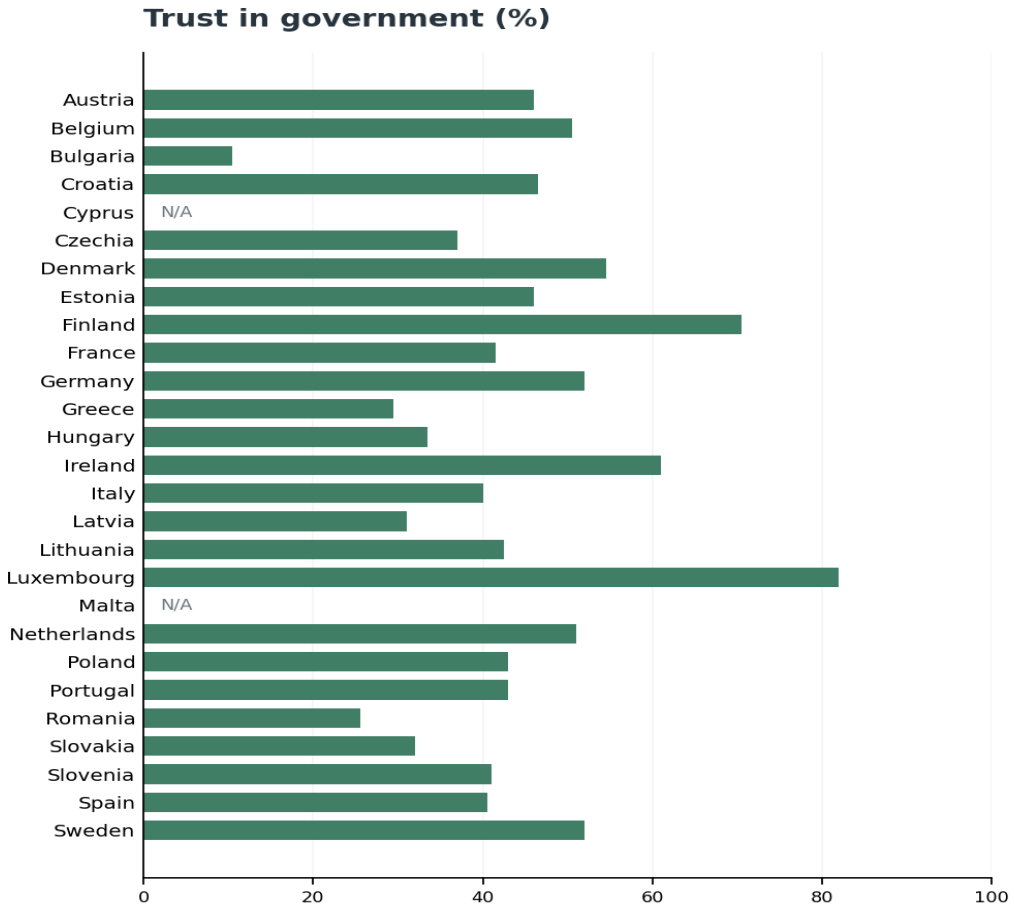
EU-27 country average: 6.35%

Orange line marks the average

Source: Eurostat. Reference: arithmetic mean of 27 country observations.

Human Development and Trust in Government (2023)





Trust data unavailable for Cyprus and Malta. Sources: UNDP, OECD.

