



Doc. 13995

02 March 2016

Promoting city-to-city cooperation in the field of culture

Report¹

Committee on Culture, Science, Education and Media

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Summary

International co-operation between cities has never been more necessary than now, as it is a source of important cultural, social and technological innovations and a factor of peace and reconciliation. By increasing co-operation activities and different forms of exchange among cities in Europe new forms of creative partnerships are generated, which may help to rebuild confidence, enthusiasm and trust in Europe.

Cities and European organisations of local authorities should review bilateral and multilateral municipal relationships seeking to redefine objectives, bring in new and younger people for the management of co-operation activities, explore more sustainable ways of financing these activities and involve a wide range of partners.

The European Union, in partnership with the Council of Europe and UNESCO and in co-operation with European and international city networks and organisations, are invited to promote the value of city-to-city co-operation in the field of culture and democracy. Examples of good practice should be more widely disseminated to assist cities in developing city-to-city co-operation taking account of principles laid down in the Faro Convention.

1. Reference to committee: [Doc. 13123](#), Reference 3942 of 22 April 2013.



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A. Draft resolution²

1. The Parliamentary Assembly considers that cities have a key role to play in Europe, not least through their co-operation in the field of culture. Within nations, this process assists democracy, as it also increases the well-being and stability of regions and localities. Between cities, cultural and working synergies represent a further dimension, one which can clearly build upon existing foundations.
2. Such endeavours include economic activities. The more cities or different centres have direct trade and financial dealings with one another, the more likely it is that both culture and the quality of life will be advantaged in each place as a result. The term “city-to-city co-operation in the field of culture” thus covers a wide territory occupied by many aspects of daily life. These comprise economic and financial activities, the contentment of people and families, their education and the variety of their aspirations and opportunities. Working synergies between cities address those aims and produce valuable results, assisting culture, education, apprenticeship and employment.
3. Governments and institutions are advised not to be prescriptive or to interfere; this would stifle and undermine the creative energies of cities. Yet, on the other hand, they need to guide cities on how to proceed, if they should wish to do so, on how and why thereby good practice is built up not only within cities but also within nations, and on how restricted budgets and economic downturns need neither impede nor totally prevent action.
4. The Assembly also notes the opportunity for re-energising national democracy from grass-root levels. This opportunity is offered by city-to-city co-operation in the field of culture. An emphasis placed on democratic values at local levels does not upstage or threaten those at national levels. On the contrary, such an emphasis helps to restore trust and confidence in European governments and democratic values. And since working synergies apply at local levels between different cities in different countries, it will be all the easier for their endeavours to give backing to a much healthier political focus in 21st-century Europe.
5. The Assembly therefore recommends that the Council of Europe member States:
 - 5.1. work with national associations of local authorities to support new city-to-city co-operation models in order to develop better strategies for financing, pooling information and sharing expertise;
 - 5.2. encourage initiatives which establish cultural connections between small and medium-sized cities across borders;
 - 5.3. create conditions for schools and other educational institutions to seek and form international partnerships in the field of culture and to support children from less privileged families and neighbourhoods to enable them to participate in activities undertaken within such international partnerships.
6. The Assembly recommends that European cities and European organisations of local authorities:
 - 6.1. review bilateral and multilateral municipal relationships, seeking to: renew commitments and redefine objectives; bring in new and younger people for the management of co-operation activities; explore more sustainable ways of financing these activities; and involve a wide range of partners, including cultural and educational associations, artists and other cultural stakeholders, media, chambers of commerce and the private sector;
 - 6.2. develop local strategies for cultural heritage which take into account the principles laid down in the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, “Faro Convention”) and adopt supporting methods for promoting city-to-city co-operation; taking note of best practice to date and of successful prescriptions within the Council of Europe Intercultural Cities Programme;
 - 6.3. mobilise competent local associations which have already established international relationships with other European cities to share their experience and know-how with relevant parties, not least those in less privileged neighbourhoods, so that international co-operation becomes more inclusive;
 - 6.4. invite local media to cover city-to-city co-operation, employing techniques developed in the Council of Europe/European Union SPARDA (Shaping Perceptions and Attitudes to Realise Diversity Advantage) project;

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 1 October 2015.

6.5. develop stronger arguments, based on proper evidence, in order to improve national campaigns in favour of city-to-city co-operation.

7. The Assembly pays tribute to the important role played by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe and encourages it to continue to promote co-operation in addressing the challenges facing the cultural and democratic life of cities.

