

WHITE PAPER AND RECOMMENDATIONS

to the EU Urban Agenda partnership on culture and cultural heritage

Concept drafted by [ICLEI](#) & [EUROCITIES](#) with contributions from EU-funded projects [ARCHES](#), [CLIC](#), [EUCANET](#), [Forget Heritage](#), [I-Media-Cities](#), [Open Heritage](#), [REACH](#), [ROCK](#), [RURITAGE](#)

30 January 2019

RÖCK

Regeneration and Optimisation
of Cultural heritage
in creative and Knowledge cities

CLIC

Circular models Leveraging Investments
in Cultural heritage adaptive reuse

Interreg 
CENTRAL EUROPE
European Union
European Regional
Development Fund
Forget Heritage

ARCHES

REACH
RE-designing access to Cultural Heritage for
a wider participation in preservation, reuse
and management of European culture

**OPEN
HERITAGE**

EU.CA.NET
Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union 

RURITAGE 
Heritage for Rural Regeneration

i media cities

Context

In June 2018, nine European-funded projects working on cultural heritage gathered for the first time in Berlin, on the occasion of the first European Cultural Heritage Summit.

In the framework of the ROCK project, the objective of this first exchange workshop was to explore the connections between ROCK and other European funded projects on cultural heritage and its valorisation at the European level, to create synergies in three main areas, all linked to ROCK objectives:

- Participatory approaches and social inclusion;
- New governance models for creative, sustainable and circular cities;
- Enabling technologies and tools for better access to cultural heritage.

The event was also intended to showcase the added value of European funded cultural heritage projects, in order to effectively feed into the European Commission's policy work on cultural heritage. This includes the Urban Agenda Partnership for Culture and Cultural Heritage, the current Horizon 2020 Framework Programme and the upcoming Horizon Europe Framework Programme, as well as the legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

ROCK and its fellow European funded projects took this further on 15-16 November 2018 in Brussels at the [Fair of European Innovators in Cultural Heritage](#), where they gathered input to support the newly founded Urban Agenda Partnership for Culture and Cultural Heritage. This White Paper was the result of that collaboration.

The Partnership on culture and cultural heritage in the Urban Agenda for the EU

European-funded projects, in particular H2020 projects on culture and cultural and natural heritage have long heralded the importance of multi-level cooperation between EU Member States and Associated Countries, cities, citizens, the European Commission and other stakeholders. The creation of an Urban Agenda partnership on Culture and Cultural Heritage, which can aid in guiding and coordinating these actors and their efforts, is music to our ears.

There is no area more suited than culture and cultural heritage to further the stated aim of the Urban Agenda to stimulate growth, liveability and innovation to tackle societal challenges in the cities of Europe, including small and medium sized cities. Indeed, the scoping paper issued in June 2018 by the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community (one of the coordinators of the new partnership, together with Italy) clearly shows that the German ministry and the active H2020 and other European-funded projects are largely aligned on the benefits of culture and cultural heritage: “The formation of sustainable societies, characterised by high quality of life, cultural diversity, individual and community well-being, social equity and cohesion, and strong economic performance.”

While we are excited to work together with the Urban Agenda towards these goals, this scoping paper also falls prey to an overemphasis of built cultural heritage, and conspicuously neglects other forms of culture and cultural and natural heritage, even truncating the partnership’s name to omit the initial word ‘culture’ in ‘culture and cultural heritage.’ It would be an enormous mistake to allow such an omission to persist. The fostering of culture and cultural heritage as an end in itself, as well as its use to achieve social, environmental and economic goals cannot succeed where it is narrowly understood to refer to built cultural heritage.

This shared perspective is based on our work in nine European-funded projects on cultural and natural heritage, as well as on these projects’ partners, including the two leading city networks ICLEI and EUROCITIES, engagement with 26 European cities and 20 regions. Buildings can only have cultural worth by virtue of evolving intangible factors, such as shared memory, dialogue and social meaning, that spin a heteroglossic web from the past into the future.

We look forward to working together with the Urban Agenda Partnership on culture and cultural heritage and sharing our combined insights and experience to create progress within the cultural priorities of European cities. Progress which, as emphasised in the UNESCO reports in 2016¹ and 2017, connects sustainable development and cultural heritage according to several objectives and strategies:

- Building on the power of culture to promote human and inclusive cities, through the transformation of cities into human-centred, inclusive, creative and innovative places, while fostering peaceful and tolerant societies;
- Improving the quality of the built and natural environment through culture by making cities compact and at human scale; considering climatic sustainability, resilience and green actions; making public spaces more inclusive; safeguarding urban identities;
- Integrating culture in urban and rural policies and vice versa to foster sustainable urban development through a sustainable local development, enhancing rural-urban linkages, improving urban governance, creating new financing methods for urban development.

We therefore strongly recommend that the partnership focuses on the current and future challenges identified by cities and rural areas when it comes to culture and cultural heritage.

