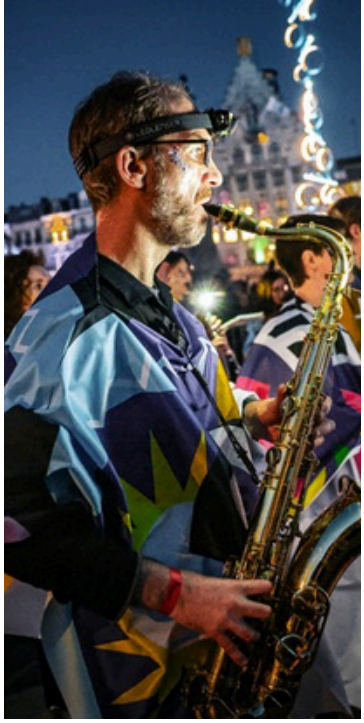








Culture for sustainable and inclusive cities

100+ initiatives from European cities implementing the Eurocities Lille Call to Action

EUROCITIES

ville de Lille

November 2025

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Foreword by the Mayor of Lille



In September 2022, Lille hosted the Eurocities Culture Forum. On this occasion, Martine Aubry, then Mayor of Lille, launched a "Call to Action for a Lower-Carbon and More Inclusive Culture," addressed to cities and metropolitan areas across Europe.

This manifesto, as of now signed by 60 European local authorities, highlights the essential role of territories as drivers of the ecological and social transitions. It also reaffirms that in times of crisis, culture and the arts offer the space for reflections, solutions, transformation and hope. Behind these shared values stands the collective recognition that we must rethink and adapt our cultural policies to meet the urgent demands of ecological responsibility and social justice.

The Call to Action being launched from Lille is a source of pride. It strongly echoes the city's history and our longstanding commitment to making culture a driving force for territorial development and social cohesion. By signing the first global Agenda 21 for Culture in 2005, following the year in which Lille was European Capital of Culture, we established culture as a central pillar of our public policies, in line with the major challenges of our time.

Since then, we have worked to build a culture that is sustainable and inclusive. We place culture and the arts at the heart of our city and the everyday lives of its residents. By supporting cultural stakeholders and artists, we safeguard both culture's emancipatory power and its universal reach. By pursuing eco-responsibility and resourcefulness in our activities, we contribute to local strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and minimising environmental impacts. By continually questioning these practices, we collectively work to develop new methods and approaches.

In doing so, we consolidate, invent, and experiment. We share our expertise and learn from other regions. Since the 2022 Eurocities Culture Forum, exchanges between local authorities have enriched and informed our thinking and trajectories. This collection of innovative cultural initiatives illustrates the wealth of transitions already underway, and aims to foster the collaborative and constructive spirit that is so characteristic of Europe.

I hope this Call to Action proliferates and brings together many European cities and metropolitan areas, united by a collective vision of a culture for tomorrow that is sustainable, resilient, inclusive and empowering.

Arnaud Deslandes
Mayor of Lille

Introduction from the Eurocities Secretary General



Dismantling instead of discarding, reusing instead of buying, enabling everyone to participate — these are just a few of the ways European cities are rethinking cultural production to reduce their environmental impact and ensure that everyone is included.

As of November 2025, I am proud to see 60 mayors of major European cities already standing together behind the Eurocities Lille Call to Action for low carbon and more inclusive culture, championing a low-carbon and more inclusive culture—from Helsinki to Bologna, from Bordeaux to Kharkiv. Many more will follow.

By signing the Call to Action, Mayors commit not only to implementing its principles but also to sharing how they are bringing them to life in their local contexts. This publication is a first snapshot of that collective effort. It highlights a selection of policies and projects submitted by signatory cities, and we warmly thank them for their contributions.

These local policies and practices are more than inspiring; they feed directly into Eurocities' advocacy work, helping shape more sustainable cultural policies at the EU level.

Culture does not stand alone. Most examples featured in this collection show how arts and culture intersect with other urban priorities: climate action, green public procurement, circular economy, social inclusion, and citizen participation. They demonstrate that culture is not an afterthought. It is a driver of urban sustainability and transformation.

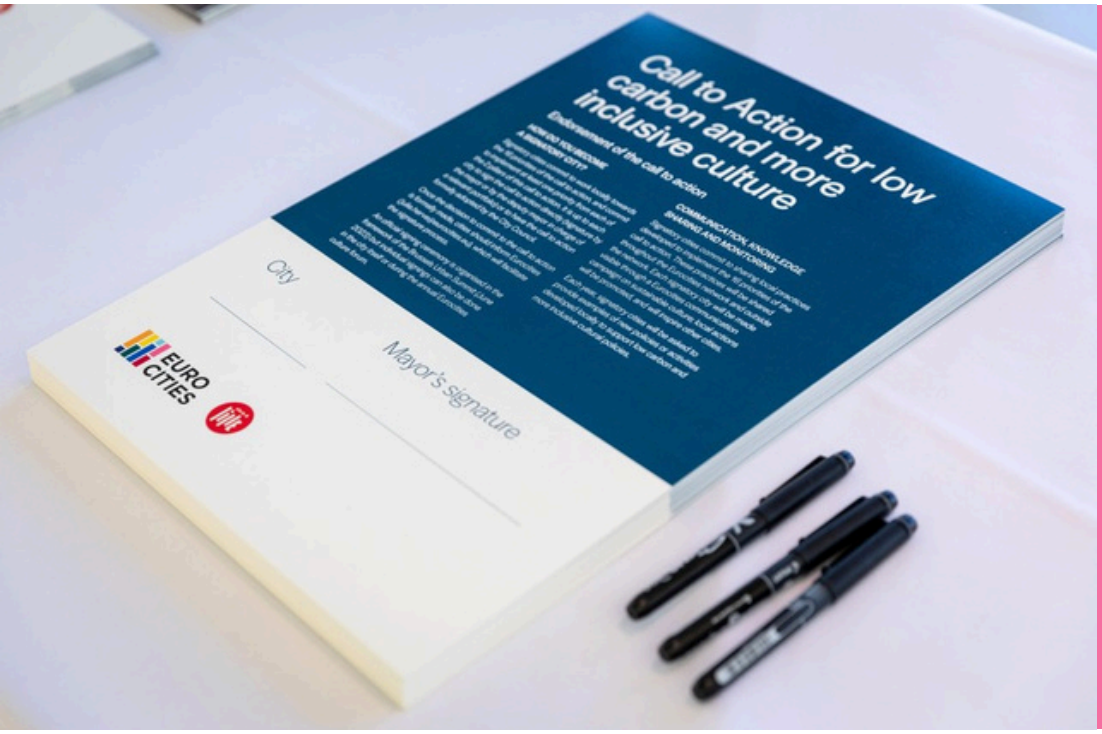
Cities are at the forefront of the fight against climate change, the push for more inclusive societies and towards systemic change. These challenges converge in cities, and it is at the local level that innovative and practical solutions emerge, close to people's everyday lives.

Cities are ready to act, but they can't do it alone. That's why we are calling for a shared European commitment to local, sustainable, and responsible cultural policies. The time to act is now! EU backing is essential to facilitate peer learning and the sharing of good practices, ensuring every city, no matter its size or starting point, can build a sustainable cultural future.

André Sobczak
Eurocities secretary general

What is the Eurocities Lille Call to Action?

A political commitment from mayors to develop cultural policies and initiatives that are more sustainable and inclusive.



This commitment is structured around 16 priorities, divided into two pillars:

- Pillar I: Ecological transition in the field of culture
- Pillar II: Inclusion in culture and through culture

By signing the Call to Action, cities commit to developing more sustainable and inclusive cultural policies and implementing and demonstrating at least one priority from each of these two pillars.

For more information on the Call to Action and how to sign it, click here or follow this QR code.

The Eurocities Lille Call to Action priorities

Pillar 1

Ecological transition in the field of culture

Priority 1 - Reducing the use of resources and using sustainable public procurement

Priority 2 - Preserving nature in urban areas when hosting events

Priority 3 - Rethinking mobility/reducing carbon emissions due to the mobility of artists and audiences

Priority 4 - Encouraging local artistic creation

Priority 5 - Facilitating connections between local cultural stakeholders

Priority 6 - Improving the energy efficiency of cultural buildings

Priority 7 - Assessing the environmental footprint of cultural events

Priority 8 - Using the potential of digital technology in a responsible way

Priority 9 - Training our staff and local actors on biodiversity and ecological issues

Priority 10 - Having specialists to carry out public policy objectives on sustainable culture

Pillar 2

Inclusion in culture and through culture

Priority 11 - Providing access to cultural programmes for all, ensuring that barriers to access to culture are addressed

Priority 12 - Developing ambitious cultural projects for vulnerable groups

Priority 13 - Taking creative climate action to improve health and wellbeing

Priority 14 - Strengthening cultural and artistic diversity

Priority 15 - Integrating gender issues and ensuring gender parity in local cultural policies

Priority 16 - Increasing citizen's participation in developing and implementing cultural policies

Which cities have signed the Call to Action to date?*



1. Amiens
2. Amsterdam
3. Arezzo
4. Birmingham
5. Bologna
6. Bonn
7. Bordeaux
8. Bourges
9. Braga
10. Bristol
11. Brno
12. Brussels Capital Region
13. Chemnitz
14. Clermont-Ferrand
15. Cluj-Napoca
16. Cologne
17. Colombes
18. Dresden
19. Edinburgh
20. Enschede
21. Essen
22. Espoo
23. Florence
24. Gdansk
25. Ghent
26. Gijón
27. Glasgow
28. Guimaraes
29. Helsinki
30. Kharkiv
31. Kortrijk
32. Leeds
33. Leuven
34. Leipzig
35. Lille
36. Ljubljana
37. Lyon Métropole
38. Malmo
39. Manchester
40. Montpellier
41. Munich
42. Nantes
43. Odunpazari
44. Osmangazi
45. Oulu
46. Reims
47. Rennes
48. Rouen
49. Rotterdam
50. Saint-Denis
51. Strasbourg
52. Tallinn
53. Tampere
54. Terrassa
55. Toulouse
56. Turin
57. Turku
58. Uppsala
59. Varna
60. Vienna

*November 2025

What our mayors say about the Eurocities Lille Call to Action



Ghent signs the call to action based on the conviction that culture is a lever to so much more: to more and better physical and mental space, to participation, and to a positive view of diversity.

Mathias De Clercq, Mayor of Ghent







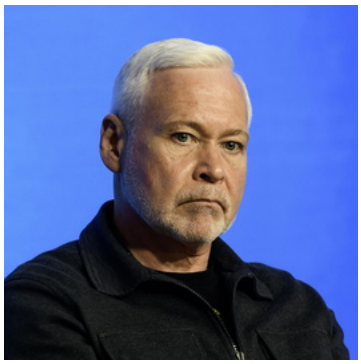






Preserving the best of cultural traditions and supporting human intellectual, aesthetic and social development are priorities in the strategy of any contemporary city that needs to live in peace.

Ihor Terekhov, Mayor of Kharkiv









By signing the Eurocities Lille Call to Action, we strongly believe that culture rooted in solidarity can shape democratic, resilient and sustainable cities.

Maximilian Kieturakis, Chairman of the Culture Committee, Gdansk



Environmental protection knows no borders. We propose a collective commitment at the European level for local sustainable and responsible cultural policies.

Marie-Pierre Bresson, Deputy Mayor of Lille

By jointly working together as cities, we can lead the way in driving positive change, sharing best practices and fostering a more inclusive and sustainable society which has room for diversity and where all people feel included.

Touria Meliani, Deputy Mayor of Amsterdam











Pillar I



Ecological transition in the field of culture

Priority 1

Reducing the use of resources and using sustainable public procurement



By signing the Call to Action, cities strive to choose the most sustainable solutions when organising cultural events, particularly through the choice of materials. This approach consists of consuming the least new material possible by: facilitating the circular economy; promoting the re-use of material and props; and helping local organisations share existing resources.

Cities commit to introducing a principle of sustainability and eco-responsibility in all new public contracts created, in order to implement responsible purchasing policies such as: committing to the principle of only purchasing what is necessary; favouring the purchase of materials that are sustainable over time and easily reusable; favouring second-hand purchases and encouraging the sharing of material.

Developing sustainable museum models

Lille – France

The City of Lille is committed to making its cultural sector sustainable, for its museums, this has translated to staging sustainable exhibitions. Experience Goya is a fitting example, the first intentionally ecologically-minded exhibition of the Museum of Fine Arts in Lille, held from October 2021 to February 2022.



Experience Goya, immersing audiences in the world of painter Francisco de Goya, was designed to be environmentally responsible throughout its production chain.



Environmental responsibility in the context of this exhibition involved:

- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions produced by the transportation of artworks by limiting the number of loans to 60.
- Designing exhibition scenography following the '6 R's': Rethink, Reduce, Replace, Reuse, Recycle, Repair.
- Using digital technology to support the project, paying specific attention to energy efficiency and sensible use.
- Calculating the exhibition's overall carbon footprint to evaluate the effectiveness of these efforts.

The experience was carefully documented and assessed, and the results of Experience Goya were compiled as a toolkit for museums beyond Lille to refer to.

A network of reused materials for museums

Gijon - Spain

To address sustainability and resource management challenges, the Gijon Municipal Museum Network supports the reuse of museum material across its eight museums.

