

EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE AND CROSS-BORDER URBAN COHESION

Best practices
guide and toolkit
for evaluation





Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

The production of this guide has been supported by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, and more specifically by the Jean Monnet Network 2018-2022 [grant n° 599614-EPP-1-2018-1-LU-EPPJMO-NETWORK]. Their work is accessible at: www.ceccut.eu/en/home/. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of its contents, which reflect only the views of the authors. The European Commission cannot be held responsible for the use of any information contained herein.

AUTHORS

Christian Lamour & Frédéric Durand
Luxembourg Institute of Socio-
Economic Research (LISER)
www.liser.lu

Corina Turşie & Nicolae Popa
West University of Timișoara
www.uvt.ro

Pauline Bosredon & Thomas Perrin
University of Lille
URL 4477 - TVES – Territoires
Villes Environnement & Société
<https://tves.univ-lille.fr>

Fabienne Leloup
UCLouvain FUCaM Mons (Catholic
University of Louvain)
Institute of Political Science Louvain
Europe (ISPOLE)
ISPOLE | UCLouvain
<https://uclouvain.be/en/research-institutes/ispole>



SAM TANSON

Minister for Culture of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

In the same vein, it is equally important to shed light on the objectives and potential effects of a European Capital of Culture in a multifaceted way. These are particularly promising, especially in the context of Esch 2022, because of the inclusion of several municipalities on both sides of the border and the fact that the whole of this constantly developing cross-border region can benefit. It is precisely these processes of cross-border urban cohesion and territorial integration that this guide highlights, as well as clarifying the relevant challenges.

Culture, nature, identity, Europe—how can they be integrated and rethought in the context of a region that is reinventing itself at the heart of Europe?

This is the question that Esch 2022 asks under the slogan 'Remix'. However, it is also a question that arises more broadly when we talk about the transformation of the living environment, and beyond that, the role of culture and cultural heritage as intrinsic and inseparable elements of sustainable development, social and territorial cohesion, the environment and biodiversity, as well as the fulfilment and well-being of all citizens in a Europe of solidarity and peace.

A European Capital of Culture is therefore not only about cultures. And culture, as a value in itself, is something that goes far beyond the strictly artistic and creative field. Indeed, culture concerns us all, and it is only through the involvement of all local and regional actors—not just cultural ones—in the planning and realisation of a European Capital of Culture that it can generate the expected effects and provide sustainable results.

Indeed, the deep roots of this cross-border region give a very special significance to the general objective of the European Capitals of Culture action, which aims, among other things, to strengthen the feeling of belonging to a common cultural space. This region has much to tell us about what is part of the history and foundations of Europe: from fortified cities to open borders, and from industrial wealth to cultural, scientific and technological wealth, it participates in the joint construction of a new future on the basis of a common past and values that could not be shared more in this cross-border area that symbolises Europe so well.

JACK LANG

Minister of Culture under François Mitterrand



Fruitful, lasting and powerful projects often arise out of thin air. Such was the case with the idea of a European capital of culture, which was born in a surreptitious, unexpected way.

It was in Athens, in December 1984. Melina Mercouri, the Greek Minister of Culture, and I were meeting our colleagues from the 11 member countries of the European Union.

The day before, we had met in an Athenian restaurant to think about a proposal we could submit to them. A simple idea came to us: designate a European city as the European Capital of Culture each year. It would bring together creators, artists, exhibitions and cultural events from all over Europe.

We did not think at the time that it would have such an explosive destiny. The chosen cities took it upon themselves to imagine unprecedented events and to bring together the most brilliant artists. Not only was the echo strong around

the world, but the event also had a profound effect on the city, the region and the country.

Even more impressive was the lasting impact of the designation on European capitals of cities in apparent decline, which had been large working-class and industrial cities. These cities became cultural capitals of Europe and led strong initiatives that gave them a new impetus, a new future and a new hope. The example of Glasgow (1990) is remarkable in this respect.

Experience shows that the idea of naming a large national capital, already endowed with important cultural infrastructures, is not always a good one. Matera, a small Italian city, was a much more resplendent capital of culture in 2019 than Paris in 1989, where the municipality was not interested in the project, as France was in the middle of its bicentenary.

From this point of view, the choice of cross-border cities as European capitals of culture would be a step in the right direction. They are indeed at the heart of transnational cultural exchanges.

It is to be hoped that today the European capitals will lead the authorities of the Union to imagine a real European policy for culture. This new European policy would not replace that of the states. Such a European impetus would certainly carry the whole world along with it.

Introduction 6

Cross-border urban cohesion: Identity, social inclusion and territorial development issues 10

European identity and its cities: Developing a sense of belonging in a multicultural context...12

Social inclusion through culture: European recognition and socio-spatial segregation in the city14

Culture and urban development: Cultural and artistic creation as a tool for global attractiveness and territorial decompartmentalisation.....16

Methodology 18

Best practices 20

Culture and cross-border urban cohesion: The Interreg programme..... 22

Interview..... 24

Robert Garcia, General Coordinator of the European Capital of Culture 'Luxembourg Greater Region 2007'..... 25

Sarolta & Agnes Nemeth, Coordinators of the Interreg project 'ECOC-SME: Actions for inducing SME growth and innovation via the ECOC event and legacy' (2019-2022).....28

Rudolf Godesar, President of the 'Cross-border Culture' Task Force at the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR).....30

Jean Peyrony, Director of the Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT) & Raffaele Viaggi, Policy Officer at the MOT.....34

Cultural projects.....38

Visavi Dance Festival & GO! BORDERLESS dance production: Cultural resilience across borders during the COVID-19 pandemic.....39

Villerupt Italian Film Festival: The transalpine

link between France and Luxembourg.....43

Alzette Belval : Mobilising the European
Heritage Days to strenghten the cross-border
feeling of belonging.....47

The Maisons Folie: The cross-border heritage
of Lille 2004.....51

Inclusive art between Serbia and Romania:
Access to culture for youth in difficulty.....55

Banat mobile chimneys: Countering
stereotypes on the borders of Hungary,
Romania and Serbia.....59

Youth centres: Regenerating industrial spaces
to break down urban borders in the city
of Timișoara.....63

The Belfry and Mons 2015: A cross-border
heritage as a player in the Cultural Capital...67

Zinneke Parade: A one-day artistic
performance, a two-year creative encounter...71

Living and embodying a territory through
walking. The GR 2013, metropolitan path of the
metropolitan area of Aix-Marseille.....75

Evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture 78

Preparing the bid-book.....80

The European Capitals of Culture
monitoring system82

Feedbacks from cultural actors involved in or
benefiting from European funding.....84

Suggestions for improving the European
Capitals of Culture.....86

Conclusion 87

INTRODUCTION

Culture is an area the European Union (EU) has progressively invested in during the different phases of its construction. It is at the same time the matrix on which the process of European integration bases its legitimacy; an activity in its own right, benefiting from a political and operational framework, and a cross-cutting theme present within many community policies. First of all, culture in its 'cultural identity' dimension is present in the discourse of the legitimisation of European construction, particularly during pivotal periods—such as the arrival of new countries or the implementation of new treaties—as a reminder that the European project is not just a large market, but also an area marked by cultural coherence and respect for its diverse identities. Moreover, it is an area included in a programme now called 'Creative Europe', which supports cultural industries in particular. Further, culture benefits from an institutional framework, notably at the level of the European Commission (the Directorate General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture) and the European Parliament (the Committee on Culture and Education: 'CULT'). Lastly, culture appears in the background of many EU actions in the fields of education, research, socio-economic policies, regional development and extra-European external relations.

The 'European Capital of Culture' (ECoC) initiative was launched in 1985, with the aim of bringing citizens closer to the construction of Europe. Today, it is one of the EU's most visible operations in the field of arts and culture. It enables the European identity project to be strengthened, cultural coordination to be established and cross-cutting actions to be put in place in a given urban area via a programme of events with an artistic dimension taking place over the course of a year. To date, more

than 60 cities have been awarded the title of ECoC and have developed this programme on the basis of a rotation between member states or candidate countries for integration into the EU. Over the past 35 years, this European initiative has evolved. After being initially aimed at major cities—often capitals, and constituting beacons of European culture, such as Athens, Brussels or Paris—it has gradually come to benefit medium-sized cities and their regional areas, with a view to regenerating urban areas through culture. The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union reaffirmed the importance of the European Capitals of Culture initiative in 2014, by establishing a new legal framework for the 2020–2033 programming period.¹ The general objectives of the initiative have become first, the safeguarding and promotion of cultural diversity and the strengthening of a sense of belonging to a common cultural area, and second, the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities in accordance with their respective strategies and priorities. The specific objectives state that the European Capitals of Culture have three clearly identified tasks: 1) an increase in the diversified cultural offer, with a European dimension and based on transnational cooperation (that is, a policy favouring the identity project of 'unity in diversity'); 2) a role in European social cohesion, with an initiative to widen access to and participation in culture; and 3) a reinforcement of the links between culture and other sectors, with the imperatives of the development of the creative economy and the importance of culture as a structuring element of the international image of cities.

The European Capitals of Culture are positioned within states, but their programming is organised within a

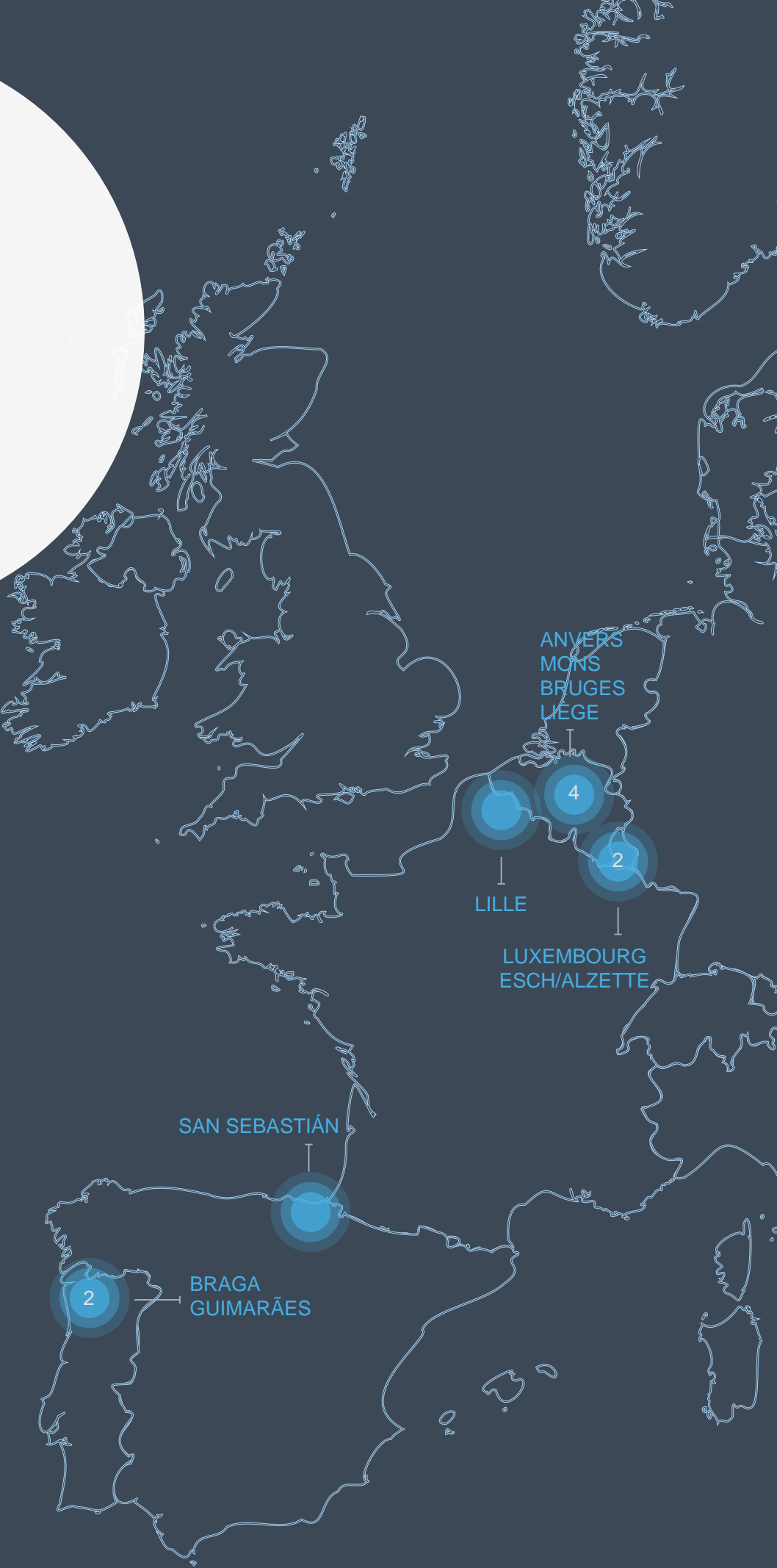
1. Decision No 445/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014, establishing an EU action for the European Capitals of Culture for the years 2020 to 2033 and repealing Decision No 1622/2006/EC - Publications Office of the EU (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:1002_2)

European space structured on several geographical scales. They attract artists and audiences who are mobile within the wider European space. Their policy of transnational cooperation also involves the establishment of networks of partner cities, or relations with cities that have the title of European Capital of Culture for a given year. Furthermore, several cities that have been awarded the ECoC title, have positioned themselves for it or will be candidates in future years, are located near state borders. The urban regions surrounding them are therefore regularly cross-border, straddling several states. This observation leads us to conclude that the ECoC initiative could constitute a lever in favour of the urban cohesion of the EWU's cross-border regions. That is, offering a tool for reinforcing a sense of identity, social cohesion and regionalised European economic development beyond state borders. The Jean Monnet academic network 'CECCUT', which brings together the University of Lille, the UCLouvain, the West University of Timișoara and the Luxembourg Institute of Socio-Economic Research (LISER), established a work programme in 2018 to explore how the European Capital of Culture initiative could foster this cross-border urban cohesion.

The current guide is a key product of this work programme. It has been drawn up in particular taking account the workshops conducted over the four years by the Jean Monnet network and including academics, cultural operators and public or associative actors involved in the implementation of the European Capital of Culture year. The guide aims to help public and private actors involved in ECoC projects, specifically when they

are located on state borders. It points out the opportunities and the elements to be taken into account in order to make the best use of this European initiative to strengthen cross-border urban cohesion policy. It has two central objectives: first, to present cultural practices for strengthening cross-border urban cohesion in Europe, and second, to present tools for the evaluation of cultural actions in this context. These two objectives are introduced in this guide by highlighting the challenges and the identity, social and economic policies of the EU that are associated with the cultural field and relevant to the urban and cross-border scales. Relevant best practices are developed on the basis of a series of concrete actions or cultural programmes related to the European Capital of Culture initiative or to other key frameworks of cross-border urban cohesion in Europe, such as the Interreg programme. The evaluation toolbox is based on a presentation of the generic methods and indicators associated with the ECoC initiative, the experience of cultural actors in evaluating their projects and a perspective on this evaluation when it is organised on the basis of cross-border operations.

Border Cities and the
“European Capital of
Culture” Initiative





Non-exhaustive list of border cities that
have applied for the title of European
Capital of Culture



CROSS-BORDER URBAN COHESION

IDENTITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The city and the urban regional space concentrate heritage and cultural poles, on which the processes of identity construction of the EU can be based. They are also central scales, where the European social model is defined. Lastly, the driving force behind the EU's competitiveness in a globalised economy is located in these regions, structured around urban centres.

The city and its regional space are therefore a major territorial framework for the application of European Union policies aimed at reducing the cultural, social and economic imbalances present; policies that work towards better territorial cohesion. Understanding the challenges of this cohesion in a Europe of cross-border urban regions, and building on the European Capital of Culture initiative, involves identifying the general framework of EU policies in terms of identity, social inclusion and economic development implies the cultural milieu.

European identity and its cities: Developing a sense of belonging in a multicultural context

The collective identity and sense of belonging associated with a given geographical area are the products of a long-term interactional process involving an institutional framework and everyday practices in space, as well as the presence of a multitude of normative discourses carried by institutions and giving meaning to the everyday practices. These discourses take two forms: discourses of association (the representation of belonging through the sharing of common cultural traits in a given territory) and discourses of dissociation (the representation of belonging through the distinction made with cultural traits characterising other communities in other territories). European institutions have drawn heavily on the nation state model in terms of the implementation of concrete operations, and the discourses of association and dissociation that have founded a national and territorial sense of belonging in the past: a flag, an anthem, a commemorative day, a historical and chronological narrative, international treaties between the EU and non-European states, and official declarations, such as the Copenhagen Declaration on European Identity of 14 December 1973¹. This is not to mention a common currency, the euro, which federates and in fact generates a European community of destiny.

In parallel with the strengthening of actions aimed at integration, a discourse of recognition of the internal diversity of the European Union has grown over the decades; a discourse that often resonates with the organisation of urban regions in Europe.

This narrative of identity and cultural diversity is based first of all on the fight for and increased recognition of the right to difference and the rights of minorities—a right to recognition, in which cities are spearheads. The major urban centres and their regions are becoming increasingly cosmopolitan in line with the construction of Europe and the increased attractiveness of Europe on a global scale. This means that the relationship with cultural otherness must be considered. Furthermore, the enlargement of the EU, the process of European integration linked to community policies and the involvement of European institutions in the resolution of international socio-economic and migratory crises have gradually become accompanied by Euroscepticism among European citizens. This distance from the European Community project varies by country and by social class. It also fluctuates over time, as shown by Eurobarometer studies.²

Community policies working to build a collective identity in the context of the rise of Euroscepticism over the last two decades have been organised around two pillars: democratic culture and the culture of memory of the present day. These two pillars have been grouped together in the programme titled 'Europe for Citizens' during the period 2013-2020³ and partly taken up in the programme 'Citizens, equality, rights and values' in the EU policies 2021-2027⁴. The aim of democratic culture is to create support for the European project through the active participation of citizens. This is achieved through the localised engagement of civil society in debates on opinions, experiences and values related to Europe. The setting up of European city networks should enable this citizen mobilisation⁵. The construction of identity must therefore no longer be based solely on the

1. Declaration on European Identity (Copenhagen, 14 December 1973) - CVCE Website

2. Surveys - Eurobarometer (europa.eu)

3. Europe for Citizens | European Commission (europa.eu)

4. Programme «Citoyens, égalité, droits et valeurs» | European Commission (europa.eu) https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/citizens-equality-rights-and-values-programme_en

5. https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/cerv/wp-call/2021/call-fiche_cerv-2021-citizens-town_fr.pdf

normative discourses carried by the institutional powers of the EU, but on a participatory democracy based on a community of citizens who define their identity relationship to Europe through speech and discursive interaction. The other pillar of the EU's identity project consists of developing a European memory, based on recent history and linked to the most pressing current events, such as the migratory crisis, the rise of populism and the authoritarian drift within certain member states. These memorial projects are also supported by European civil society, and with a view to circulating knowledge about the roots of living together in a multicultural Europe.

The European Capital of Culture initiative has not been included in the Europe for Citizens and the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values programmes. However, the selection of candidate cities depends in part on how the issues of identity and belonging to Europe are detailed in the application files. In this regard, it is important to note how these issues are addressed in the legislative text governing the European Capitals of Culture for the period 2020–2033. These capitals must 'contribute to strengthening the sense of belonging to a common cultural area and to stimulating intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding' (Decision No 445/2014/EU, p. 2). Unity in cultural diversity and respect for differences—that is, the identity project

of Europe structured by the programmes 'Europe for Citizens' and 'Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values'—fixes the identity objective of the ECoC initiative. The development of a sense of belonging to Europe in the cultural capitals is generally understood as an adherence to the general integration process involving the Europe of 27 member states. However, this feeling of belonging can also be defined on a regional European scale, and more precisely that of cross-border urban regions where the everyday construction of the community is organised with citizens living in two or three different states, but sharing the same everyday space via cross-border travel linked to education, work and cultural practices. This is an everyday space where there are also multiple national groups, often attracted to regions for professional reasons. The European Capital of Culture initiative can therefore be an instrument for the identity project of 'unity in diversity' in one of the major laboratories of European integration that the cross-border urban regions constitute. It can thus work towards better urban cohesion for spaces that straddle several member states. In the same way, the cultural capitals established in this geographical context can also be drivers of the EU's social inclusion policy.