On the understanding of cultural heritage

The notion of Cultural Heritage (CH) is the main focus of several charters, recommendations, resolutions, declarations or statements that have been introduced and adopted by international organisations with the purpose of preserving cultural property. Over time, it has been broadened and extended, finding an ever more appropriate formulation that nowadays has gained a worldwide recognition.

CH should be considered “in time and in space”²: first, it no longer stops at the dawn of the nineteenth century but also embraces the records left behind by the twentieth century; second, it covers the physical and non-physical aspects, the “tangible” and “intangible” dimensions of the global inheritance including human and natural environment, urban spaces and peri-urban areas, architectural complexes, archaeological sites, instruments, objects, artefacts but also practices, expressions, ways of life, gastronomy, myths, beliefs and rituals, values systems and traditional knowledge and know-how (UNESCO 2003)³.

CH has to be preserved and given a function: it has strongly deteriorated during the recent years as a result of industrialisation, urbanisation, pollution, climate change, mass tourism and lifestyles changes. These events have raised awareness and created a new dynamic and forward-looking approach to the value of the CH for our society (Council of Europe 2005)⁴.

After consultation with the other European funded projects on cultural heritage, there are large overlaps in how cultural heritage itself is best understood. The following explanation combines the overlapping concerns of all the represented projects dealing with cultural heritage:

Cultural Heritage

Cultural heritage is not static, it evolves to incorporate new ideas and values; nor is it monolithic, it has different, though intertwining, meanings and expressions for different people. In both cases it at once incorporates and enriches contemporary social values. In its variety of tangible and intangible forms, cultural heritage generates new social, economic and sustainable processes and is a powerful driver of local regeneration. At the same time, it strengthens a sense of place, builds community and empowers vulnerable groups.

² Jokilehto J. 2006, Considerations on authenticity and integrity in world heritage context. *City & Time* 2 (1): 1. [online] URL:<http://www.ct.ceci-br.org>

³ UNESCO (2003), Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, 32nd session of the General Conference (Paris, 29 September-17 October 2003). [<https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>; accessed: 2nd June].

⁴ Council of Europe (2005), Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society, European Treaty Series 199, [<http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/Treaties/Html/199.htm>].

On the role of cultural heritage for sustainable and creative urban and rural development

Culture and cultural heritage have a strong role to play in supporting the process of change and adaptation necessary for sustainable urban and rural development. This is confirmed by the emphasis on cultural and natural heritage among the target goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 11 dedicated to Sustainable Cities and Communities⁵.

The UN New Urban Agenda 2030⁶ has highlighted the need to enhance urban quality of life by protecting urban identities, valorising local cultures and promoting cultural expression are some of the pillars to make cities more sustainable, resilient, vibrant, and liveable, promoting urban circular economies (§71). The conservation and regeneration of cultural heritage, tangible and intangible, as expression of the cultural capital of cities concretely contributes to the aims of the Agenda 2030 and the New Urban Agenda.

Through consultation with the other European cultural heritage projects, ROCK has gathered input on how culture and cultural heritage contribute to sustainable, creative, and circular cities:

Cultural heritage for sustainable and creative cities

The conservation, regeneration and adaptive reuse of cultural heritage spaces ensures use, maintenance and valorisation of existing assets, which generates positive economic, social and environmental impacts. Such spaces, and the events and people that gather there enhance relationships and common identity, creating a “connective infrastructure”, or commons, that binds communities, providing a means of communication to improve social resilience. By offering a context in which creative people from different background, lifestyles, knowledge and disciplines can meet, culture and cultural heritage fulfil the preconditions for innovation towards a more sustainable future. As a store of collective memory cultural heritage can also provide contemporary societies with answers from the past on how to tackle adversity and remain resilient, both in terms of conceptualisation of problems and of offering practical solutions.

Recommendations to the partnership

- Since the title of the partnership is ‘culture and cultural heritage’, it is important to take the two components of the title into account. They have very different though complementary meanings and when it comes to local policy making and knowledge exchange between cities.
- We understand ‘cultural heritage’ in its broader sense, as a potential “unit of synergy” (for example in terms of relationships between physical assets and micro and small enterprises/activities, relationships between industrial activities and people, etc.). It is important that the partnership focus on both tangible heritage and intangible cultural and natural heritage. Although the quality of built cultural heritage and of open landscapes is crucial in our cities, we believe that the partnership should not be restrictive in its initial approach to cultural heritage.

⁵ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/> 02.10.2018

⁶ <http://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-English.pdf>

- While we agree that cultural heritage is a resource and an opportunity for urban and rural development, we emphasize that the transformation of urban areas is not merely related to the built environment. Genuinely sustainable urban development requires the careful consideration and balancing of social, environmental, cultural and economic values, and a culture of cooperation and synergy with nature.

