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Manifesto  
*pele futuro do*  
**ARTESANATO**

# A Manifesto for the Future of Arts and Crafts in Portugal

The Arts and Crafts constitute a productive sector of significant historical, cultural, and economic relevance, integrating technical competencies that preserve traditional knowledge and promote innovation across multiple areas. They are an integral part of national identity and Portuguese cultural diversity.

The sector faces structural constraints that compromise its continuity: the **absence of a national strategy, the non-existence of a dedicated institutional entity, and the lack of tailored public policies**. These factors result in **widespread undervaluation of professionals and fragmentation of initiatives**.

The sustainability of the Arts and Crafts cannot depend exclusively on local or individual efforts. It is essential to **ensure equal access to structuring support measures** that recognize the sector as an engine of social cohesion, territorial identity, and economic diversification.

This Manifesto, the **result of a civil society initiative and participatory process**, proposes coordinated action to identify and implement measures that promote the artisan profession, both as an economic and innovative agent and as an active part of the cultural sector.

## Areas of Action

### 1. VALUATION, DIGNITY AND CULTURAL RECOGNITION

The dignity and valuation of Arts and Crafts professionals must be achieved through the **urgent revision of the artisan's status, updating of professional recognition regulatory norms, and creation of clear categories — Artisan and Master** — integrating the diverse areas of work within the scope of utilitarian, symbolic, or artistic artisanal creation.

It is essential to implement **rigorous criteria in the official certification system and professional registry** to ensure that the quality, technical mastery, and professional commitment of the artisan are properly attested.

A **National Communication Strategy for Valuation of professional Arts and Crafts** should be promoted, distinguishing them from leisure activities, with narratives that challenge the hierarchization of cultural expressions and reflect the invaluable worth of the Arts and Crafts as a sustainable alternative to industrial production. In this strategy, **existing legislation and regulations should be integrated and updated** to ensure their correct application and the results expressed in this manifesto.

The **complete national mapping of artisans, creative routes, and immersive experiences**, based on the professional recognition of artisan, should result in a **directory publicly accessible** through digital and analog platforms, facilitating direct contact between consumers and professionals.

### 2. EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INNOVATION

**Education and Innovation** form the foundation of the Arts and Crafts sector, and it is urgent to ensure **Generational Renewal** through awareness programs, observation internships, practical workshops, and the integration of crafts into school curricula.

The implementation of **Higher Education** that unites traditional knowledge, artisan techniques, and entrepreneurship is necessary, linked to a university center of excellence in collaboration with museums and territories, stimulating research for innovation, sustainability, and regeneration.

A **National Masters and Apprentices Program** should be created, with remuneration and pedagogical recognition for Masters, scholarships for apprentices, internships in workshops, and partnerships with museums to enhance traditional knowledge-making.

The territory should count on **local Artisan Innovation hubs and poles that foster partnerships**, development of new techniques and products, use of technologies integrated into the artisanal process, and encourage ecological transition.

**Capacity Building for Economic Viability** must be promoted through training in communication and marketing, accounting and management, commercialization, internationalization, artificial intelligence, and digital tools, complemented by specialized mentoring.

### 3. INSTITUTIONAL AND STRUCTURAL SUPPORT

The strengthening of the sector also requires the **creation of a solid and representative institutional structure** capable of coordinating, gathering data, and promoting the sector through a National Entity that defends artisans' interests and a National Observatory, providing a unified voice to professionals and fostering a network of collaborations among associations, municipalities, academia, and enterprises.

The **implementation of a National Strategy** is essential to ensure the equity of measures throughout the territory in coordination with local authorities, promoting the implementation of municipal exhibition and sales spaces, the integration of craftsmanship in museums and cultural centers, the creation of shared and cooperative studios, the recovery of vacant buildings, and support policies that facilitate access to spaces, training, and fiscal incentives.

