

EUROPEAN
NETWORK OF
CULTURAL
CENTRES



CROWDSOURCED MANIFESTO

*Culture for Shared,
Smart, Innovative
Territories
2020*



We are cultural stakeholders from 22 European countries. This document summarises the conclusions from a long-term process of open consultancies and debates. The inputs were gathered at ENCC conferences Culture for Shared, Smart, Innovative Territories in Oleśnica (Poland) in 2016 and Artistic Processes and Cultural Participation-New Perspectives for Rural Development in Hildesheim (Germany) in 2017; on the ENCC crowdsourced manifesto dedicated interactive online platform, and from the ENCC Working Group on Territorial Development and Culture in Non-Urban Areas (2018-20). We believe there are steps to be followed on the European, member state and local levels to foster social participation, innovation, inclusion, accessibility and cooperation. Culture is a founding and bonding pillar for our societies and should be supported and prioritised in coherent regional development strategies.

Arts and culture have a very direct impact on societies. They foster creativity, debate, citizen participation and democracy, support grassroots initiatives and add to quality of life. We want to help remove barriers to accessing art and cultural experiences, especially for underrepresented, remote, rural and peri-urban populations. If we can create the context for transsectorial cooperation in policy and equitable access to art and culture, then art and culture could be more powerful in fostering social inclusion and innovation. It will also help counteract the century-long trend of migration to the urban, and make our rural communities as culturally vibrant as our cities.

By investing in culture, we'll move closer to achieving some of the most ambitious strategy goals formulated by Europe in the last two decades. Europe is facing rapid transformations. We believe that culture is the most significant solution for constructing new narratives and creativity in our societies. We are expressing the following recommendations:

Participation

On the EU level:

- Create a European Council of Cultural Expertise on smart territorial development. Establish a leadership development programme and an international study visits programme for trips beyond Europe. Dedicate 1% of the EU budget to funding them.
- Increase the knowledge on the fake news phenomenon. Reduce xenophobia and prejudices towards people from different cultures through cultural means.
- Encourage participation in social media to influence the social network in emancipatory and thoughtful democratic ways, and counteract right-wing fake-news networks.

On state and local levels:

- Support participative leadership on all levels (neighbourhoods, rural areas, communities, counties, regions, etc.) and wider promotion of participatory processes through culture in Europe to achieve an inclusive approach among citizens and professionals of different sectors.
- Enhance the role of community participation in local governance. Build bridges through round-table debates and foster cooperation between cultural operators, local authorities and stakeholders of different sectors/industries/ambits.

Finances

On the EU level:

- Approve stronger financial support for the cultural sector, achieving at least 1% of the EU overall budget and adequately reaching desired budget levels for culture in the European States.
- Make sure that other financial funds and programmes also integrate the sector of arts and culture at the regional level (e.g. ERDF European Regional Development Fund, RIS3 Smart Specialisation Program).

On state and local levels:

- Support artistic and civic education, the creative economy and as a priority the reintegration of the European dimension and values.
- Develop innovative and sustainable financial models for culture.

Innovation

On the EU level:

- Develop solutions to tackle the 'carbon cost' of travel, meetings and to provide a carbon-free cultural programme in regions - sustainable models are needed for citizens and tourists taking part in cultural events, especially when the distance to access culture is 50 kilometres or more.
- Promote flexibility in administrative practices. Monitor and document development. Enhance regional support and international visibility of new initiatives and business models, possibly introducing awards and incentives. Facilitate knowledge transfers.

On state and local levels:

- Organise continuous programmes for discussion, exchange, training, awareness-raising, policy design and fighting the digital divide.
- Promote creativity, capacity-building and innovation in rural & urban development through culture. Engage with developments in social and digital innovation.

- Rethink traditional forms of presenting data. Implement new formats for engaging locality in policymaking, for instance through citizens' assemblies.
- Embrace new types of audiences, for instance digital co-creators, youth, the FabLab Makers movement.
- Promote decentralised delivery of cultural activities designed to create horizontal networks of local partnerships, both in non-urban and urban areas.
- Identify effective and sustainable measures to embed horizontal networks in policy framework (also in an informal way) in order to establish and maintain continuous communication and collaboration between the private sector and public bodies.
- Prepare cultural plans which respect the distinctiveness of local situations.

Spaces for Culture

Both on EU and state / local levels:

- Support the idea of stepping beyond the obvious, beyond physical premises, since culture itself can create spaces for people to encounter each other.
- Consider 'common spaces' as laboratories for cultural evolution by building up on historical elements.
- Find ways for civil society to facilitate processes where 'the unexpected can happen'.