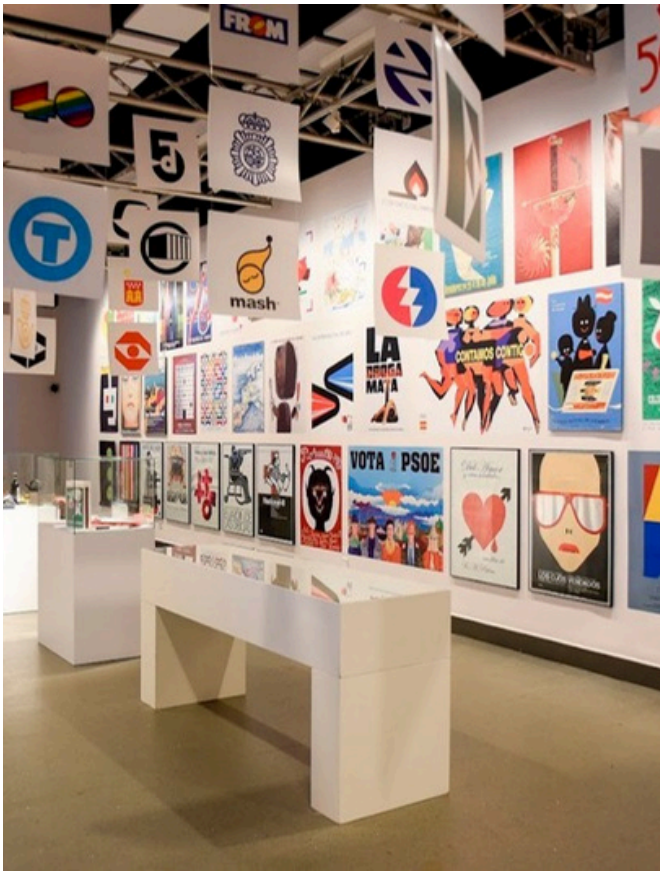
This practice aims to reduce costs, optimise storage, and reinforce the application of sustainability criteria in the museum sector.

Resources are centralised at the Antiguo Instituto Cultural Centre and are available for loan to all museums in the network. Materials such as furniture, multimedia equipment, and lighting are shared and reused for temporary exhibitions and events. This practice, first implemented decades ago, ensures resources are used efficiently and sustainably. For example, LED lighting and multimedia materials, such as video projectors and TVs, are reused across different sites, reducing the environmental and financial impact of acquiring new equipment.



Gijon's reuse system has had a significant impact, including:

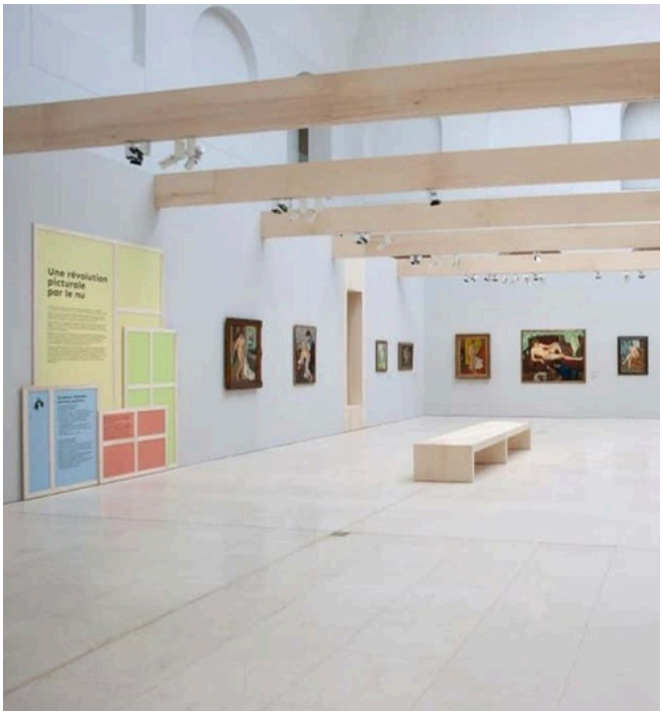
- Reduced costs and resource usage by sharing materials between museums.
- Enhanced curatorial possibilities with a diverse range of resources.
- Improved preventative conservation by ensuring optimal conditions for displaying artefacts.
- More sustainable and versatile acquisitions.



Funded by the Municipal Foundation of Culture, Education and the Popular University, the initiative is reviewed every year.

Sustainable practices in the Museum of Arts

Nantes - France





The Museum of Arts in Nantes places a strong emphasis on sustainability, embedding it as a guiding principle across its operations.

Beyond recycling materials used in exhibitions, the museum ensures that environmental considerations are systematically integrated into its procurement and production processes.

A large share of its exhibition infrastructure (including walls, beams, and benches) is reused from previous displays, with the same providers also handling both dismantling and recycling to minimise waste and emissions.

This circular approach not only reduces environmental impact but also fosters long-term partnerships with local suppliers. Looking ahead, the museum plans to collaborate more closely with other cultural institutions in Nantes by sharing storage spaces and resources, further optimising material reuse, improving resource efficiency, and strengthening the city's collective cultural ecosystem.



Municipal cultural recycling centre

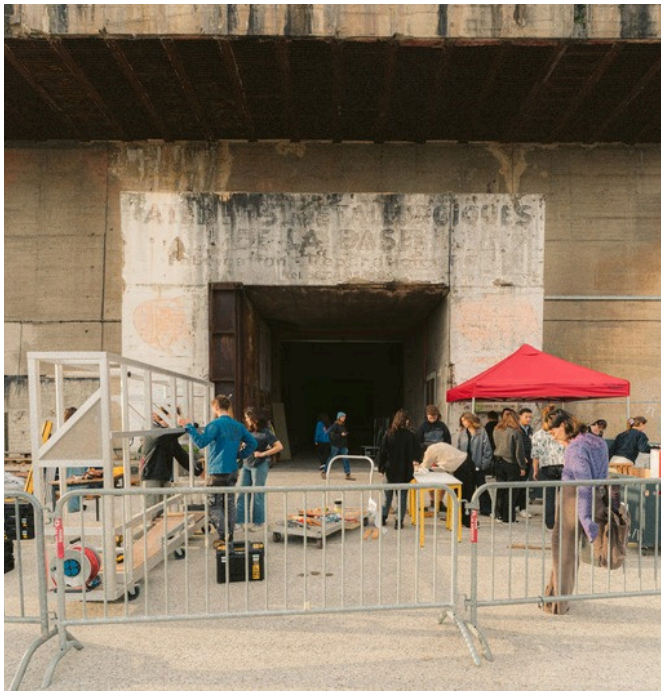
Bordeaux - France

Bordeaux's cultural recycling centre is France's first municipal recycling centre dedicated to cultural institutions. Housed in a WWII submarine base, it collects and redistributes unused exhibition materials, ranging from furniture to stage design, across 12 cultural institutions in the city. This way, the centre aims to reduce waste and embed eco-design into cultural production. The centre also aims to educate cultural staff on minimising resource waste and embedding eco-design into the production of cultural events and exhibitions.



As budgets for culture tighten across Europe, this circular model, 'combining municipal leadership with not-for-profit values', offers a smart and scalable blueprint for sustainable cultural infrastructure.

Now available for city-owned cultural organisations, resources from the centre will be accessible to all cultural actors in Bordeaux by early 2026. The municipality also aims to impose a reuse ratio for all exhibitions proposed by the city.



In figures, the Bordeaux Municipal recycling centre represents:

- 1400 square meters dedicated to storing cultural equipment for reuse.
- 10 tons of equipment collected (400 m3).
- 2.5 tons of equipment donated.
- 11 tons of CO2 emissions avoided.

Greening the stage: Sustainable theatre productions

Birmingham - United Kingdom

In 2023, Birmingham Rep Theatre, with the support of Birmingham City Council, declared a climate emergency and joined the Culture Declares movement to reduce its environmental impact.

The Theatre Green Book was created and adopted as a way to guide this process, offering practical solutions to reduce carbon footprints in theatre production, from material sourcing to energy use and tracking the lifecycle of productions.



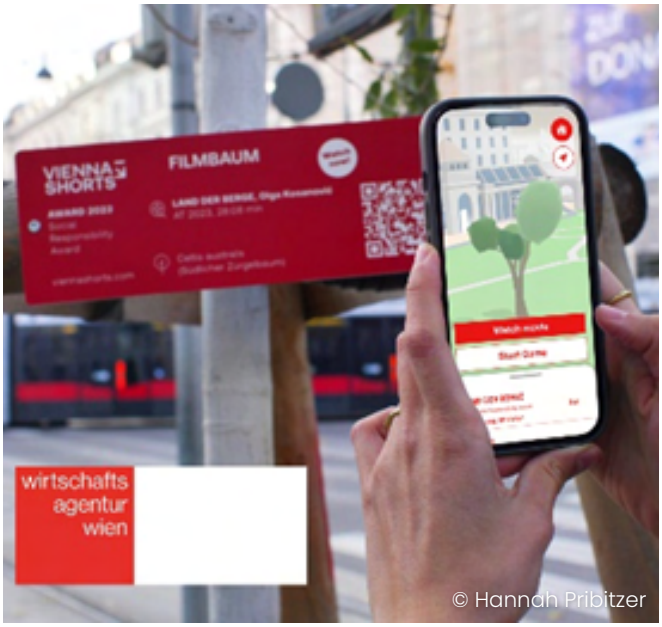


Impressive sustainability achievements have been made across productions. For example, the Rep Theatre's 2023 Christmas production of Little Red Riding Hood utilised 74.5% reused materials, with 79% planned for future reuse. These efforts are particularly important lessons for family shows, as the children in the audience today are the actors of tomorrow.

Trophy trees at the Vienna Short Film Festival

Vienna - Austria

> *The Vienna Short Film Festival has introduced an innovative and meaningful alternative to traditional trophy formats.*
> *By dedicating a tree in Vienna to the winners, the festival is sending an important signal for climate protection.*
>
> Jürgen Czernohorszky, City Councillor for the Environment.



These "trophy trees" are located across Vienna, each marked with a plaque featuring a QR code that allows visitors to stream the corresponding award-winning short film directly on their smartphone while standing beside the tree. Building on this creative use of public space, the city's film festival has also launched *Tree Trophy: Catch 'em if you can*, an augmented reality game that combines cinema with urban exploration.



Using gamification, the app turns the trees dedicated to the festival's award winners into interactive landmarks scattered around Vienna. Players can track them down, learn about the films, and earn rewards such as cinema tickets and festival passes, making the experience both playful and engaging.

The most sustainable European Capital of Culture

Oulu -Finland

Oulu is making significant progress in cultural and sustainable development in its journey to become European Capital of Culture, 2026. The Most Sustainable European Capital of Culture initiative, running from 2020 to 2023, aimed to help event organisers reduce the carbon footprint of large-scale cultural events in the region. Innovation testing was carried out between 2021 and 2023, focusing on improving energy efficiency, waste management, and low-emission event production. The initiative brought together event organisers, sustainability experts, and local communities, benefiting both cultural producers and the environment.

Despite initial setbacks due to the pandemic, the Most Sustainable Capital of Culture initiative was able to conduct over 14 innovation tests across 10 events. The innovation testing at Varjo Festival (pictured) was highly successful, with the staging built from recycled materials repurposed after the festival. Following the event, the materials were used to construct a permanent sauna, which remains in public use today. As part of the initiative, carbon footprints were also calculated for select events, and roadmaps were created to help reduce emissions.


© Kapina Oy / City of Oulu

Both events and innovators received positive feedback from audiences regarding the tests, and some partnerships appear to be continuing beyond the testing phase. The Sustainable Event Production Guide provides a solid foundation for a new sustainable event production model, ensuring that events organised in the region are increasingly environmentally responsible.

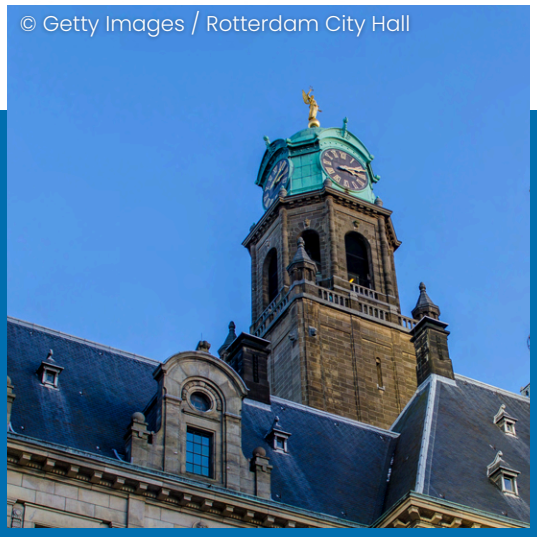

© City of Oulu

Total budget
EUR 614,503.00

Funding from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)
EUR 399,693.00

Priority 2

Preserving nature in urban areas when hosting events


© Getty Images / Rotterdam City Hall

To minimise the impact of cultural events, cities commit to respecting natural sites' biodiversity when hosting events in natural environments. This requires assessing sites prior to events and restoring them afterwards.


© City of Amiens

Adopting eco-responsible and inclusive approaches in festival organisation

Amiens - France

Every year from May to October, Amiens hosts the Hortillonages International Garden Festival, welcoming visitors to follow contemporary art trails across a group of garden blocks on the banks of the Somme river. The festival, located in a 300-hectare natural site in the heart of the city, supports architectural and artistic creations.

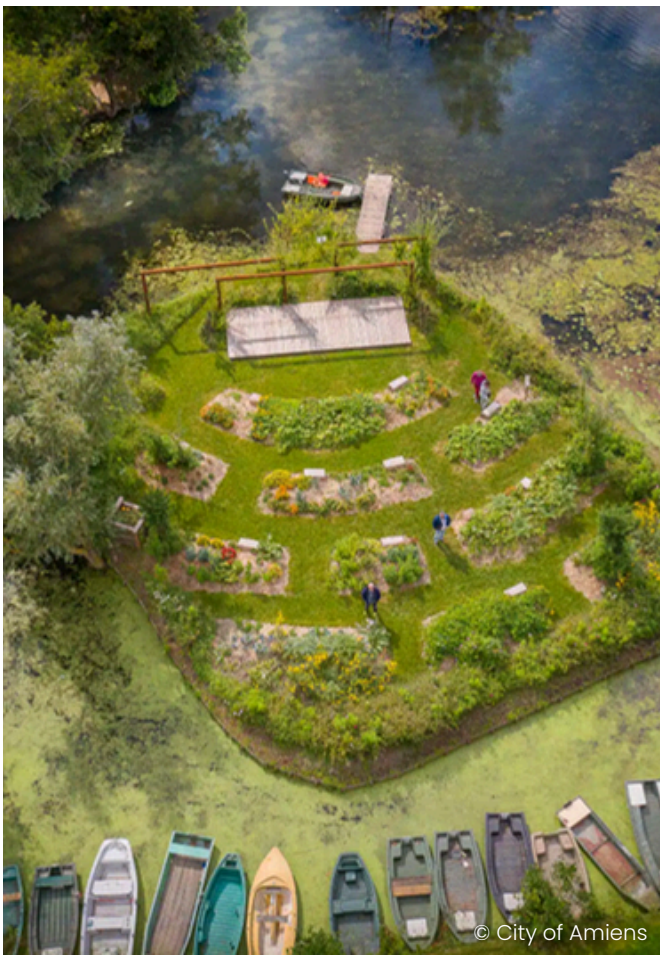
Artistic creations are designed to take full account of contemporary sustainable development issues and changing environmental challenges: preserving the eco-system and protecting weakening riverbanks, water resources, food production and food quality.

