



THE NETWORK  
OF MAJOR  
EUROPEAN  
CITIES

## EUROCITIES response to the consultation on the future Culture Programme

### Towards a strong Culture Programme that reaches cities

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#### EUROCITIES

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EUROCITIES is the network of major European cities. Founded in 1986, the network brings together the local governments of 140 large cities in some 34 European countries. EUROCITIES represents the interests of its members and engages in dialogue with the European institutions across a wide range of policy areas affecting cities. These include: economic development, the environment, transport and mobility, social affairs, culture, the information and knowledge society, and services of general interest.

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## ABOUT EUROCITIES

Name	Julie Hervé
Email	<a href="mailto:julie.herve@eurocities.eu">julie.herve@eurocities.eu</a>
In which country are you located?	BELGIUM
Have you heard of the European Union's Culture Programme 2007-13 before?	YES
Have you or your organisation benefited from a grant under the Culture Programme 2007-13?	NO
Is your organisation already involved in transnational co-operation in the field of culture?	YES
In which cultural sector do you (or your organisation) operate?	INTERDISCIPLINARY
In which capacity are you participating in this consultation?	AN ORGANISATION

## INTRODUCTION: TOWARDS A STRONG CULTURE PROGRAMME

Culture is a source of inspiration, provides opportunities, improves health and wellbeing, contributes to education and life long learning and generally improves the quality of life of citizens. It is a strong element for social cohesion in Europe, and particularly in cities.

Culture in cities should be regarded not only in terms of its artistic dimension but also as a mechanism to stimulate and promote social inclusion and urban regeneration and to assist the creative economy in general. Culture is therefore a transversal policy framework that contributes in a number of ways to the objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Culture and creativity should be supported by public policies at all levels. The Culture Programme offers essential support for cultural cooperation between different partners in Europe. We believe that there is no other reliable financial source for cultural cooperation at European level.

Considering the importance of culture in the development of European citizenship, the adoption of a very promising Agenda for Culture in Europe and recent thematic European Years with a strong focus on culture (Intercultural dialogue and Creativity and innovation) it is important that the Culture Programme remains a strong programme after 2013 and that its budget allows it to achieve ambitious objectives.

Among the list of key objectives proposed in the consultation, EUROCITIES would particularly like to stress the importance of:

- the promotion of urban and regional development through culture
- a better equipped framework for creative industries, culture and the arts
- intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity
- access to culture

## A FUTURE CULTURE PROGRAMME THAT CONTRIBUTES TO TERRITORIAL AND SOCIAL COHESION

### Culture and creativity thrive in cities

European societies are predominantly urban; 75% of Europe's population lives in cities.

Culture represents a vital aspect of urban life as cities host all kinds of cultural events, from popular events to high culture. Cities are the places where culture and creativity can flourish because they provide the necessary mix of creative minds, tailored services, infrastructure and cultural consumers. Our urban environments are therefore the preferred habitats for the cultural and creative industries.

It is now recognised that sound cultural policies are a cornerstone for inclusive, sustainable urban development, which explains why they are now increasingly placed at the heart of cities' strategic plans.

### Culture is a key tool for local development and territorial cohesion

Cultural activities generate spill-over effects to other sectors. Where culture and creativity are strong, other sectors profit and become more creative and innovative. In today's context of global competition and economic recovery this represents an enormous competitive advantage.

The cultural sector is fast growing, expanding and creating jobs faster than traditional economic sectors. Recent policy developments at the European Union level demonstrate a growing interest and awareness of the potential of culture to boost local and regional development and have made a strong case for European policies and programmes to better support such development through culture.