The input of the culture projects on recommendations for the Urban Agenda can be summarised as follows:

Recommendations on culture and cultural heritage

- The enormous value of culture and cultural heritage in regenerating and developing localities should be recognised and exploited. However, culture should not be treated in a purely utilitarian fashion.
- Abandoned / underused cultural heritage sites should be made available for adaptive reuse, in a way that safeguards their historic meaning, but also allows this to pollinate new cultural meanings and remain relevant to and generative of net positive impacts for local communities, and self-regenerative through continuous reinterpretation and reuses. Innovative *circular* business, financing and governance models should be developed and experimented, to promote sustainable development through heritage. Cultural heritage becomes a key element for the identification of a “new humanism” in technological era.
- Bottom up and participatory approaches to policy in culture and cultural heritage must be developed. Citizens and other stakeholders’ engagement should be a priority. Special effort should be made to make these processes maximally inclusive and accessible. Local knowledge is the most important asset in culture and cultural heritage.
- New governance models should treat cultural heritage as a crosscutting area that is relevant and useful to the work of many different societal sectors.
- Culture should not be regarded as resting exclusively in the past, especially not in previous centuries. Culture is a dialogue between the past, present and future, one that is always expressing itself in new, tangible and intangible ways.
- Culture and cultural heritage should be valued for the contribution they make to community cohesion and wellbeing, especially in diverse societies where they can serve as a meeting point and a sharing ground or ‘trading zone’ for the outlooks people of different backgrounds, religions and so forth. Culture should never be treated as the exclusive purview of a single or limited set of cultural groups.

Annex

List of projects who contributed to this paper:

Name	Funding programme	Description	Cities and local authorities involved
ARCHES	Horizon 2020	The project ARCHES is a Horizon 2020 funded project that involves partners in Heritage and Technology across Europe. The 3-year project will develop online resources, software applications and multisensory technologies to enable access to Cultural Heritage Sites within and beyond the project. The project partners are currently working in a participatory manner with people with differences and difficulties associated with communication, cognition, memory and perception.	
CLIC	Horizon 2020	The CLIC project develops financing, business and governance models for the circular adaptive reuse of cultural heritage and historical urban landscapes to implement a full circular economy in cities and regions.	Vastra Gotaland regional authority, Rijeka, Salerno
EUCANET	Europe for Citizens	EUCANET sustains active citizenship, enlarging civic involvement and commitment to the decision-making processes. Inspired by the Pact of Amsterdam for the EU Urban Agenda, EUCANET explores how the urban political process can contribute to tighten the connection between the local and EU level, reframing the interaction between Urban Authorities (UA), local communities, civil society, business and knowledge institutions	Urban Center Metropolitano Torino and Urban Center Bologna, Marseille, Skopje, Cluj-Napoca
Forget Heritage	INTERREG Central Europe	The main objective of Forget Heritage is promoting cooperation between CE cities in order to identify innovative, replicable and sustainable Public Private Cooperation management models of the historical sites by valorising them through setting up Cultural and Creative Industries.	Genova (lead partner), Regional development agency of the Ljubljana urban region, Nuremberg, Bydgoszcz, Rijeka,

			Lombardy region, Warsaw
I-Media-Cities	Horizon 2020	I-Media-Cities is a European research project that brings together 9 major European film archives with different important European research institutions. The goal of the project is to find easy ways to facilitate the sharing of digital content and to make that content accessible through a digital platform to many different types of users.	
Open Heritage	Horizon 2020	Open Heritage will develop and test an inclusive governance model and a supporting toolbox for the adaptive reuse of cultural heritage assets. It builds on the role of communities and the possibility of empowering them in the redevelopment process based on the concepts of heritage community and participatory culture.	
REACH	Horizon 2020	The REACH social platform will create tools and instruments to trigger the debate on how participatory approaches can contribute to develop a common horizon of understanding. Furthermore, participatory approaches are expected to contribute to a deeper engagement of civil society in the research and establishment of innovation processes in the CH sector.	
ROCK	Horizon 2020	ROCK aims to develop an innovative, collaborative and circular approach for the regeneration and adaptive reuse of historic city centres. Implementing a repertoire of successful heritage-led regeneration initiatives, it will test the replicability of the spatial approach and of successful models addressing the specific needs of historic city centres.	Athens, Bologna (coordinator), Cluj-Napoca, Eindhoven, Liverpool, Lisbon, Lyon, Skopje, Turin,, Vilnius
RURITAGE	Horizon 2020	European rural areas embody outstanding examples of Cultural and Natural Heritage (CNH) that need not only to be preserved but also to be promoted as a catalyst of economic competitiveness and sustainable and inclusive growth. RURITAGE establishes a	Harghita, Izmir, APPIGNANO DEL TRONTO, VISEGRÁD

		<p>new heritage-led rural regeneration paradigm able to transform rural areas in sustainable development demonstration 'laboratories', through the enhancement of their unique Cultural and Natural Heritage potential.</p>	
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