The festival also aims to promote and preserve Amiens' green heritage by offering meetings and workshops tailored to the needs of the public. It equally aims to contribute to the social economy by distributing the food produced in the gardens to the community and promoting social integration.


© City of Amiens

Over the past 14 editions, nearly 208 gardens and installations have been created by 322 landscape gardeners, visual artists and architects, attracting over 575,000 visitors and employing workers from integration projects to maintain gardens and civic service volunteers to welcome visitors.

In 2024, the international garden festival received the European Garden Award 2024 for the most beautiful contemporary European park and garden.


© City of Amiens

Towards a zero-waste festival

Ljubljana - Slovenia

> *Sustainable and inclusive culture is one of the elements securing the survival of the planet.*
>
> Dejan Crnek, Deputy Mayor, Ljubljana


© Nada Zgank

For over 20 years, Bunker, a Ljubljana-based NGO supported by the city, has embedded ecological thinking into the organisation of the international Mladi Levi Festival. Since 2004, the organisation has co-financed and managed the Old Power Station, transforming it into a vibrant contemporary cultural centre.

In 2024, Bunker joined the GREENSTAGE consortium, a Creative Europe initiative developed in collaboration with international partners and the city of Ljubljana. The project aims to design a comprehensive greening strategy for festivals, with the ambitious goal of achieving zero waste by 2026.

Bunker has adopted several eco-friendly measures, from using biodegradable cleaning products and eliminating single-use plastics to prioritising plant-based catering, reusing technical and scenographic materials, and encouraging audiences to travel by bicycle or public transport.

The festival also promotes green travel among international artists and has significantly reduced printed promotional materials, relying mainly on digital communication channels.

Despite its strong commitment, Bunker continues to face several challenges in reducing its carbon footprint. Limited public transportation options in Slovenia (particularly, the lack of a modern rail network) make eco-friendly travel difficult. Financial barriers also persist, as sustainable materials often come at a higher cost than conventional ones.

These systemic obstacles highlight that achieving lasting change requires collaboration beyond the cultural sector. Bunker advocates for stronger partnerships between culture, transport, logistics, and policy actors to effectively reduce emissions and build a more sustainable future.


© Nada Zgank

Building environmental awareness through summer library programmes

Kharkiv - Ukraine

Kharkiv actively promotes biodiversity conservation through educational campaigns at various events.

In recent years and despite the war, the city has continued the "Summer with the Library" project aimed at children and teenagers. Public libraries organise outdoor art sessions, interactive quests, and hiking trips, where participants explore the local flora and fauna and learn to identify plants.



© Maple Hope Foundation



These activities include exhibitions highlighting the importance of biodiversity and ways children can contribute to environmental conservation.

By blending educational and recreational elements, the initiative fosters active participation and enhances environmental awareness among young participants.

A sustainable deal for events

Rotterdam - The Netherlands


© Getty Images

In recent years, Rotterdam has worked to make its festivals and events increasingly sustainable. With nearly five million people attending these events each year, festivals offer a significant opportunity to promote eco-friendly practices and raise awareness about sustainability.

In 2020, alongside 11 festival organisers, Rotterdam Festivals and the municipality committed to the Sustainable Deal; a three-year agreement with a budget of €300,000 from the municipality, to reduce their joint CO_2 footprint and work collaboratively on sustainability challenges.

From 2022 to 2024, the group focused on practical solutions in areas such as energy use, transport, waste, and reducing single-use plastics. Festival organisers shared experiences and developed actions together, including using cleaner power sources, improving waste systems, and creating more sustainable food options.

Rotterdam municipality concluded that blanket rules and enforcement do not effectively contribute to making festivals more sustainable. Every festival is different, so a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work. Sustainability flourishes with intrinsic motivation, custom solutions and close cooperation between festival organisers and the government.

After these three years, the municipality of Rotterdam has continued its efforts and aims to share the knowledge gained more widely across the sector, helping other festivals to take similar steps. Rotterdam Festivals, a leading coordinator of the deal, will also continue its efforts to support more sustainable festivals.


© City of Rotterdam

Priority 3

Rethinking mobility / reducing carbon emissions due to the mobility of artists and audiences


© David Alvarez Lopez / Gijon City Hall

Cities committed to the call to action will act on sustainable mobility when organising cultural events (festivals, concerts, exhibitions) with the following ambitions: avoiding unnecessary travel; shortening or sharing unavoidable travel; encouraging soft and active mobility and the use of low-carbon vehicles.

This approach will apply to the mobility of local actors organising cultural events but also to the mobility of artists, artworks, equipment and especially audiences.


© Dave Porter

Greening cultural mobility

Rennes - France



The movement of artworks, artists and audiences is the main source of greenhouse gas emissions in the cultural sector. Culture is also the third most common reason for mobility of the French, after work and shopping, as highlighted by The Shift Project's report 'Decarbonising Culture' (November 2021), which warns of the sectors' heavy dependence on fossil fuels, making it particularly vulnerable to energy shocks.

Rennes Métropole partnered with the Shift Project (a think tank of national experts on decarbonisation from all backgrounds and sectors) to make the city's cultural policy more eco-friendly, particularly regarding the mobility of visitors to cultural facilities. In 2023, Rennes and Rennes Métropole developed a strategy for The Ecological Transition in the Directorate of Culture which includes an ambitious roadmap to green mobility.

Key measures of the strategy include suggestions to:

- Carry out audience mobility surveys, to be updated every 3 years.
- Develop a decarbonised mobility roadmap for each of the 9 cultural establishments under the city's direct management.
- Reduce the travel of artistic teams, while maintaining the diversity of programming and openness to new teams.
- Reduce audience travel.
- Reduce the movement of artworks (experiment with exhibitions without loans or with a single lender, relying on the permanent collections of heritage institutions in Rennes).
- Improve facilities for cyclists by increasing the number of bicycle stands in front of cultural facilities.
- Develop the use of public transportation, and encourage behavioural change; for instance, through an incentive pricing policy or media-based communication campaigns.
- Improve and guarantee access to culture for all, with particular attention to people with disabilities.


© Decarbonising Culture / The Shift Project

Joint tickets to tackle emissions

Turku - Finland

Turku is addressing the environmental impact of public transportation linked to cultural participation by introducing an innovative joint ticketing system that combines access to cultural events and public transport.

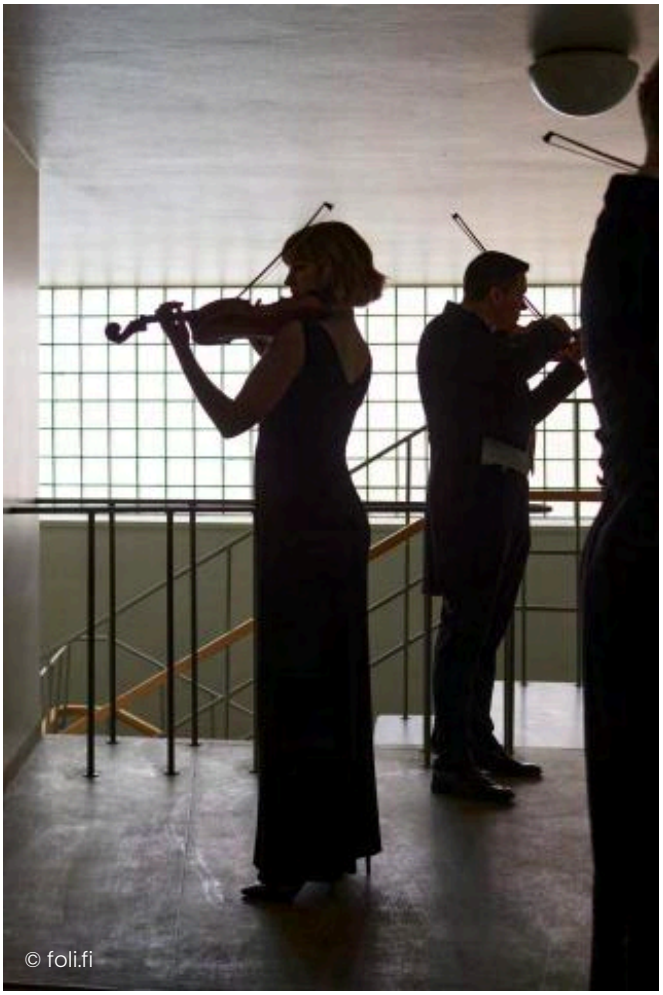
This aims to make sustainable mobility an integral part of the city's cultural experience, reducing emissions generated by audience travel while encouraging greater attendance at local events.

The public transport provider Föli operates across Turku and its surrounding municipalities, with the same tickets valid throughout the entire network. This seamless system allows visitors to move easily between venues and districts without relying on private vehicles. The joint ticket currently covers eight major cultural and sports institutions, including performances at the Turku City Theatre, concerts by the Turku Philharmonic Orchestra, and matches of the HC TPS ice hockey team.


© foli.fi

By linking culture and mobility, Turku demonstrates how coordinated local policies can enhance accessibility, strengthen cultural participation and contribute to the city's broader climate goals.

Encouraged by the positive response, the municipality is now exploring ways to expand the scheme to include more venues and events, making sustainable travel an everyday choice for audiences across the region.


© foli.fi

Get to cultural venues sustainably

Uppsala - Sweden

Uppsala is committed to improving sustainability across all sectors, including mobility to cultural events. Carried out as part of a collaboration between the municipalitty's Departments of Culture and Communications, Res hit hållbart (Travel here sustainably) is an initiative launched in 2024. The initiative focuses on providing visitors to cultural events in Uppsala with easy access to environmentally friendly travel options, such as public transport, cycling, and walking.

This includes adding clear and accessible travel information to the websites of cultural attractions and events, and highlighting public transport routes, cycling paths and walking routes. Additionally, the city promotes carpooling and prioritises limited parking near cultural venues. While not directly altering transport routes, the initiative aims to facilitate the use of sustainable mobility by providing accessible and practical information for visitors.





Educating young people on the use of sustainable mobility

Gijon - Spain

Cities have become heavily reliant on private cars, contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Road transport accounts for a fifth of these emissions, with light vehicles responsible for around 70% (European Commission).

To meet the EU's 2050 climate neutrality goal, Gijon focuses on educating younger generations to shift cultural attitudes towards sustainable mobility.

Through cycling-based initiatives, the city aims to reduce emissions, improve public health, and foster a more sustainable urban environment.

Gijon promotes sustainable mobility among students through three key activities:

- A Bike School, which teaches children how to cycle safely and independently, equipping them with practical skills for responsible urban cycling and fostering environmental awareness.
- Bike Buses, which provide a sustainable transport option for school trips, like visits to museums, with two supervisors guiding students by bike, reducing the need for car travel.
- 'Discovering Gijón by pedalling', which offers guided bike tours exploring the city's urban planning, heritage, and history, while utilising cycle lanes and traffic-calmed roads.

In the 2023-2024 academic year, 1,429 students participated in these activities. Feedback from teachers has been overwhelmingly positive, with some schools taking the initiative to organise similar activities independently. These programmes have also been expanded to after-school activities for children, young people, and adults.

Contracting processes are currently underway to guarantee the activities for a minimum period of two years, with the possibility of extension. The activities are expected to continue, with an institutional commitment to maintain them in the coming years.


© City of Gijon

2025-2026 Total budget
EUR 22,092.86

The activities are funded by the Municipal Foundation of Culture, Education and UP (Popular University)

Priority 4

Encouraging local artistic creation





Cites who commit to the Lille Call to Action strive for cultural activities to be as locally produced as possible.

This approach should be cross-cutting, focusing on the origin of the materials and consumables needed to organise cultural activities and, as much as possible, supporting local artists and creators from all artistic disciplines.

Supporting local culture through the Guido d'Arezzo Foundation

Arezzo - Italy

The municipality of Arezzo aims to make cultural activities as locally produced as possible. This approach encompasses all aspects, from sourcing materials and consumables for organising events to supporting local artists and creators across all artistic disciplines.

Promoting local culture is a key priority in the Guido d'Arezzo (GdA) Foundation's plan. The GdA Foundation, a joint initiative of the Tuscany Region, the Municipality and Province of Arezzo and the Friends of Music Association of Arezzo turns the proposals of local artists and associations into public services and projects. Each year, the Foundation publishes a call for proposals for local associations, offering grants to support activities such as theater, music, dance, and literary events.







An online cultural bank to increase local artists' visibility

Tampere - Finland

The City of Tampere's online Pirkanmann kulttuuripankki (the Pirkanmann Culture Bank), showcases local artists and cultural creators, with the aim to increase their visibility, employability, and opportunities for collaboration.

By Autumn 2024, the Culture Bank featured over 6000 artists and more than 4000 cultural and artistic services, ranging from comic book workshops to concerts and film festival productions.

Free to use, the platform is open to artists in Pirkanma and 14 surrounding regions.


© Silvan Bachmann for Getty Images


© City of Tampere

The Culture Bank both helps local artists thrive and encourages the use of locally sourced materials and services. It has received positive feedback and is marketed widely to various organisations to promote the use of art in different contexts.

For example, for the local waste management organisation, the platform has helped to find and purchase cultural services. For several years, the organisation utilised cultural services to create educational campaigns for schools.