- In 2006 the study 'The economy of culture in Europe'<sup>1</sup> argued that the cultural and creative sector and the arts constitute an essential element of local development and should benefit from strong European support of various local actions.
- The 2010 study 'The contribution of culture to local and regional development'<sup>2</sup> showed the numerous contributions of culture to the objectives of the European cohesion policy but highlighted that the share of structural funds spent for culture is not proportional to the growing (economic) role of culture. For example, in 2003 the cultural and creative sector accounted for 2.6% of EU GDP and was growing 12% more rapidly than the general economy. Yet, between 2007 and 2013, EU expenditure for culture is only planned to be 1.7% of the total Structural Funds budget.
- The European Commission's Green Paper on cultural and creative industries (CCIs) (April 2010) recognised that CCIs are one of Europe's most dynamic economic sectors and contribute greatly to social and territorial cohesion. It noted that CCIs often boost local economies in decline,

<sup>1</sup> *The economy of culture in Europe, KEA, 2006*

<sup>2</sup> *Study on the contribution of culture to local and regional development - Evidence from the Structural Funds, CSES, 2010*

contribute to the emergence of new economic activities, create new and sustainable jobs and enhance the attractiveness of European regions and cities.

Cultural investment and action have important effects by building on the distinctive qualities of diverse European territories. In cities culture acts as a mechanism to stimulate and promote social inclusion and urban regeneration. It is a vital pillar for the balanced and sustainable development of Europe's cities. It is an engine for urban economic development and contributes directly to enhancing the quality of life of citizens.

The new EU territorial cohesion objective of the Lisbon Treaty calls for EU institutions to partner with local authorities and their stakeholders to deliver appropriate solutions and support the Union's development.

Europe is facing significant new challenges with increased globalisation, such as climate change, migration and demographic change. Although the challenges are European, or even global, it is the local and urban levels that feel the effects most acutely. It is also the local and urban levels that are in a position to make a difference and help deliver the EU objectives

## Culture Programme delivering Europe 2020 in cities

Cities represent a crucial link between the potential of culture and creativity and the goals of the EU2020 strategy which calls for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

In addition to stimulating and supporting Europe's vibrant cultural scene, the future culture programme should also support cultural policies that deliver the EU2020 objectives

The Council conclusions from May 2010 state the need to 'consolidate the contribution of culture, especially the cultural and creative industries, to the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth'. Indeed, culture contributes to the three objectives of the strategy:

### *Smart growth - developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation*

- Culture and creativity lead to innovation

Culture helps drive innovation, the generation of new ideas and the accumulation of skills and flexibility, which increases the competitiveness of Europe and of its cities. The creative industries are considered as important innovators; firstly in terms of the goods and services they provide for consumer markets, but secondly, and perhaps more importantly, in their role as drivers of innovation in other segments of the economy.

- Culture and creativity are part of education and training

The promotion of culture and creativity not only strengthens education and culture related competencies, but also, in the longer term, stimulates the demand for cultural products. Furthermore, arts and culture in education can make a direct contribution to resolving the social and cultural challenges faced by people living in our cities today.

*Sustainable growth - promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy*

- Culture contributes to sustainable competitive cities

Culture, together with cultural and creative industries, is part of Europe's solution to becoming more competitive worldwide in the long term. Creative cities with vibrant cultural communities attract more investments and highly skilled people. Furthermore, Europe is an important producer of cultural and creative goods with intellectual property rights, the demand for which is increasing.

- Culture is central to tourism as well as to the preservation of heritage

Cultural tourism is beneficial for Europe's economy, and for cities in particular, where many cultural institutions are linked to the preservation and safeguarding of local cultural heritage. The attractiveness of our cities is heavily based on culture and heritage as part of a strong European model of urban development, which city administrations strive to manage and sustain. This European urban model contributes significantly to Europe's competitive edge.

*Inclusive growth - creating a job market for all and delivering economic, social and territorial cohesion*

- Cultural and creative industries are major employers

In some cities and regions, up to 10% of employment is in cultural and creative industries.

- Culture fosters social cohesion and participation

Participation in cultural and creative activities help develop social links and dialogue between generations and among a city's various socio-demographic groups. Cultural and creative activities are also a way of promoting the European values of tolerance, democracy and solidarity and are useful tools to support inter-cultural dialogue, to integrate different parts of the population and to contribute to greater social cohesion and inclusion.