Social inclusion through culture: European recognition and socio-spatial segregation in the city

The European social model and the policies that organise it are elements that distinguish the European Union within the Western world, where redistribution systems to reduce social imbalances are not always as developed. However, this social model is experiencing difficulties in a globalised economy. The lack of training for the active population (particularly young people), the precariousness of employment, the rise of poverty, the increase in inequalities and the crisis of social protection systems linked to an increase in demands and a weakening of resources are all themes around which European policies are currently being implemented by the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Culture is both a field of action for social inclusion and a sector of composite economic activity that presents certain fragilities and requires social support measures. This role and fragility have become particularly apparent with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Social inclusion is defined at the European level in terms of access to resources, rights, goods and services defined as essential (such as housing, training, transport and justice), but also culture. Participation in cultural activities is considered by the EU to be an activity that is just as important as involvement in socio-economic actions to ensure the social inclusion of populations on the margins of society, whether from a generational (youth and the elderly), educational (low-skilled), professional (unemployed and precarious populations), health (the disabled), community (migrants and refugees) or gender (gender equality) perspective. The participation of marginalised populations as actors or audiences in cultural projects reflects the desire of these groups to be recognised within society, as well as the ability of cultural actors and audiences to open up to other social groups that were previously not very visible. Cultural participation thus allows a process of reciprocal recognition, from which

processes of inclusion within society can be set up. Moreover, participation in cultural activities is perceived by the EU as a means to acquire skills in order to reintegrate more easily into the path of training and employment in the market economy. This approach to social inclusion through culture is not novel. It underpins a reduction in socio-spatial disparities within European regions, particularly urban regions where inequalities and territorial segregation are growing more rapidly than elsewhere. This segregation can be particularly acute in cross-border urban regions, due to the co-presence of state social policies with different means and scope, not to mention the variable presence of populations in difficulty linked to asymmetrical economic development.

Access to culture as a driver of social inclusion promoted by the EU has been implemented in a very unequal way in the different member states in the past.⁶ This access is hindered by problems related to the mobility of the most disadvantaged people, a lack of information and a lack of financial means to take part in cultural activities, not to mention certain discrepancies between cultural supply and demand, or the absence of cultural activities in the territory of everyday life of these social groups.⁷ This problem is even more pronounced in cross-border urban areas, where the flow of information about cultural offers, means of transportation and expectations about artistic content are more easily constrained by state borders due to public policies and cultural/linguistic identities often contained within states. However, the usefulness of culture in preventing the marginalisation of certain social groups is no longer in question, whatever the physiognomy of the urban regions considered. This becomes obvious during serious crises, such as the one linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. The cultural sector has shown its importance in the social inclusion process during the various periods of confinement linked to this pandemic, by offering online content to break the dynamics of isolation among young people and in disadvantaged areas.⁸

The cultural sector, a tool for social inclusion, is a sector of activity requiring social support policies.

6. https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/final_joint_inclusion_report_2003_en.pdf

7. https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion/docs/studyculture_leaflet_en.pdf;
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Culture_statistics_-_household_expenditure_on_culture&oldid=471060

8. Issue 6 EN Culture & COVID-19 Tracker (unesco.org) https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/issue_6_en_culture_covid-19_tracker-7.pdf

It is also an economic field that is experiencing significant development in Europe, and more specifically in the urban regions. However, it is structured mainly around small and medium-sized enterprises that are often fragile due to increased competition and highly variable demand. The solvency of this demand is not always there due to the rise of digital consumption practices and the expected/effective availability of free content on the Internet. Moreover, the economic actors in the cultural sector depend in part on public consumption, which is not necessarily a priority when budget cuts are made in a crisis situation. The global economic and financial crisis of 2008 has shown the fragility of the cultural sector, and of the knowledge economy in general, the resilience of which has been accompanied by a rise in precarious employment.⁹ The health crisis linked to COVID-19 has had an even more radical impact on this precariat, with the closure of cultural places during the periods of confinement, the perpetuation of social distancing measures (reducing the capacity and the profitability of cultural places once confinement has ended) and

simply the non-return of some of the public, who prefer to maintain cultural practices in the digital sphere.¹⁰ The social inclusion of cultural employees following the COVID-19 crisis has been thought of in terms of emergency measures for the sector (e.g., income support) and actions related to the digital economy (e.g., the training of employees for this new economy and the creation of platforms for the dissemination of cultural productions).¹¹ Social support for the cultural economy, which is concentrated in urban areas, is strongly dependent on state measures. This can lead to asymmetries in cross-border urban regions where several state policies coexist. Accordingly, there is a particular issue concerning social cohesion in the cultural sector in these laboratory regions of European construction, especially since COVID-19 has resulted in closed borders and reinforcement of the asymmetry of public policies. It is a question of setting up the coordination of public policies on a supranational scale; policies that take into consideration the presence of this urban and regional continuum.

9. Beirne, M., Jennings, M., & Knight, S. (2017) Autonomy and resilience in cultural work: Looking beyond the 'creative industries'. *Journal for Cultural Research*, 21(2), 204–221. Howells J, 2012, The geography of knowledge: never so close but never so far apart, *Journal of Economic Geography*, vol. 12, n° 5, pp. 1003-1020.

10. Comunian, R. & England, L. (2020) Creative and cultural work without filters: Covid-19 and exposed precarity in the creative economy. *Cultural Trends*, 29(2): 112-128.

11. European cultural and creative cities in COVID-19 times - Publications Office of the EU (europa.eu) <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC120876>
Research for CULT Committee - Cultural and creative sectors in COVID-19 Europe – crisis effects and policy recommendations (europa.eu) [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU\(2021\)652242](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=IPOL_STU(2021)652242)

Culture and urban development: Cultural and artistic creation as a tool for global attractiveness and territorial decompartmentalisation

The economic sector of culture and creative industries is considered by European institutions as a key area that should be paid significant attention, given its role in the production of wealth and the attraction of capital on a global scale. In addition to the arts, media and communication, it includes the fashion, architecture and design industries, as well as other activities where the production process is based on creation and that exist in a market of supply and demand of goods and services.¹² The EU's support for this economy can be found in the 'Creative Europe' programme, which also includes the safeguarding, development and promotion of the cultural, linguistic and heritage diversity of member countries.¹³ The European Capital of Culture initiative, with which economic development opportunities have been progressively associated since the 1990s, is present in this programme.¹⁴ In fact, the culture and creative industries sector has emerged as a means of regenerating cities and their regional space on the basis of a strategy on several geographical scales. First of all, the enhancement of the cultural and heritage sector has been thought of as a means to positively change the image of urban centres and make them more

attractive on a national and international scale in terms of capital and/or population. Culture has thus emerged as a resource for territorial marketing. In addition, the cultural economy has been conceived as a sector to be promoted in disused urban spaces, such as industrial wastelands or neglected residential areas. The aim is to create new urban centralities through spatial planning and development strategies based on massive public investment and facilities for cultural industries to locate there. Lastly, these redeveloped spaces, often aimed at micro-entrepreneurs, are imagined as nodes of interaction, from which processes of creativity, innovation and wealth creation are supposed to emerge; nodes taking on different names such as 'fab-labs', co-working spaces or third places.¹⁵ This regeneration of urban margins on the basis of the cultural economy can be particularly relevant in cross-border regions, with the marked presence of neglected spaces at the border point long considered as no-man's-land, and that can constitute reservoirs of space to define new European centralities. Culture, and more specifically the setting up of a European Capital of Culture programme on the scale of cross-border spaces, can therefore have a leverage effect for the remobilisation of neglected peripheries within cities in border situations.

This revival of urban development through the creative economy is nevertheless not without risk from the point of view of the identity of places and the processes of social inclusion. The image conveyed by territorial marketing policies can distort the complexity of collective identities and the sense of belonging to European urban

12. Employment in the cultural and creative sectors (europa.eu)
[https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI\(2019\)642264](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_BRI(2019)642264)
<https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

13. About the Creative Europe programme | Culture and Creativity (europa.eu)
<https://ec.europa.eu/culture/funding-creative-europe/about-creative-europe-programme>

14. European Capitals of Culture | Culture and Creativity (europa.eu)
<https://ec.europa.eu/culture/policies/culture-cities-and-regions/european-capitals-culture>

15. Brown, J. (2017) Curating the 'Third Place'? Coworking and the mediation of creativity. *Geoforum* 82, 112-126. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2017.04.006>; Bruno Moriset (2017) « Inventer les nouveaux lieux de la ville créative : les espaces de coworking », *Territoire en mouvement Revue de géographie et aménagement* [En ligne], 34 | 2017.

regions, in particular by making invisible the populations that do not have the potential to attract international economic resources, and in particular low-skilled populations with popular cultural practices. Moreover, the reclaiming of disused margins by culture, and without in-depth social reflection, can lead to the accentuation of socio-economic and residential segregation. This can result in the arrival of new, more-affluent residents, increasing real estate prices and the creation of highly qualified jobs, thereby forcing the working classes back into the margins.¹⁶ In fact, the arrival of cultural and creative industry workers in urban spaces is not necessarily determined by their desire to participate in strategies of social mixing, but by a concern for access to more accessible work spaces in terms of cost.¹⁷ Moreover, the cultural and creative economy has the capacity to attract the attention of political decision-makers for the wealth it is supposed to generate, but in the end, the actors welcomed into the new spaces are often self-employed or small entrepreneurs on the periphery of the capitalist system. They do not put the search for maximum profit at the centre of their priorities, which can limit the returns on investment. Lastly, economic and other crises show the fragility of the cultural economy and the limitations of cultural industries as a key area of urban development in a globalised economy. Thus, the various confinements associated with COVID-19, the perpetuation of social distancing measures linked to this pandemic and the rise of teleworking that resulted from it, risk showing the weak relevance of urban policies based primarily on the development of co-working spaces and 'fab-labs' in an increasingly digitalised economy.

The setting up of a European Capital of Culture programme must be based on clearly identified and appropriate objectives for each territory. This has to be in terms of a sense of belonging to Europe, social inclusion in the city and urban development based on the cultural and creative economy. The implementation of such programming in a geographical context that straddles several member states offers opportunities to strengthen cohesion policies in a privileged laboratory of European construction: cross-border regions. Even if these regions have benefited from the European Interreg programme over the last few decades, thanks to which a series of cultural cooperation has been established, many other experiments—such as the ECoC years—can deepen this original experimentation.

16. Navarro Yáñez, C. J. (2013) Do 'creative cities' have a dark side? Cultural scenes and socioeconomic status in Barcelona and Madrid (1991–2001). *Cities*, 35, 213–220.

17. Lloyd, R. (2010) *Neo-bohemia: Art and commerce in the postindustrial city*. London: Routledge.



METHODOLOGY

The guide on cultural practices and tools for the evaluation of the European Capitals of Culture as a driver of cross-border urban cohesion has been developed on the basis of different sources of information. These data were produced during various actions implemented by the Jean Monnet network 'CECCUT' between 2018 and 2022:

- 'Teaching', in the form of academic seminars in which members of the CECCUT network and other researchers presented the results of their research. This details the value of European Capitals of Culture for borderless urban cohesion, approached from the perspective of the sense of belonging to Europe, social inclusion and urban development,
- 'Research' conducted by the members of the CECCUT network and master's students recruited by the members of the network. This research consisted of analysing cultural projects carried out in the European Capitals of Culture located in cross-border regions: specifically Lille (France), Mons (Belgium), Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg) and Timișoara (Romania). The questions of European identity, access to culture for marginalised audiences and the inclusion of the cultural sector in strategies concerning the organisation of space are the structuring themes of this work,
- 'Events' coordinated by the CECCUT network to allow exchanges with public, associative and private actors involved in cultural projects in past, present and future European Capitals of Culture located in cross-border regions. Two types of event have followed one another: a launch conference bringing together more than 80 people from all over Europe, and three workshops, each bringing together more than 30 people. Methodologically speaking,

the members of the CECCUT network built a thematic reflection on identity, social inclusion and urban development through culture in a cross-border context in the introduction of each meeting in order to frame the exchanges. The interactions between the actors present were then organised on the basis of a two-part investigation (best practices/monitoring-evaluation) on the themes of identity, social inclusion and urban development. The ideas and experiences disseminated during these exchanges and presented on the CECCUT network website have structured this guide.¹

The CECCUT network also relied on a steering committee that has provided information for the definition of this guide. This committee comprised the following people:

- Flora Carrijn, Catholic University of Leuven (Belgium) and University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC),
- François Carbon, University of Luxembourg and University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC),
- Suzana Žilič Fišer, University of Maribor (Slovenia),
- Ioan Horga, University of Oradea (Romania),
- Raffaella Viaggi, Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (France).

1. <http://www.ceccut.eu/en/resultss/>



BEST PRACTICES

The best practices part is structured in three sections.

The first section provides an overview of cross-border cultural projects co-financed by Interreg on the three themes targeted by the CECCUT network. The second section includes a series of interviews with key players who have been in charge of cultural programmes on a cross-border scale, such as the European Capitals of Culture, or who have been involved in cross-border cooperation in the field of culture. Lastly, the third section presents specific original cultural actions. We should remember that the term 'cross-border' is extended to the crossing of any border, which may not be between two states but can be administrative or social; that is, a limit that is difficult to cross and that induces a strong discontinuity.

Culture and cross-border urban cohesion: The Interreg programme

One of the intentions of the Interreg community funding programme is to transform borders—which are often experienced and perceived as lines of division and delimitation—into areas of interface, with contacts to promote European integration at the level of border regions. In the first two programmes—Interreg I (1990–1993) and Interreg II (1994–1999)—culture was understood in a somewhat restrictive way, focusing mainly on border heritage. In the Interreg III programme (2000–2006), a new perspective was added to the preservation of heritage: the cultural identity of cross-border spaces. The Interreg IV (2007–2013) and Interreg V (2014–2020) programmes have continued to promote and enhance culture across borders. Moreover, culture is considered ‘a key element for job creation and growth in areas driven by creativity, innovation and access to knowledge’, to quote Corina Crețu, Commissioner for Regional Policy.¹ Culture is thus understood through the economic principles that characterise the European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

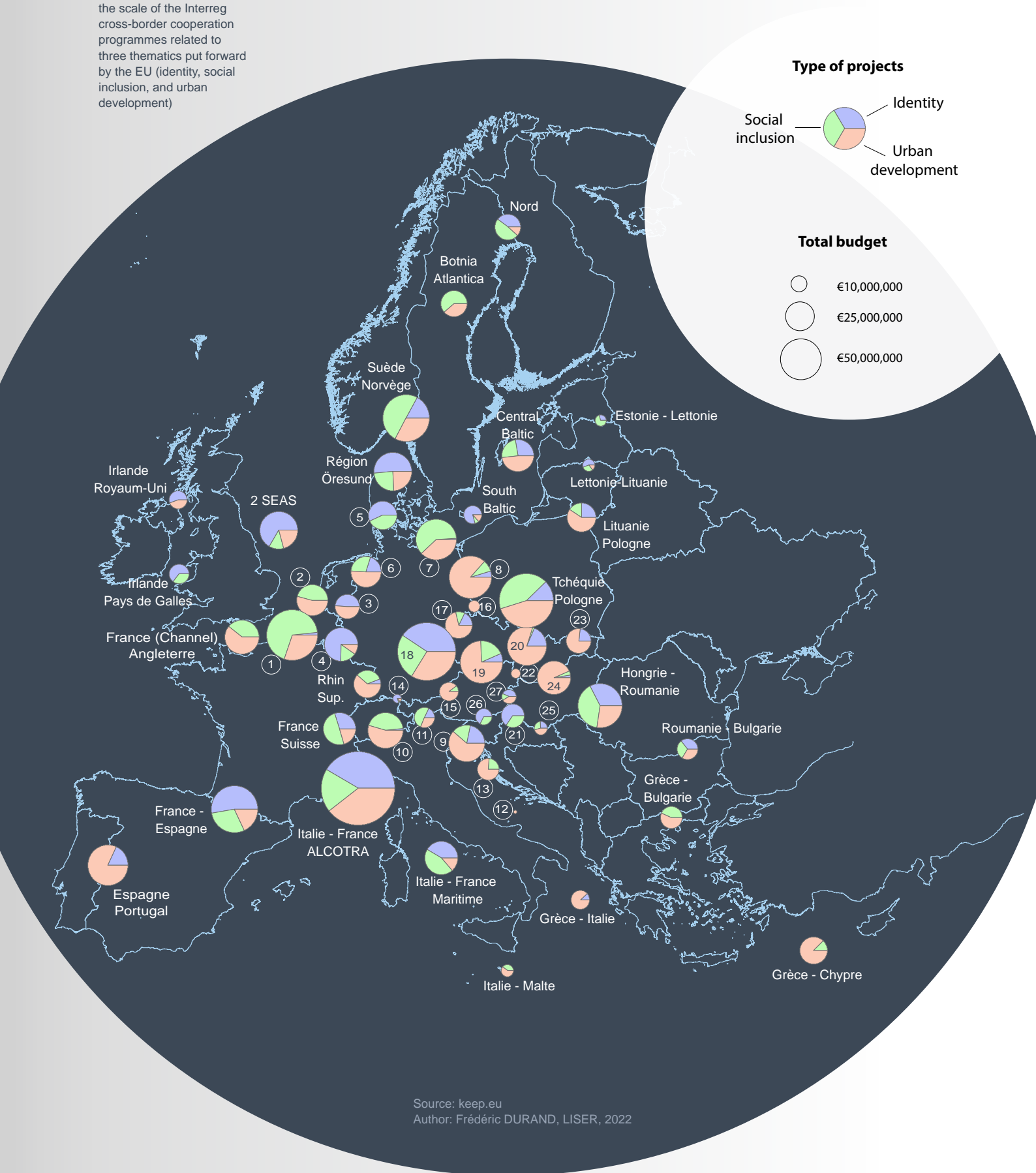
Since its inception in 1990, the Interreg A strand specifically dedicated to cross-border cooperation has co-financed many projects, and its budget has continued to increase and reached 10 billion euros for the programme covering 2014 to 2020. The non-exhaustive database Keep.eu details cross-border projects funded by the Interreg programme, and has records of nearly 20,000 projects, of which more than 3,000 are in the cultural field, for a total budget of 2.6 billion euros (or 14.1% of Interreg funding spent between 2000 and 2020 with information in this database). The Keep.eu database is a major source of information on completed cross-border cultural projects. In this regard, it provides a substantial list of best practices and experiences for actors wishing to develop cross-border projects, particularly in the cultural field.

A number of cultural projects supported by the Interreg programme have a clearly identified objective in the field of bringing together cultural identities, social inclusion and urban development. The map shows the budgetary proportion of cultural projects co-financed by Interreg over the period 2000–2020 on the scale of the programming areas. Only the three themes studied in the CECCUT project (identity, social inclusion and urban development) are taken into account.

1. European Commission (2018b) Connecting Cultures, Connected Citizens Inspiring examples of Interreg cultural heritage projects in the framework of the 2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage.

