

**Mr Pietrangelo Buttafuoco**  
President of La Biennale di Venezia

**Mr Luigi Brugnaro,**  
**Ms Tamara Gregoretti,**  
**Mr Luca Zaia**  
Board of Directors of  
La Biennale di Venezia

For information:  
**Mr Alessandro Giuli**  
Minister of Culture  
of the Italian Republic

**Honourable President Buttafuoco,**  
**Honourable Members of the Board of Directors,**

We, the undersigned Ministers for Culture and for Foreign Affairs, write to convey to you our position regarding the participation of the Russian Federation in the 61st International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia.

For more than a century, the Biennale di Venezia has stood as one of the world's most prestigious expressions of artistic freedom. Guided by our shared commitment to our common European values – artistic freedom and freedom of expression, and respect for human dignity – our countries and our artists have long participated in the Biennale di Venezia in the spirit of cultural exchange and mutual respect.

Culture is not separate from the realities societies face. It shapes how people understand the world, what they value, and how they choose to act. Cultural institutions therefore carry not only artistic significance but also moral responsibility.

As Russian-born artist Kirill Savchenkov stated when he, together with Alexandra Sukhareva and the Lithuanian curator Raimundas Malašauskas, withdrew from the Russian Pavilion in 2022: *“There is no place for art when civilians are dying under the fire of missiles, when citizens of Ukraine are hiding in shelters, and when Russian protestors are getting silenced.”*

Regrettably, Russia continues to wage its brutal war of aggression against Ukraine. The Ukrainian people continue to fight against the unprovoked and unjustified Russian invasion and continue to fight for their sovereignty and to protect their cultural identity.

Russia's war has also brought systematic destruction of Ukraine's cultural life and heritage. According to Ukrainian authorities, at least 342 artists have been killed, while 1,685 cultural heritage sites and 2,483 cultural infrastructure facilities have been destroyed or damaged. These figures represent not only the loss of physical structures, but the silencing of voices and the erasure of cultural memory.

In response to this ongoing aggression and its devastating human and cultural consequences, the Russian Federation remains subject to European and international sanctions, including in the cultural domain, imposed for its violation of international law and Ukraine's sovereignty.

In this context, granting Russia a prestigious international cultural platform sends a deeply troubling signal.

We, the undersigned, therefore express our deep concern over the significant risk of an instrumentalization by the Russian Federation of its participation in the Biennale di Venezia, to project an image of legitimacy and international acceptance that stands in stark contrast to the reality of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine and the destruction of Ukrainian cultural heritage, and European and international sanctions.

We also note the political nature of the project associated with the Russian pavilion and its suspected links to individuals closely connected to Russia's political elite. These connections raise serious questions about the risk of state-directed cultural diplomacy being presented under the guise of artistic exchange.

For these reasons, we, the undersigned Ministers for Culture and for Foreign Affairs, consider the participation of the Russian Federation in the La Biennale di Venezia unacceptable under current circumstances.

Therefore, we respectfully call upon the leadership of La Biennale di Venezia to reconsider the participation of the Russian Federation at the International Art Exhibition of the Venice Biennale.

**Mr Andreas Babler**

Vice-Chancellor and Federal Minister of  
Housing, Arts, Culture, Media and Sport  
*Austria*

**Mr Victor Stoyanov**

Deputy Minister of Culture  
*Bulgaria*

**Ms Caroline Gennez**

Flemish Minister for Welfare, Poverty  
Reduction, Culture and Equal Opportunities

**Mr Gregor Freches**

Minister of the Government of the German-  
speaking Community of Belgium for  
Culture, Sport, Tourism and Media

**Ms Elisabeth Degryse**

Minister-President of the Government of the  
French Community of Belgium, in charge of  
the Budget, Higher Education, Culture  
(including Audiovisual Media) and  
International Relations

*Belgium*

**Ms Nina Obuljen Koržinek**

Minister of Culture and Media  
*Croatia*

**Mr Jakob Engel-Schmidt**

Minister for Culture  
*Denmark*

**Ms Heidi Purga**

Minister of Culture  
*Estonia*

**Ms Mari-Leena Talvitie**  
Minister of Science and Culture  
*Finland*

**Ms Rianne Letschert**  
Minister of Education, Culture and Science  
*The Netherlands*

**Ms Catherine Pégard**  
Minister for Culture  
*France*

**Ms Lubna Jaffery**  
Minister of Culture and Equality  
*Norway*

**Dr Lina Mendoni**  
Minister of Culture  
*Greece*

**Ms Marta Cienkowska**  
Minister of Culture and National Heritage  
*Poland*

**Mr Johann Wadehul**  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
*Germany*

**Ms Margarida Balseiro Lopes**  
Minister of Culture  
*Portugal*

**Mr Patrick O'Donovan**  
Minister for Culture, Communications and  
Sport  
*Ireland*

**Mr András István Demeter**  
Minister of Culture  
*Romania*

**Ms Agnese Lāce**  
Minister for Culture  
*Latvia*

**Mr Ernest Urtasun i Domènech**  
Minister of Culture  
*Spain*

**Ms Vaida Aleknavičienė**  
Minister of Culture  
*Lithuania*

**Ms Parisa Liljestränd**  
Minister for Culture  
*Sweden*

**Mr Eric Thill**  
Minister for Culture  
*Luxembourg*

**Ms Tetyana Berezhna**  
Minister of Culture  
*Ukraine*