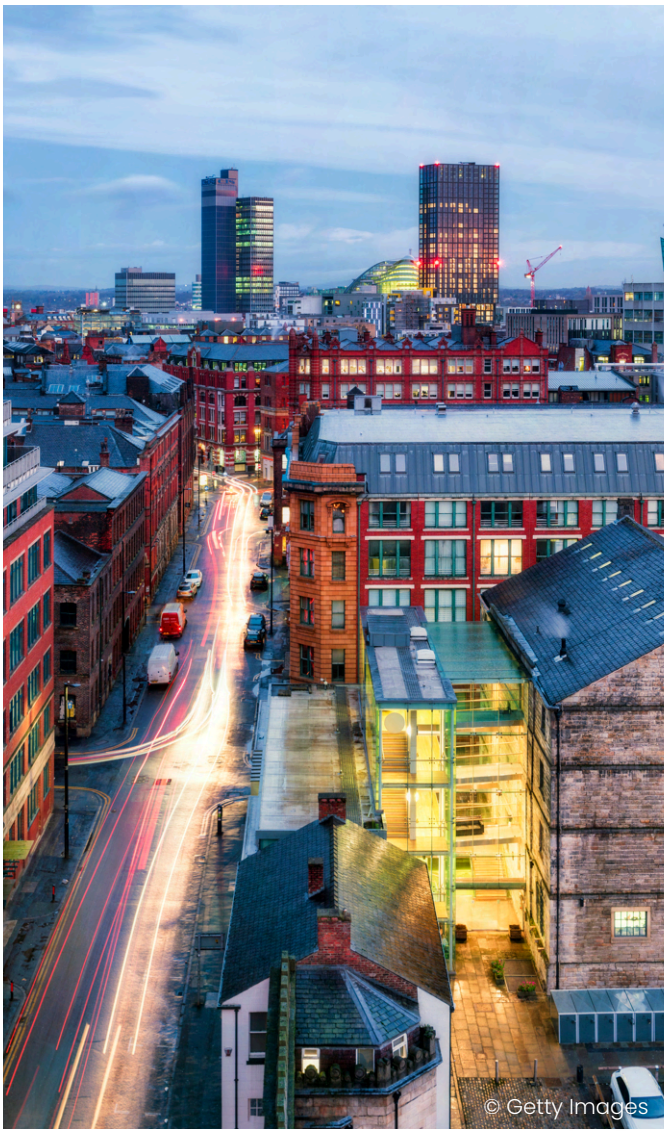
Through these efforts, Tampere ensures that local culture flourishes and that local artistic creation is at the forefront of cultural activities.

There is a current and ongoing project to expand the online Culture Bank to cover multiple regions, led by the City of Tampere and funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture (EU Next Generation).

Culture Awards: Made in Manchester

Manchester - United Kingdom

Manchester encourages local artistic creation by weighting 30% of any procured services the Council makes against the social value commitment to the community. Additionally, 10% of this weighting is allocated to Zero Carbon commitments. This includes supporting local artists, commissioning local organisations and implementing green processes.





The annual culture awards have a dedicated award called 'Made in Manchester', which recognises the unique and amazing forms of creativity that are found in Manchester.

For this award, Manchester is particularly keen to capture art forms that have been less frequently represented in the awards to date.

Furthermore, the city continues to monitor funded organisations, asking them to report on the number of local artists they work with in the city and encouraging them to commission local artists where possible.

New cultural policy to strengthen local creation

Enschede - The Netherlands

The signing of the Eurocities Lille Call to Action coincided with the development of a new cultural policy in Enschede.

Inclusivity, diversity, sustainability and increasing citizen's participation were major priorities in the development and implementation of Enschede's new cultural policy and led to instrumental partnerships between the municipality and local cultural partners.

New and increased prospects for cultural subsidies allowed for the creation of a level playing field, giving equal access for artists and organisations to apply for multiannual municipal support.



Enschede's cultural policy (Cultuurnota), adopted in December 2023 and rolled out in 2024, expands physical, financial, and creative opportunities for artists, recent graduates, and small to mid-sized cultural organisations. The introduction of multiannual subsidies supports young creatives, collectives, and communities in building a more diverse and stable cultural scene.

A total of €2.9 million was allocated for these four-year subsidies, primarily benefiting smaller organisations and cultural makers.

Nineteen groups were selected, representing a young, diverse, and internationally oriented cultural community. Applicants comply with national sustainability standards, including the governance culture code, fair practice code, and cultural diversity code.

Developed through close collaboration between municipal administrators and cultural actors, the policy emerged from joint meetings, workshops, and discussions that fostered a shared vision. This cooperation has strengthened ties between the city and its cultural sector, enhancing artistic and cultural diversity across Enschede.



€

2024-2027 Total budget
EUR 2,896,000.00

Exclusively for cultural makers and small to medium-sized organisations.

Priority 5

Facilitating connections between local cultural stakeholders


© City of Ghent

The role of municipal authorities is central when it comes to bringing the local cultural sector together.

Cities commit to supporting local cultural and creative actors in their sustainability efforts, for example by promoting the exchange of innovative practices between actors, by providing common support services or facilitating contacts and joint projects with actors outside the culture sector.

Greentrack Ghent: the sustainability ‘think and do tank’ of the cultural sector

Ghent - Belgium

Originally a network of 56 cultural organisations, Greentrack Ghent has now become part of the 'Gents Kunstenoverleg' (the Arts Council of Ghent), uniting all stakeholders in the city's artistic imagination.

Greentrack helps members collect environmental performance data, create action plans, and implement sustainable initiatives, focusing on areas like mobility, waste, food, water and energy.


© Sean Pavone for Alamy


© City of Ghent

The organisation collaborates closely with the city of Ghent to reduce CO2 emissions and explore climate adaptation strategies, aligning their efforts to enhance the city's overall sustainability.

One of the key features of Greentrack Ghent is its ten guidelines for a sustainable cultural scene which serve as the basis for all the sustainable actions taken by the organisation and are embraced by all 56 members.

Vienna Climate Biennale 2024

Vienna - Austria

The inaugural edition of the Vienna Climate Biennale in 2024 encompassed a programme focusing on sustainability, art and alternative approaches to climate change.

The event positioned the city of Vienna as a pioneer in addressing current ecological challenges through culture.


© Paul Bauer

Over 100 days, the programme focused on the potential of art, design, architecture and science to contribute to a sustainable future that is both viable and desirable, as well as on the social impact of climate change.

In collaboration with over 100 institutions, initiatives and organisations, the Vienna Climate Biennale shared the findings of the climate debate with a broad audience.

Established arts institutions and festivals, including Belvedere 21, the Weltmuseum and the Wiener Festwochen, representatives of Vienna's independent art scene and civil society organisations were also involved.

The Biennale benefits from substantial financial and content-related support from three City of Vienna departments: climate, culture and economy.

The event featured a diverse range of activities, including exhibitions, discourse formats, talks, lectures, dialogue discussions, panels, concerts, symposia, processions, an activism camp, a climate summit, reading series, interventions, performances, workshops, dialogue tours, guided tours, and, of course, parties.

The 2024 biennale attracted over 225.000 visitors. The urgency of the global climate crisis was conveyed to this audience through 30 exhibitions and 780 events across 87 venues.

Climate Protection Network for independent cultural institutions

Leipzig - Germany

A climate protection network for the independent cultural scene was founded in Leipzig in June 2024, marking an important step towards integrating environmental responsibility into the city's vibrant creative ecosystem.

The initiative brings together 22 independent organisations, associations and institutions from across the cultural spectrum, from small collectives and art spaces to larger cultural venues, united by a shared commitment to reducing their ecological footprint.


© Rudy Balasko for Getty Images


© City of Leipzig

The network's main goal is to familiarise its members and stakeholders with sustainable practices, supporting them in developing concrete measures and long-term strategies to make their work more environmentally conscious. Through collaboration and shared learning, it aims to build a stronger, more resilient cultural community that leads by example in tackling climate challenges.

To ensure this process is well guided, the city's culture department has commissioned experienced experts to coordinate the network's activities. These experts organise regular meetings, workshops and exchange sessions, offering participants professional advice and tailored support to help each organisation advance its own sustainability agenda. This demonstrates Leipzig's belief that cultural life and climate protection can go hand in hand, inspiring others to follow a similar path toward a greener cultural future.

Priority 6

Improving the energy efficiency of cultural buildings


© City of Guimaraes


© Miguel Oliveira / City of Guimaraes

Energy efficiency is key to reducing the energy consumption of cultural buildings.

As owners of heritage and cultural buildings, cities commit to improving the energy efficiency of such buildings by supporting cultural organisations in finding technical solutions to reduce their energy consumption and/or produce renewable energy on site.

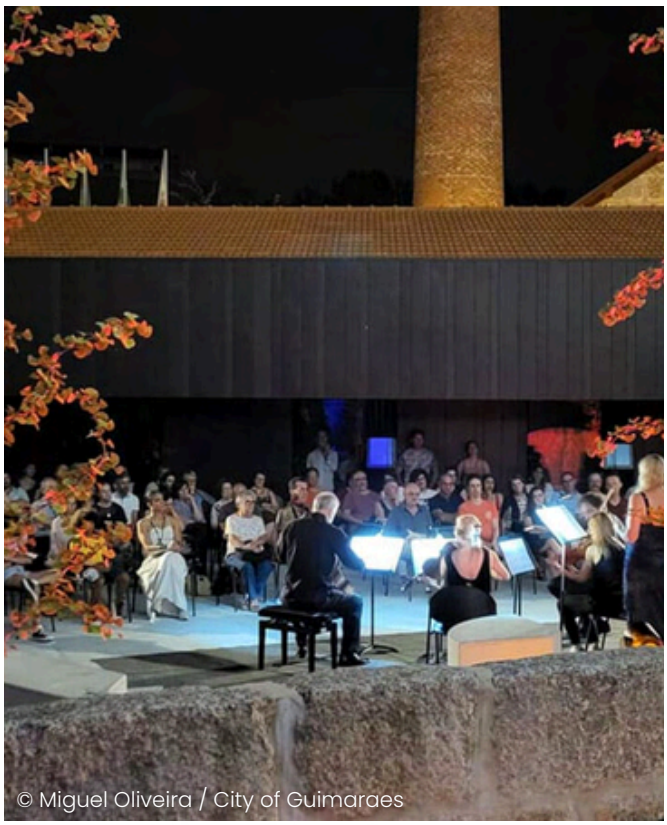
District C: Zero-carbon commitment

Guimaraes – Portugal

District C in Guimaraes is a former factory space which has been transformed into hubs for science and creativity. It is at the forefront of achieving carbon neutrality as part of the NetZeroCities Pilot Programme.

With a €1M budget over two years, District C has fostered decarbonisation by addressing energy, mobility, waste, and land use emissions, while promoting behavioural change, social innovation, culture, sustainable finance and green technology.


© Miguel Oliveira / City of Guimaraes


© Miguel Oliveira / City of Guimaraes

Central to this initiative is the Citizen's Pact for neutrality and co-creation processes, ensuring strong citizen engagement alongside local actors and stakeholders.

The project aims to drive systemic transformation in the neighbourhood. This is done through measures such as encouraging public transport use, improving energy efficiency, supporting local renewable energy production, particularly historic buildings and implementing circular economy strategies.

The outcomes will serve as a model to be replicated and scaled across the city.

Wien Museum: Renovate, refurbish and reduce CO2 emissions

Vienna - Austria



The Wien Museum is a general-purpose metropolitan museum with a wide range of collections and exhibitions on themes from the history of the city to art, fashion and modern culture, from the earliest settlements to the present day.

Built and opened in the 1950s, the museum's collections, exhibitions and activities have since grown, leading to an inevitable need for increased capacity.

After a long debate on the location, Vienna City Council decided to refurbish and expand the Wien Museum on Karlplatz. The expansion and refurbishment doubles the museum space to 12,000 m² and creates a modern, centrally located city museum for Vienna's residents and tourists.

The museum's new energy management systems, from geothermal and solar power to green roofs and intelligent building services, make it a state-of-the-art sustainable building.

The landscaping in front of the museum, with its added greenery and water features, is also a significant upgrade for Karlsplatz square.





Counter for heritage and sustainability

Amsterdam - The Netherlands

To align with the Paris Agreement's sustainability goals, the city of Amsterdam has committed to making all buildings, including its many monuments and heritage sites, more sustainable. However, preserving the cultural and historical value of these buildings while introducing sustainability measures presents particular challenges.

The city launched the "Counter for Heritage and Sustainability" to address this, by guiding residents and property owners in making their buildings more sustainable without compromising their historic value.

Before 2021, residents and property owners often struggled to navigate rules and regulations, frequently finding it difficult to connect with the right person within the city's organisation.



The process has since improved, with individuals now being properly directed and receiving timely responses.

Several initiatives have been introduced on a digital platform, including interactive maps, online webinars, informational gatherings, and the creation of policy documents for personalised guidance on navigating sustainability efforts.

This enables residents, property owners, and organisations to easily access advice on implementing sustainable measures, such as installing solar panels or improving energy efficiency, while respecting heritage values.



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Funding January 2021 - December 2022
EUR 150,000.00

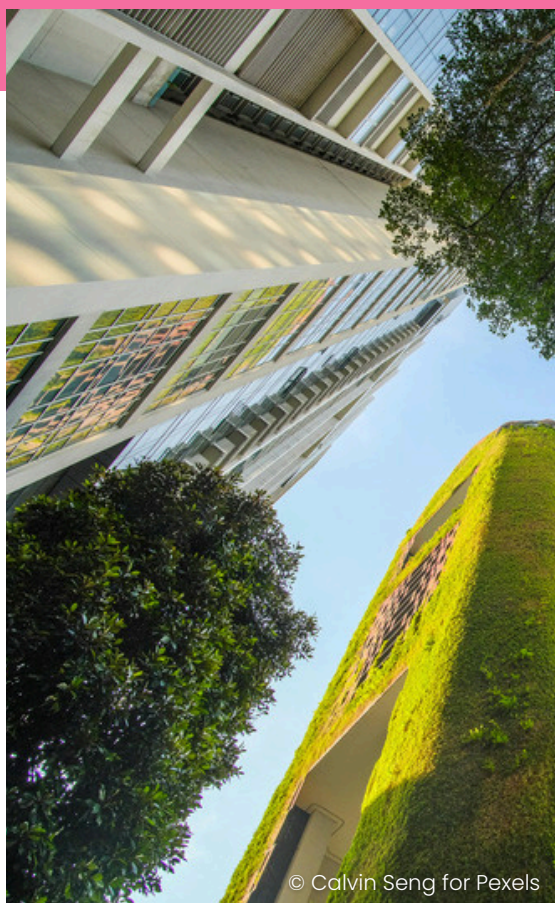
Funding January 2023 - December 2027
EUR 300,000.00/year

Priority 7

Assessing the environmental footprint of cultural events


© Leipzig Old Town Hall / Getty Images

Cities commit to producing, as far as it is possible, the most exhaustive carbon report possible (ideally SCOPE 3) and life cycle analysis for every cultural event organised.