Interreg cross-border cooperation programme (2000-2020)	Number of project	
Bavaria - Czech Republic (DE-CZ)	118	(18)
Netherlands - Germany (NL-DE)	93	(6)
Sweden - Norway (SE-NO)	59	
Czech Republic - Poland (CZ-PL)	52	
Italy - France ALCOTRA (IT-FR)	51	
Hungary - Romania (HU-RO)	40	
Italy - Slovenia (IT-SI)	39	(9)
Austria - Czech Republic (AT-CZ)	37	(19)
France - Switzerland (FR-CH)	28	
France - Wallonia - Flanders (FR-BE)	28	(1)
Italy - Switzerland (IT-CH)	23	(10)
Slovakia - Czech Republic (SK-CZ)	22	(20)
Central Baltic (FI-SE-EE-LA)	21	
Nord (SE-FI-NO)	21	
Hungary - Slovakia (HU-SK)	20	(24)
Lithuania - Poland (LT-PL)	20	
Italy - France Maritime (IT-FR)	19	
Romania - Bulgaria (RO-BG)	19	
Greater Region (BE-DE-FR-LU)	18	(4)
Latvia-Lithuania (LV-LT)	17	
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern / Brandenburg - Zachodniopomorskie (DE-PL)	17	(7)
Hungary - Croatia (HU-HR)	16	(25)
Spain - France - Andorra (ES-FR-AD)	16	
Brandenburg - Lubuskie (DE-PL)	14	(8)
Greece - Cyprus (EL-CY)	14	
Öresund - Kattegat - Skagerrak (SE-DK-NO)	14	
Upper Rhine (FR-DE-CH)	13	
Estonia - Latvia (EE-LV)	12	
Saxony - Czech Republic (DE-CZ)	12	(17)
Slovenia - Croatia (SI-HR)	11	(13)
Spain - Portugal (ES-PT)	10	
Austria - Hungary (AT-HU)	9	(27)
France (Channel) - England (FR-UK)	8	
Greece - Bulgaria (EL-BG)	8	
South Baltic (PL-SE-DK-LT-DE)	8	
2 SEAS (FR-UK-BE-NL)	7	
Bavaria - Austria (DE-AT)	7	(15)
Border Region Flanders - Netherlands (BE-NL)	7	(2)
Botnia Atlantica (SE-FI-NO)	7	
Germany - Denmark (DE-DK)	7	(5)
Slovenia - Hungary (SI - HU)	7	(21)
Alpenrhein-Bodensee-Hochrhein (DE-AT-CH-LI)	6	(14)
Italy - Austria (IT-AT)	5	(11)
Poland - Slovakia (PL-SK)	5	(23)
Slovenia - Austria (SI-AT)	5	(26)
Euregio Meuse-Rhine (NL-BE-DE)	4	(3)
Ireland - Wales (IE-UK)	4	
Italy - Malta (IT-MT)	4	
Northern Ireland - Border Region of Ireland - Western Scotland (IE-UK)	4	
Greece - Italy (EL-IT)	2	
Saxony - Poland (DE-PL)	2	(16)
Slovakia - Austria (SK-AT)	2	(22)
Italy - Croatia (IT-HR)	1	(12)

Type of cultural projects cofinanced by Interreg between 2000-2020 at the scale of the Interreg cross-border cooperation programmes related to three thematics put forward by the EU (identity, social inclusion, and urban development)



Source: keep.eu
 Author: Frédéric DURAND, LISER, 2022



2007

— Robert Garcia —

Why did the European Capital of Culture project in Luxembourg in 2007 open up to the border territories of the Greater Region?

The cross-border dimension of our European Capital of Culture in 2007 is essentially linked to a political decision and a particular geographical context. At the beginning of the 2000s, we saw the implementation of political governance in the cross-border area centred on Luxembourg and known as the Greater Region, which includes German, Belgian, French and Luxembourg territories. Moreover, from an economic point of view, there is the affirmation of an increased interdependence between the Grand Duchy and the neighbouring regions. More and more cross-border commuters are coming to work in Luxembourg. There is a need for coordination of this emerging European geopolitical entity. At that time, Jean-Claude Juncker, the Prime Minister of Luxembourg, proposed to the political actors in the border area that they should be associated with the Luxembourg

candidacy in 2007. This took place during a summit of the Greater Region held in Liege. It was a bit of a surprise. Nobody expected it, but everyone was interested. The European Capital of Culture initiative was conceived as a tool for structuring the emerging cross-border cooperation area.

How did the European institutions welcome this candidacy, which was proposed by one country but was presented as straddling several state territories? Was this an asset in your application?

To tell you the truth, it was not enough to just have the will to make a cross-border project. Our first proposal was not accepted. We had to be more ambitious in terms of content and not replicate on a cross-border scale what had been done during the last Luxembourg bid in 1995. Moreover, it was not easy to get German, Belgian, French and Luxembourg partners to agree on a common project for a very large territory

General Coordinator of the European Capital of Culture 'Luxembourg Greater Region 2007'
r.garcia@pt.lu

with more than 11 million inhabitants. We were not the first to submit a cross-border bid. Before us, there was Lille and there, the Mayor of Lille, Martine Aubry, met with the coordinator of the Capital Lille 2004 every week to review the situation with him. There was strong political support. With the Luxembourg-Greater Region project, we had to deal with all the parties in a larger European political space by seeking a balance between four countries. Luxembourg wanted to have migration as a structuring theme, but this was not necessarily relevant for all its partners. We agreed on a common project with the principle that we could not replicate existing events, and that cross-border projects should involve at least two countries. In Luxembourg, we would have liked to have had a minimum of three countries, but it was too complicated because it was necessary to rely on pre-existing cultural networks and effective pairs were already in place.

'The European Capital of Culture initiative was conceived as a tool for structuring the emerging cross-border cooperation area'

How was the political and technical governance of the European Capital of Culture Luxembourg Greater Region organised? How was it structured?

At the start, we set up a Luxembourg association to manage the project. Afterwards, we set up an additional association including the partners on both sides of the border, and we quickly saw that cross-border cooperation cannot be improvised. The actors coming from territories that had been involved in the cooperation with Luxembourg for a long time—the Lorraine Region in France and the Saarland in Germany—regularly came to the first meetings. For the partners from the Walloon Region in Belgium and the Land of Rhineland-Palatinate in Germany, mobilisation took longer at the start, which is normal. We put together thematic cross-border groups on dance, music, etc. to prepare the operational programme. Where we have innovated is in the partnership approach. We did not start off with a strong artistic organisation imposing a cultural programme. We were supposed to work on the basis of proposals coming from the territory. The top-down dimension was even less appropriate in Luxembourg, as there were no major cultural infrastructures to set up. Everything had already been planned at that level.

‘The cross-border cooperation cannot be improvised’

A European Capital of Culture that straddles state borders can lead to the mobility of audiences on both sides of the borders to attend shows and exhibitions. It can also encourage cross-border cooperation between artists. What can you tell us about this mobility of audiences and the cooperation in connection with Luxembourg-Greater Region 2007?

Let's be realistic, the public interested in cultural events—that is, those who go to shows at least once a month—represents between 5 and 10 per cent of the social body. It is closer to 5 per cent for those who go to the theatre and 10 per cent for those who go to the cinema. Therefore, one cannot expect a mass population to travel across the border for cultural events. Some large-scale shows or exhibitions have been able to attract a cross-border audience, but this is not the case for all shows, and sometimes it was easier to get an audience of connoisseurs from the UK than from the cross-border region for these large-scale events. With regard to cooperation between artists, it is true that Luxembourg-Greater Region 2007 had a major leverage effect. The initiative made it possible to create or strengthen networks of artists in the cross-border area. In particular, it helped to strengthen the professionalisation of the artistic milieu in terms of project management, so that artists can make a living from their art, either entirely or partially professionally, with public funding. Before that, in Luxembourg at least, it was less professional.

The Greater Region has two linguistic spaces (French and German). How did you deal with the question of languages and the fact that the resident populations do not necessarily understand both languages? Did this play a role in the choice of programming?

It's very simple. For the theatre, we developed subtitles. In the exhibitions, we offered texts in three languages, German, English and French; not in Luxembourgish, because in Luxembourg everyone is supposed to understand at least French or German. On the other hand, for musical performances, the languages are less important. For cross-border youth projects, language was also not a barrier.

‘The feeling of belonging to Europe in our cross-border territory is above all linked to a reality that existed before the Capital Luxembourg-Grande Région’

What was the added value of Luxembourg-Grande Région 2007 with regard to the feeling of belonging to Europe?

I would say that the feeling of belonging to Europe in our cross-border territory is above all linked to a reality that existed before the Capital Luxembourg-Grande Région, a reality that has become even more significant over the years; that is, the existence of a cross-border economic basin where interdependencies between Luxembourg and neighbouring regions are organised. The Capital of the Luxembourg-Greater Region was created to reinforce this belonging within an economic region. In this respect, the European Capital of Culture and its territorial marketing have been able to mobilise major financing for large cultural events. For example, the exhibition about the Emperor Constantine in the German city of Trier took advantage of the European Capital of Culture label to attract massive funds from the Federal Republic of Germany.

What were the main problems encountered in the implementation of the Luxembourg-Greater Region 2007 programme and how were they overcome?

The title of European Capital of Culture implies that ambitious and mobilising projects must be elaborated and, to tell you the truth, it makes you dizzy at first because you look at the cultural offerings in place and you wonder very quickly whether you will find projects with a European dimension. And then, the cultural actors are not there waiting for you to come up with a European Capital of Culture project. They have

their own programmes and priorities, and at the beginning, they may have the feeling that you are far from their concerns. Thus, there is a double cultural challenge: the possibility to set up structuring projects and the integration of the European initiative in the agenda of the cultural actors. Lastly, let us not forget that we are in a cross-border area. Therefore, there is a diplomatic challenge. In Luxembourg, politically, it is fairly simple. There is a Ministry of Culture and municipalities, but when you cross the border, the cultural competence is potentially distributed among a multiplicity of institutions that do not necessarily agree with each other for political reasons, so it can become very complicated. How do we overcome these challenges? We have to deal with them. It's all about the power of conviction; about listening. We cannot impose anything, but we must find middle ways that are acceptable to all. That's what Europe is all about, isn't it?

What advice could you give to border cities wishing to submit a bid for a cross-border European Capital of Culture in partnership with neighbouring regions?

I think that you should already have a bid for a fairly small cross-border territory. The larger the area, the more complex it will be to set up partnerships and define a joint programme. Second, it is essential for this cultural cooperation to be organised in a cross-border area that is not virgin in terms of collaboration. The pre-existing partnerships do not necessarily have to be in the cultural field, but they establish a space of trust and communication from which cultural cooperation can more easily emerge. Lastly, I would say that it is important to choose the right management organisation for the bid and the

European Capital of Culture project. It is necessary to have a general director with a sufficiently strong political dimension, so that an artistic director can work with a certain degree of independence. By this, I mean that the general director who is selected must know the political players well and have their confidence. This general director must also know how to be diplomatic in order to avoid cross-border misunderstandings and the paralysis of cooperation.

'We cannot impose anything, but we must find middle ways that are acceptable to all. That's what Europe is all about, isn't it?'

You are researchers working on cross-border cooperation in Europe. What types of cultural projects are often set up to deconstruct the internal borders of the European Union?

As our Karelian Institute at the University of Eastern Finland is located at the border with Russia, we can offer some insights from a particular external border context. It is not only an external border of the European Union, but also one that had been closed to people-to-people cooperation for decades, and represented an unsurmountable barrier with regard to actual interaction.

‘An important message from ECoC-SME is that these are crucial elements to combine in order to achieve a sustainable impact of ECoC in terms of promoting entrepreneurship and local SMEs’

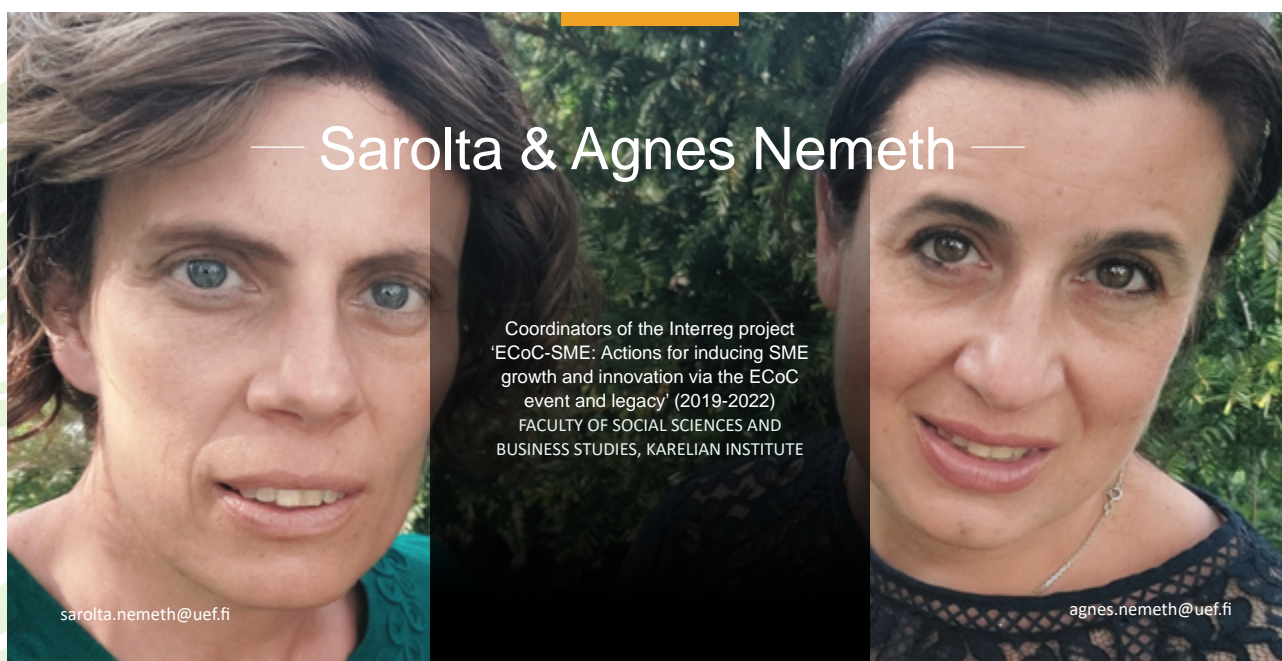
Hence, generations had grown up being unfamiliar with the ‘other’. Despite lingering prejudices and fears, curiosity drove actors on both sides to engage in collaboration (this had already started in early 1990s, even before EU support was available for it). Cultural projects and collaboration in education

have played a key role in changing mentalities, promoting trust and inter-cultural competencies and skills, and had prepared the ground for collaborations in other fields, between public institutions and businesses. Many of the cultural projects are aimed at the youth. Also, we are located at ‘Euregio Karelia’, a borderland with a shared cultural heritage (language, literature, music, religious art, architecture, gastronomy, etc.) and identity, making the cultural cooperation natural and rich. We have worked on international research projects (e.g., EUBORDERREGIONS and EUBORDERSCAPES) that also included internal EU-border case studies. Based on these, we can say that even in those situations, cultural interactions and collaborations have a fundamental importance in ‘de-bordering’ and maintaining cross-border dynamics in other fields of life and the economy.

Your Interreg project was set up at the time when the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting Europe. The events put in place by your partner cities have been affected by this health crisis, in particular the closure/increased control of borders. What strategic axes have been developed to ensure the resilience of the cultural sector companies, and more particularly their internationalisation?

More than ever before, the crisis raised attention to the need to make policy actions and their effects sustainable in the long run. Although actions clearly

— Sarolta & Agnes Nemeth —



focusing on legacy creation were originally envisaged only in Leeuwarden and Matera, it became obvious from 2020 that all our ECoC-SME regions have been drafting action plans in support of longer-term developments. This is also a result of interregional learning: we can see a shared concept of joining actions that are:

1. aimed at capacity building for entrepreneurship,
2. establishing new regional cross-sector platforms for problem solving and innovation,
3. introducing novel governance solutions for community engagement.

An important message from ECoC-SME is that these are crucial elements to combine in order to achieve a sustainable impact of ECoC in terms of promoting entrepreneurship and local SMEs.


Is the internationalisation of cultural enterprises a key element in the construction of a sense of belonging to Europe, particularly in cross-border regions?

We believe so, yes. The cultural and creative sector is inherently very open to networking, and European Capitals of Culture are (or should be) facilitators for increased international networking. Especially in our Matera-Basilicata case, we observe major efforts to support local knowledge and resources by embedding actions in national and international exchanges and flows (i.e., Basilicata Heritage Smart Lab and its digital platform).

You are working on the networking of European cities with the theme of developing the cultural economy through major events via your Interreg project. This includes 20 localised working groups that must produce operational plans adapted to each urban context. In the current state of the project, is regional and cross-border cooperation identified as a driver of the cultural economy?

The '20 localised working groups' were various types of policy learning events (in

the end, we actually organised far more than 20 over the two years): these were intraregional and interregional events for exchanges, where stakeholders from diverse sectors participated from the regions. (They represented public, private and civil-society organisations; and included cultural production, various media, education, IT sector, youth support, tourism and hospitality, etc.). Although it was not a focus of the ECoC-SME project, we are aware of the importance of some 'cross-border' links, mainly in the case of Timișoara. However, this exists evidently through their multicultural society—many ethnic minorities live in the city, including Serbs and Germans, coming second and third after the Hungarian minority, as well as Bulgarians, Croats, Czechs, Slovaks, etc. and also a substantial Italian community. Therefore, the international aspect of the cultural economy is not primarily a question of physical 'cross-border' proximity.



The AEBR is an institution working for the cohesion of border and cross-border regions in Europe. It has a Task Force for 'Cross-border culture'. Can you tell us what the work of this Task Force consists of?

The AEBR strives to promote cross-border cooperation in the European and other continents. It represents the common interests of border and cross-border regions, and identifies obstacles to cooperation as well as possible solutions. The AEBR Task Force Cross-Border Culture (T4CBC) is part of this approach. Border regions are almost always characterised by the presence of two or more different cultures and languages. Here, as in other areas, borders offer both an opportunity and a challenge. An opportunity, because where cultures meet, creativity and innovation thrive. A study by the Euregio Meuse-Rhine (EMR) and the Office for the Study of the Cultural Economy of Cologne from 2010 (and for part of the EMR, renewed in 2018), shows that the cultural and creative industries (CCI) of the border regions generate a cross-sectional added value that is higher than the national added values. There is also a challenge, because like all other sectors of activity, culture is exposed to the pitfalls of cross-border and transnational cooperation. It can be divergent or similar from country

— Rudolf Godesar —

President of the 'Cross-border Culture'
Task Force at the Association of European
Border Regions (AEBR)
www.aebr.eu
r.godesar@outlook.com



to country, through differences in languages, mentalities, public support, laws and regulations, etc. T4CBC identifies obstacles to cross-border cooperation in cultural matters and works to remove them by lobbying within the AEBR structures; at the level of its members, but also at the level of the member states and the various European bodies—from the Council of Europe to the European Parliament, via the Commission or the Committee of the Regions. On the other hand, T4CBC puts the cultural actors of the border regions in contact with the European and international cultural networks, which for many are mainly anchored in the capitals and almost absent in the border regions.


‘The aim is to put local actors in contact with other European or international actors’

Since its inception (late 2012, early 2013) and up to the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, T4CBC has organised a cultural colloquium in a European border region every year. At the beginning of the year, or the year before the colloquium, a preparatory congress is organised in the border region concerned. The aim of this preparatory conference is to start

as much as possible from the realities on the ground, in order to survey the situation of the existing cross-border cultural cooperation in the regions organising the colloquium. We also aim to find out the wishes and needs of the cultural actors in these border regions. Based on the results of the preparatory conference, the objectives and themes of the conference itself are defined. Artists and cultural and creative actors from other border regions, as well as from European and international networks, are invited to actively participate in the colloquium and its workshops according to the themes of the programme. The aim is to put local actors in contact with other European or international actors and thus to facilitate mutual learning, the emergence of innovative solutions or the implementation of new joint cultural projects.

Your network brings together 100 members from different parts of the European Union. Does cross-border cooperation in the cultural field attract members and regions in particular, and how do you explain this potentially greater interest?

Yes. Cross-border cooperation is more attractive when there is a culture and a language in country A that is specific to, and/or in the majority, in that country; and on the other side of the border in country B, there is a cultural and linguistic minority that is associated with the neighbouring country and that has a history often common with it. In other regions and for political reasons, cross-border cultural cooperation exists only through minorities present on both sides of the border. For example, the Greek minority in the Ukrainian Donetsk Oblast cooperates culturally with the Greek minority in the Rostov am Don Oblast in southeast Russia.



‘The day that I find the answer, I will hold in my hands the lever to move economic Europe towards a cultural Europe; a Europe that puts people at the centre of its concerns’

Is there a transformation of the objectives associated with cross-border cultural cooperation with a potential desire to mobilise culture as a driver of economic collaboration and less as an issue of belonging to Europe?

Yes, before the COVID-19 pandemic and also outside the cross-border context, almost everywhere in Europe the dominant political discourse already consisted of instrumentalising culture in the service of the economy. Nowadays, many funds exclude culture, and other funding and cultural aids are subject to economic profitability criteria. From now on, to speak only about the usefulness or the cultural benefit of a project is suspect. Even in a proposal for a cultural project, one has to talk about the benefits for the ‘creative and cultural industries’. This evolution is more noticeable in the border regions. Political decision-makers, elected by the population of a region in a country, are more exposed to questions and criticism from their electorate about the validity of the time and money they invest in cross-border projects and work. They are therefore more likely to invest in areas that can show quick results in terms of jobs, economic benefits, more visible projects and more tangible objectives for the border population.