- Cultural and creative industries drive urban regeneration

In addition to its contribution to local economies, culture drives urban regeneration. Often established in run-down, segregated parts of cities, cultural and creative industries have the power to inject new life and vitality into the less popular parts of a city. Ultimately, creative hubs can overhaul such neighbourhoods by making them more attractive and helping with the inclusion of their inhabitants into the city's mainstream activities.

## OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE NEW PROGRAMME FOR CULTURE

We would like to emphasise a number of objectives for the future programme that are in line with cities' current priorities and would very usefully support cities' activities which, as we have argued, are the best way to ensure the delivery of Europe 2020 on the ground. These specific objectives would also strongly complement and support the objectives of the European Agenda for Culture and of the new Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014 of the Council of the European Union.

### *Objective 1 - Urban and regional development through culture*

#### **Why?**

- Urban and regional development are essential to boost the development of Europe as a whole
- culture and creative industries play a key role in local and regional development
- directly linked to Europe 2020 "smart and sustainable growth" priorities
- the Council of the European Union Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014, adopted in November 2010, sets as a key topic "Strategic use of EU support programmes, including structural funds, to foster the potential of culture for local and regional development and the spill over effects of cultural and creative industries on the wider economy"
- as stated by the Council in its conclusions on Culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation<sup>3</sup>, further support at Community level for the networking of cities will help improve the dissemination of best practices and experiences

#### **Sub-objectives and activities to be supported:**

- **Support exchange, learning and networking**
  - o Building the networking capacity of local authorities through peer learning and peer coaching is essential to support the sharing of successful practice
- **Support interdisciplinary projects**
  - o Cooperation projects between cultural and non-cultural operators (economic development, tourism sectors, new media...) in order to develop new partnerships and products
- **Support skills and talent development**
  - o Cooperation projects between arts institutions, universities and business aiming to foster the entrepreneurial skills of creative talents
- **Evaluate the impacts of culture on local and regional development**
  - o Research projects developing methodologies and concrete tools
  - o Sharing best practices to reduce the impact of decreasing public budgets on culture
- **Support the development of a space for experimentation, innovation and risk taking**
  - o To date the Culture programme has mainly co financed traditional projects (both on their form and content). It is now time to open-up to artistic laboratories and to

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<sup>3</sup> Council conclusions "Culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation", 12 May 2009

new kind of artistic forms and productions i.e. new alliances between arts and technology, between artists and private companies

### *Objective 2 - A better equipped framework for creative industries, culture and the arts*

#### **Why?**

- it would allow the creative sector, as well as culture and the arts as a whole, its capacities and connections to contribute more fully to economic, social and territorial cohesion

#### **Sub-objectives and activities to be supported:**

- **Encourage production, exchange, learning, networking and better promotion**
  - o Creative clusters and one-stop-shops should be supported and developed
  - o Networking and the exchange of experiences are vital to the sector's success
  - o The mobility of cultural and creative industry workers and products should be supported both inside and outside Europe
- **Nurturing an 'eco-system' for the creative industries, culture and the arts**
  - o Entrepreneurship should be promoted in the sector and educational programmes should be adapted to the sector's particular business needs
  - o Access to finance needs to be facilitated and financial tools that are tailored specifically for the sector should be introduced to encourage the sector's growth
- **Developing indicators and gathering evidence**
  - o More effective tools are needed to better understand the sector and its economic, social and environmental impact
  - o Data must be collected at the local level but should have a Europe-wide basis to ensure comparability and learning outcomes

### *Objective 3 - Foster intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity*

#### **Why?**

- This objective is essential to deliver the Europe 2020 smart and inclusive growth. It will also ensure a strong follow up of the European Year of intercultural dialogue (2008)
- Cities play a key role in terms of facilitating and supporting intercultural dialogue, promoting mutual understanding and acceptance, and overcoming barriers between different groups. Intercultural dialogue and the promotion of cultural diversity are priorities for Europe's large cities, which are becoming more and more diverse. They have to successfully celebrate diversity while providing a framework that enables the development of a shared sense of belonging, citizenship and urban identity
- Cultural activities and events can make a unique contribution to promote cultural diversity by encouraging interaction between people, the expression of cultural identity, enabling better understanding between people and tackling racist behaviour and intolerance
- "Promotion of culturally inclusive cities" is a key topic of the new Council of the European Union Work Plan for Culture 2011-2014