© Calvin Seng for Pexels

Carbon calculator for institutions

Dresden & Leipzig – Germany

In December 2022, the cities of Leipzig and Dresden joined forces with local organisations to develop a carbon calculator for the cultural sector that is free of charge and available to all cultural institutions and organisations in both cities.



© Jana Hekner



For the first time, a web tool is available to determine the main emission sources for cultural operations, such as audience travel, catering, touring or the purchase and transport of materials.

The E-Tool Culture is a high-quality and long-term solution developed in accordance with global standards (Greenhouse Gas Protocol). The data is anonymised and stored centrally, so that different years are comparable. There are also numerous additional tools, with a survey tool for quick and easy recording and analysing audience arrivals and departures.


© Jana Hekner

The CO2 calculator can be used permanently and free of charge by all cultural institutions and organisers nationwide:

www.e-tool.de

Public art and the climate impact calculation tool

Uppsala - Sweden

Uppsala is working to reduce the climate impact of art productions while connecting artistic initiatives with sustainable urban development. The challenge is to ensure that public art projects contribute to both social and ecological sustainability.

In 2024, the Public Art Unit of the Uppsala Municipality, together with Tyrén, a consulting company working in urban development, launched a climate impact calculation tool for public art designed to help reduce the environmental footprint of artistic projects.

This tool analyses and compares the climate impact of different materials and production methods, enabling decision-makers to make more sustainable choices.





The climate impact calculation tool is part of a broader effort to integrate sustainability in public art initiatives and urban planning. In parallel, Uppsala is working on the Climate Protocol, a local climate agreement between the private and public sectors to reduce the city's climate emissions. The network has 44 members, consisting of companies, public agencies, universities and associations.

Additionally, the city is exploring sustainable urban transformation through projects like the new business and innovation district Främre Boländerna, where public art plays a key role in regenerating the industrial area.

These efforts align with Uppsala's long-term vision of combining art with sustainable urban development, demonstrating how cultural initiatives actively contribute to a city's ecological goals.

Scoring and rating events for improved sustainability

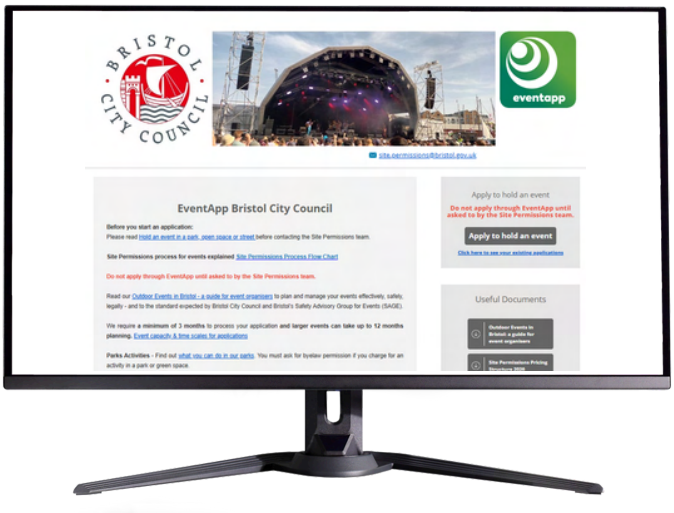
Bristol - United Kingdom

To better align cultural events with its sustainability and inclusion goals, Bristol City Council redesigned its 2025 event application process.

The updated expression of interest form goes beyond logistics, and asks organisers to reflect on key areas such as energy use, transport, waste, food and drink, accessibility, inclusion, and community relevance.

Responses are scored and rated, with results adjusted for event size and type, ensuring that small community events are assessed fairly alongside large commercial ones. Each organiser receives a personalised report with their scores and practical guidance for improvement.

Follow-up meetings provide space for dialogue, helping the Council understand organisers' challenges and offering targeted support.




© Victor Huang for Getty Images

Developed using free tools like Google Forms and Sheets, the system requires no external funding, though staff time is key for analysis and engagement.

Moving to a dedicated Events App in 2026 will streamline the process further, while maintaining the scoring and rating system.

Tips from the process so far include:

- Allowing sufficient time to design and test the process.
- Tailoring questions to reflect your city's specific goals and priorities.
- Using the data collected to identify both organiser needs and areas where the city can improve, such as infrastructure gaps.

Priority 8

Using the potential of technology in a responsible way



Using digital technology can help reduce unnecessary travel and thus reduce the environmental impact of cities' activities. However, our digital habits must also evolve, as greenhouse gas emissions from the digital sector are increasing year upon year.

Cities are aware of the importance of assessing the environmental impact of our digital use, and commit to developing and implementing sustainable solutions that minimise carbon emissions from digital technologies.

Considering the carbon footprint of digital culture

Toulouse - France

Toulouse's cultural institutions are re-evaluating their technological approach to reducing their carbon impact.

Toulouse's library documentary information system is being replaced, designed to minimise its environmental footprint. Eco-design issues have been taken into account from earliest stage of identification, with a specialist consultancy firm commissioned to advise on the project.

From 2019 onwards, the Quai des Savoirs, a component of the Department of Scientific, Technical and Industrial Culture of Toulouse Metropole, also chose to prioritise documenting podcasts, because audio consumes less bandwidth, and therefore less energy. The curation team behind the podcasts prioritises the development of long-term formats to build audiences and mobilise their communities.





Two examples of these podcasts include:

- Détour vers le Futur (Detour to the Future), a podcast looking at contemporary research topics from the point of view of imagination and society.

- Sans réserves (Without restrictions), a podcast addressed to cultural professionals which looks at the diverse ways to transmit and share knowledge.

In June 2024, an episode of Sans Reserve/s, discussed how to deploy new digital technology for cultural mediation while limiting its carbon footprint.

Rethinking tourism: FeelFlorence experience app

Florence - Italy


© Dico Baskoro

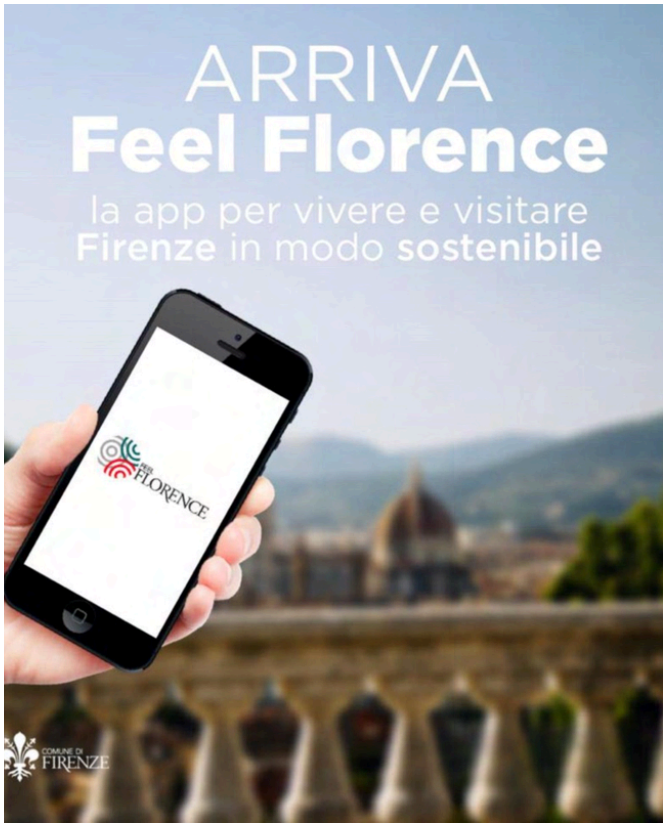
Tourist management is a key challenge for the city of Florence. After the record-breaking year of 2019, with 15.9 million overnight stays in Florence, and the challenges surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of visitors is once again on the rise, drawn by the city's exceptional historical, cultural, and natural heritage.

In 2024, Florence recorded 10,330,000 overnight stays. Unfortunately, visitor activity remains heavily concentrated in the small historic centre, which occupies just 5 km² within the city's total area of 105 km².

FeelFlorence is a free application which offers visitors unexpected itineraries. It facilitates the discovery of new experiences including traditional and artisan workshops and recommendations for lesser-known museums.

It goes beyond the historic city centre, extending into the surrounding areas and the metropolitan region. The app aims to bring tourists closer to local experiences and to avoid over-tourism in central areas of the city.

The app was developed by the city and metropolitan area and has since been extended to the 41 local municipalities.



Priority 9

Training city staff and local actors on biodiversity and ecological issues


© Getty Images

Adaptation to climate change and the preservation of biodiversity are two essential elements to ensuring a collective ecological transition.

Cities commit to increasing the awareness and skills of staff throughout their administrations, regarding both biodiversity and ecological issues, as well as issues linked to inclusion.

Helping cultural organisations reduce their carbon emissions

Manchester - United Kingdom

Zero Carbon Culture is a guide to help Manchester's cultural organisations go green. The online guide was produced for Manchester City along with Julie's Bicycle, a not-for-profit supporting environmental action across the arts.

The development of Zero Carbon Culture was informed by discussions with a group of 16 of Manchester's cultural organisations, many of them members of GMAST (Greater Manchester Arts Sustainability Team).


© Mario Spencer for Pexels


© Ruth Davey / Julie's Bicycle

The guide provides inspiration on the forms of action cultural organisations in Manchester can take, depending on who they are and what they do. It has been developed in line with the priorities and actions outlined in the Manchester Climate Change Framework.

It focuses on actions taken to reduce harm on the planet without incurring major costs and without major capital investment. For each area, there is a summary of different types of actions and signposting for further resources and support. At the end of the guide, additional resources covering topics such as skills, training and programming are also provided.

The Climate Class: a pioneering training programme for cultural professionals

Strasbourg - France


© Jerome Dorkel / City of Strasbourg

The Climate Class is an innovative, practical training programme launched in January 2024 to meet the challenges of ecological transition in the cultural sector. Designed for cultural professionals in Strasbourg and its Eurometropole, the Climate Class aims to raise awareness of environmental issues and provide practical tools to take effective action.

The first part of the Climate Class took place over a four-month period, from January to March 2024 and was structured around two days of plenary training and interactive workshops.

In addition, eight thematic modules of four hours each were offered, covering a variety of fundamental topics: circular economy and eco-design, responsible communication, biodiversity, careful use of technical and technological resources, energy design, eco-responsible broadcasting techniques and public and professional mobility.

More than a hundred professionals representing over sixty different cultural organisations, as well as production facilities, have benefited from this training. The Climate Class has succeeded in creating a common knowledge base on the main axes of ecological transition for the cultural sector.

The first stage of the Climate Class marks the starting point of collective commitment to less carbon-intensive and more environmentally-aware culture. The Climate Class takes a systemic approach to integrating environment and people into cultural practices, aspiring towards responsible, sustainable and supportive creative processes.



Ensuring staff and local cultural actors are trained on ecological and biodiversity issues

Turku - Finland

The city of Turku aims to ensure that biodiversity and ecological issues are widely recognised and taken seriously amongst their own staff and local cultural actors. To do so, Turku organises education for administrative staff and partner organisations.

Capacity building in cultural organisations gives the city greater possibility to achieve its aims, while co-created education helps NGOs seamlessly incorporate sustainable development in their own agenda.

Cultural institutions in Turku, such as Turku City Theatre and Turku Museum Centre are applying principles and guidelines from EcoCompass. EcoCompass is a Finnish environmental management system to make operations more sustainable, prevent environmental risks, identify their most relevant environmental impacts, and focus on concrete actions.


© EcoCompass


© Seilo Ristimaki / City of Turku

When the system is used, an environmental programme which describes the organization's measures to achieve the jointly set goals is assessed and approved.

An essential part of the programme includes regular training sessions for the staff and an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures implemented.

In the future, the information obtained through the implementation of the EcoCompass will also be used to develop activities of cultural actors in the third sector.

Culture for climate convention

Lyon Metropole - France


© Ladiras for Getty Images

In 2023 Lyon Metropole co-organised a culture and climate convention with the City of Lyon, offering a platform for stakeholders to exchange ideas and collaborate.

Each class of the convention brings together a small group of cultural stakeholders from different artistic fields. To date, over 25 stakeholders have been supported, benefiting from peer-to-peer exchanges, a free and accessible tool, and local resources and contacts for each theme (transport and mobility, digital, energy, food, waste, and more.)

Among the challenges encountered, the most significant difficulty reported was for cultural stakeholders to find the time to attend sessions and collect the necessary data.

Participants highlighted that such approaches must be supported and initiated by the management of each organisation, with internal reporting mechanisms to raise awareness and ensure the engagement of the entire team.

At the same time, they valued the opportunity to connect with local actors and resources, recognising the benefit of shared learning and collaboration. Building on this, Lyon Metropole aims to gradually bring all participating organisations together into a cohesive network, fostering collective momentum and long-term commitment to sustainability.


© City of Lyon

Training and capacity building for sustainable city governance

Uppsala - Sweden

Uppsala faces the complex challenge of preparing governance model that foster collaboration and innovation necessary to address climate change, social sustainability, and urban development.
The Innovation Lab – Training for Transition(s) is an initiative from Uppsala's long-term vision for sustainable urban transformation.

