Eurocities – Culture Committee

POLICY PAPER
The Cultural Dimension of Urban Governance

ISSUES STATEMENTS

Preamble

Today, all European cities recognise **the value of culture**, both **as an end in itself**, where it has a direct impact on quality of life, and **as a means**, where it beneficially influences the development other urban policies, enhancing their social, economic and environmental effectiveness.

Culture gives identity to individuals, cohesion to communities, wealth to territories and a means for innovation to all three – but only if its potential is acknowledged at every stage in the development of those policies.

1. What do we mean by 'culture'?

According to the definition that Member States agreed upon at the EUROSTAT working group, 'culture' includes all goods and services in the following fields: *Cultural Heritage, Visual Arts, Architecture, Archives, Libraries, Books and Publishing, Performing Arts, Audio and Audio-visual* and *Multimedia*. In recent years there has been a consensus that there are also a range of goods and services which, though not specifically 'cultural' in themselves, are closely related. These are called 'creative industries'. They include *Advertising, Antiques, Crafts, Design* and *Fashion.* Culture and the creative industries are increasingly recognised as the core of the **knowledge society** because they encourage and enhance innovation, participation, creativity and the development of risk-taking and trust.

More broadly defined, however, our culture means 'the way we live' – i.e. our beliefs and aspirations and they way in which they are manifested – and it follows that **all public policies have a cultural dimension** and have an impact on the populations of cities and the way that they live – whether the policies concern urban planning or social services, economic development or community participation.

Therefore **EUROCITIES Culture Committee members point out that the cultural impact of all public policies should be given due consideration when those policies are being developed**. Take, for example, urban planning: it determines how space is configured and managed by society through the location of activities (e.g. production, housing, education), and the identification of public places. The configuration determines what the population can and cannot do and where it can and cannot do it. It significantly influences how people use their time; whether they feel included and whether they participate fully in democratic processes. In fact it

determines how they live – their culture. But urban planning is not unique. Similar examples might be found in the social services, economic development, tourism, ICT and all other sectors in which the welfare state has an influence.

2. Cultural policies are evolving.

As societies change, so does their culture, and so too do their cultural policies. Excellent examples exist across Europe of policies that cover:

- The management of arts and cultural programmes through conservation, creation and production, distribution and dissemination, trading and education. By and large, policies of this type are developed and implemented by cultural institutions (libraries, theatres, concert halls, opera houses, museums, galleries etc) who are acknowledged to have a particular expertise and whose activities are recognised to have an explicit impact on social well-being and quality of life.

- The use of culture to enhance projects and programmes in other fields.

- Flashgiovani in Bologna, KTREE in Malmo and POEM in Oulu have all used culture to help develop new technologies designed to encourage innovation, youth creativity and civic participation.

- Manchester Road Quality Bus in Bradford and Tell the City in Antwerp have both used culture to promote social cohesion and a common identity while celebrating cultural diversity.

- Helsinki and Barcelona have both pursued policies which demonstrate the economic value and impact of culture and its role in developing enterprise, employment opportunities, tourism and international profile.

- The Children's Zone at Diamond in Genoa and Birmingham's Gallery 37 have both developed projects which encourage community participation in the design and management of their cities: education, life-long learning, cultural participation and artistic training are all activities that make a city more creative, cohesive and expressive.

- Leipzig's Stadhalten project and Marseille have both put culture at the heart of regeneration initiatives with startling results.

The EUROCITIES Culture Committee members stress that common to all these projects is partnership. Partnership between cultural and other departments of municipal authorities; between local communities, the private sector and local authorities; between cultural institutions, schools and universities. **This is how culture and cultural policies are adapting to the challenges of urban governance. These are cultural solutions.**

3. Culture has to be at the heart of urban governance

Culture is the key to making urban governance work. Cities across Europe are finding a diverse range of solutions to similar problems. In order to enhance and sped up this process **there are specific actions to be taken:**

1. **Encourage and support the preparation of cultural strategies at city, regional and national levels**.

2. **Exchange experience and to collaborate on projects**.

3. **Analyse and stimulate research into issues of common concern – including youth culture, the use of ICT, the economic value of culture and intercultural dialogue**.

4. **Position culture at the heart of the European project, recognising that shared cultural values and concepts are essential to a successfully enlarged Europe.**

The Culture Committee believes firmly in the need for cultural solutions to the challenges of urban governance and it is since several years strongly involved in all these four above-mentioned actions. The Culture Committee collates and distributes examples of best practice in a systematic and structured way. It reports to, and lobbies, European institutions and the Member States.

The Culture Committee member cities recognise that it is essential to support subsidiarity in the delivery of agreed strategies and programmes and it campaigns for substantial increases in cultural funds and for better co-ordination of the funds that already exist.

Departing from the principle of subsidiarity, the Culture Committee is in favour of fostering international partnerships, with or without European funds or grants.

Today, in order to reinforce, strengthen and make more visible its action **the EUROCITIES Culture Committee urges all representatives from cities gathering at the annual EC AGM and Conference 2002 in Barcelona to actively contribute to its work**.

In particular, the EUROCITRIES Culture Committee invites **cities from the South of Europe as well as from the New Accession Countries gathering at the EC AGM and Conference 2002 in Barcelona** to join the Culture Committee and to actively contribute to its achievements with their cultural solutions.

4. Culture and the future architecture of Europe

In 2003 the European Convention will shape the future Architecture of Europe. **Culture has the potential to be one of the most dynamic forces in the new development of Europe**. **Therefore the enlargement of the EU will be successful only if the cultural dimension will play a major role** .

At the eve of this historic momentum for our EUROPE the EUROCITIES Culture Committee reinforce the request of the European cultural networks convened in Brussels on the October the 2nd by the European Cultural Foundation, ECF, and the European Forum for Arts and Heritage, EFAH; and recognise that:

- Culture should be mentioned, not only in the Preamble of the Treaty but also in the Principles (Article 2 of the current Treaty)
- The incorporation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights into the Treaty would strengthen the position of culture
- Article 151, despite its imperfection, should be integrated into the new Treaty since it provides a solid framework for implementation that could be more actively exploited
- Flexible decision making would be improved by a switch to qualified majority voting
- Article 151 explicitly excludes any attempt to harmonize national cultural policies on the European level
- Member states should themselves be committed to supporting cooperation in Europe.

Policy Paper approved by the EUROCITIES Culture Committee in Lille, 20/09/2002

Antwerp, Barcelona, Bologna, Bradford, Bristol, Chemnitz, Dortmund, Dublin, Eindhoven, Frankfurt, Gent, Götenborg, Helsinki, Leipzig, Lille, Newcastle, Nottingham, Malmö, Rome, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Tampere, The Hague, Turin, Turku, Venice and Vienna.