8. The Assembly invites the European Union, in partnership with the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and in co-operation with European and international city networks and associations, to promote the value of city-to-city co-operation in the field of culture and democracy. To this aim, partners should disseminate examples of good practice to assist cities in developing city-to-city co-operation activities, taking account of principles laid down in the Faro Convention and in Committee of Ministers Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)1 on intercultural integration and of the pioneering best practice of the Intercultural Cities programme.

9. The Assembly also invites the European Union to consider whether existing funding programmes (INTERREG, URBACT, Creative Europe, etc.) might be reviewed in order to strengthen connections between them so that the funded projects could serve as best practice examples for other European cities.

B. Explanatory memorandum by The Earl of Dundee, rapporteur

1. Origin, scope and objective of the report

1. City to city co-operation may apply to a wide range of urban communities. Certainly it does to large ones such as Berlin, London, Moscow and Paris. But it also applies to smaller populations within cities of less than 1 million, to those in towns of a few thousand and even to those in villages of only a few hundred people. For constructive relationships between cities, towns and villages do not have to depend upon size or status, or even upon populations themselves. For within Europe's urban areas these can equally be forged between civil society groups, cultural institutions, businesses and social enterprises.

2. This report argues that good democracy requires strong support by administrations, cultural and educational institutions, associations and citizens, especially at local level. Therefore, the Parliamentary Assembly should assist citizens' cultural and educational opportunities and facilitate international co-operation in this field.

3. Recent European elections reflect mistrust of and alienation from politicians and their institutions. City-to-city co-operation is viewed differently. Much freer from European bureaucracy it is also even independent of national control and interference. For it consists of direct exchanges between European communities themselves; particularly through the arts, cultural heritage, the creative industries and intercultural dialogue. As a result, working synergies and partnerships are forged. These not only involve institutions and local authorities but the private sector and citizens as well. Such contacts thus serve to rebuild confidence, enthusiasm and trust.

4. Yet attempts to form international links face challenges from economic cutbacks, the tendency of States and governments to centralise and from a rise in racial prejudice. Consequently heritage and culture can often be sidelined. Ironically, however, thanks to cheap travel, social media and common language, the opportunities for international communication and exchange have never been greater.

5. This report seeks to connect three themes: the nature and purpose of city-to-city co-operation, particularly in the field of culture; its assistance to democracy and stability in Europe; and how it can best be advanced by governments and institutions.

6. Between cities and communities, the benefits of cultural exchange are identified in terms of better understanding of its quality and diversity, of enhanced scope and political will for it to be built up and managed; of greater numbers of people who have access to their own heritage and who take part in local cultural life; and of more employment and improved economic returns connected with the development of cultural tourism.

7. The report also recommends the adoption of certain measures both at local and national levels to encourage city-to-city co-operation in the field of culture. Existing achievements should be highlighted. These include the work of individual artists, that of cultural and other associations in cities and the huge contribution by civil society initiatives and local participants.

8. It will be argued that European identity benefits from city cultural co-operation in three ways. From strengthened cultural awareness in itself. That this leads to greater appreciation and respect for difference and diversity. And thereby that bridges can be built across cultural divides.

9. The Council of Europe has consistently promoted cultural exchange and diversity in Europe: through its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities;³ through its Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform; by its endorsement of the Council of Europe Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS No. 199, "Faro Convention"); and through its co-ordination of the European Cultural Routes and the expanding network of Intercultural cities.

2. Brief historic overview

10. There is a long history of international city-to-city co-operation in Europe. This has assisted peace and prosperity across the continent, particularly through cultural exchanges.

3. Two texts of the Congress are of particular interest: Resolution 291 (2009) on "Creative cities – managing cultural activity of cities" <http://www.24cities.eu/es> and Resolution 284 (2009) on "The future of cultural tourism – towards a sustainable model".

11. Since the time of ancient Greece and its city States, there have been countless examples of cities co-operating with each other. Thriving for several centuries is not least the Hanseatic League which connected about two hundred towns and city States in pursuit of mutual trade and political influence. The rise of nation States from the 16th century onwards gradually diluted the influence and independence of European cities.

12. However, towards the end of the 19th century their independence partially revived. This was caused by dissatisfaction with Europe's nationalism and its aggressive policies. Cities thus then came to stand for peace and solidarity,⁴ resulting in the foundation of the International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) in 1913. Yet it was not until after the Second World War that they provided both a key initiative and moral lead. At municipal level, this was to form links and partnerships between nations which had recently been fighting each other. Thus was born what became known as the "town twinning" movement,⁵ which in Europe has been assisted since the 1950s by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).⁶

13. Created by the Parliamentary Assembly in 1955, the Europe Prize rewards municipalities which have twinning arrangements with foreign municipalities and are involved in a wide range of activities to develop the relationship with their European partners. Sixty years after it was set up, the Europe Prize with its four separate awards (the European Diploma, the Flag of Honour, the Plaque of Honour and the Europe Prize) is as relevant as ever, representing as it does an important vehicle for improving relations between European citizens.