It provides a collaborative space where urban planners, cultural professionals, businesses and researchers can explore and test new models of sustainable development to be integrated into municipal planning.

The lab encourages prototyping, experimentation, and scenario-based training to address the challenges of future urban transitions and ensure that Uppsala's growth is both adaptive and resilient.

A core aspect of this is its alignment with Uppsala's Municipal Master Plan, which guides the city's long-term urban development and sustainability efforts.


© Benedek for Getty Images


© City of Uppsala

By fostering cross-sector collaboration and new thinking, the lab is preparing the city's decision-makers and stakeholders to navigate future transformations effectively. Through this initiative, Uppsala is building the capacity needed for more sustainable and inclusive urban governance.

By approaching urban development as a dynamic and ongoing process rather than as a fixed outcome, Uppsala is fostering a culture of experimentation and resilience. This approach allows for continuous learning and adaptation, which is critical in the face of future challenges.

€

EUR 9,100.00
mostly dedicated to external support for developing and testing

Funded by Uppsala Municipality's Innovation Lab's idea grant

Priority 10

Having specialists to carry out public policy objectives on sustainable culture



Cities commit to appointing contact persons within their administration who can monitor initiatives aimed at making cultural policies and activities more sustainable while documenting changes and impacts on the ground.

Such persons can support local cultural organisations in their sustainability efforts. City administrations can also be supported in this journey by external specialists providing the necessary training to the city's staff members.

A global strategy with new tools for sustainable culture

Lille - France

After signing of the Call to Action, the City of Lille identified 51 commitments to promote the transformation of professional practices in the cultural sector.

A Sustainable and Inclusive Culture Department was set up, with two people coordinating the implementation of these commitments in conjunction with all culture department agents. For two years, the department developed and tested concrete projects and global actions.

This long-term structural process aligns with Lille's cultural strategy and its collaboration with local operators. Increasingly, staff members seek guidance from the department on incorporating sustainability into daily operations, including public procurement and reuse practices.

The focus has broadened beyond these 51 initial commitments, with "sustainable and inclusive culture" becoming the central pillar of Lille's cultural policy.




© Daniel Rapaich / City of Lille

This shift culminated in the 2024 launch of a wider strategy, 'Culture Durable Partagée' (shared sustainable culture) supported by a joint manifesto signed by over 30 local cultural organisations.

This manifesto calls for collective action to reshape cultural policies in response to the climate emergency and rising social inequalities. It aims to reduce organisations' environmental footprints while enhancing the social impact of culture across Lille.

To implement this vision, Lille worked with local partners to co-create a practical tool: 20 pictograms illustrating keywords for sustainable and inclusive culture.

These keywords reflect key values of the city's cultural policy such as accessibility, creativity, circularity, and wellbeing. They also provide a framework that guides cultural institutions to align their daily practices with sustainability and inclusion goals.

SAIL: Sustainable arts in Leeds

Leeds - United Kingdom

Leeds City Council funds Sustainable Arts in Leeds (SAIL) to establish a baseline carbon footprint for Leeds' cultural industries.

SAIL supports Leeds Cultural Investment Programme (LCIP) organisations to collect and report on their environmental data, with resources scaled to the size of the organisation and level of funding received from LCIP.







Smaller organisations have access to a training course, resources, and a recorded webinar on how to collect and report on their data, and larger organisations have their data verified for consistency and accuracy.

In 2024 alone, LCIP delivered 500 training opportunities. Through LCIP, SAIL has made progress on bringing together working groups on circular economy principles and sustainable transport solutions and continues to build and develop on this work.

Hiring experts in sustainability

Munich - Germany



As part of its climate efforts, Munich is committed to becoming climate-neutral by 2035 and is involved in the EU Mission '100 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities by 2030'. The city has initiated numerous projects, including within cultural institutions focused on reducing the sector's carbon footprint.

In 2024, Munich's Department of Arts and Culture created a permanent position of "sustainability and transformation manager" to centralise and expand climate efforts. The manager is responsible for developing and implementing a sustainability strategy aligned with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

The manager also acts as the main contact point for cultural institutions and independent organisations on sustainability issues, while contributing data to the city's sustainability report to facilitate collaboration across city departments and cultural institutions.

Thanks to this new position, strategic, efficient, and impactful activities can be implemented across departments. For instance, a concrete project for the sustainable management of catering at the Museum Villa Stuck and other institutions.

The sustainability and transformation manager ensures that all cultural institutions follow a unified approach. Nevertheless, encouraging change in all stakeholders and employees is key; this can be done by maintaining dialogue, motivating with empathy, exchanging with subdivisions, and offering information events and individual consultations.

It is important to have both political and social support. Transformation and sustainability are community tasks requiring creativity and decision-making power to push things forward. In the city administration context, such positions should identify existing sustainability efforts across departments to avoid duplication and use resources efficiently. Effective communication, though time-consuming, is essential for long-term success.



Pillar II



Inclusion in culture and through culture

Priority 11

Providing access to cultural programmes for all, ensuring that barriers to access culture are addressed



© Manchester City Hall / Getty Images

An ambitious cultural policy fosters the conditions for creativity and expression for all, at all stages of life, regardless of their social background.

To achieve a more inclusive society, cities commit to facilitating access to cultural activities for all inhabitants of our territories and neighbouring areas, and to removing barriers to cultural access such as socio-cultural, geographical, economic and technological barriers.



© Rachel Bywater / City of Manchester

The Burrell Collection: How community co-design can create accessible, inclusive and sustainable museums

Glasgow - United Kingdom

Following a six-year closure for major refurbishment and redisplay, Glasgow's Burrell Collection reopened in 2022.

The philosophy behind the refurbishment was to celebrate diversity through the museum's rich and varied collection and create an accessible, inclusive and sustainable space. Designed to ensure inclusivity, the museum includes features such as a quiet room, the use of British Sign Language and captions and digital displays in multiple languages.

The redisplay was co-curated with a community group to ensure the museum showcases diverse and inclusive perspectives. The Burrell team also partnered with local schools to amplify their voices, with over 15,000 people contributing to the process.





The museum has taken additional steps to develop a more inclusive volunteer programme. Its aim is to remove barriers that have previously limited participation, making it possible for a wider range of people to get involved.

This includes creating opportunities for family groups, older and younger participants, individuals with reduced mobility and people living with dementia.

Through these measures, the museum seeks to ensure that volunteering reflects a broader cross-section of the community and that everyone interested has the chance to contribute according to their abilities and interests.

Reintroducing traditional cultural noticeboards

Manchester - United Kingdom

As part of Manchester's new cultural framework, Always, Everywhere: Manchester's Cultural Ambition 2024-2034, the city is committed to fostering an inclusive and sustainable cultural environment. This framework is built around three key themes:

- Everyone: Making culture accessible and recognising the people who contribute to it.
- Everything: Ensuring all cultural forms and art practices receive the support they need.
- Everywhere: Expanding spaces wherein culture can thrive.




© Rachel Bywater / City of Manchester

One of the key initiatives under this framework addresses the importance of accessibility, including for citizens that face barriers to digital platforms. Through community consultations, the city found that some groups prefer to engage with cultural information in a physical format, as they lack access to online services. In response, Manchester introduced the New Cultural Noticeboard.

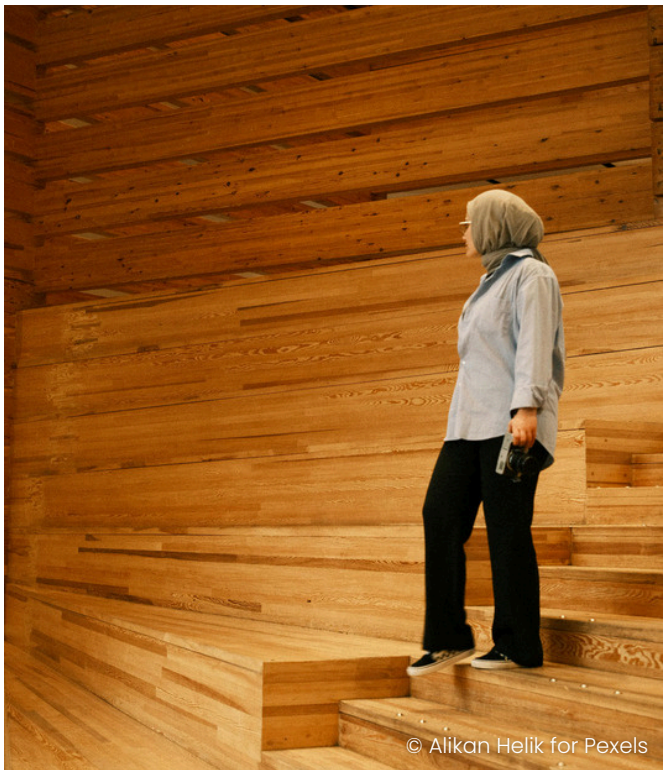
This noticeboard centralises printed materials such as flyers and posters in the Manchester Central Library, making it easier for underrepresented communities to discover and participate in cultural activities.

A monthly summary of cultural opportunities across the city is also produced and displayed, helping ensure that these opportunities are publicly available to all. This initiative reinforces Manchester's commitment to inclusivity, ensuring that culture is accessible to everyone, everywhere, in every form.

Making cultural activities accessible to all

Odunpazari - Turkey


© City of Odunpazari


© Alikan Helik for Pexels

The Municipality of Odunpazari has undertaken many steps to make culture more accessible in the city. Firstly, all events organised by the municipality are open to the public and free of charge.

In 2022 this included 41 concerts, 9 exhibitions, 8 interviews, 5 commemorations, 3 tours, 3 opening programmes, 145 theatre performances, 5 festivals, 4 panels and 79 other events organised by Odunpazari Municipality.

Furthermore, museum visits are not charged upon request from schools, institutions and organisations involving disadvantaged groups. If there is further demand, select visitors from certain institutions are also allowed free entry.



© City of Odunpazari

Bringing culture outside the city centre (I)

Florence - Italy

Since 2012, Florence has developed Estate Fiorentina (the Florentine Summer) into a six-month, city-wide cultural festival that promotes inclusion, accessibility, and social cohesion.

From May to October, the 2023 edition offered over 1,000 mostly free cultural events across all neighbourhoods, particularly outside the city centre.

These included 132 cultural partners and 111 decentralised projects. Over 150 local associations took part, helping to activate public spaces and reach diverse audiences.

The programme focuses on involving vulnerable groups and young people, using culture to support post-pandemic recovery, strengthen communities, and boost the local economy.




© Sergey Novikov

Through municipal support, European funds (National Operation Programme, Metro), and private sponsorships, funding has increased significantly from **EUR 200,000.00 to EUR 1,900,000.00**

Bringing culture outside the city centre (II)

Guimaraes – Portugal

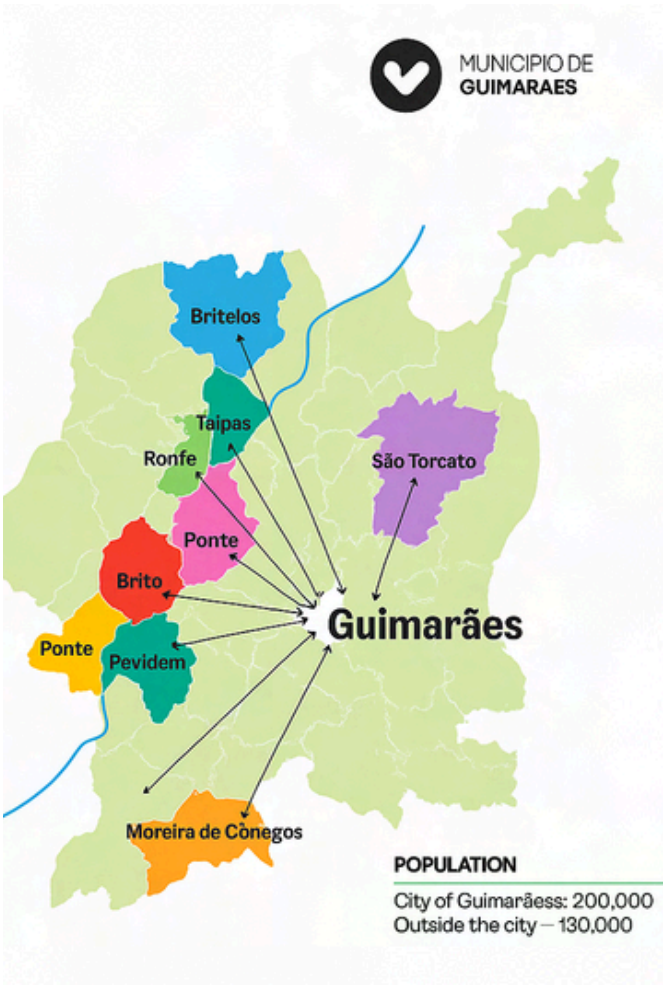


The municipality of Guimarães, the 2026 European Green Capital, believes in the fundamental role culture plays in the dynamics of urban regeneration.

It developed Excentricidade (ExcentriCity) in partnership with parish councils and local partner networks, and aims to create new centres of cultural consumption that showcase a variety of artistic expressions, fostering connections through modern, diverse, and engaging cultural programs.

ExentriCity focuses on new venues while following the same strategy as the city's cultural spaces: to create opportunities for audiences and creators, to support the growth of citizens as cultural individuals and to contribute to the strengthening of human relations, responsible citizenship, enlightenment and sharing.

From an environmental perspective, bringing cultural events closer to areas where communities lack access to public transportation at night also helps reduce the need for private transportation to reach cultural venues.



A museum of fine arts close to the residents

Rennes Metropole - France

> *The idea is to break down barriers. First, the economic barrier. Hence the free entrance. Second, the sociological barrier. The inhabitants, whatever their origin or cultural capital, must be able to cross the threshold of the museum.*
>
> Marc Hervé, first deputy mayor for urban planning.



In February 2025, for the first time in France, a fine arts museum opened in the heart of a deprived neighbourhood in Rennes, reflecting the city's desire to rethink urban spaces and foster inclusivity.