What are the main problems associated with the implementation and sustainability of cross-border cultural projects, and how can these problems be overcome?

In addition to the reluctance of political decision-makers to finance cross-border cultural projects, there is often a blatant lack of listening on the part of these political actors to the cultural and associative world. As a rule, politicians start with an agenda that has not been sufficiently confronted with the needs and desires of the grassroots organisations. The projects often focus on ‘highbrow culture’ or on cultural tourism, which are areas perceived as generating economic activities. However, it is precisely the ‘grassroots’ initiatives—which do not aim for a spectacular and temporary effect—that should be put at the centre of cross-border cultural political action. In the Meuse-Rhine Euregio alone, it is the grassroots initiatives such as ‘CHE’, ‘Very Contemporary’, ‘Come Hello Creator Festival’, ‘SPACE’, etc. that create a cross-border cultural glue. They are the ones that confront, represent and make culture cooperate, and give the populations the opportunity to widen their horizon, to see further, beyond the border, and thus reinforce the feeling of belonging to a common Europe. However, if the success of these organisations and their value for the Euregio Meuse-Rhine is undisputed, their financing is not—or is only marginally—ensured by the public authorities. Unfortunately, what is true for the Euregio Meuse-Rhine is often also true for other border regions. How can we overcome this problem? The day that I find the answer, I will hold in my hands the lever to move economic Europe towards a cultural Europe; a Europe that puts people at the centre of its concerns.

What advice could you give to border cities wishing to submit a cross-border European Capital of Culture bid in partnership with neighbouring regions?

Having closely followed a number of cross-border city bids to become European Capital of Culture (ECoC), I have had the opportunity to lead many discussions with local artists and their organisations—the ‘grassroots’ actors—around these bids. Some applications have been successful, others not. Sometimes, and beyond the general objective for cross-border bids of strengthening cultural and social cohesion within a cross-border territory, strong objectives have been formulated. An example is in Donostia, with the reconciliation between the Basque liberation movement and the Spanish state. However, when the grassroots organisations were asked about their involvement in the preparations for the bid (regardless of whether a candidate city had become an ECoC or not), the answer was unfortunately too often that they had not really been consulted about the objectives and the programme; that their role was more or less imposed and their freedom in terms of proposals and actions was restricted. Moreover, in cities that have become an ECoC, the years after the event are sometimes difficult or very difficult. The cultural budget is often exhausted for the subsequent years, and cultural organisations are subject to financial restrictions that can sometimes lead to their closure or the dismissal of staff. Cross-border cultural cooperation is certainly no better off. Local artists and their organisations often point to the specifications of ECoC candidates in terms of the realisation of grandiose infrastructures on the one hand and extraordinary artistic performances

and shows on the other; yet these do not fit into a sustainable regional and cross-border development perspective. They sometimes have the impression that all that is left from the ECoC year are spectacular cultural buildings and artistic monuments made by external architects and artists that then have to be filled and/or maintained.

Therefore, if I may offer some advice, I would say that candidate cities should first of all give a prominent place to the local cultural grassroots organisations in

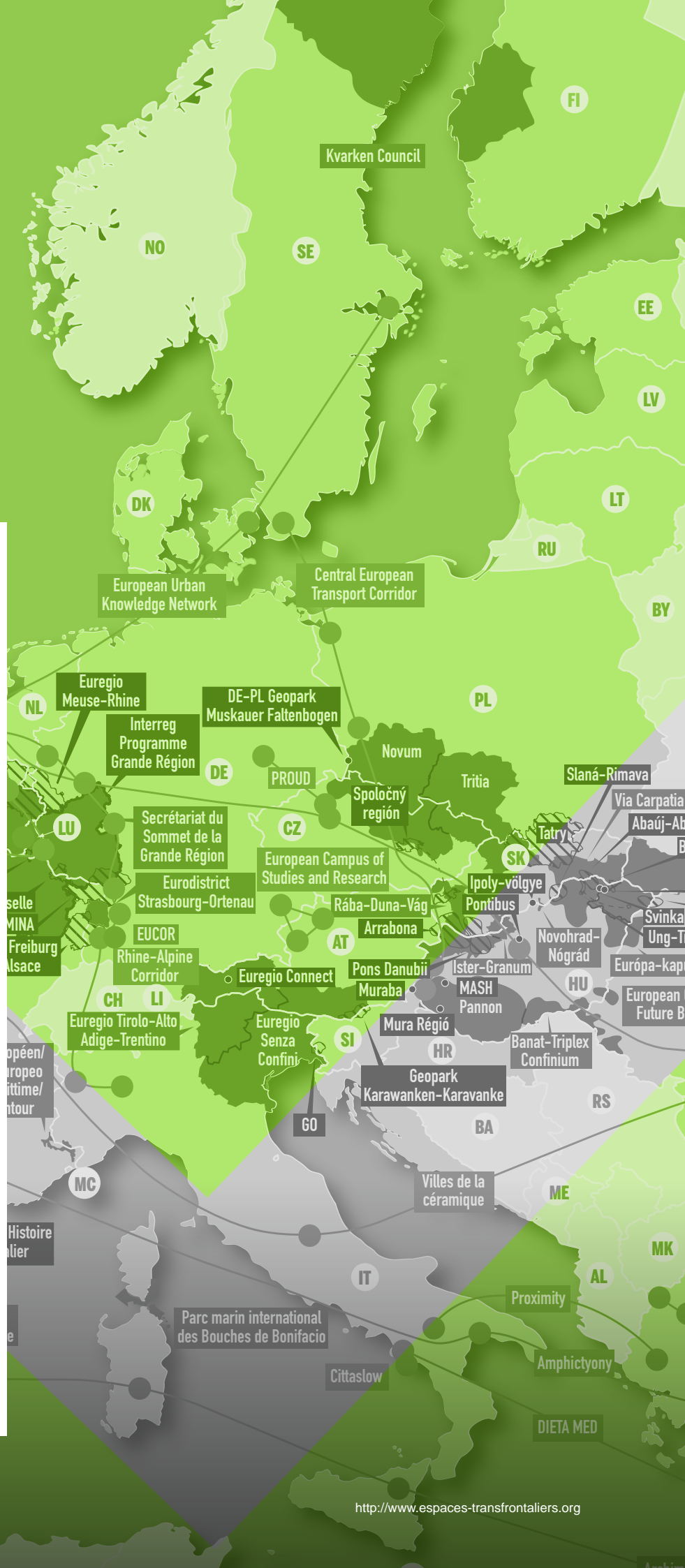
‘I would also say that it is necessary to avoid the eternal *‘bread and circuses’*, the ephemeral shows and the prestige infrastructures or artistic achievements often seen as expensive and useless’

the preparation of the candidacy and the eventual realisation of an ECoC year, especially in determining the cross-border objectives and the sustainability of the operations. Moreover, it is important to include the ECoC in the development of cross-border cultural cooperation in the medium and long term. I would also say that it is necessary to avoid the eternal ‘bread and circuses’, the ephemeral shows and the prestige

infrastructures or artistic achievements often seen as expensive and useless. Last, but not least, I believe that the European Capitals of Culture should include the creation of a cultural data bank in their terms of reference. We can be inspired by the one that was set up by Plurio.Net in the framework of the ECoC Luxembourg Greater Region 2007 (but which is unfortunately no longer financed), or that of the ASBL Publiq for Flanders and Brussels. Since these databases are not self-financing, they should be considered from the beginning as a public service. Thus, in Flanders, this database will from now on be structurally co-financed by all the regions involved.

The Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière is a network working for cross-border cooperation in Europe. Culture is one sectoral field in which it has acquired expertise. Are there any specific drivers for cultural cooperation compared with other cooperation areas, such as the environment or health?

First of all, it should be noted that culture is a singular community policy compared with others implemented at the European Union level, such as monetary policy or the common agricultural policy. It is present, but is not an exclusive competence of the EU or even a competence shared with the member states; instead, it is a competence to support them. Depending on the country, cultural policies may have a different scope. They may be managed at different levels: by territorial actors, notably the regions, and/or by the state, such as in France, where a national cultural policy has been in place since the 1960s. This makes cross-border cooperation in this field very particular.





— Jean Peyrony —

Director General
Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)
jean.peyrony@mot.asso.fr

‘It is a matter of encouraging rapprochement and facilitating exchanges to better understand the otherness...’



Policy Officer
‘Cross-border studies and European projects’
Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière (MOT)
raffaele.viaggi@mot.asso.fr

— Raffaele Viaggi —

Do you notice differences in the dynamics of cultural cooperation if the state border is a dividing line between different cultural and linguistic spaces (for example, France and Germany) or if it is, by contrast, a dividing line between homogeneous or close cultural and linguistic spaces (such as the Hungarian cultural basin in the Carpathian Mountains, crossed by the state borders)?

Sometimes the state border is a line of linguistic and cultural separation between two national communities, for example between France and Germany or Italy. In such a case, the cultural cooperation has a strong symbolic dimension. It is a matter of encouraging rapprochement and facilitating exchanges to better understand the otherness and to encourage a common culture; a ‘unity in diversity’, following the

example of Franco-German cooperation presented in the Elysée and Aachen Treaties, or Franco-Italian cooperation in the Quirinal Treaty. It also depends on the scale: the inter-state scale, or the border scale. The border can also divide regional and cross-border cultural basins into two, such as the Upper Rhine between Alsace and its German and Swiss neighbours, the Basque Country between Spain and

France, or Flanders between France and Belgium. Cultural cooperation in this regional and cross-border context is then a driving force to facilitate European regional integration. Sometimes, as in the case of Hungary, where the drawing of the border by the Treaty of Trianon in 1920 represented a trauma, cross-border cooperation makes it possible to combine the regional and national dimensions of culture—the symbolic and integrative dimensions. But this can only be done while respecting the cultural otherness present, otherwise there is no cooperation and the border becomes a line of national tension.

The Interreg programme is the European fund for financing cross-border cooperation. What place is given to culture in these programmes? Have there been any changes over time?

The European Interreg programme has evolved considerably over the last few decades. There was a first phase between 1990 and 2010, during which a strong emphasis was placed on cultural projects in the operational programmes. The aim was to bring together actors who did not know each other, and cultural projects were seen as an obvious way


‘There are no exclusions, but projects that have a soul are needed’

to facilitate this rapprochement. Since 2010, the European Commission has instead encouraged cooperation related to the central objectives of the EU, such as the environment, innovation or the economy. However, outside the Interreg programme, in its 2015 ‘cross-border review’ the European Commission noted that linguistic and cultural differences could be a major obstacle to such cooperation. Use of the neighbour’s language can help overcome this cultural divide. For the period 2021–2027, Interreg programmes are encouraged to finance funds for small projects, including those led by cultural actors. Collaboration must become more independent of European funding, with public funding coming from both sides of the border. Thus, the Euroregion Nouvelle-Aquitaine Euskadi Navarre between France and Spain has its own funding for its cultural projects. The Conseil du Léman, involving French and Swiss communities, also has funds for its cross-border cultural collaborations.

Is there specific governance for cross-border cultural projects?

In fact, when we get down to the nitty-gritty of setting up cultural projects, there is a need for technical expertise, which

is provided by cultural professionals, but at the beginning, cross-border cooperation is mainly political. Strong political support is needed if projects are to see the light of day. Lastly, beyond the ‘cultural’ expertise, there is also a need for ‘cross-border cooperation’ expertise; that is, the support of generalist technical teams used to managing cooperation between several countries and on a local/regional scale. This cannot be improvised, which is why structures such as EGTCs (European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation) employing cooperation professionals have been set up. Thus, an EGTC has successfully supported the application for the cross-border European Capital of Culture



Nova Gorica/Gorizia 2025 between Slovenia and Italy, and will coordinate the future cultural programming of this capital of culture.

Which cross-border cultural projects are of most interest to public actors?

There are no exclusions, but projects that have a soul are needed. It's not easy to explain, but these are projects that must mobilise. Culture has often been approached in a cross-border context from the angles of tourism and heritage. We are in the economy, and it can be very mobilising in a cross-border context. For example, the EGTC 'Vallées Catalanes du Tech et du Ter' between France and Spain is a cross-border art and history region. Culture is perceived locally as an area likely to promote job creation and the retention of inhabitants

in the valleys. In addition, there are also projects that can combine the economy and social inclusion. This is the case for the cultural third place 'Borderline Fabrika' in Hendaye station that was set up on the basis of cooperation between French and Spanish actors. The third places are thought of as nodes of the creative economy in the city, and the third place 'Borderline Fabrika' was developed through work

'There is real added value in carrying out a cross-border European Capital of Culture project, such as Esch 2022 or Nova Gorica/Gorizia 2025'

camp. Here, we are in the social and solidarity economy. In the background of this third place, there is cooperation initiated through the European Capital of Culture San Sebastian 2016.

What advice could you give to border cities wishing to apply for a cross-border European Capital of Culture in partnership with neighbouring regions?

The most important thing is to belong to European networks, such as the CECCUT network, in order to get to know other experiences, to gain access to know-how on the implementation of a bid and thereby to avoid the pitfalls encountered by others. There is real added value in carrying out a cross-border European Capital of Culture project, such as Esch 2022 or Nova Gorica/Gorizia 2025. The 'European' dimension of the bid is easier to demonstrate in such a geographical context that involves several states. If there is a political will on both sides of the border for such bids, the technical teams must approach cities and networks with expertise in the field.

DANCE FESTIVAL

VISAVI

GO!

BORDERLESS

DANCE PRODUCTION

FESTIVAL
DANCE
PRODUCTION

Cultural resilience across borders during the COVID-19 pandemic

The Visavi Dance Festival seeks to highlight the particular location of the festival at the Italian-Slovenian border between the cities of Nova Gorica (SLO) and Gorizia (IT), the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) for Slovenia in 2025.

The term Visavi, from the French expression vis-à-vis, is widely used locally with the meaning 'in front of'. It implies a feeling of closeness, dialogue and exchange that the festival aims to increase through the universal language of dance.

The first event of the festival took place in October 2020 and it is planned to become a main cross-border feature in the area; before, during and after the ECOC Nova Gorica/Gorizia 2025.

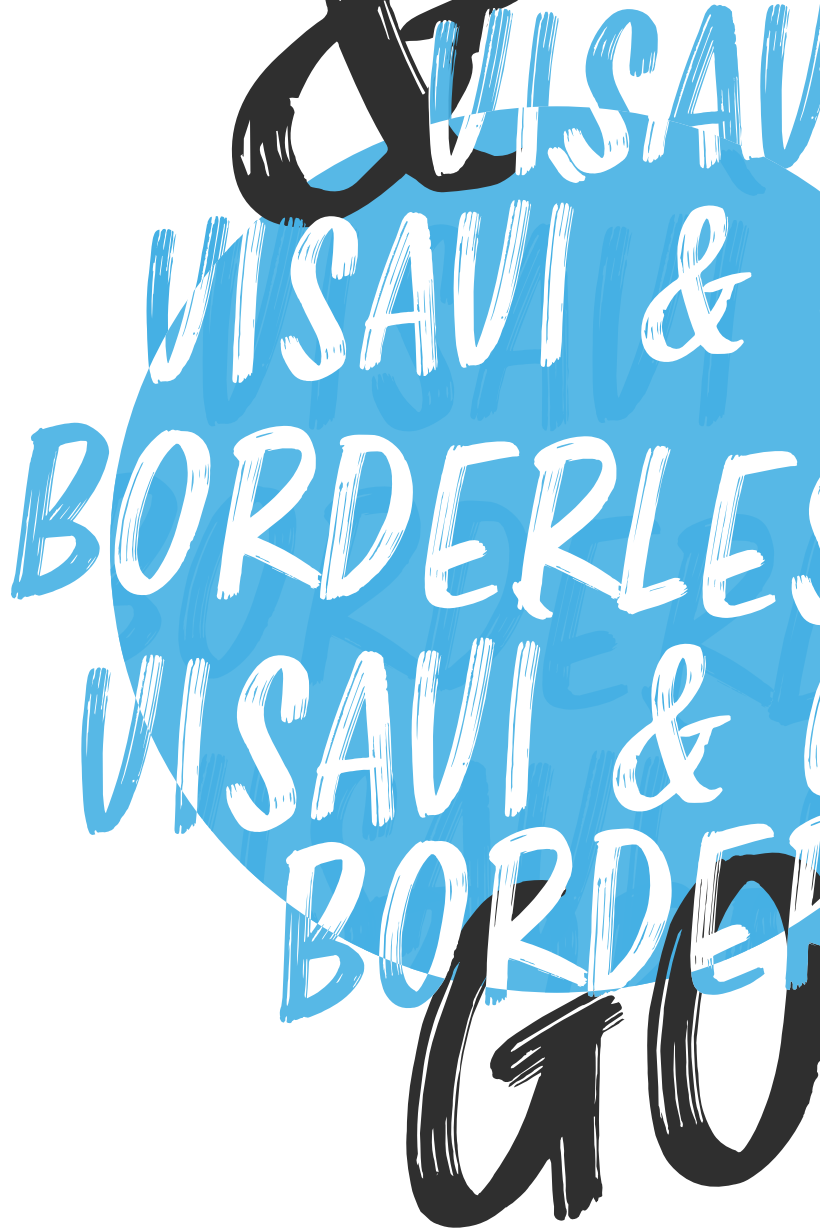
In parallel, a cross-border dance performance named 'GO! Borderless', was programmed in 2020, and in relation to the Nova Gorica/Gorizia European Capital of Culture 2025 candidacy. The subject for this artistic performance was the border as an artificial barrier, forced on the population in history and especially during the cold war.



GO!
CULTURE
BEFORE
HISTORY
GORICA
FESTIVAL
GORIZIA
DANCE
CEC 2025
VISA
VIS-A-VIS

Similar to the Visavi Dance Festival, the 'GO! Borderless' dance event involved international artists, as well as local ones from the cross-border area. The two artistic events shared a common symbolic location: the Europa/Transalpina cross-border square, built in 2004 in-between Slovenia and Italy when Slovenia entered the European Union.

The square will be renovated, with work due to finish in 2025 when it will become an open space venue for cultural events and a common city centre for both Goricas.



The Visavi Dance Festival was developed by 'Artisti associati', with artistic director Walter Mramor. It is delivered with the support of partners in Italy (The Municipality of Gorizia, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism, and the Foundation Cassa di Risparmio di Gorizia) and in Slovenia (The Slovene National Theatre of Nova Gorica, ERT, the Regional Body for Theatrical Productions, the Palazzo del Cinema-Hiša Filma di Gorizia PAN ADRIA network, and the GO! 2025 EGCT cross-border institution).

The 'GO! Borderless' dance production has been developed and will be delivered by the M&N Dance Company, led by artistic directors Michal Rynia and Nastja Brevec Rynia. It is sponsored by the SNG Nova Gorica, the Municipality of Nova Gorica, and the GO! 2025 EGCT cross-border institution.



INTERVIEW

Neda Rusjan Bric
Artistic Director,
ECoC GO! 2025

neda@go2025.eu
<https://www.go2025.eu/en>

COHESION

Can you tell us what the added value is of the presented projects for the European cross-border urban cohesion between Nova Gorica and Gorizia?

Dance is an international language that can bring together different European people who do not share the same language, but who can live side by side in the same cross-border urban environment between Slovenia and Italy.

The two dance projects can be seen as important events involved in the development of a shared sense of belonging among the citizens of the Europe living in our borderland cities. I must add that the issue of border and border crossing was the key topic of these artistic performances.

Therefore, a message favouring the European cross-border identity and urban cohesion was delivered locally on both sides of the border. Furthermore, the two dance projects took place in an important historical place for us in the two Goricas; that is, the Europa/Transalpina square, which represents the end of hard borders between Slovenia and Italy in a united European Union.

Cultural events, and especially those programmed in the European Capital of Culture, will be important to reinforce the position of this square as a strong urban tie between the two Goricas.

Artistic performance on the Europa/Transalpina square

VISAVì
<https://www.goriziadancefestival.it>

GO! BORDERLESS
<https://www.mndancecompany.com/en/repertoire/show/2021011821375933/go!-borderless>

BORDER

Have you had any problems with the implementation of these projects, and if so, how have you overcome them?

Well, the Visavì Dance Festival and the 'GO! Borderless' dance production took place during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been a very difficult for the cultural and creative sectors in Europe, and especially for us in a cross-border urban region.