### Sub-objectives and activities to be supported:

- **Support skills development**
  - o Support the professional development and capacity-building of artists and cultural operators (including local authorities) in an international context
- **Support the mobility of artists, works and products, through**
  - o The transnational mobility of those working in the field of culture, with special focus on the mobility of municipal cultural workers and exchanges between cities. Cross-disciplinary mobility (e.g. involving professionals from the artistic, educational and tourism sectors, and civil servants) should also be supported, under the form of work placements or secondments for example.
  - o The transnational circulation of works and cultural and artistic products
  - o Support for cultural and creative companies/organisations that promote the development of artists and their works in different European countries, specifically with a view to fostering cultural diversity
  - o Support for young talents, emerging artists, start-up initiatives
  - o Support to enable artists and cultural operators to overcome barriers to transnational mobility (e.g. legal and administrative barriers)
  - o Incentives for artists performing or touring outside their own country
  - o The evaluation of mobility schemes
- **Support the development of a space for experimentation, innovation and risk taking**
  - o The Culture programme has mainly co financed traditional projects (both on their form and content). It is now time to open up to new kinds of artistic forms and productions.
- **Foster intercultural dialogue**
  - o Support projects aimed at identifying and sharing good practices implemented by local authorities and cultural stakeholders: peer reviews, a dedicated website, valorisation conferences or an 'intercultural city' award are examples of effective tools to ensure knowledge-sharing.
  - o Support the mobility of politicians and civil servants in transnational exchanges to promote and facilitate mutual learning amongst peers
  - o **Promote cultural cooperation with third countries operators, without linguistic priorities or geographical restrictions**

### *Objective 4 - Accessible and inclusive culture for all*

#### **Why?**

- Culture is for all to share, at all ages. It contributes to the wellbeing and entitlement of citizens and to social cohesion and inclusion.
- Access for all citizens to culture is a means of social cohesion; in cities special efforts are being made in decentralising cultural policies and resources to deprived areas. Culture plays a specific role in tackling poverty and social exclusion, as outlined in Council conclusions on this exact issue (November 2010)

#### Sub-objectives and activities to be supported:

- **Support digitisation of cultural content**
- **Widen access to cultural works**
  - o Support the development of new digital distribution and exhibition platforms
  - o Support and promote the exchange of good practices
- **Develop cultural operators' skills to reach out to all publics**
  - o Support training and awareness raising events for professionals from the culture area and also for social affairs professionals
- **Widen access to culture and participation in culture for disadvantaged groups**
  - o Support and promote international networking for exchanging experience and practices, for both cultural operators and public authorities

## TYPES OF SUPPORT: FURTHER IMPROVING THE NEW PROGRAMME FOR CULTURE

There are a number of additional conclusions that cities have based on their experience of how the current culture programme is functioning. These should also be taken into consideration in the reflections on shaping the new programme.

- **Improve financial rules** to enable a wider variety of stakeholders to participate in the future programme.
  - Raise the EU co-funding rate. The current 50% rate is too low and prevents many stakeholders from submitting proposals.
  - Recommend that Member States set up national co-financing funds and give additional co-financing for smaller projects.
- **Open up to smaller projects**, because the European added value of a project is not strictly related to the financial input.
  - This could include lowering the minimum threshold of co-financing to €25,000 for cooperation projects (currently €50,000) and €100,000 per year for multi-annual cooperation projects (currently €200,000).
- The possibility to support cultural festivals since 2010 is welcomed. However, eligible costs are restricted to 'non-national works' only. The current definition of 'non-national works' requires clarification and we suggest that national works should also be eligible for support.
- **Better publicising project results** would increase the prestige and the political legitimacy of the programme, encourage the exchange of experiences between stakeholders and help applicants to better appraise whether their project idea is sustainable and innovative.
  - For example, the outcomes of Culture funded projects should be made available on the EVE platform (which should be easily accessible through DC EAC's website) as well as on Europeana.