With a surface area of 400 m², the Maurepas museum welcomes visitors on two levels. Taking climate change into account in the choice of conservation and presentation of the works, the project favoured the renovation of an existing social housing building, without extension or modification of its structure.

The Maurepas site displays ancient and contemporary works from the Museum of Fine Arts collection. Together with the Quai Zola site, it offers a complementary programme, hosting two annual temporary exhibitions, one as part of Exporama, Rennes' contemporary art event, and another co-created with local residents.

Admission is free for all, ensuring that cultural experiences are accessible to everyone. The space also integrates family-friendly facilities, such as a toy library and daycare.

By 2027, in new facilities located nearby, the local library will bring together a collection of documents on art. The community integration organisation 'Pépites!' will also offer a range of catering services and 'La Cohue', a cooperative third place, will open to the public.

This initiative has significantly contributed to promoting inclusion, improving the neighbourhood's image, and engaging the local community in cultural activities. It also highlights the potential of repurposing existing buildings for cultural use.

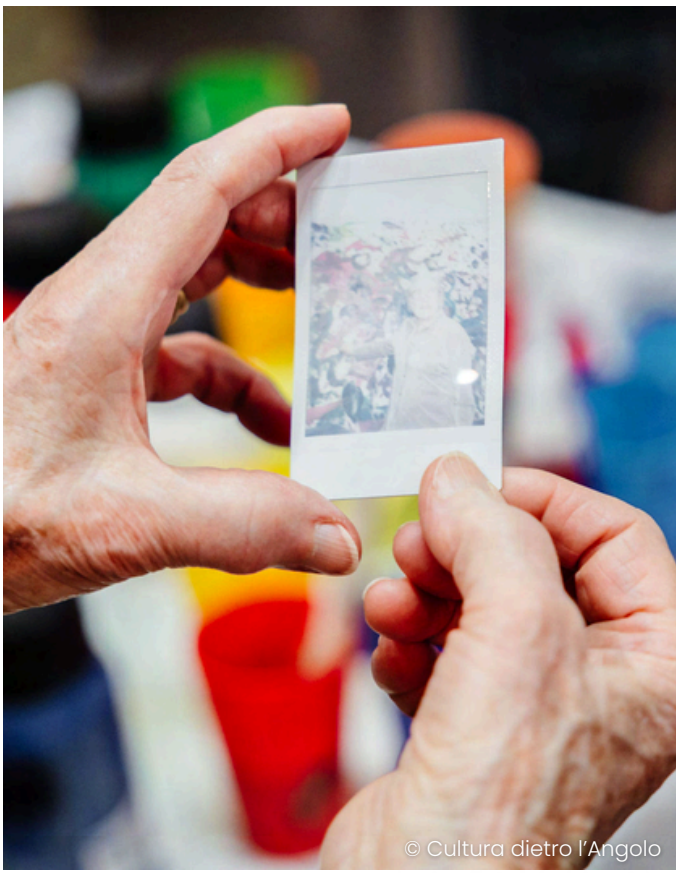


Funding for the museum
EUR 2,500,00.00 (653,284.00 from the City of Rennes and 150,000.00 from Rennes Métropole)

The project is part of a broader urban renewal programme that began in 2016.

Culture around the corner

Turin - Italy


© Cultura dietro l'Angolo

To address cultural access gaps in suburban areas and engage diverse audiences, the city of Turin and Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo developed the Cultura dietro l'Angolo (Culture around the Corner) initiative.

It brings cultural events like arts, performances and music to local neighbourhood hubs, including libraries, community centres, and public venues aiming to make culture more inclusive, accessible and strengthen social interaction and community spirit.

Over 12,000 attendees participated in the 2024 events, more than twice the attendees in 2023.

A satisfaction survey, conducted via phone with 314 participants, revealed that 98% of feedback was positive and 61% was very positive. 72% of respondents said they rediscovered the pleasure of socializing, while 57% said they stayed in touch with people they met during the events.


© Cultura dietro l'Angolo

Budget and funding sources

The project is funded with €4 million from the EU-cofinanced PON METRO PLUS and Città Medie 2021–2027 programme, plus €460,000 from Fondazione per la Cultura and Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo.
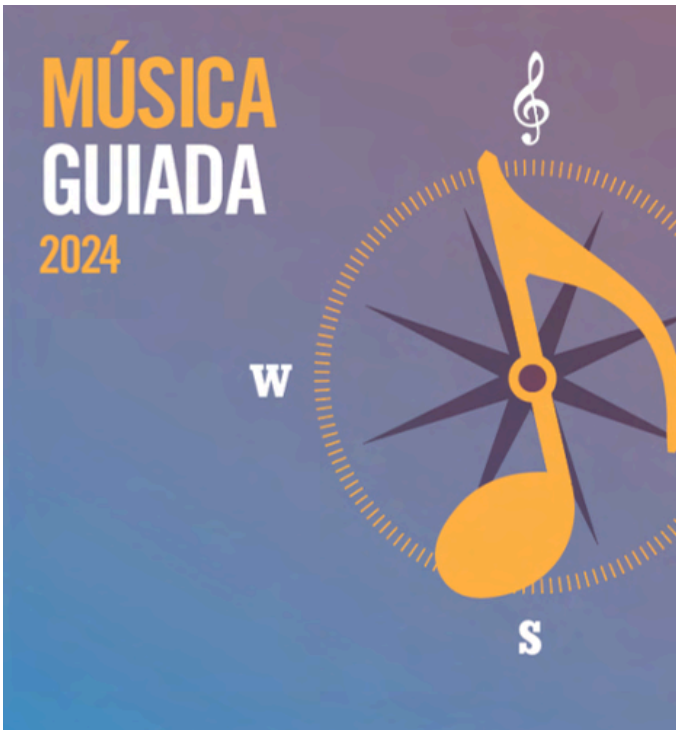
Connecting new audiences to classical music with Música Guiada

Gijon - Spain

The city of Gijon launched the Música Guiada (Guided Music) initiative to make classical music accessible to new audiences, particularly those who do not usually engage with this type of cultural activity.

The aim is to overcome barriers related to geography, economic limitations, and educational backgrounds by offering free, didactic concerts.

Música Guiada is a programme that brings classical music to the city's peripheral areas. It is run by the Universidad Popular, an organisation offering courses, workshops, and events that engage the local community in culture and creativity.




© Música Guiada

The programme offers free, live concerts with explanatory narrations that guide audiences through the music being performed. By taking the concerts out of the traditional city centre venues and using a more accessible, educational approach, the project breaks down barriers to cultural participation.

Between 2021 and 2024 attendance increased by 439%, with 835 attendees in 2024. Feedback from participants is positive, especially regarding the decentralisation and accessibility of the concerts.

Local musicians were hired to perform, supporting artistic creation. Significant media presence also boosted the visibility of the Universidad Popular.

The Culture Coach: Equal opportunities in cultural education

Amsterdam - The Netherlands



Amsterdam places inclusion at the heart of its cultural policies, aiming to broaden and diversify arts and culture across the city. Between 2021 and 2024, all municipally funded cultural institutions developed inclusion action plans covering personnel, programming, partnerships and audiences.

The city also invested in new cultural centres and activities in neighbourhoods such as Nieuw-West, Noord, and Zuidoost to make culture more accessible to all residents.

This commitment continues under the Arts Plan 2025–2028, which emphasises sustainability, accessibility and social safety in cultural spaces while reinforcing Amsterdam's international cultural profile.

As part of this effort, the Culture Coach programme ensures equal access to cultural education for children, particularly those from vulnerable backgrounds.

The initiative connects 84 schools (65 primary and 19 secondary) with around 100 certified artists from various disciplines who work within schools to integrate cultural education, link students with extracurricular activities, and strengthen ties with local organisations. After its first phase (2020–2021), the programme was extended from 2022 to 2025 within the new Arts and Culture Plan.

Results show that 61% of schools reported improved student motivation, engagement, and confidence, alongside stronger social-emotional skills. Over half (55%) increased their focus on arts and cultural education, while 52% saw reduced teacher workload.

Because every school's context differs, a tailored approach is essential. Culture coaches are most effective when well integrated into school life and supported through professional exchange, clear agreements, and strong networks with nearby cultural institutions -factors that enhance both accessibility and long-term impact.

Funding from:

- National funding
- Education and Arts and Culture departments of the city

EUR 1,600,000.00

Growing up with culture

Espoo - Finland

In Espoo, cultural services are a key part of the city's strategy for sustainable and inclusive development, guided by the city as a service approach and as part of the CultureEspoo2030 programme. This long-term vision sees culture and art as essential to promoting equality, wellbeing, and a sense of community.

One of the city's leading initiatives is the Culture Call art programme, developed together with the education sector to ensure all children can access meaningful cultural experiences from an early age.

Culture Call offers free art education programmes for children aged 3 to 5, integrated directly in their schedules at early childhood education units. It currently reaches 166 public units (6,699 children) and 95 private units (around 1,500 children), engaging more than 8,000 children in total.





The programme is delivered by 32 professional service providers through creative workshops and performances that support emotional wellbeing and creativity.

Espoo also supports children and young people throughout their educational journey by helping teachers use diverse learning environments such as museums, cultural venues, libraries, and exhibitions to enrich the curriculum and make arts education more accessible.

The city further promotes inclusion by ensuring every young person can access at least one enjoyable hobby. Around 250 free leisure activity groups are offered across 83 schools. These activities, organised by 36 service providers, promote inclusion while supporting children's development and educational progress.

Center Rog: a collaborative hub bridging sustainability and creativity

Ljubljana - Slovenia



The Center Rog Creative Hub, funded by the City of Ljubljana, is a dedicated space covering 8,500 m2, supporting entrepreneurs in applied arts, crafts, design and architecture, with a strong focus on sustainable development.

In 2018, the Center Rog development team won the Eurocities Innovation Award for their contribution to innovation in local ecosystems, involving residents in decision-making, and using innovation to enhance resilience and sustainability.

The revitalisation project of the old bicycle factory represents the largest participatory cultural development process in Slovenia, engaging over 6,000 individual users and more than 600 stakeholders.

Center Rog's production space includes eight workshops covering areas from woodworking and biotechnologies to cookery and glasswork, with related technical support service programmes catering to a wide range of target users including individuals and companies in the cultural and creative sector, children, students, engineers, makers, creative amateurs, senior citizens, and more.

Inclusivity is central to Center Rog's approach, inspired by both fablabs and libraries. Everyone is welcome for a small membership fee, regardless of age, background, or preferences.

Nineteen studios are available free of charge to local creatives working on sustainable products, and five residential studios host international exchanges. The former industrial yard has been transformed into an 8,000 m² public park with an 'edible' garden of fruit trees and a community plot maintained by 25 volunteers.

Center Rog also prioritises access for socially disadvantaged groups, including migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees. A working group with local NGOs and a community manager is developing tailored programmes and introducing participatory budgeting to involve members directly in funding decisions and strengthen community ownership.



Priority 12

Developing ambitious cultural projects for vulnerable groups


© City of Helsinki

Excluded audiences are those for whom cultural sites or activities have not been designed or adapted, which can lead to limited participation in the city's cultural life or a less engaging physical or intellectual experience. In the interests of fair access to art and culture, cities commit to inclusion both through culture and within culture.

This includes developing cultural and artistic activities that raise awareness of different types of vulnerability, including those related to disability; making cultural venues and events more accessible to vulnerable or disabled people; supporting projects that foster intergenerational dialogue and connect audiences across different stages of life; and organising cultural activities in settings such as social centres, hospitals, prisons, or homes for the elderly to reach those who might otherwise be excluded.

Combatting isolation through cultural expression

Nantes – France



The City of Nantes is implementing a cultural policy strategy where residents are key players and contributors. Creating accessible opportunities for meaningful experiences, combatting isolation and enhancing the quality of life for the most vulnerable are part of the local political priorities, based on the principles of social justice.

This translates into 3 local flagship projects:

- Carte Blanche is a cross-cutting scheme promoting equal access to cultural life through affordable prices and support for leisure activities for low-income residents. It includes a mediation network of over 67 cultural, leisure and sports operators, and 230 operators in the field of inclusion.

- Nantes' Accessible Season initiative helps cultural venues in the region, including museums, cinemas, and festivals improve access to cultural information for people with visual impairments. For 2024-2025, the City of Nantes, in collaboration with twenty cultural organisations, launched a series of "Culture à l'oreille" (Culture by Ear) podcasts designed for people who are blind or visually impaired.

- The Culture & inclusive experiments project is part of Nantes' strategy for new forms of solidarity. Coordinated by the department of culture, it relies on cross-departmental coordination between the prevention and solidarity and equality departments (across the city of Nantes and Nantes metropole).

Collaborative cultural projects enhancing access to culture are developed thanks to cooperation between cultural, social, and health sectors, promoting cultural citizenship by encouraging connection, belonging, expression, and dialogue. These projects empower individuals and communities, unlocking potential and fostering new perspectives.



Supporting access to culture for people with special needs

Tallinn - Estonia



Tallinn supports professional cultural projects that are developed with a specific target group in mind and in consultation with representatives of the target group or relevant experts to improve accessibility.

In 2024, Tallinn launched the first local support scheme for organisers of cultural projects tailored for individuals with special needs: physical and mental disabilities, health problems, intellectual disabilities, sensory impairments, behavioural disorders, learning difficulties, or other special needs that hinder their participation in society on an equal basis with others.

When evaluating project applications, priority is given to collaboration with the target group, incorporating expert input, and ensuring accessibility. Projects should involve communities whose specific needs are central to the creative process.

Supported projects include:

- The production 'My Mind Got Lost Behind the Mountains…' is intended for visually impaired children and those who do not know how these children see and perceive the world. It is a journey performance where 'viewers-listeners-tasters-smellers-feelers' can experience various sensations with the help of the performers.

- The participatory theatre performance 'Everyday Circus - Circus Every Day,' uses circus as a medium and features performers with special needs in collaboration with professional artists. The performance is mobile and accessible to people with different needs.



Celebrating creative ageing

Helsinki - FInland

Helsinki is actively promoting creative ageing and taking comprehensive measures to ensure that cultural rights are upheld for people of all ages and in all life situations.