The border between Slovenia and Italy was closed at some points. After the collapse of the iron curtain and the integration of Slovenia in the European Union, we would have never thought we would experience the return of strong border control and barriers again. It was quite dramatic and emotionally difficult to deal with on the cross-border Europa/Transalpina square, which was cut into two parts by a quickly installed fence.

Nevertheless, we did not give up and we continued with our events. The square became a meeting point for divided families, friends and groups such as orchestras, sports clubs, etc., who held rehearsals and exercises on both sides of the border fence.

We integrated the presence of the newly installed COVID-19 fence into our dance performance taking place on the square, as you can see in one of the photos. There were artistic performances on the border and with the border, with a reinforced message on the need for a borderless European Union.

IDENTITY

Your dance performances are recent, and the cross-border square was created less than 20 years ago. How do you imagine the sustainability of the cross-border art performance in the area and the long-term use of the cross-border square for cultural purpose?

On our territory, people have been cooperating and joining forces since forever, regardless of borders. Now, Nova Gorica and Gorizia will be the European Capital of Culture in 2025. We think this European initiative will boost the sustainability of the cultural and creative sector in the area.

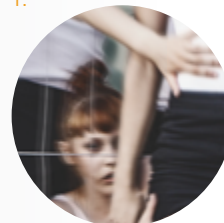
Furthermore, the Italian and Slovenian central states recognised the importance of the common candidacy of Nova Gorica and Gorizia. The presidents of the Italian and Slovenian Republics—respectively, Sergio Mattarella and Borut Pahor—made a joint visit to the area in October 2021 during an important tour of the cross-border region, in order to strengthen state reconciliation between the two countries. On this occasion, we also joined forces and put together a borderless symphony orchestra to perform for them.

We think that Nova Gorica/Gorizia is an important location for the rapprochement between Italy and Slovenia. The cross-border square, Evropa/Transalpina, will be used in the long term as a major place of memory for both countries; a place of memory used to display a European identity in diversity.

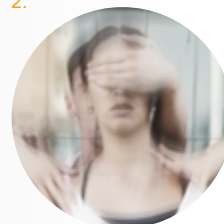


The issue of border and border crossing was the key topic of these artistic performances

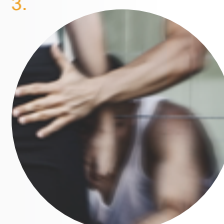
1.



2.



3.



1. 2. 3.

Using the COVID-19 fence in the 'GO! Borderless' performance

ITALIAN
FILM
FESTIVAL

VILLERUPT



This poster shows the success of the film festival over the years, but also illustrates the industrial and popular cross-border area in which the Italian diaspora has settled. It is the presence of this population from Italy that justified the appearance of the festival in the 1970s.

The colour red symbolises the prestige of the 'festival without borders', the colour of the night sky in the industrial region lit by molten metal, and the political leanings of a working-class community that has traditionally voted for left-wing parties in the cross-border area.



1976

The transalpine link between France and Luxembourg

The Villerupt Italian Film Festival has existed since 1976, and is one of the main festivals dedicated to Italian film production in France.

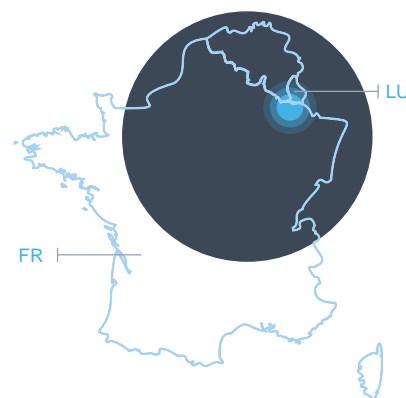
From the outset, it has been able to attract internationally renowned directors, such as Ettore Scola and Luigi Comencini, as well as actors such as Nino Manfredi.

The cross-border and Franco-Luxembourg dimension of the festival has been affirmed over the years through collaborations between the festival team based in Villerupt and the Grand-Ducal structures involved in 'the seventh art', such as the Cinémathèque of the city of Luxembourg created in 1975, the Centre National de l'Audiovisuel in Dudelange and the KulturFabrik cultural centre in Esch-sur-Alzette.

Moreover, the festival's audience comes from France and Luxembourg. It is composed in part of descendants of the Italian diaspora who settled in the cross-border region of northern Lorraine and southern Luxembourg between the end of the nineteenth century and the 1960s.

Since 1998, the festival has been supported by the association 'Le Pôle de l'Image'. It receives public funding from France, Luxembourg and Italy.

1998





INTERVIEW

Antoine Compagnone
General Delegate,
Villerupt Italian
Film Festival

organisation@festival-
villerupt.com
<https://festival-villerupt.com>

ROLE

The Villerupt Italian Film Festival is in its fourth decade. What has its role been in strengthening cross-border urban cohesion between France and Luxembourg?

You know, the festival appeared at a difficult time in the economic and cultural history of the cross-border industrial area comprising the north of Lorraine and the south of Luxembourg.

In the 1970s, there was a decline in the industrial activities that had been the reason for the arrival of the Italian diaspora locally. The flow of immigrants from Italy stopped. It was felt that a page was being turned in the way of life and in the ties that bind the diaspora. A team of young people based in Villerupt decided to create the festival to give visibility to this popular community through cinema. We were all amateurs at the time, and the festival had a marked political connotation. It was Italian directors with communist leanings who came to Villerupt. The films we screen are social comedies and some of them deliver political messages that speak to the Italian diaspora in our territory, such as the famous *Pane e cioccolata* by Franco Brusati (1974), with Nino Manfredi.



The festival is also a time to renew a festive atmosphere. The *mammas* in the territory are called upon to make simple and hearty meals. It is a popular festival organised around a diaspora open to its Franco-Luxembourg environment. The Festival is a way of affirming a feeling of belonging to a Europe that is based in particular on the presence of cultural diasporas that integrate over the generations in the territories where they are located without forgetting where they come from. Today, things have changed, but with a Luxembourg that brings together more than 140 national communities, we believe that our festival contributes to bringing the communities together thanks to a very diverse programme that speaks to the greatest number of people.

SETTING UP

In more than 40 years, you have sometimes encountered problems in setting up the Festival, what are they and how did you manage to overcome them?

It's clear that over the years we've faced difficulties. They have been of two kinds.

The first is beyond our control. It is the Italian film production. The festival comes at a time when the golden age of Italian film is coming to an end. The conditions of film production in Italy are changing. It is the era of very commercial productions and the quality is not always there. Fortunately, things changed for the better in the 1990s with films like *Cinema Paradiso* and *Mediterraneo*.

The second difficulty is linked to the organisation of the festival. We had internal debates about whether we should remain amateurs or set up an autonomous, professional structure by seeking funding to offer an increasingly ambitious festival programme. The second option was chosen. Maybe we wouldn't be here now if we hadn't taken this. This choice allowed us to create a climate of confidence with the French and Luxembourg financiers of our festival. Afterwards, you can never be sure of a problem.

In 2020, because of COVID-19, our festival was interrupted after six days due to the containment measures, but this was the case for most of the major film festivals in Europe.

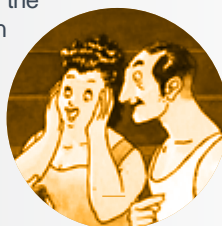
SUSTAINABILITY

What is the basis for the sustainability of your cross-border festival?

As I said before, I think that the professionalisation of the festival has been a driving force in its sustainability. It has allowed us to adapt to a context that has changed a lot in over 40 years. Our audience has evolved, as have their cinematic tastes. We still have an audience from the cross-border region, but we also attract film lovers from more distant urban centres, such as Metz in France and Luxembourg City, where a new Italian diaspora has been growing for several years; that of executives working in the higher services sector.

The maintenance and strengthening of the festival has consisted of assessing the diversification of the public in an enlarged cross-border space. We are committed to responding to all the expectations present. In fact, we have kept the popular and quality comedy, while proposing a programme aimed at a more restricted audience interested in Italian auteur cinema. This has enabled us to increase the number of films programmed per festival from 30 to 60, and to attract up to 40,000 festival-goers per year. We have the recognition of the public and the support of the French, Luxembourg and Italian ministerial authorities.

An international festival relying on the budgetary resources and audiences present on a regional and cross-border scale is a very original cultural project; almost unique, I would say.



“

It is a popular festival organised around a diaspora open to its Franco-Luxembourg environment

ALZETTE BELVAL

EUROPEAN HERITAGE DAYS
OF ALZETTE BELVAL

Cross-border bicycle tour
organised in 2018 between
Belval (L) and Redange (F).

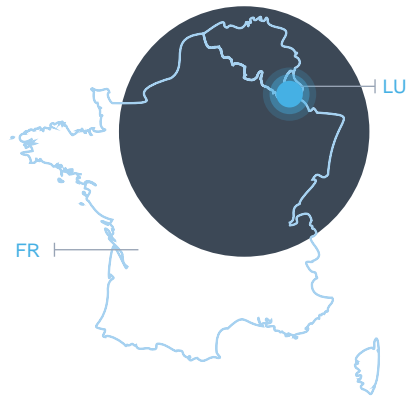
Mobilising the European Heritage Days to strengthen the cross-border feeling of belonging

The European Heritage Days, coordinated by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and national authorities, attract 20 million visitors every year.

This initiative, which has been in place for over 30 years, helps to strengthen a common European culture. Because of its history, the Franco-Luxembourg conurbation of Alzette Belval is entirely part of the European culture without borders.

Every year, it draws up a programme as part of the European Heritage Days. This programme is an opportunity to (re)discover the cultural and tourist sites of the cross-border region, while taking advantage of guided and interactive tours with passionate people.

The operation is coordinated by the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) Alzette Belval, which is financed by the local authorities and the French and Luxembourg states.



EUROPEAN
HERITAGE
DAYS
ALZETTE
BELVAL



In the Alzette Belval territory, the distances are short and the riches are great. It is possible to cycle easily from one country to the other. This shows the participants that their living space is cross-border and that they can feel at home there.



INTERVIEW

Marine Yeral
Project Officer,
Alzette Belval EGTC

myeral@gectalzetebelval.eu
<http://gectalzetebelval.eu>

DIFFICULTIES

Have you encountered any difficulties when setting up your project, and if so, how are they overcome?

The local actors involved in the project vary every year, and the themes or activities proposed are also different from one year to the next. It is therefore sometimes more difficult to create

At the same time, another difficulty linked to communication may be apparent. The dates of the **European Heritage Days (EHD)** are different in France and Luxembourg (as well as in the rest of Europe). This makes the marketing of our cultural event more complicated. Indeed, the promotional tools put in place by each of the two countries (online diaries, publication and distribution of programmes, etc.) do not systematically allow the cross-border event to be included if it takes place outside the period of the EHD set in each country. For example, the EHD in France always take place on the third weekend in September, whereas they are sometimes held later in Luxembourg. If the cross-border event takes place at the end of September (therefore, after the French EHD), it will not appear in the programme for the EHD in France, even though the event is held partly on French territory. We are overcoming this problem by using other communication channels to promote our event to the public living on French territory.

COHESION

How are the European Heritage Days an important event for the cohesion of your cross-border territory?

They are an opportunity to promote the richness of the cross-border conurbation and to take participants across the border. Cross-border tours (or combinable visits) are proposed each year, thus demonstrating the ease of crossing the border to people who are not used to it or for whom the other side remains foreign and therefore unknown. This project also highlights the common history of the territory (the steel industry, resistance, festivities, art, etc.) and thus promotes the strengthening of a feeling of belonging to the cross-border conurbation. The project has been ongoing since 2016. Its repetition helps to federate actors and to stabilise a dynamic!



synergies during certain occasions and this can be felt in the attractiveness of our cultural event. However, we always manage to attract a public interested in discovering the heritage of the neighbouring country and the cross-border tours that are set up. There is an undeniable interest in a local Europe, approached from a cultural perspective.

EVOLUTION

How has the project evolved over time, and what has been the basis for its sustainability?

Originally, the Alzette Belval EGTC produced a 'simple' brochure in 2015, listing the events organised as part of the JEP in French and Luxembourg territory. In 2016, in parallel to the joint brochure, a cross-border heritage quiz was put online to enable participants to discover their territory in a fun way. From 2017, the EGTC formed a working group with the municipalities of the EGTC, the Communauté de Communes du Pays-Haut Val d'Alzette (CCPHVA) and local associations to propose cross-border events. Since then, all the tourism, cultural and local events players are invited to a meeting every year to jointly draw up a programme. The project for the current year is thus drawn up together with the interested and willing actors (who alternate each year).

The sustainability of the project is due to the leadership of the working group by the Alzette Belval EGTC for two reasons. First, it ensures the regularity of the operation through its mission to coordinate the efforts involved. Second, it ensures the organisation and promotion of the cultural event, which does not have to be left to the cultural players who come together. The latter can thus concentrate on the sites they manage and the visits/events programmed on

these sites. Further, as the Alzette Belval JEPs have been organised for many years, they are now easily integrated into the cultural agendas and are widely reported in the press.

The EGTC has been contacted by other cross-border structures and by the Direction Régionale des Affaires Culturelles (DRAC) of the Grand Est (France) to reproduce the project in other border locations. Lastly, the municipalities that do not participate in the project act as relays for the inhabitants, making it possible to reach the whole of the cross-border conurbation, year after year, and thus to federate a fairly loyal public.

“

There is an undeniable interest in a local Europe, approached from a cultural perspective

THE MAISONS FOLIE

The cross-border heritage of Lille 2004

Lille 2004 allowed the creation of a central element of Lille's cultural infrastructure: the Maisons Folie. While seven of them are located in different districts of the Lille conurbation, five have been established in the cross-border metropolitan area, including three in Belgium (in Mons, Kortrijk and Tournai), thus highlighting the cross-border influence as one of the main achievements of Lille 2004. These new socio-cultural facilities, with operations based on proximity and interdisciplinarity, aim to play a federating role for neighbourhood initiatives and to create links with the inhabitants, associations and artists by supporting artistic and cultural activities mainly oriented towards popular culture..

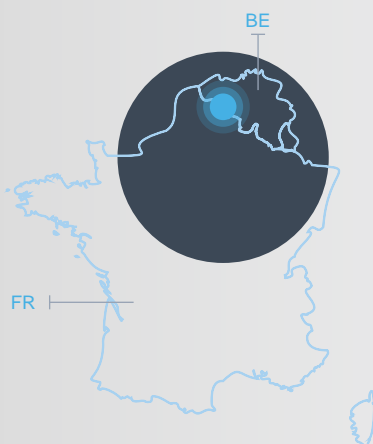
Most of the Maisons Folie were created in old disused buildings—a malt factory, a flax mill, a primary school, a convent, etc.—where restoration and transformation have made it possible to enhance a neglected heritage and to create a contemporary architectural gesture.

Although the opening of these new cultural facilities, on the very day of

the inauguration of the European Capital of Culture or in the months that followed, took place in different contexts (a parade, exhibition, guided tour, concert, etc.), all the Maisons Folie showed imagination in making these opening days special moments. Of the twelve facilities created in 2004, seven have retained the name of Maison Folie to this day.

The creation of these facilities required the collaboration of various actors and financiers: the European Union, the French state, the Lille Urban Community, the Caisse des dépôts et consignations. For each Maison Folie, the budget can be counted in millions of euros. For example, the one called 'Condition Publique' required the highest funding, with more than eleven million euros spent.

Maison Folie Wazemmes and Mons are cultural facilities that were created in 2004. Both are places for dissemination, creation and cultural action, and have continued to develop to this day, with the Mons Maison Folie actually having a 'second wind' in 2015 when Mons became the European Capital of Culture (ECC).





INTERVIEW

Olivier Sergent*
in charge of sustainable
culture, City of Lille

osergent@mairie-lille.fr
<https://maisonsfolie.lille.fr>

*
Former director of the Maisons Folie
Wazemmes and Moulins, and of
Flow (until 2021)

INITIATIVE

How is the Maison Folie initiative an example of best practice?

In 2004, it was innovative to network the territory of the cross-border region with twelve Maisons Folie. The common characteristic of these facilities is their strong local territorial presence, which makes them local facilities; in the case of the Lille Maisons Folie, located on the edge of central or **gentrified** neighbourhoods and very working-class neighbourhoods. Cultural action with populations that are traditionally far from the cultural offering is thus part of the missions of these facilities of a new type, where artists are accompanied in their work with the neighbourhood. .

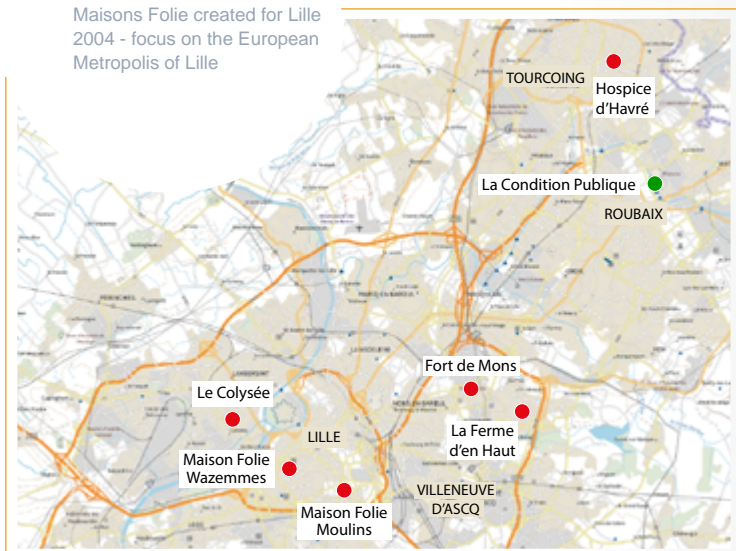


**Cultural action with
populations that are
traditionally far from
the cultural offering
is thus part of the
missions of these
facilities of a new
type, where artists
are accompanied
in their work with
the neighbourhood**

The strength of the Maisons Folie, and in particular those of Wazemmes and Moulins, is also that they are first and foremost places for artists in residence; working spaces that meet a real need for artists. By their very nature, the Maisons Folie work in close collaboration with the other cultural structures of the metropolis. All of the events that they organise, particularly the festivals, are the result of this co-construction..

They are also part of the network of 'cultural factories' of the European Metropolis of Lille. This network includes the six Maisons Folie of the metropolis—as well as other structuring cultural facilities, such as Le Vivat in Armentières—and benefits from funding to develop joint projects that is very beneficial to local artists in the long term. The Maisons Folie Wazemmes and Moulins thus play their role perfectly as complementary places to the more traditional cultural facilities. We wonder how we did it before they existed!

Maisons Folie created for Lille
2004 - focus on the European
Metropolis of Lille



LILLE French Municipality

● French 'Maison Folie'

● Former french 'Maison Folie'
(cultural facility that no longer
bears the name)

Background map : IGN, 2022
Authors : P. Bosredon et T. Lesage

PROJECT

Did you encounter any difficulties in setting up this project?

The arrival of the Maisons Folie appears to have been a success, but certain constraints might have affected their operation. The Maisons Folie of Lille are placed under direct municipal control, which implies having to respect specific rules (public contracts, etc.) and some complexities. Nevertheless, this has always provided these facilities with a solid cash flow, which is favourable to the success of projects.

Another challenge concerns audiences, which are very diverse depending on the type of show or exhibition, and are difficult to retain in the absence of a subscription policy and without annual programming. This is impossible to implement when working with small structures. Nevertheless, if the difficulty of building loyalty can be seen as a weakness, the crossing of multiple networks and the diversified audiences are also strengths!

LABEL MAISON FOLIE

How has the project evolved over time? What has been the basis for its sustainability?

Not all the Maisons Folie have continued. The ones in Arras and Tournai closed their doors at the end of Lille 2004. This was mainly due to a lack of alternative funding to that of the European Capital of Culture, and a lack of local political support. Two others no longer use the 'Maison Folie' label (the Condition publique in Roubaix and the Ile Buda in Kortrijk), but have remained major cultural facilities. The other eight still exist and a ninth, the Maison Folie Beaulieu in Lomme, was actually created five years later, on the same model as the Lille metropolis.

The Maisons Folie project has evolved over time. New questions that have not arisen before are now at the heart of the concerns: sustainable culture, ecological transition and the global issue of inclusion. The Maisons Folie that continued the adventure after Lille 2004 have all reinvented themselves in



Maison folie Wazemmes
Former spinning mill restored

Maison Folie de Mons
The house of the project

one way or another, by integrating the notion of living spaces more fully. For example, the Maison Folie Moulins has added a micro-folie (a digital museum), a café or a mini fab-lab for families, which has allowed for a wider operating range and a real mixing of the population.