The **National Institute of Arts and Crafts** should **promote specific support and financing programs** that include startup capital for new artisans, subsidized credit, simplified access to European funds, equipment subsidies, targeted microloans, and incentives for internationalization, expanding the representativeness, visibility, and competitiveness of Portuguese craftsmanship abroad.

**Transparency in the management of public funds** must be guaranteed through publicly accessible audit mechanisms and an independent oversight council with financing criteria based on merit and real impact.

### 4. TAXATION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The sustainable development of craftsmanship in Portugal requires a **profound fiscal and regulatory reform** that begins, first and foremost, with the **creation of a simplified tax regime adapted to the specificities of artisanal activity**, namely through the reduction of VAT rate to 6%, thus aligning it with other artistic sectors.

It is equally essential to develop a **practical fiscal guide** that is regularly updated on tax and tributary obligations, available on a single public online platform, accompanied by free training sessions on taxation and legal framework, capacity building in management and digitalization.

The **social protection of artisans** strongly requires structural adaptation, with official recognition of the intermittency characteristic of artisanal activity in the calculation of contributions and the creation of a flexible contributory regime for independent artisans, adapted to the reality of irregular income typical of the sector. This regime must guarantee universal access to full social protection, including sick leave allowance, unemployment benefit, parental protection, dignified retirement pension, and specific protection measures related to the physical strain inherent to artisanal work.

Finally, it is fundamental to establish a **specific legislative framework through a framework law** on craftsmanship that officially recognizes the sector as an integral and valued part of Portuguese cultural and economic heritage.

### 5. VISIBILITY AND MARKET ACCESS

For the Arts and Crafts to endure and prosper, **adequate and dignified channels of visibility and commercialization** are needed. We believe in the creation of markets, fairs, and regular events with rigorous curation and transparent quality criteria, that distinguish authentic artisanal production from leisure activities or industrial products, ensuring the dignity of the Arts and Crafts. This structuring should establish effective coordination with Municipalities and their existing platforms for updated and accessible dissemination of information about markets and events.

It is essential to develop **collaborative sales spaces** — physical and/or through an online sales platform functioning as a specialized marketplace. The **promotion of cooperation models in commercialization** should strengthen the network of artisans, reducing individual costs and creating synergies that reinforce the sector's negotiating power against major distributors.

**Excellence and innovation must be promoted** through the implementation of contests and awards assigned by juries chosen based on their experience and knowledge of the sector, recognizing not only the quality of products but also the transmission of knowledge and technical evolution of the sector. It is fundamental that **access to events follows criteria of equity and transparency**.

Portugal should position itself as a reference through the organization of an annual prestigious international event — such as a **Forum on Intangible Cultural Heritage and Craftsmanship** — that places the country on the global map of arts and crafts. **Internationalization should be supported with financial and logistical** incentives for participation in global fairs, integrating the Arts and Crafts into programs of cultural diplomacy.

## APPEAL

**The Arts and Crafts constitute a strategic sector** that integrates essential dimensions of society and should be valued as an asset in promoting inclusive and sustainable development models.

**Craftsmanship contributes directly to several Sustainable Development Goals**, namely through the dynamization of local economies, the promotion of social inclusion, the safeguarding of intangible heritage, and the adoption of environmentally responsible practices. Recognizing this value is, therefore, a concrete measure for achieving global goals with local impact.

**The Arts and Crafts should not be understood merely as consumer goods**, but as structuring elements of our collective identity and the cultural diversity that defines us. Their future depends on decisions made in the present within a long-term perspective, on a change in mentalities, and the deconstruction of established narratives.

**In this context, we call for the mobilization of all stakeholders** — arts and crafts professionals, public entities, civil society organizations, enterprises, and citizens — in the achievement of these objectives for the **continuity, dignity, and innovation of this sector**.

## PUBLIC PETITION

<https://peticaopublica.com/pview.aspx?pi=Manifesto-Artesanato>

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**It is time  
for change!**

**Join us and  
sign the  
Manifesto!**