Comparative Profiles Across Seven Indicators

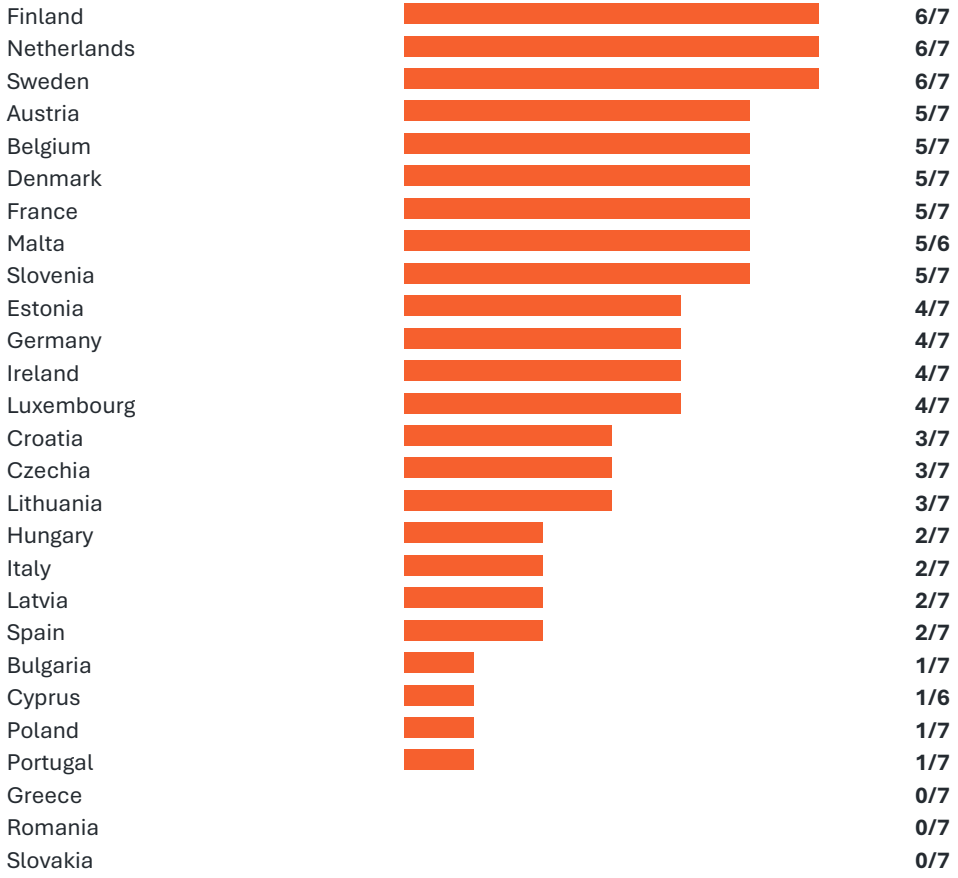
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Above (+) or below (−) the arithmetic mean of available EU country observations

	GDP	Employment	Value added	Enterprises	Public spend.	Trust	HDI
Finland	+	+	+	+	−	+	+
Netherlands	+	+	+	+	−	+	+
Sweden	+	+	+	+	−	+	+
Austria	+	+	−	+	−	+	+
Belgium	+	+	−	+	−	+	+
Denmark	+	+	+	−	−	+	+
France	+	+	+	+	−	−	+
Malta	−	+	+	+	+	N/A	+
Slovenia	−	+	+	+	+	−	+
Estonia	−	+	−	+	+	+	−
Germany	+	+	−	−	−	+	+
Ireland	+	−	−	+	−	+	+
Luxembourg	+	+	−	−	−	+	+
Croatia	−	−	+	−	+	+	−
Czechia	−	+	−	−	+	−	+
Lithuania	−	+	−	+	+	−	−
Hungary	−	−	−	+	+	−	−
Italy	−	−	+	−	−	−	+
Latvia	−	+	−	−	+	−	−
Spain	−	−	+	−	−	−	+
Bulgaria	−	−	−	−	+	−	−
Cyprus	−	−	+	−	−	N/A	−
Poland	−	−	−	−	+	−	−
Portugal	−	+	−	−	−	−	−
Greece	−	−	−	−	−	−	−
Romania	−	−	−	−	−	−	−
Slovakia	−	−	−	−	−	−	−

Orange: above country average · Grey: at or below · Light grey: unavailable · Not a ranking.

Patterns and Contrasts Across EU Member States



NORTHERN EUROPE

Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands: 6/7 indicators above average.

BALTIC STATES

Above-average public cultural expenditure; differing wider profiles.