14. It is estimated that 70% of the world's cities have been engaged in some type of international co-operation, while over 11 000 pairs of cities in 159 countries have entered into twinning relationships.⁷ In 1989, the European Parliament formally recognised the role of town twinning and established a funding stream which survives in the new *Europe for Citizens 2014-2020* programme.⁸

15. While, as indicated, common interests can be followed up bilaterally between two cities or centres, they can also be pursued multilaterally between several cities and through EUROCITIES⁹ or similar networks which any particular city may join.

16. In 2004, IULA merged with other municipal organisations to form the global body: United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), with CEMR acting as its subsidiary for Europe. The emergence of UCLG reflects the important role now acknowledged to be played by cities and their administrations alongside national and international bodies.

3. Main themes and trends of city-to-city co-operation

17. Until the 1990s, most city twinning focused on education and cultural exchanges. This same focus continues. However, many twinning links are now also used to assist business, trade, apprenticeships and jobs within their respective local economies, thereby raising their own city profiles.

18. Nor has twinning been confined to European cities as a reciprocal practice amongst themselves; a great number of links have been formed between European cities and those elsewhere. To some extent, these reflect global migration. The international wing of the Dutch Association of Municipalities is an example.¹⁰ Many European cities have forged relationships in the developing world with regions which may also be the source locations for their own resident foreign migrants. Such links (often known as "city diplomacy"¹¹ or "decentralised development co-operation"), while mainly providing technical assistance, often also offer mediation and peace-building in former conflict zones; as a result of these activities, community integrity and confidence also benefits host cities.¹²

4. A conference in 1883 of "municipalists" from France, Italy, Spain and the United Kingdom under the aegis of the International Working Men's Association is the first example of this new trend.

5. Also known variously as Partnerstadt (Germany), Miasto Partnerskie (Poland), Partnerské město (Czech Republic), Ville Jumelée (France), Gemellaggio (Italy), Stedenband (Netherlands), (Adelfopiisi (Greece) города-побратимы (sworn brother cities) (Russian Federation) and Sister Cities (United States).

6. www.twinning.org/en/page/cemr.html.

7. Tjandradewi B. and Marcutollio P. (2009), City-to-City Networks: Asian Perspectives on Key elements and Areas for Success, *Habitat International*, 33/2, pp. 165-172.

8. http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/europe-for-citizens_en. This included the annual award scheme for good practices in citizenship and twinning, the Golden Stars, which came to an end in 2010, see

http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1203_en.pdf http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/doc1203_en.pdf.

9. Baycan-Levent T., Gülümser Akgün A. and Kundak S. (2010), Success Conditions for Urban Networks: Eurocities and Sister Cities, *European Planning Studies*, 18(8), 1187-1206.

10. www.vng-international.nl/.

19. Another noticeable trend over recent years is a diminution in the role of local authorities and the growing importance of civil society (both professional and voluntary) in the maintenance of international relationships.¹³

20. Over the last five years, the economic downturn has reduced international commitments (both bilateral and network memberships). Some argue that the only way for town twinning to survive is as an arm of city promotion and investment strategies.¹⁴ Others, however, say it must proceed free of performance management and value-for-money auditing, achieving its purpose through informal ties and rituals of hospitality and empathy.¹⁵

21. Some also claim that the traditional post-War model of twinning is no longer relevant; yet within a current background of austerity, euro scepticism and national insularity it is instead outdated. Hence it is asserted that whilst town twinning and individual exchange programmes such as Erasmus may have mainly engaged a middle class audience, they have had little persuasive influence upon the groups in society from whom the populist-xenophobic political parties draw most of their support.¹⁶

4. City co-operation in the field of culture¹⁷

22. “If I were to start anew, I would start from culture” are words often ascribed to Jean Monnet. Culture provides an accessible platform upon which to bring together not only strangers, but past or potential antagonists. As a powerful healing agent it has already carried out an invaluable service since 1945. Yet within and between cities it can also now clearly help to promote many other useful actions.

