

CULTURE NEXT

Annual Report

2023 | The second year of the project







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About the Network

Culture Next works towards achieving wider European acknowledgement and recognition of culture as sustainable development and towards extending the existing European cultural cooperation frameworks. Our mission is to contribute to having more European Capital of Culture (ECoC) programmes implemented in European cities and regions and to define a long-term European vision on local development through culture and creativity.



Through our work, we focus on capacity building, organising conferences and annual meetings, and on developing a platform for promoting member cities, as well as facilitating collaborations among them. Also, the network aims to become a voice in shaping European cultural policies.

Building on the experiences, processes and collaborations established during the ECoC bid, we support all cities, being them awarded or not, to implement culture-led local development programmes and policies.

2023: The Second Year of Our Project

The year 2023 marked a significant milestone for the Culture Next network, being its most active year to date. We broadened our network to include 36 member cities from 21 EU countries and the UK. We successfully organized three conferences in Elefsina, Belfast, and Leeuwarden. Additionally, we initiated our first thematic working groups: Youth Engagement, hosted by Rouen, and Funding Culture, hosted by Bielsko-Biala.

We also launched the internal call for our inaugural Mobility Programme, successfully matching the first 11 cities. Furthermore, we introduced the SDG Thing, a pilot initiative aimed at assessing culture's impact on various Sustainable Development Goals across more than ten member cities.

Throughout the year, we maintained our CN Monthly meetings, held periodic Board and Executive meetings, and conducted Management Working Sessions, which involved in-person one-day meetings between the Board and the Executive team. Moreover, we explored the concept of Culture Next Missions, which are one-day visits to member cities requiring targeted training, coaching, or advocacy at different stages of their European Capital of Culture journey.

Another significant accomplishment this year was the establishment of connections with various European and international networks, platforms, and organizations, including Culture Action Europe, the UCLG Culture Committee, Trans Europe Halles, Tandem, and One Earth.



Member Cities in 2023

Full members:

1. Aveiro (Portugal)
2. Belfast (Northern Ireland)
3. Braga (Portugal)
4. Burgos (Spain)
5. Chemnitz (Germany)
6. Cluj-Napoca (Romania)
7. Debrecen (Hungary)
8. Dublin (Ireland)
9. Elefsina (Greece)
10. Faro (Portugal)
11. Gijon (Spain)
12. Leeds (The United Kingdom)
13. Leeuwarden (The Netherlands)
14. Leuven (Belgium)
15. Matera (Italy)
16. Oeiras (Portugal)
17. Oulu (Finland)
18. Plungė (Lithuania)
19. Rouen (France)
20. Trenčín (Slovakia)
21. Valmiera (Latvia)
22. České Budějovice (Czech Republic)
23. Galway - Ireland
24. Larnaka - Cyprus

Observing members:

1. Upsalla (Sweden)
2. Broumov (Czech Republic)
3. Brno (Czech Republic)
4. Bielsko-Biała (Poland)
5. Kortrijk (Belgium)
6. Gent (Belgium)
7. Katowice (Poland)
8. Novi Sad (Serbia)
9. Jerez de La Frontera (Spain)
10. Kolobrzeg (Poland)
11. Lublin (Poland)
12. Molenbeek- Brussels (Belgium)

Our Year in Numbers

In the second year of the project, we successfully expanded our reach to additional cities, resulting in increased network membership and participation. Furthermore, we enhanced the depth and quality of our programs.

2

New member cities

3

Culture Next conferences

12

Cities involved in the Mobility Programme

72

Cities represented at the three CN Conferences

21.600

Reach on social media

3.500

Website visitors

Timeline



January 22-24, 2023

Management & Policy Meeting (Budapest, Hungary)

Following the official opening of #Veszprém2023, we traveled to Budapest for a management working session aimed at organizing the network activities for 2023 and addressing various policy issues. The key outcomes of this working session included (1) the annual action plan and (2) the initial design of the SDG Thing, our instrument for assessing cultural outputs related to the Sustainable Development Goals.



May 4, 2023

Culture Next Mission (Gijon, Spain)

On May 4, four cities from the Culture Next network embarked on the first Network Mission to the Spanish city of Gijon. Cultural managers from Aveiro (PT), Chemnitz (DE), Cluj-Napoca (RO), and Faro (PT) participated in this pilot initiative aimed at providing guidance and support to a fellow member city. The mission sought to enhance European connections and foster local collaboration in pursuit of a successful European Capital of Culture (ECoC) bid.

The agenda featured two extensive sessions with local authorities and the cultural community, focusing on the unique aspects of candidacies for European Capitals of Culture. These discussions were informed by case studies and personal narratives from the Culture Next member cities involved in the meeting.



June 8-10, 2023

The 9th Culture Next Conference (Elefsina, Greece)

27 European cities met in Elefsina between June 9-11 for the 9th conference of the Culture Next network. Designed as a space for exploration, the meeting offered the participating cities opportunities to connect with the Eleusis 2023 cultural programme and with relevant European networks and initiatives.



September 13-15, 2023

The 10th Culture Next Conference (Belfast, United Kingdom)

From September 13th to 15th, 2023, 20 member cities convened in Belfast for the 10th conference of the network. The focus of the discussions was on the connection between Culture and the Sustainable Development Goals. Participants explored ways to integrate these two elements within their cities. They also examined the appropriate balance between standardisation and customisation in assessing culture's impact on the SDGs. Additionally, there was a debate on whether culture should be established as an 18th SDG in the upcoming agenda or if it should remain a transversal theme.