Inclusion

On the EU level:

- Support the inclusion of disadvantaged groups in cultural management and programming.
- Make European programmes easily accessible for local citizens.

On state and local levels:

- Increase social inclusion in both urban and rural culture to counteract labelling categories of 'centre and periphery';
- Create policies to encourage the existence of independent advisory groups in cultural centres.
- Analyse changing social and economic conditions in order to respond more effectively to society's needs.

Cooperation

On the EU level:

- Empower local and international networks of stakeholders from diverse fields. Organise for instance 'in situ' research projects responding to the needs of stakeholders, that deliver

economic, quantitative & qualitative data to inform efficient approaches by public bodies and policymakers.

- Develop ways to create continuity between ECoCs in terms of lessons learned in citizen and social participation.
- Value real-time stakeholder meetings as a crucial tool for enhancing and reinforcing cooperation.

On state and local levels:

- Bridge gaps between cultural centres by building cross-border connections for sharing insights, strategies, and good practices.
- Organise real-time meetings of stakeholders as a crucial tool for enhancing and reinforcing cooperation.
- Design policies, based on research in urban and rural areas, to identify strategic aspects of joint cooperation and to reinforce communication between policymakers and the cultural sector: we need to speak to each other!
- Forge partnerships with both similar-sized regions & activities and with very different entities from other parts of the world;
- Develop a network of Small-Town Biennales, or create a Towns and Villages Capitals of Culture label to complement larger urban Capitals of Culture.

Accessibility

On the EU level:

- Reduce mobility obstacles. Support the work of the European Mobility Info Points. Further develop programmes supporting short-term mobility of artists and culture professionals in Europe.
- Remove administrative barriers for artists and cultural professionals related to social security (especially European coordination of different social security systems), taxation, visa issues and others.
- Promote coordinated governance and policies on transport and access to community facilities such as youth centres and schools in rural and peri-urban areas.

On state and local levels:

- Regenerate cities and urban-rural linkages by integrating culture at the core of urban, regional and rural planning.
- Identify suitable approaches for remote areas (for instance mountain villages). Help overcome geographic, economic and socio-cultural isolation of disadvantaged neighbourhoods (inside and outside Europe).
- Increase urban-rural exchanges through visits, seminars, projects and more. Organise artist residency programmes for national and international artists to activate community life, re-discuss ideas and reimagine the meaning of 'rural' and 'urban'.

- Support decentralized models and mobility, a key competence which should characterise any cultural organization, rural or urban.

Education

On the EU level:

- Organise conferences, seminars and debates in order to share knowledge on sustainable territorial development.
- Bring rural and urban areas together by developing systemic programmes, strategic solutions and tools to educate and support regional leaders. Enable them to encourage local cultural operators to respond to social needs and to improve competences of local policymakers.
- Educate urban populations and decision-makers about the barriers and inequalities (for instance transport and lack of facilities) that face underrepresented, remote, rural and peri-urban populations in accessing art and culture.
- Raise knowledge on the wider definitions and values of culture, which should not be reduced to entertainment. Revise programme guidelines to reflect this broader meaning, in order to inform practitioners and local policy makers working with civil society.

On state and local levels:

- Embed specific educational paths in the schooling system to prepare for employment and integration in the creative and cultural sector (for instance IT language, manual skills, awareness of diverse cultures and traditions).
- Organise life-long learning programs for professionals of the creative and cultural sector to trigger further ideas and developments and foster exchanges among professionals of different sectors.
- Create and support new formats for laboratories/hubs/professional internships for graduates of culture and arts (or the CCI) to be integrated in ongoing projects and activities prior to entering the job market.
- Create new forms of volunteering, including youth and intergenerational forms, to support the creative and cultural sector.
- Share knowledge on how art and culture can bring well-being and provide education in different fields of society. Showcase examples, good practices and benefits of artists recruited in business or other work communities.

The Arts

Both on EU and state / local levels:

- Support art as a trigger for social change by dedicated funding programmes, with a special focus on community arts and artists.

- Support freedom of artistic expression, which is an important experience for maintaining democracy. Support art as a universal language to find ourselves in the other and the other in us, to be critical, to overcome labels and boxes and to open our minds.
- Promote the value of arts and culture in connection with mental and physical health and wellbeing.
- Promote the arts as a way to keep re-negotiating, experimenting and renewing our identity and future aspirations as individuals and communities.