23. There are several ways in which cities have sought to co-operate within the context of culture:

- bilateral twinning relationships may begin with general cultural and education exchanges, then develop into working synergies in other connected spheres such as technical knowledge, business, trade, apprenticeships and employment; for example between Croatia and the United Kingdom, such working synergies exist between Zadar and Dundee, as well as those between Dubrovnik, Zadar and Inverness;
- multilateral collaborations are often within the framework of a European Commission funding programme such as INTERREG, URBACT and Creative Europe; or form part of the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society;
- networks which include a cultural element, for example:
 - UCLG’s Agenda 21 for Culture
 - UNESCO’s Creative Cities
 - EUROCITIES’ Culture Forum
 - The Council of Europe’s Intercultural Cities network;
- city networks devoted to culture, in particular:
 - World Cities Culture Forum
 - Les Rencontres – Association of European Cities and Regions for Culture
 - CreArt (Network of Cities for Artistic Creation)
 - European Cities and Capitals of Culture

11. The UCLG has had a Committee on Development Cooperation and City Diplomacy since 2010. See more at: www.uclg.org/en/organisation/structure/committees-working-groups/development-cooperation-and-city-diplomacy#sthash.GWGN2OG.dpuf.

12. See, for example, Platforma, The European Voice for Local and Regional Authorities for Development, www.platforma-dev.eu/.

13. Anheier H. (2002), The third sector in Europe: five theses, Centre for Civil Society, London School of Economics and Political Science.

14. Clarke N. (2009), In what sense “spaces of neoliberalism”? The new localism, the new politics of scale, and town twinning, *Political Geography*, 28(8), pp. 496-507.

15. Jayne M., Hubbard P. and Bell D. (2011), Worlding a city: twinning and urban theory, *City*, 15(1), 25-41.

16. Anheier H. and Falkenhain M. (2012), Europe’s Stratified Social Space: Diagnosis and Remedies, *Global Policy*, 3/1, December.

17. “Culture” in the context of this report includes cultural heritage, the arts, the creative industries, sport and recreation, tourism and intercultural relations.

- European Association of Historic Towns and Regions
- Inter-City Intangible Cultural Co-operation Network
- Organisation of World Heritage Cities
- Network of European Regions for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism.

4.1. Obstacles to co-operation

4.1.1. Financial austerity

24. A city's international programmes must always play second fiddle to its main commitments, and all the more so during periods of austerity. These include statutory responsibilities to deliver certain services such as the provision of education and welfare or the maintenance of essential infrastructures. In this scenario, it is very difficult to retain budgets for traditional city-twinning activities or to contemplate joining international networks.

4.1.2. Lack of powers and initiative

25. One reason why cities find it difficult to maintain internationalism is that they lack the powers to take independent decisions and action. In many countries, the national government defines the role of local government and disburses finance from the centre, leaving cities with little room for manoeuvre, even if they were so inclined.

4.1.3. Dependence and obsolescence

26. Even where independent twinning associations have emerged over the years, driven by local fund-raising initiatives, there is a now less enthusiasm than there used to be: A whole generation of people who joined such associations in their youth are now ageing and withdrawing from active participation, often not being replaced when they do.

4.1.4. Lack of access and continuity

27. Equally, in the case of multi-city networks and projects, many have become dependent upon one source of funding, perhaps a time-limited European Commission grant, and thus lack the flexibility to adapt when this expires.

28. One contribution to the survey which was conducted came from Agenda 21 for Culture (A21C) (the culture and sustainability campaign of UCLG with a global perspective); it mirrors the challenge which Europe presently faces. Whilst noting that active collaboration between cities in Asia and Latin America was now working well, the respondent observed that many European cities seemed more concerned with self-promotion, branding, fund-raising and short-term competitive advantage. It warned that if and when Europe emerged from its current preoccupation with austerity and xenophobia, it might be surprised to find that other parts of the world have moved on to more advanced collaborative paradigms.¹⁸ In order to address this perceived deficit, A21C says it will seek to involve many more European cities than in the past in its future activities such as peer review and joint capacity-building programmes.

29. Asked to identify an example of best practice of city collaboration in the European context, however, A21C was unequivocal in recommending the Council of Europe's own initiative, Intercultural Cities (see paragraph 36 below). Indeed A21C is proposing to emulate ICC's structure and methodology in the remodelling of its own strategy for the coming decade.¹⁹

30. Despite the problems indicated above, already new models for international city co-operation are being designed and implemented. Outlined below are some of the main advantages of city co-operation. They are illustrated with some good practice examples.

18. Committee members might note an echo of these sentiments in the speech by Pope Francis to the European Parliament on 25 November 2014.

19. Agenda 21 for Culture's consultation document can be inspected at www.agenda21culture.net/index.php/newa21c/new-a21c.

4.2. The benefits of city co-operation

31. Whilst local authorities can galvanise local identity and create the conditions for international co-operation, they neither can nor should monopolise the field. Their role is to provide a space in which many groups and interests within public service, civil society and the private sector can pursue worthwhile endeavours.