GDP CONTRAST

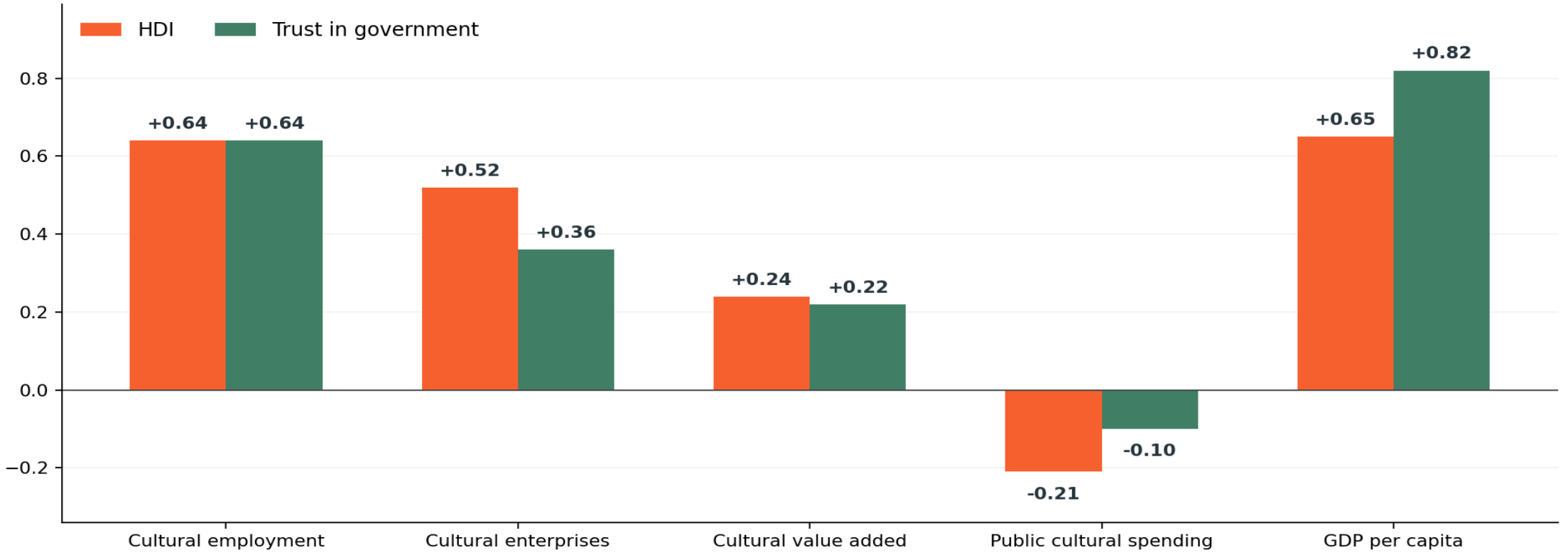
Luxembourg and Ireland: high GDP alongside mixed cultural indicators.

SOUTHERN EUROPE

Cultural heritage does not automatically translate into high values on all measures.

Count of above-average indicators: descriptive summary, not a composite development index.

Exploratory Correlations: Culture, HDI and Institutional Trust



Pearson r · HDI: n = 27 · Trust in government: n = 25

Public Spending: Priority Is Not the Same as Outcome

- Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Malta allocate relatively high shares of government expenditure to cultural services.
- Hungary also allocates an above-average budget share to culture, while trust in government remains below the country average.
- Public cultural expenditure has weak correlations with HDI ($r = -0.21$) and trust in government ($r = -0.10$).
- A spending share reflects budget composition – not total resources, policy effectiveness or benefits that may emerge over time.

Luxembourg and Ireland: Why GDP Needs Context

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- Both countries have exceptionally high GDP per capita in the EU comparison.
- Their cultural-sector value-added shares are comparatively modest.
- Luxembourg: cross-border employment and the internationally oriented financial sector influence GDP per capita.
- Ireland: multinational enterprises, intellectual property and profit accounting affect GDP statistics.
- High GDP per capita does not necessarily imply equally high cultural-sector intensity.

Illustrative Cases: Culture and Urban Regeneration



BILBAO · 1997

Guggenheim Museum and wider urban regeneration

1.32 million visitors · 2023

~13,900 jobs supported · 2023

€657 million regional GDP contribution · 2023



LIVERPOOL · 2008

European Capital of Culture; legacy studied a decade later

44% reported greater cultural interest · 2018

45% perceived a positive external city image · 2018

18% held this perception before the event · 2007

Sources: Le Monde (2024), Bilbao museum impact figures; Liu (2019), Urban Science 3(3), 79, Liverpool resident surveys.

Illustrative cases; Liverpool is outside the EU-27 statistical comparison. Economic figures are published impact estimates.

Main Findings: Culture and Socioeconomic Development

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- Culture has a measurable economic footprint through employment, enterprises and value creation.
- Cultural employment is positively associated with HDI and trust in government (r = +0.64 for both).
- Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands have six of seven indicators above the EU-27 country average.
- EU countries combine economic prosperity, cultural-sector activity and institutional trust in different ways.
- GDP remains informative, but cannot substitute for cultural, social and institutional indicators.

Future Research: Culture and Socioeconomic Resilience

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- Cultural and institutional change may unfold over long periods; development paths can be persistent (path dependence).
- Future research will test whether cultural factors relate to adaptation and transformation – not only recovery after crises.
- A longitudinal approach will compare cultural and socioeconomic indicators before, during and after crises.
- Resilience is a future research objective, not an outcome measured by the present cross-sectional analysis.

How and under what conditions can culture contribute to socioeconomic progress and strengthen socioeconomic resilience in times of uncertainty?