MONS Belgian Municipality

● Belgian 'Maison Folie'

● Former Belgian 'Maison Folie'
(cultural facility that no longer bears the name)

LILLE French Municipality

● French 'Maison Folie'

● Former French 'Maison Folie'
(cultural facility that no longer bears the name)

Background : IGN, 2022
Authors : P. Bosredon et T. Lesage



Maisons Folie created for
Lille 2004 within the cross-
border area

INCLUSIVE ART BETWEEN SERBIA AND ROMANIA

Access to culture for youth in difficulty

ARTISTS
CULTURE IN ACTION
COMMUNITIES
ANIMATED FILM
STORYBOOK

The overall objective of the project was to strengthen local communities and disadvantaged groups through innovative and inclusive social practices involving culture and the arts. In order to contribute to the cultural and social cohesion of the Romanian-Serbian cross-border area, the project was implemented by the Intercultural Institute Timișoara in partnership with the Nevo Parudimos Association in Reșița (Romania), the Municipality of Zrenjanin (Serbia) and the Terra Centre for Fine and Applied Arts in Kikinda (Serbia); organisations that had collaborated on previous projects.

The project was aimed at an extremely heterogeneous target group. It comprised young unemployed university graduates in the fields of the arts, social sciences, etc., but also disadvantaged youth and children from rural and urban areas, children with parents working abroad, Roma youth and children, disabled youth and children, and migrants—in total, more than 1100 direct beneficiaries.

Meeting the needs of these beneficiaries required the implementation of a wide variety of activities and sub-activities, including Culture in Action (24 cultural and artistic interventions in 12 marginalised cross-border communities); the monitoring the implementation of the cultural public policy documents of the Timișoara, Zrenjanin and Reșița town halls; the capitalisation of experiences and the transfer of know-how; and the communication related to projects. These activities resulted in the dissemination of a story and colouring book, manuals, art catalogues, an animated film, posters and leaflets. The quantitative and qualitative aims were achieved and actually exceeded.





Dr. Corina Răceanu
Programme Director,
Timișoara Intercultural
Institute

corina.raceanu@intercultural.ro
<https://www.intercultural.ro/en>



**It was possible to reduce
differences in access
to culture for children
and young people from
marginalised social groups
and communities**

CROSS-BORDER COHESION

**Has the project been an important
element for cross-border cohesion
in your region? Why was this?**

From the outset, the choice of partners was based on geographical positioning and a context of needs that allowed for a broad scope of action. The selection of the 12 marginalised communities on both sides of the border was made by taking into account the needs of the target groups involved in the project, as well as the cohesion of the urban space (a centre-periphery relationship in the cities of Timișoara, Reșița, Zrenjanin and Kikinda) and the poor and/or marginalised rural communities.

Through common approaches and activities, as well as the specific activities of each partner, it was possible to reduce differences in access to culture for children and young people from marginalised social groups and communities. The analysis of the public cultural policies of local administrative decision-makers in the field of cultural inclusion, as well as the joint or specific recommendations provided, allowed the project to open up new paths towards the reduction of disparities, by creating more inclusive cultural ecosystems better adapted to local needs.



EMOTIONS

What were the difficulties in implementing the project and how did you overcome them?

The novelty of the approach, the heterogeneity of the target groups, and the diversity and size of the activities implemented made this project difficult to manage and imposed a great physical, intellectual and emotional task on the 19 members of the project teams.

In analysing the project with some of the target groups involved—the artists—we identified three conclusions reached by the young creatives. First, working in a totally different environment appeared to be a challenge. Second, approaching this environment only from a personal point of view is a mistake. Lastly, having unfounded expectations comes from a lack of information.

The lessons learnt allowed us to note the following recommendations, which will guide us in future projects: to have more empathy, to use a friendly approach, to adapt to the environment, to involve the community more and to allow more time for action.

LEGACY

Has the project evolved over time? How has it evolved? What is its legacy?

Four years after the implementation of the project, 'Art Inclusif' is still an example of best practice in the intervention area. It has been selected by the European Commission's DG REGIO for its exemplary nature.


One of the legacies is the implementation of a cultural centre in Kuntz district, Timișoara, proposed by the Intercultural Institute and included in the Timișoara 2023 bid file, is in the contracting phase. The museum point opened in Berliște, Caras Severin County, is now operational. The socio-cultural animation manual and the story and colouring book are being used in other projects.

The long-term sustainability and impact of the Inclusive Art project is also ensured by the continuous collaboration of the partners in various other projects, the presentation of the project in numerous national and international conferences, and the continuation of the cultural inclusion approach within the activities of the Visible/Invisible programme of the Timișoara 2023 European Capital of Culture event, as well as by another project on cultural inclusion developed by our institute.



Art camp
in Kikinda

Access to Culture
Acces la



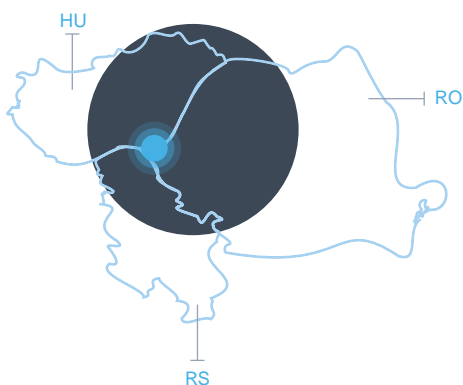
BANAT MOBILE CHIMNEYS

Countering stereotypes on the borders of Hungary, Romania and Serbia

Banat Mobile Chimneys is an interdisciplinary project based on field research in the historical region of Banat. It started in 2017 and is still ongoing. Its main objective is to counter stereotypes (concerning migration and population movements, otherness, etc.) by revealing them through storytelling and contemporary artistic experimentation, in order to highlight the benefits of diversity and intercultural communities.

People explain about their rites of passage, moving from one place to another, and the tumultuous past of the region, such as the wars in Yugoslavia (in the 1990s) or the deportation to Bărăgan (in the 1950s, during the communist regime). Everyday life and trauma become subjects for debate and reflection.

Through this project, the aim is to create an optimal climate for freely discussing such topics, encouraging storytellers to share their personal experiences with others and to document their stories.





INTERVIEW

Nicoleta Mușat
Researcher,
Western University
of Timișoara
nicoleta@prinbanat.ro

BELONGING

How has the project contributed to cross-border cohesion/belonging to the cross-border area?

The project is based on collaborative research at several sites. Data collection has been carried out so far in several areas of Banat, near Timișoara (Stanciova, Recaș, Charlottenburg), near Făget (Margina, Zorani, Coșteiu de Sus, Sintești), as well as in the Serbian border area (Comloșu Mare, Comloșu Mic, Lunca, Lenauheim, Grabaț, Bulgăruș), and the Hungarian one (Beba Veche) so that we could complete a complex mapping of the region, the people and their stories.

Once the stories had been collected, they were transformed into artistic acts, plays such as *O altă zi cu soare* (based on interviews taken in Zorani with the Codrea family and directed by Andrei Ursu), photo exhibitions and even documentaries, such as the one titled *The Border* (directed by Cristina Băican).

These artistic acts were addressed to the communities and inhabitants of Timișoara as a shared research exercise. In 2022 and 2023, the project will also have a cross-border dimension due to the extension of the research to rural localities in the historical Banat region in Serbia and Hungary. Again, the results will be shared with the local communities. This creates not only a sense of belonging to the local community, but also to the region as a common space that has generated similar life experiences over the last century.



DIFFICULTIES

What were the difficulties in implementing the project? How did you overcome them?

The COVID-19 pandemic was, and still is, a major difficulty in the implementation of the project. In 2020, we were not able to continue our field research because of social distancing rules. We therefore organised a series of online workshops, focusing on the theme of migration and the life stories it could generate. The project team had time to reflect on and analyse the material collected up to then.

In addition, a national competition between artists was organised, with the aim of using the database to create innovative artistic works, which were exhibited at the Faber Cultural Centre in Timișoara.

In 2021, the project merged with another project called 'Centripherie', to generate new artistic works based on local knowledge and grouped under the name 'fixed chimneys'.



LESSONS

What are the lessons learned from the project?

The project is ongoing. It is still premature to say how it will be finalised, but it could be a process or rather a local/regional exercise around memory, which has already been initiated and needs to be continued. The creation of a regional collection of life stories could contribute to a stronger sense of regional identity and belonging.



The stories collected, were transformed into artistic acts, plays, photo exhibitions and even documentaries



YOUTH YOUTH YOUTH YOUTH YOUTH CENTRES CENTRES CENTRES CENTRES

Opening of one of the youth
centres in the districts
of Timișoara

Regenerating industrial spaces to break down urban borders in the city of Timișoara

The UP Youth Houses are an initiative by young people for young people.

It all started in 2019, with the implementation of the first event of the project. Then, more than 100 international volunteers joined the project with the help of the European Solidarity Corps programme. This led to the creation of five youth centres in the neighbourhoods of Timișoara; centres that are open to their environment.

In 2021, the second part of the project started, and by the end of the year, two more youth centres had been created in the neighbourhoods. The aim of the project is to overcome the centre-periphery dichotomy in the city of Timișoara, providing places for youth activities. These places should become spaces of communication between young people and the local population in the neighbourhoods where they are established.



The project also focuses on the involvement of local populations and citizens in the setting up of the urban youth centres through voluntary actions or donations; for example, donations of objects needed to decorate and furnish the youth centres. The inauguration of the centres was carried out according to the principle of community solidarity and participatory arts.

The main objective of the project is to transform industrial buildings into youth centres. The photo shows one of these spaces being painted by the volunteers taking part in this wave of change. The project is led by the Timis County Youth Foundation (FITT), the only Romanian youth centre awarded the Council of Europe quality label.

FITT is also a member of Trans Europe Halles, a network of community cultural centres across Europe that transform abandoned buildings into centres for arts and culture.





INTERVIEW

Nadia Tismănaru
Director of the Projects and
Programmes Department,
Western University
of Timișoara
nadia.tismanaru@fitt.ro

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

How has the project contributed to urban development, or to overcoming geographical boundaries or even boundaries within the city?

This project is aimed at young people from all social categories, including disadvantaged young people who live in remote areas. Moreover, the youth centres are open and available spaces for a whole range of initiatives by individuals, informal groups, associations or institutions when actions can be beneficial for the neighbourhoods. Since the opening of the first youth centres, these spaces have hosted hundreds of endeavours, ranging from educational activities to artistic and cultural events (small concerts, plays and exhibitions) and leisure activities.

The project has made a significant contribution to urban cohesion, bringing together different stakeholders and helping them to better understand and respond to the needs of the community. In terms of crossing external borders, the Șagului, Martirilor and Circumvalațiunii youth centres have hosted exhibitions by international artists (from Iran, Graz in Austria and Spain), as part of a project called 'Analogic'.

OVERCOME

What were the difficulties encountered in implementing the project and how were they overcome?

At the beginning, the local population was not very open to contribute or to support our initiative. However, during the process of developing the spaces, noticing the good things the volunteers were doing for their neighbourhood (mowing the grass, collecting the rubbish, etc.), they became closer and involved by donating; either furniture, games or books, or food and water for the volunteers. Similarly, by organising weekly activities and actively approaching locals to discuss and understand the needs of young people, local populations felt connected to the youth centres and the people who work there.

Nevertheless, the most relevant challenge to mention is the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected the implementation of the second event of the project, but also the process of developing a community around the first opened youth centres. Unfortunately, the restrictions put in place forced us to move all activities online and adapt them to the new reality. This made the process of engaging the community and keeping it engaged much more difficult.



Transformation of
industrial buildings into
youth centres

SUSTAINABILITY

Has the project developed over time? Is it sustainable?

The most important results are represented by the spaces developed within the project, and by the skills developed among the young European people involved in the development, the sustainability of the centres and the activities organised there. We have

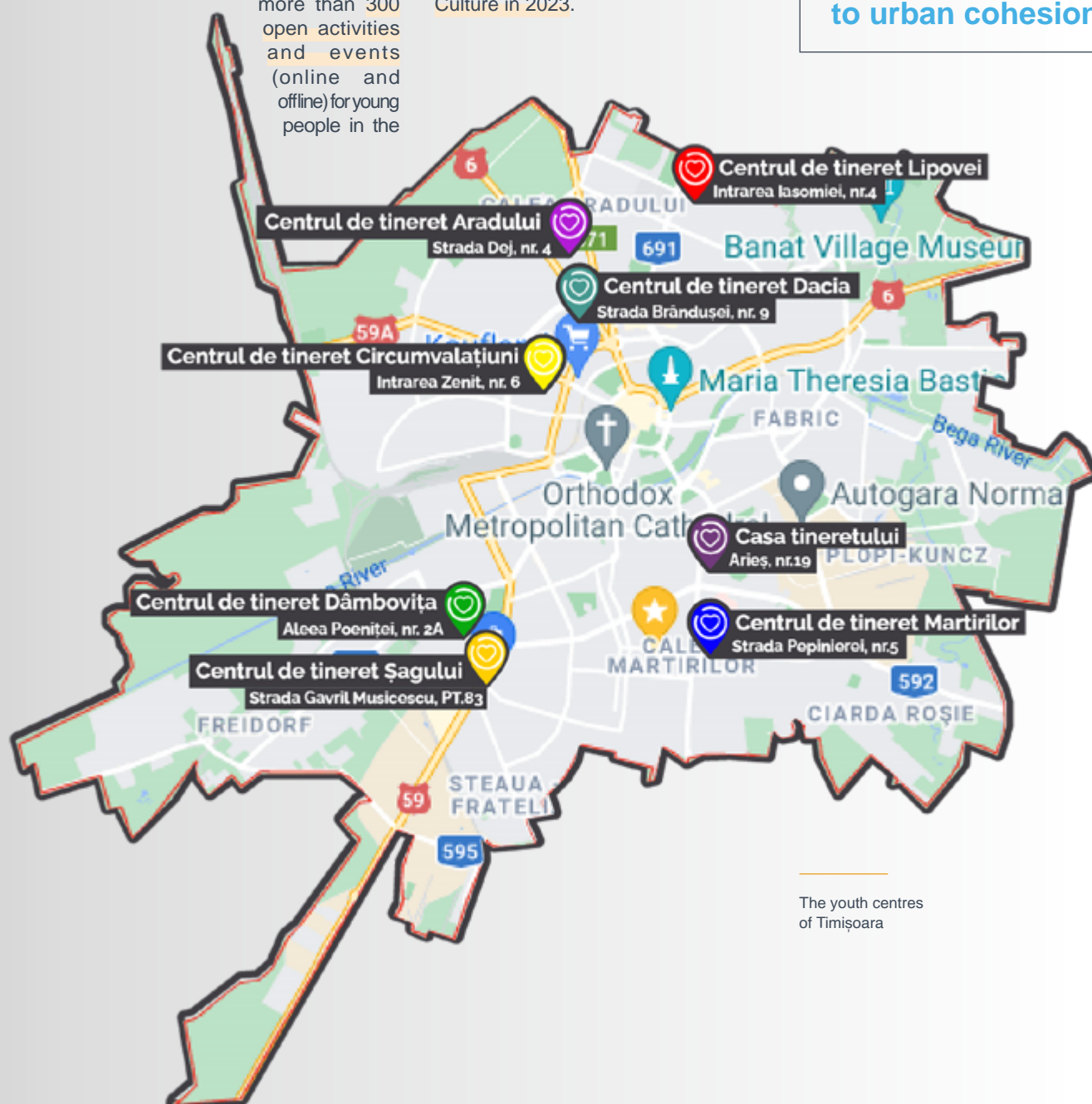
implemented more than 300 open activities and events (online and offline) for young people in the

neighbourhoods and the local population, despite the pandemic, with the support of volunteers, associations and a whole range of structures. Our vision is, through the second part of the project, to have a network of 15 youth centres in Timișoara, in order to be able to offer a varied range of events and activities for young people, as well as to facilitate the access of other associations to young people living in these neighbourhoods. Moreover, the centres will be relevant spaces, being part of the infrastructure dedicated to the implementation of the programme of Timișoara, European Capital of Culture in 2023.


Recently, in the context of the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, FITT is hosting a transit centre for Ukrainian refugees in its main youth centre in Timișoara (The Youth House), as an expression of European solidarity.



The project has made a significant contribution to urban cohesion



The youth centres of Timișoara

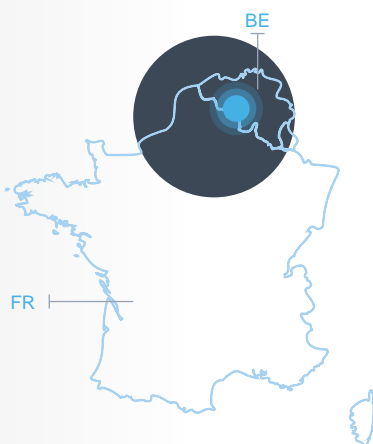


THE BELFRY & MONS 2015

A cross-border heritage as a player in the Cultural Capital

The belfry of Mons, along with 31 other Belgian belfries, was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. Built between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, the belfry symbolises the victory for civic rights and the power of the municipality, in contrast to the keep, a symbol of the lords, and the bell tower, a symbol of the Church. In fact, this construction reflects the prosperity of cities throughout north-western Europe, which is why in 2005, 23 belfries located in northern France—including the belfry of Lille, and an additional Belgian one—joined the Belgian belfries and were recognised as 'belfries of Belgium and France'. The belfry is therefore a recognised exceptional heritage of the common Franco-Belgian history..

In 2015, the second phase of the European Capital of Culture year Mons 2015, the Metamorphosis, allowed the opening or reopening of five museums, including the belfry. Thus, after more than 30 years of work, the belfry was returned to its public. The temporality of the ECoC accelerated the coordination between public authorities, and allowed the outcome of this major restoration.



Today, a panoramic lift and an original scenography 'Windows of time' highlight the history, landscapes and resources of the region. The most visited tourist site in Montpellier, it offers a panoramic view of the region as far as the French border



INTERVIEW

Manuela Valentino
Curator of UNESCO heritage
in Mons
UNESCO de Mons

manuela.valentino@ville.mons.be
www.beffroi.mons.be

CROSS-BORDER REALITY

REGION

How is the belfry important for the cohesion of your region?

The belfry is visible from the whole region. It is part of the territory perceived by the residents, even though the 30 years of work have slowed down its appropriation by preventing it from being visited.

It should be noted that the park surrounding it has remained open, which has allowed various events to take place, notably those organised by the association 'Le Quartier du Beffroi'. Mons 2015 brought about the discovery of the heritage of the area by foreign and non-regional Belgian visitors, but also reaffirmed the territorial attachment and pride of the inhabitants with regard to the riches of their city.

Since this cultural year, numerous events such as 'Sunday toasts', concerts and exhibitions have been organised in the belfry park. In 2021, an exhibition titled 'The Belfry of Mons - the story of an incredible restoration' was held in the Grand Place in Mons, retracing the 30 years of work, and highlighting—in addition to the stages of construction and architectural renovation—the specific skills of the local craftspeople who worked on this restoration, whether carpentry, blue stone work or clock making.

How does the belfry reflect a cross-border reality?

From the top of the belfry, on a clear day, you can see France; Mons is only 15 kilometres from the border.

More fundamentally, UNESCO's recognition of the Belgian and French belfries reflects the architectural homogeneity that unites the cities of northern France and Belgium, and therefore their common history. This recognition has led to the managers of the Belgian and French belfries meeting once a year to work together. These meetings deal with architectural or heritage issues, knowing that the state of renovation and accessibility of the various belfries differs greatly from one place to another. On a cultural level, the links between the Belgian and French sides have always been important, whether this relates to during Lille 2004, the construction of a Maison Folies in Mons or the coordination of various European Interreg territorial cohesion projects.

Another heritage recognised by UNESCO as world heritage recalls the Franco-Belgian unity of this region,

and specifically the continuity of its socio-economic history and its mark on the landscape, namely the mining past of Northern France and Wallonia. This time, two separate recognitions were made in 2012; one for the major mining sites of Wallonia and the other for the living cultural landscape of the Nord Pas de Calais mining basin. The Major Mining Sites of Wallonia bring together four integrated industrial and urban architectural groupings over a 170 km strip of land, representing the best preserved sites of Belgian coal mining in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Nord Pas de Calais coalfield, for its part, extends over 120 km and recognises the specificity of a living landscape, revealing the French coal seam and its place in the world social history of mining.