32. The motivations and enabling mechanisms for such relationships are diverse, but there remains an important role for national and supranational organisations such as the Council of Europe itself. Other benefits outlined below still derive from the leadership of city government, but many of the most dynamic come from “bottom-up” initiatives.

4.2.1. Creating a European cultural identity

33. After the Second World War, the town twinning movement provided a consensual and democratic identity for the former combatants of western Europe. Then again in 1989, a new post-Cold War identity was made possible. Once again city partnerships and networks were actively forged. Yet a generation has elapsed since then and there is now the need to give renewed vigour and contemporary relevance to this objective. The following are two examples of such attempts.

34. CORNERS is an intercultural artists platform. It was initiated in 2010 by six cultural institutions – Europe–Intercult (Stockholm), Exodos (Ljubljana), POGON (Zagreb), Drugo More (Rijeka), City Culture Institute (Gdansk) and Umeå 2014–European Capital of Culture – and has subsequently forged partnerships with institutions in Bulgaria, Georgia, Italy, Kosovo*,²⁰ Serbia, Spain and the United Kingdom. In its first phase, it conducted extensive expeditions by mixed groups of artists to the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, eastern Europe, Lapland, the Basque Country and Northern Ireland, with the intention of forging transnational collaborations. Now, having won funding under the European Union Creative Europe programme, it is transforming these creative relationships into practical projects in local communities. For example, one project is comparing the meaning and uses of public space between Croatia and the United Kingdom; whilst another brings artists from Sweden, Poland and Serbia together to engage with “street corner” children in Slovenia.²¹

35. For many decades, the land border between Russia, Norway and Finland in the high Arctic was a troubled and restricted place. It experienced extreme destruction in the Second World War and was then locked down as a high security NATO/USSR barrier for decades. It suffered a further disadvantage of being so far in the North that the communities of Kirkenes, Murmansk and Nikel were hardly known and not even considered part of Europe. Now, however, a common community of interest is developing there along the coast of the Barents Sea, representing both the ancient lands of the Sami people and the future management of the rich economic resources of land and sea and of climate change. Yet even though there is more freedom of travel across the political border, it has remained difficult to create common spaces of interaction between Norwegians and Russians. The arts have provided a most effective solution, particularly through the annual Barents Spektakel organised by the multilingual and intercultural organisation Girls on the Bridge (*Pikene på Broen*). Through the co-operation of artists and children and audiences travelling to experience various co-productions either side of the border, as well as the commissioning of work from throughout the continent, there are now many tangible reasons for the people of the Barents to feel like full members of Europe.²²

4.2.2. Encouraging the appreciation of diversity and living together

36. If European cities engage their diverse citizens, then clearly they also enhance European democracy and stability. The following examples indicate how international and local actors can work together to assist this process.

37. The Intercultural Cities network (ICC) was founded in 2008 by the Council of Europe in response to the White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue and in solidarity with the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. It highlights that cities were the important stage upon which would be negotiated (for better or worse) the future of a multi-ethnic Europe. It challenges xenophobic rhetoric with a concept of “diversity advantage” which sees opportunity and innovation in diversity and interaction. It gives agency to cities to design policies and practices which will release these resources and facilitate co-operation between politicians, officials, civil society, business and the media in over 60 European cities. The ICC Index enables cities to analyse their practices

20. *All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United National Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

21. www.cornersofeurope.org/.

22. www.barentsspektakel.no/en.

according to a 70-point profile and to compare themselves with peers; and empowers them to experiment and take calculated risks in pursuit of new ideas. Whilst a supranational body has provided a shaping framework, the cities actively participate in the setting of agendas, priorities and the sharing of costs.

38. By encouraging joint working between cities, the ICC has enabled several spin-off projects to emerge, and has also enabled good local ideas to be scaled-up to an international level. A good example of the former is SPARDA (Shaping Perceptions and Attitudes to Realise Diversity Advantage), which aims to foster successful integration of migrants by designing better local communication strategies. Seven partner cities (Coimbra (Portugal), Had-Dingli/Malta, Limassol (Cyprus), Patras (Greece), Reggio Emilia (Italy), Lyons (France) and Valencia (Spain)) were selected as pilot locations to implement communication campaigns. Results were promising.²³ An example of the latter is the project Antirumores, originally designed to counter the spread of misinformation about immigrants in Barcelona; this project has now been adopted across many European cities.²⁴