Key actions to achieve the above-mentioned goals:

On the EU level

- Increase investment in the cultural sector from the overall EU budget, subsequently giving more support to arts & artists.
- Endorse, advocate and raise recognition for culture by emphasizing its complexity, impact and importance at the European level.
- Organise more national and international meetings dedicated to non-urban culture and to territorial development. Exchange on these major topics is crucial to influence policy on the member state and local levels.

On the cultural sector level

- Create networks to inspire each other and to be productive. Formulate recommendations and position papers for policymakers of all levels.
- Create efficient models for the implementation of prepared recommendations on local, regional & international levels.
- Use existing resources as well as identifying new sources of investment and capacity, to support territorial development focused on new narratives and enabling new forms of creativity.

Participating Organizations (2016-2019):

Poland: Community Culture Center of Oleśnica, Community Council of Oleśnica, Community Culture Center of Międzybórz, City Council of Międzybórz, Wandering Cultural Forum of Lower Silesia, Ośrodek Kultury Ochoty, Municipal Culture Center of Konstantynów Łódzki, Community Culture Center of Żmigród, Community Culture, Sport and Local Activity Center of Szklarska Poręba, Community Culture, Sport and Tourism Center in Wleń, Cultural Center in Syców, Municipal Culture Center of Wieruszów, Municipal Culture Center of Mielec, Independant Manufacture of Dance, Regional Cultural Center in Katowice, Municipal Culture Center of Chorzów

Germany: Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft e.V., Association of Cultural Policy, LAG Soziokultur NRW, Landkunstleben e.V., MitOst/Tandem, Info Initiativ-Forum für Interkulturelle Vielfalt, Waschhaus Potsdam, University of Hildesheim, Künstlerstadt Kalbe e.V., Kulturhaus Dehnaide e.V., Plattform Kulturelle Bildung Brandenburg, Kulturzentrum Weserrenaissance Schloss Bevern Landkreis Holzminden, LKB Hessen e.V., Bundesvereinigung Soziokultureller Zentren, Kulturfabrik Löseke e.V. Hildesheim, Paul-Gustavus-Haus Altenburg e.V., theater 3 hasen oben, Initiativ-Forum für Interkulturelle Vielfalt e.V., LAKS Baden-Württemberg, Büro für Regionalkultur, Opernale INSTITUT für Musik und Theater in Vorpommern, LKJ Schleswig-Holstein, Netzwerk RaumUmOrdnung, Netzwerk Kultur Heimat E.V. Hildesheim, Stiftung Niedersachsen, Kreismuseum Peine, LKJ Lower-Saxony, Kulturzentrum Seefelder Muhle, Kulturland Brandenburg, Stadt Hildesheim, Hildesheim-Sarstedt congregation, Kreatives Sachsen, Kulturverein Platenlaase e.V. & KuBa e.V., IGBK - International Society of Fine Arts Berlin, Basedonart Gallery Düsseldorf,

Belgium: VVC - The VVC member of cultural centres and community centres in Flanders, Association of cultural centres Brussels/Wallonia, Cultuurhuis de Warande, De Zeyp Cultural Centre, Cultuurcentrum Leopoldsburg, Vlabra'ccent vzw Leuven, Culture Action Europe Network, IETM Network, AMATEO Network, Voices of Culture Brussels

Netherlands: Cultural Participation Fund, NHL Hogeschool,

Iceland: Cultural Council of North East Iceland, Þingeyjarsýsla District Cultural Centre

Ireland: ECoC Galway 2020

Denmark: ECoC Aarhus 2017, Kulturhusene Denmark

Austria: IG Kultur Vienna, IKULT. Interkulturelle Projekte und Konzepte Salzburg, Netzwerk Bildungsberatung Salzburg, Museumsverein Klostertal

England: ArtWash (associated, Modern Art Oxford)

Switzerland: Zeitgarten.ch Pfyn, Kult X / Cinema Kreuzlingen

Latvia: Health Institute

Croatia: Udruga Vestigium, Zagreb

Ukraine: Visual Research Culture Center

Czech Republic: Culture Centre KD Mlejn, Prague

Italy: Eurac Research Bozen-Bolzano

Armenia: The Union of Communities of Armenia

Finland: Office of Tampere Region ECoC 2026 Candidate

Scotland: Deveron Projects

Portugal: SQXDance Santa Maria, Açores

Wales: Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA)

Serbia: Kreativni Pogon Novi Sad

Spain/Basque Country: Donostia Kultura, City of Donostia

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