- **Provide more support services and advice for applicants** preparing applications to the Culture Programme.

The new Culture Programme Guide and the clear calendar for submission of applications covering the entire period of the Programme have been very useful to cities.

Local cultural institutions (e.g. theatres, cultural associations, museums) often turn to cities for advice when developing project proposals. Although cities do their best to provide local cultural stakeholders with updated information on EU funding opportunities, partner search or advice, this task is very challenging and only a small number of cities feel confident enough to answer complex questions within the time constraints. In addition, some cities do not have personnel with expertise and knowledge of EU-funded programmes. Initiatives such as infodays or dissemination conferences are very helpful. In addition to this, we would suggest:

- More detailed feedback is given to unsuccessful applicants. The information provided currently is not precise enough and does not allow the applicant to clearly identify the weaknesses of their project proposal.
- National Cultural Contact Points (CCPs) should be given enough means to provide tailor-made advice to potential applicants, and to provide information on co-funding possibilities for cultural projects outside the Culture Programme
- Develop dynamic, expandable and flexible on-line tools such as: a supervised wiki about the experiences of stakeholders with the Culture programme; a more complete FAQ section on the website of the Executive Agency; forums where applicants would discuss project ideas and frequently faced problems.
- Support the creation of a reliable network of experts and contact persons.
- Create clear and simple check-lists to avoid formal mistakes when preparing a project proposal.

- **Continue simplifying the Culture Programme**

Simplifications have already taken place (shorter application form, fixed deadline for submission, single submission phase, automated estimated budget, online application, fastest evaluation) and these have proved very helpful. We believe that simplification should lead to a reduction in the costs of administering the programme.

However, we have the impression that even large stakeholders participate in a programme only once - particularly if they have been coordinator. Further simplification of programme structures and procedures are needed, as the following issues remain problematic for a large number of (potential) participants:

- the time lag from the submission of the application until the final decision on a grant
- the long period of time that is necessary for the final checking and the final payment
- the final payment should represent a smaller percentage of the total grant as expenses have to be supported by the partners during the project and not at the end of the project (i.e. the final payment represents 20 % of the grant for cooperation measures (area 1.2.1. cooperation measures))
- technical specifications of the programme should be available in all official languages of the EU and not only in English, French or German

- the number and complexity of application papers and technical specifications
- the difference in currency rates for grants given to applicants outside the Euro zone. Amounts paid at the end of the project often differ from the amount needed due to changing exchange rates

We believe that such changes would simplify the application and payment processes and would encourage more operators, especially smaller stakeholders, to submit project proposals.

## CONCLUSION

The world is rapidly changing. Economic, spatial and social developments confront us with new challenges that force us to be more creative and to work on unconventional innovative solutions. The Culture Programme is an instrument to tackle these challenges. Culture plays a key role in increasing citizens' quality of life, and it contributes to making our European cities attractive. In this difficult and uncertain era cultural activities will continue to need strong support from a strong, ambitious Culture Programme.

In order to help build a Culture Programme that will reach the cities, we can offer cooperation and partnership and provide:

- A EUROCITIES network of cities that can identify good practices implemented in cities, offer a strong base for developing projects at the local level and that can raise local authorities' awareness on the Culture Programme
- A EUROCITIES Culture Forum with meetings that offer a platform for discussion and exchange between representatives of the European Commission and Parliament and city politicians in charge of culture and economic development. This would usefully complement the dialogue that the Commission is already developing with civil society
- A EUROCITIES platform for discussion and exchanges with representatives of the European Commission positioning member cities as focal points for raising public awareness of European policies and events related to cultural and creative industries