39. The City of Melitopol in south-eastern Ukraine joined the Intercultural Cities network with a clear understanding of the “diversity advantage” that could be achieved. Firstly, it wished to raise awareness of itself as a city which, despite many waves of invasion, immigration and settlement, has managed to maintain a harmonious community free of inter-communal acrimony. Secondly, it wished to employ this as a tool in tackling the severe degradation to its heritage and to the environment caused by years of economic hardship. The centrepiece of this strategy is a plan to revive its large and derelict park as an “intercultural park” which would both reflect the diversity of the local population and be a tourist destination. It made an appeal through the ICC for international advice and the Fontys University in Tilburg (Netherlands), an ICC member, responded. Fontys formed a multidisciplinary team from Ukraine, Norway, Portugal, Canada, Netherlands and the United Kingdom and conducted an intense and creative assessment of the park, in association with local residents, resulting in a plan that Melitopol will be able to follow for years to come.²⁵

40. Many innovative co-operation projects have been initiated under the Europe for Citizens banner, but many too have languished once their initial injection of European Union funding has expired. Thus more projects should establish a sustainable and longer-term existence in order to mature and capitalise upon the international co-operation links which have been established. A good example of this is the project Cooking Away Prejudices, initiated by the National Institute for Social Integration in Vilnius. Civil Society organisations from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia came together with UNITED for Intercultural Action from Amsterdam to evolve an effective model for undermining xenophobia; which model they have dubbed “Travelling Social Cuisine”. The project brings youngsters together for joint cooking exercises, “Human Libraries” in which they may “borrow” people from different cultural backgrounds to learn about their lives, and facilitate discussions. It has been evaluated a success in reducing racism in the Baltic republics.²⁶

4.2.3. Achieving better management and protection of local culture and heritage

41. Europe’s historic and contemporary culture faces many threats including neglect, environmental degradation, speculative and exploitative land development, and the lack of resources or appropriate management skills; but is also presented with many opportunities too. In a climate of finite resources and austerity, it is unacceptable for there to be wastage or duplication, but this is always likely if localities lack the curiosity or the capacity to learn from the experience of others. City co-operation is one of the most effective and efficient ways of directing knowledge and competence to those who need it, as can be seen from the examples below.

42. Maintaining the integrity of a city’s built heritage, whilst improving its accessibility is an important challenge. One such challenge was a city-to-city co-operation venture between the Polish city of Warsaw’s Heritage Protection Department and the Norwegian city of Bergen’s Heritage Management Office, to exchange experience and expert knowledge on how to improve disabled access to historic buildings without compromising their historical character and settings. The project took the form of exchange visit-workshops between Warsaw and Bergen specialists, followed by a seminar in Warsaw summarising the findings along with a publication in two languages (Polish and English).²⁷

23. www.consorci.info/userfiles/files/brochure%20SPARDA.pdf.

24. www.antirumores.com/.

25. <http://fontys.edu/Stadslab-European-Urban-Design-Laboratory/Stadslab-European-Urban-Design-Laboratory/Projects/Past-projects/2010-Melitopol-Ukraine.htm>.

26. www.visiskirtingivisilygus.lt/socialinesvertuves/en/social-kitchens.

27. <http://przelamywanie-barier.um.warszawa.pl/en>.

43. Projecting such city-to-city models on a large scale has produced the Inter-City Intangible Cultural Cooperation Network (ICCN).²⁸ It is the only international organisation of local governments and cultural organisations that aims to safeguard the world's Intangible Cultural Heritage and "its inseparable relation to sustainable local development" and is a UNESCO-endorsed non-governmental organisation (NGO). Significantly, it also proclaims its aim to "make cultural peace" based on mutual understanding formed through intercultural dialogue. The ICCN is a global network with many European members, but seems to be notably absent in much of the north and east of the continent. Its highlight is an annual International Forum which specifically engages the enthusiasm of young people in both the protection and creation of intangible heritage.

44. TANDEM is an exchange programme that assists cultural organisations in building long-term, international working relationships. It supports knowledge development through pairing cultural managers from different countries, and their organisations, in a year-long programme of training and co-operation, leading to joint projects in each other's cities. It also creates wider networking and fund-raising opportunities with project partners from Europe and beyond. Since 2011, TANDEM has brought together more than 200 independent cultural organisations and supported the professional development of over 150 cultural managers from more than 80 cities and 25 countries in Europe and its near neighbourhood. Examples of its achievements include connecting traditional textile makers in rural Republic of Moldova with leading fashion designers in Berlin; and artists from Turkey and London collaborating to track the routes, and tell the stories of, Syrian refugees to Europe. TANDEM is promoted by the European Cultural Foundation and MitOst. Its current programme twins cultural managers from Ukraine with their peers in the European Union,²⁹ whilst future plans include a programme to connect past, present and future winners of, and candidates for, the European Capital of Culture award.