October 9, 2023

Internal Call for Thematic Working Groups

We have launched the first call for Thematic Working Groups to explore two key topics relevant to our work. Member cities were invited to apply as hosts, with the requirement to deliver the following minimum dissemination outputs:

- 1 written output (report, position paper, etc.);
- 1 online workshop for at least 15 Culture Next member cities;
- 1 online conference for a minimum of 30 participants;
- 2 podcasts for the Culture Next website.

The selected cities and topics were Rouen, France (Youth engagement in culture) and Bielsko-Biala, Poland (Funding culture). Their work will be conducted from 15 November 2023 to 15 May 2024.



November 22-24, 2023

The 11th Culture Next Conference (Leeuwarden, Netherlands)

During the period of November 22-24, 2023, we had the privilege of gathering in the charming city of Leeuwarden, which was the European Capital of Culture in 2018 and continues to uphold a remarkable legacy program. This occasion marked the 11th Culture Next Conference.

Our discussions centered on two key themes: examining the significance of the European Capital of Culture program within the local and regional context, and investigating the connection between community engagement and participation through the Mienskip concept, which emphasizes instinctive, action-oriented communities united by authentic solidarity within a grassroots framework.



December, 2023

First 12 cities matched in the Culture Next Mobility Programme

Following a detailed and tailored assessment process coordinated by the Executive Team, we successfully identified the first 12 cities to be included in the inaugural edition of our Mobility Programme.

Hosting cities:

- Budweis (CZ)
- Chemnitz (DE)
- Rouen (FR)
- Oulu (FI)
- Dublin (IE)
- Faro (PT)
- Leeuwarden (NL)
- Elefsina (GR)
- Gijon (ES)
- Larnaka (CY)
- Debrecen (HU)
- Braga (PT)

Traveling cities:

- Rouen (FR)
- Burgos (ES)
- Faro (PT)
- Galway (IE)
- Budweis (CZ)
- Brno (CZ)
- Oulu (FI)
- Valmiera (LV)
- Trencin (SK)
- Gijon (ES)
- Chemnitz (DE)
- Cluj-Napoca (RO)



Throughout the year

The SDG Thing

Within Culture Next, we have been exploring how tracking and evaluating the impact of cultural outcomes could improve the ECoC process, seeking to develop a mechanism to unify an evidence base that could be disseminated as the Network's Culture & SDG Tool & Manifesto. 14 Culture Next member cities decided to develop a BETA collective impact pilot of measuring cultural activities using during November 2023 and October 2024, with two expected results:

- Individual SDG impact reports for each pilot city, for their own use;
- A first collective SDG impact report from at least 10 European cities.



Every month

CN Monthly Meetings

We hold the CN Monthly online meeting for network members on the final Wednesday of each month. The agenda includes updates from the network, collaborative decision-making, and news and invitations from cities wishing to share information with others.

Communications Stats

In 2023, we aimed to follow a cohesive communication strategy to effectively convey Culture Next activities. This approach was designed for both internal communication with member cities and external outreach to a wider audience, including other cities and stakeholders interested in engaging with the network.

PAGE VIEWS

14,000

(on the culturenext.eu website)

WEBSITE VISITORS

3,500

(unique viewers)

REACH

21,633

(user)

POSTS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

42

(on the Culture Next Facebook page)

CONTENT INTERACTIONS

867

(comments, likes, shares)

PROFILE VISITS

2,700

(times)

Project News



Cities are invited to participate in the 9th Culture Next Conference in Elefsina, Greece

Read the article [here](#).



Culture Next Mission in Gijon, Spain

Read the article [here](#).



The 9th Culture Next conference, hosted in Elefsina, European Capital of Culture in 2023

Read the article [here](#).



Great start of the season for Culture Next in Belfast

Read the article [here](#).



Internal call for Thematic Working Groups

Read the article [here](#).



Save the date for Leeuwarden!

Read the article [here](#).



Closing the season with the 11th Culture Next Conference in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

Read the article [here](#).



Gestores de candidaturas a la Capitalidad Europea de la Cultura dan consejo a Gijón

Read the article [here](#).

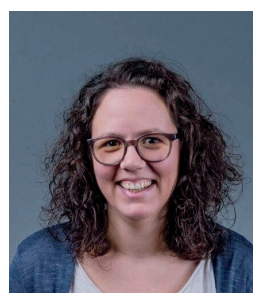
Our Team



Ștefan Teișanu
Secretary General



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Cultural Policies Lead



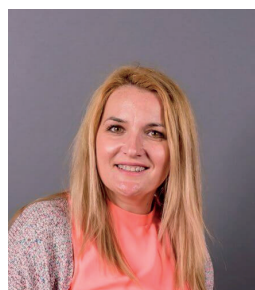
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Board Members



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Director of Cultural
Training, ELeusis 2023
ECoC



Carlos Martins
Board Member, Aveiro



Henri Turunen
Executive Producer, Oulu
2026 ECoC



Immie Jonkman
CEO Leeuwarden
Fryslân 2028



Pam Johnson
Head of Culture
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Photo Gallery







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Co-funded by
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