PERPETUATION

How did the project evolve over time, what was the basis for its perpetuation and did you encounter any difficulties concerning this perpetuation?



UNESCO's recognition of the Belgian and French belfries reflects the architectural homogeneity that unites the cities of northern France and Belgium, and therefore their common history

The UNESCO recognitions of Mons—including that of the belfry—were a 'tab' in the Mons 2015 programme. It is clear that the title of **European Capital of Culture** accelerated the completion of the work on the belfry and enabled the museums of Mons to gain ten years over a traditional tourist marketing process. Further, this is despite that fact that in the ECoC's programming, the implementation and staging of architecture and heritage do not appear to be as well supervised as event-based productions or the performing arts.

Another difficulty concerns the aftermath of the ECoC: while the relevant year makes it possible to galvanise the forces and enthusiasm that are present, the aftermath is sometimes difficult. How can we avoid the flight of know-how and ensure the transmission of the exceptional expertise acquired during the ECoC year, when financial means and human resources go back to normal? How can we ensure the long-term attractiveness of the buildings and other material heritage inaugurated or renovated? How can the programming and attractiveness of the city be perpetuated? One way, among others, is the one followed in Mons in terms of governance, where the city, the museum centre and the

cultural centre work together in a Mons 2025 Foundation. This foundation is the heir to the Mons 2015 Foundation and is intended to perpetuate the cultural dynamic of 2015, for example in terms of programming: it thus ensures the continuity of the **Grand Huit**—cultural events spread throughout the 19 municipalities of Greater Mons—and of international art and culture biennials.

UNESCO's **heritage status** creates requirements for the development of the city centre and for a balance to be found between conservation objectives and public access. In order to highlight all of the UNESCO heritage of Mons and its region (as a reminder, the province of Hainaut has 20 sites, events or buildings classified by UNESCO, not counting the heritage on the other side of the border), the 'Spanish House', a historic building at the foot of the belfry, has been restored and will serve as a reception area for visitors to the belfry and its park, as well as for access to the various UNESCO heritage sites. The '**UNESCO Heritage House**' or 'Unesco House' will thus be a point of entry for visitors, but also a place of reflection for researchers and a space for the appropriation and participation of citizens and inhabitants in relation to their culture and heritage.



ZINNEKE PARADE

ma
me
202

zaterdag
Zaterdag

Brussel Centrum
Bruxelles Centre

15:00

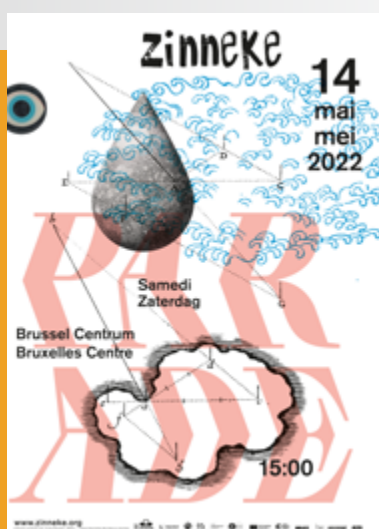
A one-day artistic performance, a two-year creative encounter

The Zinneke Parade (in Brussels, a zinneke is a street dog) has been celebrated every two years since 2000, the year in which Brussels was named European Capital of Culture along with seven other cities, and in which the parade was one of the **flagship projects**. From the outset, the project was intended to be a permanent one, providing the capital with a parade similar to the carnivals and other **traditional processions** in Belgium..

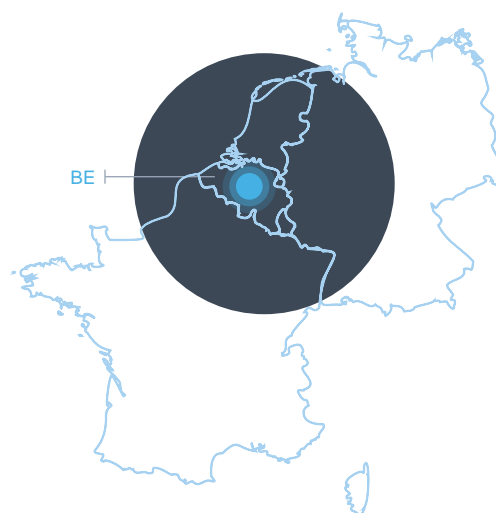
It is a travelling show, bringing together a few thousand people and composed of about twenty 'zinnodes': creations

highlighting the richness and socio-cultural diversity of the Belgian capital. They are developed around the chosen theme over a period of more than a year by a group bringing together an artistic team, social or cultural associations, and inhabitants from the 19 municipalities of the Brussels Capital Region. The parade is both an artistic performance attracting diverse audiences and a two-year process of collective meetings and productions.

Let us briefly recall the particular context of the Brussels Capital Region. Composed of 19 municipalities, including Brussels, it is organised in a bilingual manner and constitutes an autonomous region, like the Belgian Flemish and Walloon regions. It is a territory where not only French and Dutch-speaking Belgians live side by side, but also residents of more than 180 nationalities (in 2020). This can be explained in particular by the status of Brussels as the political capital and by the presence of the European Union institutions.



The poster for the Zinneke Parade represents the main components of the parade: its durability (its 12th occasion in 2022), the construction over two years, the aim of 'building the city together', and a wish to 'meet in the centre of Brussels' to watch or participate through culture



Florian Vanhagendoren
Project coordination,
Zinneke Parade

info@zinneke.org
<https://www.zinneke.org>

BRUSSELS CAPITAL

How do you see the Zinneke Parade as a driving force for cohesion in the Brussels Capital Region?

The Zinneke Parade was founded to make the social and cultural resources of the neighbourhoods surrounding the Brussels city centre visible, and to encourage encounters between the inhabitants of Brussels, whether they are Dutch, French or non-native speakers. Prior to the show that takes place every two years in May, the Zinneke Parade generates a process of mobilisation and creation based on new encounters between inhabitants, artists, cultural centres, social centres, open support services, schools, neighbourhood centres, centres for the disabled, centres of expression and creativity, associations and other interested groups. The process of participatory creation and creative participation is the DNA of the parade. The twenty or so zinnodes that make up the parade are the result of territorial projects, meetings between artists from various disciplines and organisations of all types, and specific issues such as the development of a neighbourhood or the highlighting of

a shared place. In order to set up this process, the coordinating team meets with artists, operators and residents, and then contributes to their partnership and the structuring of projects. Open workshops are offered in disciplines as diverse as acrobatic cycling, Brazilian percussion, dance, musical instrument construction and textile making.

Two examples illustrate this desire to 'create together' and to enhance the strengths of each person: the way in which the theme of the future parade was chosen and the technical support for the construction of machines. The choice of the theme for the future period is worked out in two stages. In the first of these, a list of proposals is drawn up by a mixed panel of citizens: Flemish and French-speaking, young and old, artists and workers. This panel is led by members of the coordination team. In a second phase, a vote is organised on the day of the parade via ballot boxes and a virtual platform available for a fortnight. Several thousand votes validate the collective choice. In 2022, the theme for the twelfth parade is 'Trompe l'oeil'.

The second example concerns the role of 'Metal & Machinery', coordinated by Anton Cauvain of 'Z team' and supported by the artist Hans Luyten. The 'Metal & Machinery' training is offered free of charge to a mixed group of about 15 people in exchange for the creation and construction of the floats, assemblies and constructions used in the parade.



The process of participatory creation and creative participation is the DNA of the parade



CROSS BORDERS

Would you say that the Zinneke Parade crosses borders within the Brussels region?

The parade takes place in the city centre and aims to build bridges between the 19 municipalities of the Brussels Capital Region. On the one hand, it aims to bring together the residents of the region, whatever their origin, language or municipality; on the other hand, it mobilises works that may come from social and cultural structures from all the municipalities of the inner suburbs, or even from the entire region.

Initially, this distribution of productions was organised into geographical poles (South, North-West, South-West, East and North), within which five to six projects were developed around the common theme chosen for the travelling show. Subsequently, the zinnodes became transversal. They even crossed institutional borders, decentralising, for example, a workshop in La Louvière in the Walloon Region.

In addition, the Zinneke Parade has collaborated with Bologna and Belfast on a three-year 'BelBoBru' project. It has also been invited to present its work abroad, notably in future European cultural capitals.

ANCHORING & STABILIZATION

What are the difficulties encountered in sustaining such an event?

The structure of the Zinneke Parade was initially nomadic, moving from one venue to another. In 2013, the move to the former 'Atelier Général du Timbre', a building belonging to the Brussels Capital Region, ensured that the event was anchored and stabilised. One of the major difficulties today concerns the mobilisation of the public, whether this involves associations, schools or citizens. Similarly, dealing with logistical issues (where and when the zinnodes meet) requires regular support and can hamper schedules or limit achievements.



ZINNEKE PARADE

What have been the main developments of the Zinneke Parade since 2000?

From the start, the project was designed to be sustainable. Subsidised contract staff positions were made available, and the project was structured as a French-speaking non-profit association and later with a Flemish equivalent. A permanent coordination team was associated with the socio-cultural structures of the five geographical poles and then, following restructuring, the team was reorganised, favouring original collective work.

Since 2020, there has been shared governance. The position of director has been abolished and power is shared between the various members of the team. The achievements of the parade no longer emanate from a broad call for participation—as in its origin—but from a two-year structuring based on meetings of artists, organisations and audiences, and on coordinated and participatory implementation. In order to better mark the city, for the next parade in 2024 it has been planned for an event to be organised halfway through—around September 2023—to bury the old theme in the public square and reveal the new theme..





LIVING AND EMBODYING A TERRITORY THROUGH WALKING

The GR 2013, metropolitan path of the metropolitan area of Aix-Marseille

GR 2013 was set up for the European Capital of Culture Marseille Provence in 2013. This project is a good example of how to cross borders while producing a new cartography, both symbolically and in a very concrete way.

The trail, designed by Nicolas Mémain, covers 365 km in the Aix-Marseille metropolitan area, over 38 communes and 3000 square kilometres. It links territories that were previously not (or barely) connected, within a metropolitan whole to which the trail has given a reality on the map and on the ground. The trail 'retraces' borders by crossing them—without closing them. It renews the relationship with the metropolitan environment, in particular through the artistic themes and projects that line the route, moving between nature and urbanity. The trail combines a creative and exploratory dimension with an operational and tangible vocation as a hiking trail. It is also the first metropolitan trail officially marked as a GR (long distance hiking trail).

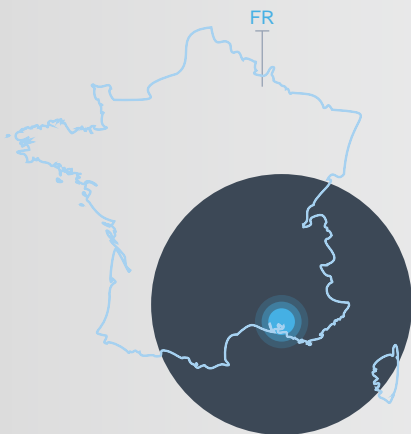
Further, the project has acted at the level of social cohesion, by bringing

together actors from different backgrounds within the metropolis. Initiated by an editor, Baptiste Lanaspèze, the project has been supported by citizens, artists and producers, associated in particular within the 'Cercle des Marcheurs'. It is the culmination of an approach initiated in the 1990s, supported by a dynamic of residents in the northern districts, in particular the Hôtel du Nord residents' cooperative and the action of Christine Breton, a heritage curator, to defend a renewed vision of the heritage narrative in the face of the complexity of people and landscapes. The project linked practices, and these practices were combined on the occasion of the European Capital of Culture.

The setting up of the trail also initiated territorial, inter-municipal and inter-

departmental cooperation at the scale of the metropolis, which was innovative. The trail was awarded the Urban Planning Medal by the Academy of Architecture, and the Best New Trail award by National Geographic magazine. It is one of the only permanent features of the Marseille 2013 capital. A dedicated association, the Bureau des Guides, was created in 2014 to 'continue the GR 2013 adventure'. Artists, researchers and other experts contribute to the events and walks that the Bureau develops along the GR, around issues of territory, development and ecology.

Also created in 2014, the Metropolitan Trails agency based in Marseille, accompanies the creation of walking routes in metropolises and leads an international network of trails, such as those in Athens, Bordeaux, Milan, London, Paris and Boston. These initiatives are transferable to multiple scales and can inspire the creation of artistic-cultural urban walking trails in cross-border agglomerations and metropolitan regions.



GR 2013 is made up of seven sequences of about 50 km (two to three days' walking). The route forms a double loop, a sort of roller coaster shape, with loops encircling the Étang de Berre on the one side and the Étoile and Garlaban massifs on the other, following the idea that 'the metropolis is organised around two large gaps'. A topoguide was created on the model of the long-distance hiking guides, with adaptations and contributions by the artists of the Cercle des marcheurs: drawings, photographs, texts and maps

The guidebook is available at:
<https://wildproject.org/livres/gr2013-marseille-provence>



INTERVIEW

Vincent Fouchier
Deputy Director General
of the Aix-Marseille-
Provence metropolis

vincent.fouchier@
ampmetropole.fr
www.ampmetropole.fr/

“

The GR crosses
where one would not
spontaneously go
for a walk, but that
are emblematic of
the history of
the metropolis, of
its memory and its
territorial specificities



1.



2.

1. 2. 3. 4.

These photos give an overview of the diversity of spaces crossed by the GR 2013. These spaces renew the vision and the practice of hiking, while reflecting the multiple faces of the metropolis of Aix-Marseille: coastal and interior spaces, towns, villages or peri-urban transitions, natural areas and post-industrial sites.

ADDED VALUE

In your opinion, what is the added value of GR 2013 for the Aix-Marseille metropolis?

First of all, we need to put 'GR 2013' long-distance hiking trail back into the context in which it was created. At the time, there was no institutional metropolis. The process of creation was starting, with the support of an inter-ministerial mission of the state, in which I was in charge of the metropolitan project. This metropolitan project aroused the interest of many socio-economic players, but also a strong debate among elected representatives. The 2013 European Capital of Culture was one of the first experiences of working together at this new scale. It was an opportunity to get elected representatives to work with other stakeholders. Several organisations (association of walkers, Marseilles excursionists, departmental hiking committee) have joined forces with 11 artist-walkers to propose a 365-kilometre long hiking route in the city.







The GR project because it is located in the middle of the perimeter covering the 92 municipalities of the new metropolis, came at the right time and in the right place, to show what makes up the unity of the metropolis, beyond the fragmentation of administrative or electoral perimeters: the landscape continuities, the economy and industry, and the social dynamics. Its initiators had nothing to do with the actors of institutional metropolitanisation, but their motivation and energy were able to be mobilised to support the institutional project; to give substance to the debates around this metropolis. We can also note a similar dynamic with, at the same time, the process of merging the universities of Aix and Marseille.

URBAN COHESION

How can GR 2013 contribute to urban cohesion?

Immersion in the territory by walking and viewing, the discovery of diverse horizons, with experts who offer the keys to decipher the **history of unexpected places**, sometimes unknown or not understood; all of this can contribute to the pride in the territory.

The GR crosses places where one would not spontaneously go for a walk, but that are emblematic of the history of the metropolis, of its memory and its territorial specificities. The GR allows us to reveal them, sometimes with surprises, such as the place where Josephine Baker gave a concert in front of the American military during the Second World War, and also with many **atypical viewpoints** on industrial sites or on the vast and atypical pond of Berre. The **elected representatives** whose 38 municipalities are covered by the GR seem to have made it their object, but there is still room for improvement in order to make the GR more popular, to better widen and direct its uses towards all the inhabitants of the city.

-  Municipalities associated with CEC Marseille Provence 2013
-  Municipality included in the region
-  Neighboring region
-  Municipality outside the CEC Marseille Provence 2013 perimeter
-  AMP metropolis boundary
-  Departmental boundary
- GR 2013 trail



SUCCESS

How do you see this system developing?

The GR has met with definite success, for example with **'market seminars'** that companies order for their employees (Engie and Total, among others), and more generally with people who come from all over the world to discover what seems to have become one of the **attractions of the city**; with radio broadcasts (radio 'Grenouille'); with artistic installations or scientific approaches; with a photographic inventory. In the same vein, some of the initiators of the GR are now involved in developing an international network of metropolitan trails. All of this illustrates the success of the system. The two years of Covid have taken their toll on the more popular events and activities scheduled, but the GR must not become

something reserved for a few insiders, as this would not correspond with the culture of the territory or its history. The GR is a wonderful tool for more frequent and even systematic actions aimed at the inhabitants of the city, via social actors or popular education networks, for example. Of course, there are already **initiatives** in this direction, and their expansion requires strong public support. Many ideas exist for more sustainable progress in projects such as temporary accommodation on the GR route or ephemeral exhibitions, for example. This shows the potential of the GR ten years after its creation.

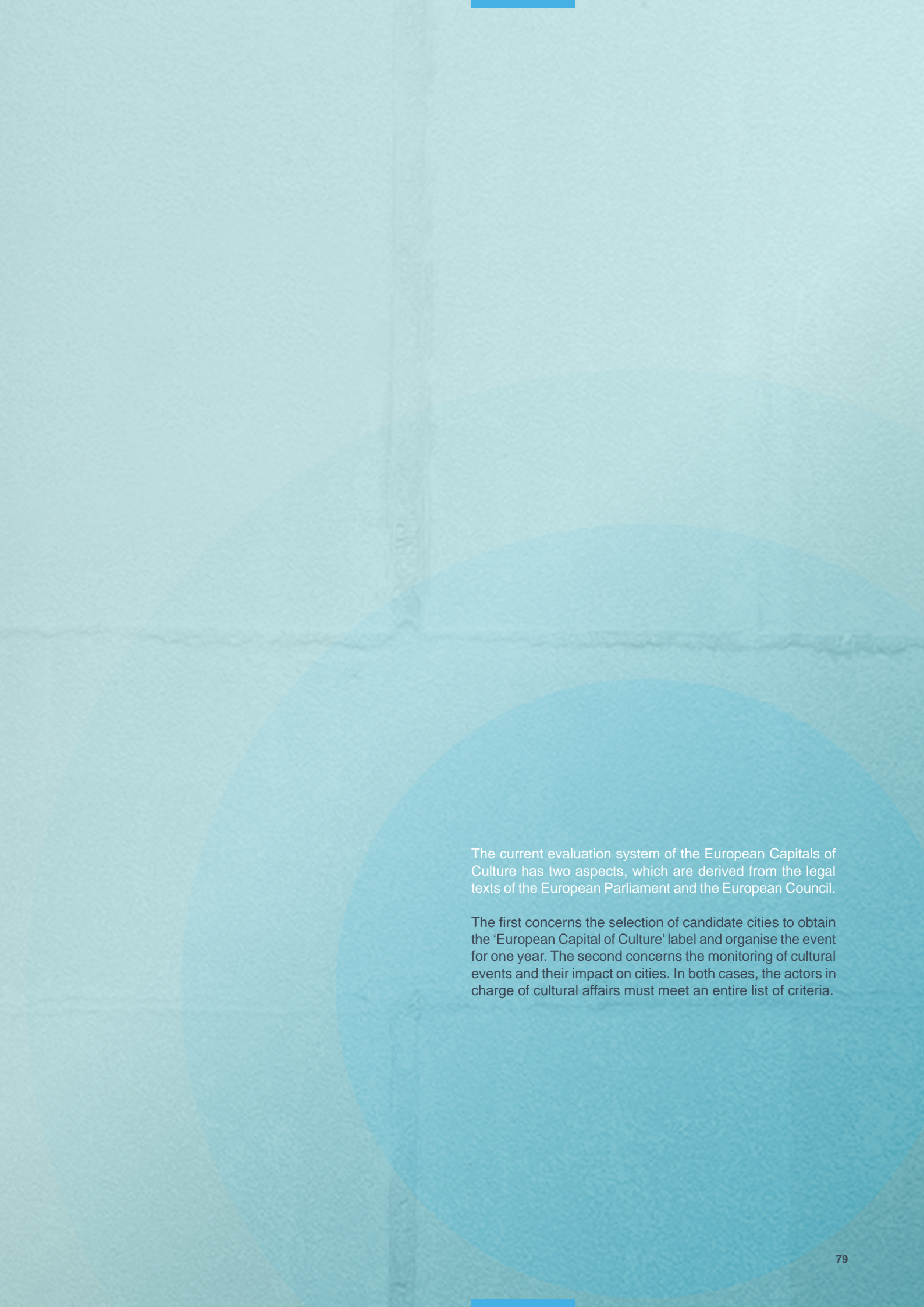


The GR 2013 in the territorial organisation of the Aix-Marseille metropolis

Source: map produced by Mathilde Vignau, 2019, Towards a geography of creativity: impacts of places, activities and creative or cultural events on the development of the PACA region, Geography thesis under the supervision of Boris Grésillon and Alexandre Grondeau, Aix-Marseille University.



EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITALS OF CULTURE



The current evaluation system of the European Capitals of Culture has two aspects, which are derived from the legal texts of the European Parliament and the European Council.

The first concerns the selection of candidate cities to obtain the 'European Capital of Culture' label and organise the event for one year. The second concerns the monitoring of cultural events and their impact on cities. In both cases, the actors in charge of cultural affairs must meet an entire list of criteria.

Preparing the bid-book

Any city considering applying for the title of European Capital of Culture must combine achieving own local objectives—which depend both on its geographical location and its social, economic, cultural and urban development priorities—with the European aspect, which means opening up to the world while promoting the ideals of the EU (respect for cultural heritage, opening up borders, etc.). Since 2014, six criteria for assessing applications have been established to best guide the preparation, programming and implementation of cities' cultural activities¹. Generally, candidate cities have around six years to develop and submit their application and meet these criteria.

With regard to the preparation for the European Capital of Culture candidacy, few criteria directly address identity,

social inclusion or urban development, or even the cross-border scale. Through the aspects of promoting cooperation and intercultural dialogue, the 'European dimension' criterion refers to the issues of European identity and the feeling of belonging, while the 'scope' criterion clearly explains the desire to involve local populations and different audiences in the organisation of events. The other selection criteria are more concerned with whether the applicant cities have all the qualities required to host the event, and deal more with aspects related to cultural and artistic programming, and the capacity of the applicant cities in terms of infrastructure, management and strategic development. It should also be noted that in the application file, cities must indicate their plan for monitoring and evaluating the impact of the European Capital of Culture title on the city.

1. Décision 445/2014/UE :

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0445&from=EN>

Selection criteria	Factors taken into account
Contribution to the long-term strategy	Development of a cultural strategy and action plans over a multi-annual period
	Building the capacity of the cultural and creative sectors
	Development of sustainable links between the cultural, economic and social sectors
	Estimation of the cultural, social and economic impact, as well as the urban development of the candidate cities
	Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation plan
European dimension	Promotion of cultural diversity in Europe and intercultural dialogue
	Highlighting the common aspects of European cultures, history and heritage
	Encouraging a wide European and international audience
Cultural and artistic content	Existence of an artistic vision and strategy
	Involvement of local artists and actors in the design of the cultural programme
	Quality of the artistic activities programmed
Capacity to deliver	Political support and sustained commitment from local, regional and national authorities
	Provision of an appropriate cultural infrastructure to host the event
Outreach	Involvement of local people and stakeholders
	Creating opportunities to attract different audiences (young people, marginalised or disadvantaged people, volunteers) to participate in or attend cultural events
Management	Feasibility of the European Capital of Culture programme
	Existence of a governance structure to organise and monitor the event
	Development of a marketing and communication strategy
	Availability of competent and experienced people to plan, manage and execute the cultural programme

Source : Decision n°445/2014/UE

The European Capitals of Culture monitoring system

The European Capitals of Culture are now considered to be among the most prestigious cultural events in Europe. They contribute to giving the candidate cities a new image, to redeveloping certain districts and to stimulating a local dynamic with the populations and the cultural actors. Under these conditions, they are now recognised as 'laboratories for strategic investments in culture at local and regional level'.¹ For the European Commission, there is a lack of a common basis for comparing the benefits and negative effects from one city to another. The monitoring and evaluation of the results and effects of the European Capital of Culture title is therefore a way to overcome this problem. The monitoring has been carried out in

two ways since the adoption of the new legal framework for the European Capital of Culture initiative in 2014: an evaluation of the results by the cities themselves and an external evaluation by independent structures.

The first evaluation follows the guidelines defined by the European Parliament according to general and specific objectives that are common to all candidate cities. This grid of objectives aims to structure the different aspects of the evaluation expected by the European Commission, while associating the indicators that may differ from one city to another depending on their geographical context and ambitions for the European Capital of Culture event.

General Objectives

Safeguard and promote the diversity of cultures in Europe, highlight the common features they share, increase citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space (GO1) and foster the contribution of culture to the long-term development of cities (GO2) .

Specific Objectives (SO)

SO1 : Enhance the range, diversity and European dimension of the cultural offering in cities, including through transnational co-operation	SO2 : Widen access to and participation in culture	SO3 : Strengthen the capacity of the cultural sector and its links with other sectors.	SO4 : Raise the international profile of cities through culture
---	---	---	--

Operational Objectives

Stimulate extensive cultural programmes of high artistic quality
Ensure cultural programmes feature a strong European dimension and transnational cooperation
Involve a wide range of citizens and stakeholders in preparing and implementing the cultural programmes
Create new opportunities for a wide range of citizens to attend or participate in cultural events
Improve the cultural infrastructure
Develop the skills, capacity and governance of the cultural sector
Stimulate partnerships and cooperation with other sectors
Promote the city and its cultural programme
Improve the international outlook of residents

Source : European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) 2020-2033 - Guidelines for the cities' own evaluations of the results of their ECOC

1. European Capitals of Culture (ECOC) 2020-2033 - <https://culture.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-04/ecoc-guidelines-for-cities-own-evaluations-2020-2033.pdf>

The treatment of the theme of identity is mainly addressed in the first General Objective (GO1) through impact indicators, such as raising citizens' awareness of the diversity of European cultures, and strengthening citizens' sense of belonging to a common cultural space or their perception of European identity. These specific types of indicators measure the indirect effects of the actions carried out in the framework of the European Capitals of Culture—beyond the results for the targeted audiences. The production of these indicators is complex, to say the least, and requires the collection of qualitative data through surveys and interviews, the running of workshops or the setting up of focus groups.

The theme of social inclusion is included in Specific Objective 2 (SO2). The indicators used are more result indicators that aim to measure the direct and immediate effects produced by an action. They are quantitative indicators that evaluate, for example, the level of attendance at events, the percentage of residents attending or participating in events, the level of participation of specific groups (young people, disadvantaged population, etc.) or the socio-demographic characteristics of the various groups (age, gender, place of residence, etc.). The data used come from statistical databases collected locally, but also from surveys carried out in the field at the time the events take place, as well as afterwards in order to study changes.

The third thematic area of urban development is dealt with under General Objective 2 (GO2). This mainly involves impact indicators, which are produced in order to measure the long-term development of cities in terms of their image (recognition and attractiveness of the city internationally), in economic terms (increase in GDP and employment in the cultural and creative sectors of the city) and in spatial terms (development of new public spaces, appropriation of these spaces). In addition, more political aspects can also be assessed, such as the long-term cultural strategy, the targeted objectives for the development of the city and the budget allocated to achieve them, as well as the modalities of urban governance (involvement of residents, consultation of the cultural and civic sector).

The cross-border dimension is only very rarely addressed in the European Commission's documents on the European Capitals of Culture. In this evaluation grid, Specific Objective 1 (SO1) explicitly mentions the 'transnational cooperation' aspect, of which cross-border cooperation is one of the components. From the point of view of results indicators, the cross-border dimension can be measured through the number of cross-border collaborations, co-productions and exchanges, or even the number of activities highlighting the border.

The second evaluation aims to measure the impact of the European Capital of Culture title in its entirety and to draw useful lessons for future candidate cities. Carried out by external service providers, it is mainly based on five criteria or key concepts, which have become the benchmark for this type of evaluation. First, relevance, which concerns the added value of the project (do the objectives and results of the actions carried out correspond to the expectations of the beneficiaries and the needs of the territory?). The other criteria are effectiveness (ability to obtain the desired or expected result, to achieve the set objective), efficiency (ability to achieve the maximum results with the minimum of financial, human and organisational resources), impact (measurement of the effects of the action in the medium and long term, both positive and negative, and foreseen and unforeseen), and lastly sustainability, which aims to find out whether the effects brought about by the title of European Capital of Culture last beyond the year in question.

Feedbacks from cultural actors involved in or benefiting from European funding

European identity and the sense of cross-border belonging

These two notions are based on a personal and subjective evaluation, which can be complex to grasp. Indeed, the European identity and the identity of a cross-border area are not necessarily perceived as one and the same thing. A person may feel attached to a cross-border area without necessarily being attached to Europe. Furthermore, it should be noted that at the cross-border level, it can be difficult to talk about a common identity, especially in regions that have experienced many violent conflicts with their neighbours. Evaluating European identity and the sense of belonging within cross-border spaces is a difficult exercise, as several dimensions characterise them and make it possible to address some of their aspects:

- The cognitive: I know my territory well / I use its name / I often travel around it / I have socio-spatial and cultural practices
- Affective: I feel really at home in my region / I am very attached to my region / I would feel uprooted if I had to leave my region / after having left my region, I am happy to return
- Cognitive: I carry out cross-border projects / I feel very supportive of my region and the community / it is important for me to help my region develop
- The social: What relationships do I usually have with the inhabitants of this territory? / What social relationships have I had during the development of the European Capital of Culture?
- Spatio-temporal: How long have I been travelling through this area? / By what means do I travel through the area? / By what routes and how often?

Measuring identity and the feeling of belonging also invites us to reflect on the usefulness of an evaluation. This is a process through which we seek to establish whether or not a project has achieved the objectives that were previously set, in what way

and by what means. For example, in the framework of the European Capitals of Culture and in response to the European objective of reinforcing citizens' feeling of belonging to a common cultural space, it is a question of identifying indicators that show that culture contributes to cross-border functional integration (through measures of cross-border mobility), as well as to the rapprochement between Europeans on either side of the border (through measures on shared values, common experiences, co-productions and cross-border projects carried out, mastery of the language, social interactions).

Social inclusion

On a cross-border scale, the notion of social inclusion can be understood as a process of active participation in the various artistic events, and not simply as just the presence of people in front of works and live performances. This participation is accompanied by learning that enriches and reinforces its dynamics. Indeed, through the experiences of the participants, there is a transfer of artistic knowledge in the deciphering of the works, the production of know-how and knowledge in relation to others, and the construction of greater self-confidence that can be mobilised outside the world of the arts. Social inclusion through culture makes better social cohesion possible in its entirety, and gives full meaning to participatory democracy and cultural rights. Even if inclusion must be aimed at everyone, talking about the evaluation of social inclusion leads us to reflect on the target or priority audiences that have little or no access to culture (young people, residents, senior citizens, isolated or precarious people, people with reduced mobility, migrants or refugees). In a cross-border context, the practice and use of different languages on either side of the border can make the implementation of cultural projects more complex. In the interests of social inclusion, these projects need to address and deal with the language issue and integrate the multiplicity of languages, in order to avoid any sense of exclusion.

The evaluation of social inclusion should be based on instruments common to the different teams involved in cross-border cultural projects. These instruments are linked to objectives defined upstream and based on a territorial diagnosis in terms of social inclusion. Several types of indicators can be mobilised to evaluate the level of social inclusion: indicators of access (to cultural facilities, to information) and indicators of socio-economic profiles (age, gender, income, poverty index, unemployment), as well as indicators of the creative

and participative process (type and quality of the supervision of discriminated audiences, target audiences, provision of open spaces for audience participation/creation). The chosen indicators can be quantitative (frequency of participants, their preferences), but also qualitative (perceptions and representations, experience and feelings of cultural events through people's accounts).

It should be noted that the purpose of a social inclusion evaluation is to encourage broad public participation in cultural events. Evaluation is no longer simply a measurement of the results achieved, but an objective to be reached in order to ensure social inclusion through culture. Evaluation is part of a broader strategy of citizen participation. In order to meet the requirements, it must be carried out in continuity and over a long period of time; that is, beyond the annual programming of the European Capital of Culture. It also requires a political will and sufficient financial means to collect the quantitative and qualitative data necessary for its execution.

Urban development

The evaluation of urban development in relation to culture requires relatively precise upstream work based on the context of each European Capital of Culture, the size and history of which are always particular. In this context, the evaluation must be seen as a political tool—for communication or for territorial marketing—that serves to highlight each cultural event that is put in place, while at the same time being an instrument that triggers reflection to prepare the actions to be implemented and the means to achieve them. This last point invites us

to consider the evaluation (and its modalities) as an injunction to reflect on the way in which the actors will organise their cultural project.

Like the two previous themes, the evaluation of urban development through culture must be based on both quantitative and qualitative indicators. There is a particular attraction to use quantitative indicators, such as the number of people attending performances. However, these indicators are not always relevant for measuring the impact of cultural projects on the daily lives of urban populations and their relationship with Europe, because the real impact of culture—through people's experiences and feelings—is not necessarily quantifiable. The objective of an evaluation on this theme would be to examine the individual and complex relationship to cultural works and the places that host them. From a methodological point of view, semi-structured interviews can be a way of obtaining qualitative data and thus going beyond the quantification of the added value of culture in urban development. It should also be noted that in the context of an evaluation, negative opinions from the territory are never or are rarely reported, even though they are important for the positive and constructive development of cultural policy.

It should be noted that such evaluations, aimed at measuring the impact of cultural events in the European Capitals of Culture, can only be relevant over a long period of time. Information gathering and analysis mechanisms need to be designed and implemented before, during and after the cultural year in order to better understand the changes that have occurred.

Suggestions for improving the European Capitals of Culture

Evaluating the actions and impact of the European Capitals of Culture has been a major concern of the European authorities. However, these evaluations are not always well perceived by the organisers of cultural events and suffer from a somewhat negative image. Despite the successive evaluations of the European Capitals of Culture and the changes proposed in 2006 and 2014, the system deserves to be further improved. This section lists a series of ideas and remarks to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system.

Firstly, the organising actors should ask themselves what the purpose and objectives of the evaluation are: What will or should it be used for? What type of information and learning would the organisers of cultural events like to obtain from the evaluation? What would be their needs in terms of information, feedback and added value? The idea here would be to reflect on the meaning and purpose of evaluation, in order to see this work in a positive and constructive way: What is interesting to measure? How can it be done? By what means? What preparations should be made beforehand and then put in place to carry out the measurement?

Consequently, the evaluation work would need to be thought out before the event, in order to define and put in place the modalities of the evaluation system, particularly in terms of data collection. Several problems or obstacles are often identified by the people in charge of producing these evaluations: the lack of information about the cultural practices of the populations, the administrative burden of the evaluation, the 'control' effect induced, the scale of the task with limited technical and human resources, and the sometimes excessive focus on quantitative indicators to measure the effects of the European Capitals of Culture. The evaluation exercise can thus offer an opportunity to reconsider the methodological approaches and their content: combining quantitative and qualitative indicators; considering the evaluation over the medium to long term; carrying out diachronic studies, before and after the programming carried out by the European Capitals of Culture, and in the best of cases on a sample of identical people; relating the information collected more closely to the socio-demographic data and cultural practices of the people; and working with all of the inhabitants of the territory or territories concerned (public, non-public, excluded public, cultural operators, political decision-makers who are somewhat distant from the reality of what the cultural players do) in order to discover their perceptions, their representations and their cultural practices. For this last point, the effective participation of non-traditional audiences

or disadvantaged communities requires important preparatory work and/or an effective partnership with intermediary organisations.

The border is an ambivalent space, perceived as both a place of severance and as a seam; a place of separation and a place of reunion. Adding the cross-border dimension to a cultural event therefore makes intercultural dialogue more tangible, as the cross-border space entails the co-presence of both and imposes otherness. In the context of an evaluation, the cross-border context is not always easy to take into account: the collection of data takes longer because it involves several territories, and the comparability of data is not always easy because the methods can vary. Moreover, the cross-border dimension broadens the scope of the evaluation by examining in particular the impact of the border on cultural practices. The problem is how to evaluate a border effect, including difficulties in assessing when an event is considered to have beneficial spillover effects/impacts on a cross-border scale?

Carrying out an evaluation raises the question of its use. Evaluation can be a tool for:

- Organisers of cultural events, so that they can reflect upstream on the tools, resources and methodology needed to prepare and facilitate the implementation of a cultural event,
- public authorities, in order to promote their territory. The evaluation can be an element of the communication strategy, revealing what worked well during the year of the European Capital of Culture title and identifying what could be best practice for future candidate cities,
- Thinking about the event differently, involving local actors, populations and experts who know the territory and its needs. Evaluations often measure and examine a multitude of aspects through quantitative and qualitative indicators; however, a global vision of the event is missing. Therefore, there is no lack of evaluation procedures, but in the end the positive or negative experience of the cultural acts associated with initiatives such as the European Capital of Culture requires a transversal reflection on the observation of cultural practices in order to measure their impacts.

CONCLUSION

The European Capital of Culture (ECoC) initiative is one of the EU's most visible operations. It is intended to bring Europeans closer to the process of European construction, while mobilising the cultural and creative sector as a driving force for urban cohesion, involving work on living together, social inclusion, economic development and the regeneration of spaces. It appears from this guide that cities located in border areas can be actors in cross-border urban cohesion in Europe by applying for the title of 'European Capital of Culture'. The 'cross-border' dimension of an application can be an asset for reinforcing the European added value of the project in relation to applicant cities located far from state borders, but it is not always easy to define this European added value in the bidding documents. Indeed, in what way is an ECoC cultural programme fundamentally different from an annual cultural programme outside the ECoC? The definition of a programme of activities aimed at an audience living in an urban region straddling several states and facilitating sustainable partnerships between cultural players present on both sides of the border represents the undeniable guarantee of a European added value. Indeed, the border is an interface that offers opportunities for building an ECoC application for a more integrated Europe. However, the border can also be a dividing line that is not always easy to overcome in order to set up cross-border initiatives, establish an operational cultural programme and define a unified evaluation framework. The best practices, expert advice and evaluation data reported in this guide provide an information base to help

actors in border cities to overcome the problems and seize the opportunities related to the setting up of cross-border, and therefore European, cultural programming.

Beyond the 'European Capital of Culture' initiative, this guide can be of use to all border cities wishing to revive their cross-border partnership through culture, and for a more unified Europe. In past decades, European integration has often been conceived as a large economic market, without borders and relatively open to the world. However, as the crises affecting Europe in recent years—from the migrant crisis of 2015 to the Ukrainian refugee crisis of 2022—have shown, borders are both barriers and gateways, hindering or facilitating the migration of populations in critical situations. Cross-border and regionalised cultural cooperation cannot solve the crises affecting Europe, but it is nevertheless an area that is too often forgotten and needs to be revived to avoid the return of walls on the internal and external borders of the European Community space.

Design / Layout

Isabelle Bouvy (LISER)

Benoît Lanscotte (LISER)

Print

Reka

Photos credits

© SIP/Yves Kortum : 2

© Thierry Rambaud : 3

© Pexels/Lum3n : 24

© Mission Opérationnelle Transfrontalière -
mot@mot.asso.fr: 34

© Aljoša Kravanja : 38, 41

© Maja Murenc : 40

© Festival du Film Italien de Villerupt : 42, 44, 45

© GECT Alzette Belval : 46, 48

© Tiphaine Lesage : 50, 53

© Intercultural Institute Timisoara : 54

© Inclusive Art project : 56, 57

© Flavius Neamciuc/Moving Fireplaces : 58-61

© FITT (Timis County Youth Foundation) : 62-65

© Ville de Mons/Serge Brison : 66-69

© Elise Dubouny, Peter Deroy
et Axel Claes : 70, 71

© Luc Auwaerts : 73

© Huuib Kooyker : 73

© Ingram Image : 75

© Camille Fallet - Métropole commune : 74, 77

© David Girard 2019 : 76 (portrait)

© Julie Vandal / Bureau des guides du GR2013 I
1001 Nuits : 76

© Geoffroy Mathieu - Métropole commune : 76

© Geoffroy Mathieu / Bureau des guides du
GR 2013 I Pamparigouste : 77

© Unsplash/Etienne Girardet: 10, 11, 18, 19, 20,
21, 30, 78, 79

Publication date

June 2022



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union