4.2.4. Building social cohesion and citizen participation

45. One of the best guarantors of the maintenance of human rights and democratic values is the active participation of citizens, local associations and businesses in the life and decisions of their communities. Ironically, a great way of invigorating and expanding such local initiative is through exposing it to international comparison. Experience shows that when youth and civic groups have the opportunity to travel to meet like-minded people in other countries, not only do they discover new ideas and skills, but they also learn many things about themselves that might have remained hidden or dormant at home, as the examples below demonstrate.

46. Studies (quoted in paragraph 20 above) have suggested that much international co-operation activity of the past has failed to represent, benefit or influence working class communities in Europe's towns and cities. However, there is one organisation with a specific remit to address these issues: Banlieues d'Europe, based in Lyons (France). Founded in 1990, it now has 118 active international partners and 7 500 contacts in Europe's most disadvantaged urban residential areas. The network covers many topics, but art and culture is a constant leitmotif. In 2014, it enabled the cities of Belfast, Munich, Turin, Vienna, Cluj-Napoca, Budapest, Madrid and Lyons to co-operate on "UrbART", the creation on an online Platform mapping innovative youth cultural activities across Europe. A specific aim is for the participants to develop awareness about the importance of European mobility and opportunity provided by Erasmus+. Meanwhile, between 2013 and 2015, "7 STEPS" is a network of seven European partners in Brussels, Amsterdam, London, Paris, Lyons, Copenhagen and Helsinki, which have carried out activities centred on choreographic creation in urban dance.³⁰

47. The cities of Subotica in northern Serbia and Wolverhampton in the English midlands have nurtured long-term relations founded on the sharing of experience in building democratic participation within a multi-ethnic environment. Originally brokered by the Network of Local Democracy Agencies in the former Yugoslavia, close relationships were built between politicians and senior officials in each municipality.³¹ The longer term aim has been to connect people in civil society, and the arts have been an effective means to this. In particular, the Lighthouse Media Centre in Wolverhampton has produced a film documentary demonstrating for British and Serbian audiences how artists and musicians are overcoming the linguistic and political barriers which have divided Subotica since the civil war.³²

28. www.iccn.or.kr/.

29. <http://tandemexchange.eu/>.

30. www.banlieues-europe.com/cooperations.php?lang=en.

31. www.lda-subotica.org/eng/.

32. <http://vimeo.com/31259976>.

48. A member of the ICC network, the London Borough of Lewisham has also been a pioneer of youth participation in democracy. For the last decade it has held annual elections for a Youth Mayor and a cabinet of Youth Advisors, possessing influence (and a £30 000 annual budget) in the borough. Because it works so well it attracts a large youth electorate and is much more than a token gesture. This has aroused widespread international interest and in recent months there have been invitations from cities in Denmark, Sweden, Poland, and Norway to share ideas, broaden horizons and raise aspirations with adults and young people. The Young Mayor's team have also organised training projects with Malta, the Czech Republic and Germany. Most notable, however, has been the long-term relationship with Lewisham's twin town of Antony, a French commune in the southern suburbs of Paris.³³

49. Founded in 2010, the Doc Next Network aims to create a vibrant European space where young people's media messages are more accessible in mainstream public discourse.³⁴ Its goal is to create an arena where the views of a new generation of documentary makers, media artists and emerging journalists are made more visible – opening the public's eye to new European perspectives. This unique movement offers new connections between online free (remix) culture, the media industry, documentary circuits, the arts establishments, academic environments and the European policy-making arena. It is founded upon four independent cultural organisations which act as hubs for their wider regions, namely: Association of Creative Initiatives “ę” (Warsaw, Poland), British Film Institute (London, United Kingdom), Mode Istanbul (Istanbul, Turkey) and ZEMOS98 (Seville, Spain). Since 2012, it has worked with some 50 young media-makers with a migrant background from the four cities, and remixing the existing imagery of migrants in different European countries, the project has had many spin-offs such as the touring live cinema performance “European Souvenirs”.³⁵

4.2.5. Bringing socio-economic investment to localities

50. There is increasing awareness that through the application of sustainable heritage and cultural tourism strategies, as through the encouragement and development of creative industries, localities can achieve revenues, investment, jobs and profile, and retain them in spite of globalisation. To achieve the economies of scale or the flexible specialisation which is necessary in these new economies, many cities are now finding advantage in forging or renewing city relationships, as the examples below demonstrate.

51. Through competitive bidding processes, such as the European Capital of Culture, many cities now have the opportunity to raise their profile and to position themselves within new international relationships and networks. Experience suggests that the ability to take long-term advantage of these short-term opportunities has been rather variable, but a number of cities have shown real determination to cement lasting relationships. Foremost amongst these has been the city of Lille which has sought to build upon its role as European Capital of Culture in 2004 with the Lille3000 initiative. For example, in 2009, with “Europe XXL”, it embraced the cities and cultures of Istanbul, Berlin, Riga, Tallinn, Vilnius, Budapest, Bucharest, Warsaw, Ljubljana, Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Moscow in a year of festivals. Most of these collaborations over the last decade have been linked to efforts to revive the economy and physical fabric of the conurbation. For example, in 2012, the Futurotextiles expo was held in the city on the occasion of the opening of the European Centre for Innovative Textiles in the new industrial zone of Tourcoing, l'Union. Lille-Métropole has also been elected as President of the UCLG Committee on Culture, reflecting that its interests are not only European but global.

52. At the place where eastern Styria in Austria, eastern Slovenia and south-western Hungary meet, 24 municipalities from the three regions have formed a pact for communication and co-operation. The aim of the “24 Towns” project is to trial new and experimental ways of marketing their towns and to increase the attractiveness of their shared region to tourism generally; and on the back of this to develop common cultural and commercial programmes. Most recently, this has included joint development of technology and of a publicity strategy to create a downloadable audio-guided touring system to be offered in all 24 towns.³⁶

53. The Scottish city of Dundee and the city of Zadar on the Dalmatian coast of Croatia have been twinned since 1959, and in February 2014, the Council of Europe invited a small group of Dundee civic and business leaders to visit Zadar. Dundee was represented by its Lord Provost, who had talks with the President of the Zadar County Chamber of Commerce. It emerged that Zadar has a thriving tourism sector, a busy port, a large agricultural hinterland and considerable potential for leisure businesses, including land earmarked for

33. www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/youngmayor/pages/default.aspx.

34. www.docnextnetwork.org/.

35. www.europeansouvenirs.eu/.

36. www.24cities.eu/.

golf course development. The city of Dundee shares these business and cultural interests, enabling new alliances to be forged. Such is a good example of how cities with old established links can act to refresh and refocus their relationship to meet the new conditions of contemporary Europe.

5. Conclusions

54. In the 21st century, with the acceleration of urbanisation, cities have a greater impact than ever before upon both the global community and within it the individual himself. Whilst international co-operation between cities has always been a natural facet of human civilisation, it has never been more important or necessary than now. It is a source of important cultural, social and technological innovations and has also been a significant guarantor of peace and reconciliation.

55. Cultural heritage and cultural innovation have always been an incentive and driver for international city co-operation. Culture offers a unique means for us to negotiate the complex balancing act of building local, global and multi-ethnic identities, and in ways which enhance rather than undermine democracy and social capital.

56. In the current context of austerity and growing Euro-scepticism, observed in recent European elections, city-to-city co-operation offers an opportunity much closer to citizens. By increasing co-operation activities and different forms of exchange among cities in Europe (particularly through the arts, cultural heritage, the creative industries and intercultural dialogue), new forms of creative partnerships and connections are generated – involving not only local authorities and institutional partners, but also the private sector, associations, cultural actors and citizens directly – which may help to rebuild confidence, enthusiasm and trust in Europe.

57. Such benefits cannot be taken for granted, however, and at several levels there needs to be concerted action in order to realise them.

58. Assisted by the Council of Europe, support should be given to both national and local agencies in the field. The Council of Europe already makes a significant contribution in this regard, for example through its Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, through its Centre of Expertise for Local Government Reform, its endorsement of the Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society and its co-ordination of the European Cultural Routes and the growing network of Intercultural Cities.

59. At metropolitan levels, there is a need to breathe new life into long-standing bilateral and multilateral relationships as well as to forge new networks. National and supranational agencies have an important role in supporting them through devolving more powers and initiatives or by helping to shape new mechanisms and networks.

60. Local authorities hold the key position in retaining and developing international city relations, but they should raise their game in the current climate. They must lift their sights above narrow econometric factors and broaden the range of participation beyond educated elites. They should also demonstrate political courage and leadership to withstand the scepticism against internationalism emerging across large sections of the media and the political spectrum.

61. Whilst municipalities remain central to the process, perhaps the most significant and still-evolving impulse for local/international co-operation is from civil society, particularly with the emergence across Europe of a “Millennial Generation”, which moves with greater ease across borders and identities. The challenge is for cities and cultural institutions to have the openness and flexibility to accommodate these loose and dynamic forces alongside more formal political, administrative and business structures.