The city recognises culture as an essential part of well-being and social participation, and works to make it accessible throughout different stages of life.

At the heart of this effort are cultural instructors, who operate as part of multi-professional teams within Helsinki's social and health care services. These professionals design and deliver outreach programmes, remote cultural activities, and creative workshops for older people, while fostering collaboration between cultural institutions and healthcare providers.



© City of Helsinki / ARMAS Festival / Matti Snellman



© Liisa Takala

Their work ensures that artistic and cultural experiences reach residents in hospitals, care homes, and community centres, helping to integrate creativity into everyday life and support well-being.

In addition, the city contributes to the ARMAS Festival – Celebrating Ageing Artfully, an annual event that showcases older artists and explores themes of ageing through arts and culture. The festival encourages intergenerational dialogue, strengthens social connections, and promotes cultural inclusion by presenting ageing as an active and creative stage of life.

Book your fun: Participatory workshops in care centres

Munich - Germany

As Europe's population ages, there is a growing need for politicians and city administrations to reconsider existing structures and approaches to ensure participation in all aspects of society.

Inspired by EU-funded exchanges on creative ageing, the City of Munich launched a pilot project in 2024 aimed at improving the health and well-being of people in care facilities. The initiative offers participatory, dementia-friendly workshops in visual arts, dance, theatre, and music, designed for residents, staff, and families.

The project involves the collaboration of the department of arts and culture and the department of social services, which together collect a certified pool of artists offering tailored workshops. Care facilities can commission these artists at a fixed price, ensuring easy access and cultural activities.

Each workshop consists of five events, and the activities are designed to engage the senses and provide methods that can be continued by staff and family after the sessions. Care homes provide a staff member to assist the artist and organise participant groups.


© Maciej Schwarz


© Ben Reiss

Directors of the involved care facilities report a strong need for initiatives like these, which act as external inspiration and invite innovation. During the workshops, participants with severe dementia showed increased concentration and engagement and artistic interactions improved the relationship between residents and staff. All four pilot facilities from 2024 were rebooked for 2025, with two more facilities added. The project has now entered its second phase, continuing in 2026. Following these positive results, the project is to be anchored permanently.

Transferability is rooted in several key factors. Focusing on people's potential rather than their problems has contributed to the success of the workshops, with professional artists bringing creativity and energy to the process. Collaboration between artists and staff is essential, and the involvement of key figures, such as directors, helps secure the necessary funding. The partnership between two city departments has also fostered trust and cross-sectoral cooperation, leading to a shared understanding of the benefits of creative ageing for inclusion, health, and social cohesion.

Preserving local stories through seniors and artist collaboration

Espoo - Finland



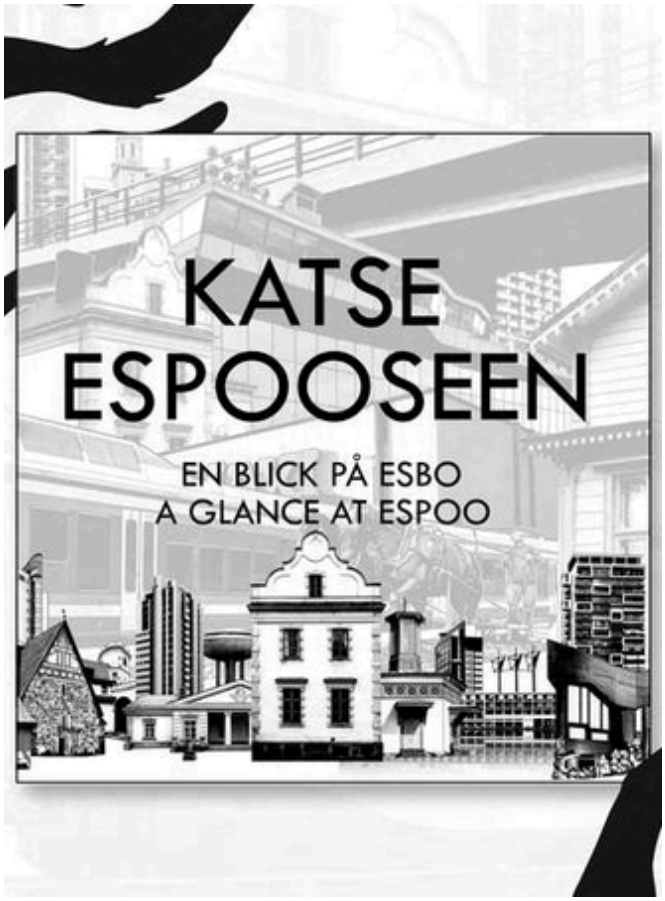
© Urban AI Art Espoo

In 2024, the city of Espoo launched a series of workshops where elderly residents in sheltered housing units shared their memories of the city. This initiative aimed to preserve Espoo's history while celebrating the contributions of its senior population.

The collected material was then given to local artist Jussi Lahtinen to create the picture book A Glance at Espoo, and Urban AI Art Espoo, a media artwork blending past and present images of the city's districts. The digital work uses artist-driven AI to generate an endless stream of unique images of Espoo's buildings and landmarks.

The Glance at Espoo book is available in libraries and has been distributed to sheltered housing units and nursing homes. Intended for people of all ages, the initiative has successfully preserved local history and sparked intergenerational dialogue.

A podcast series inspired by the book was also released in Spring 2025, featuring episodes dedicated to each major district of Espoo. It includes interviews with locals, as well as snippets from the 'reminiscing' workshops, offering a deeper exploration of Espoo's identity through personal stories and reflections.



Creating safe(r) spaces: Queer safe(r) space for culture

Kortrijk– Belgium

The city of Kortrijk has made significant strides in fostering a more inclusive and diverse cultural scene, with supporting initiatives like Qace [kweis, queer space] which began as a group of young people looking for a safe(r) queer space in the cultural sector.

The group met every two weeks to talk, discuss and brainstorm on ways to engage in gender inclusive work in Schouwburg Kortrijk, the municipal theatre, and the surrounding area.

Following research conducted by Schouwburg Kortrijk a survey was distributed, which led to the formation of a group of young people committed to the themes of gender, diversity, and inclusivity.

Their objective was to educate and initiate dialogue around LGBTQIA+ experiences for both themselves and others.





Schouwburg then started organising events (which they described as "edutainment" – a blend of education and entertainment) that provided a platform for people of colour and queer artists.

Their goal was to showcase people of colour and queer individuals both onstage and offstage, always in a safe environment, while fostering conversations around these topics.

The city of Kortrijk also gives opportunities and offers support to new partners in the city such as: QueerKortrijk (students from the universities of applied sciences Howest and Vives), Safety Pin (an organisation pinning queer places on the map) and the BAF collective (a creative playground of 40 young artists).

The city is also programming an annual Qace talk as part of Schouwburg Kortrijk in collaboration with several new partners. Workshops for schools and teachers on topics surrounding gender expression and identity are also offered.

Priority 13

Taking creative climate action to improve health and wellbeing



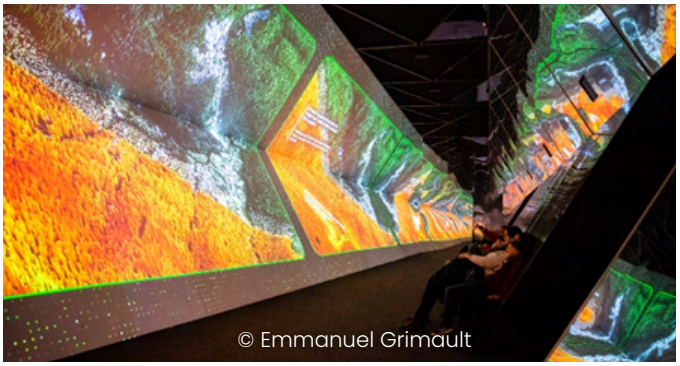


Artists and designers are agents of change, and cultural experiences can have positive benefits on health, mental health and wellbeing, help develop confidence, dignity and new skills, and create new links between people.

Cities commit to exploring the opportunities to integrate climate considerations with health programmes through arts and culture, tackling the existential climate crisis humanity is facing.

Biodiversity, pollution and climate change in cultural centres' programming

Toulouse - France


© Emmanuel Grimault

In Toulouse Metropole, two municipal cultural centres are particularly engaged in taking creative climate action: the Quai des Savoirs (Platform of Knowledge) and the Museum of National History. Both are part of the department of scientific, technical and industrial culture of the Metropolis.

Since 2019, the Quai des Savoirs has organised several workshops on recycling, aimed at 8-15-year-olds. These focus on textiles, the creative recycling of plastic used by 3D printers, as well as activities reusing old plastic bottle caps.

In 2023, the institution presented the "Fire, mega fire" exhibition. It included an entire section dedicated to giant forest fires, designed and produced by the Quai des Savoirs to shed light on current events and highlight the findings of the latest IPCC report. Usually, side events are also organised in different locations around the metropolitan area, as part of festivals or off-site events.

Toulouse's libraries are also committed to raising awareness of environmental issues, as part of their social, educational and cultural missions.

For two months of 2023 Toulouse's libraries worked on Ecology in the Spotlights: Going green, a programme that was both pragmatic and forward-looking, highlighting concrete initiatives and discussing climate challenges that have yet to be imagined. A second edition held in March 2024 focused on sustainable food.

In April 2024, the museum of natural history opened a new 350 m² area dedicated to biodiversity in the permanent exhibition circuit. Structured into three different sections, it showcases the biodiversity in visitors' bodies and the different microbiota that have a direct effect on people's health. The exhibition ends with the concept of 'One Health for the Planet', which presents the current challenges of preserving biodiversity.

Installed for a minimum of three years, this semi-permanent exhibition is included in the visitor itinerary at no extra cost.



© City of Toulouse

Overcoming burnout through arts

Cluj-Napoca - Romania

In 2020, the city of Cluj-Napoca identified an increasing need to address mental health challenges and burnout, issues that had been present before but were significantly intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The crisis highlighted how prolonged stress, uncertainty, and social isolation were affecting the well-being of residents across different age groups and professional backgrounds. Recognising that emotional health is closely connected to social and cultural engagement, the city began exploring how the arts could play a meaningful role in promoting recovery and resilience.

As part of this effort, the Cluj Cultural Centre, working in close partnership with local health institutions and cultural organisations, launched Overcoming Burnout through Arts, a seven-week pilot programme aimed at supporting adults and young people experiencing burnout.

The initiative combined therapeutic and artistic approaches, offering creative workshops that encouraged self-reflection and emotional release.



Co-designed with participants to ensure relevance and accessibility, the sessions included theatre, music, dance, and visual arts activities designed to help participants express emotions, manage stress, and rebuild confidence.

Beyond individual benefits, the project also created a framework for dialogue between cultural and health professionals, showing how cross-sectoral cooperation can contribute to mental well-being.

The experience gathered through this pilot continues to inform future initiatives in Cluj-Napoca that integrate culture, community, and care as interconnected elements of urban well-being.

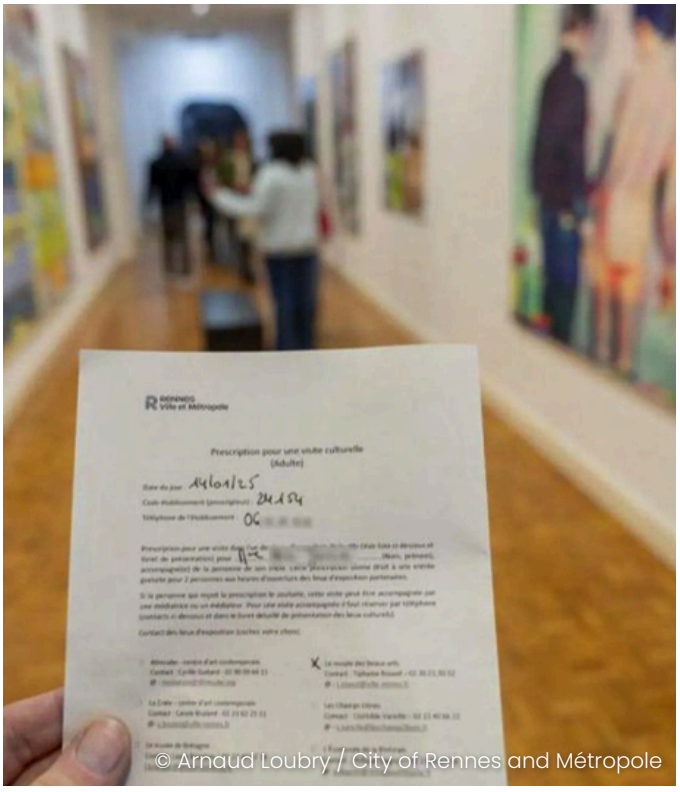


Total cost
EUR 7,000.00

Funded by
EU Creative Europe Programme and Cluj-Napoca Municipality

A rising trend: Cultural prescriptions

Rennes - France



© Arnaud Loubry / City of Rennes and Métropole

Since 2022, Rennes and Rennes Metropole have tested museum prescriptions allowing patients, upon recommendations by health professionals' recommendation, to access free cultural activities at partner museums and art centres.

Inspired by initiatives in Belgium and Quebec, these prescriptions aim to support patients' psycho-social well-being through cultural experiences alongside talking therapies. These include guided tours or contemplative walks, designed to soothe, stimulate, and enrich.

The initiative brings together cultural and health professionals, involving 10 cultural venues (including contemporary art centres, museums, and science spaces) and 6 health establishments (including psychiatric hospitals and clinics).

Health professionals are allocated a quota of prescriptions to offer patients, who also receive a booklet with venue details and contact information for mediators. Patients can use their prescription to gain free access to exhibitions for themselves and a companion.

A recent evaluation (2024) shows that around 25% of prescriptions are used and feedback from patients and cultural partners is positive.

Based on feedback, health and cultural organisations have confirmed their desire to continue the collaboration and to set up a permanent arrangement. They have identified various levers for the future, such as improving the conditions for welcoming and supporting patients.


© Arnaud Loubry / City of Rennes and Métropole

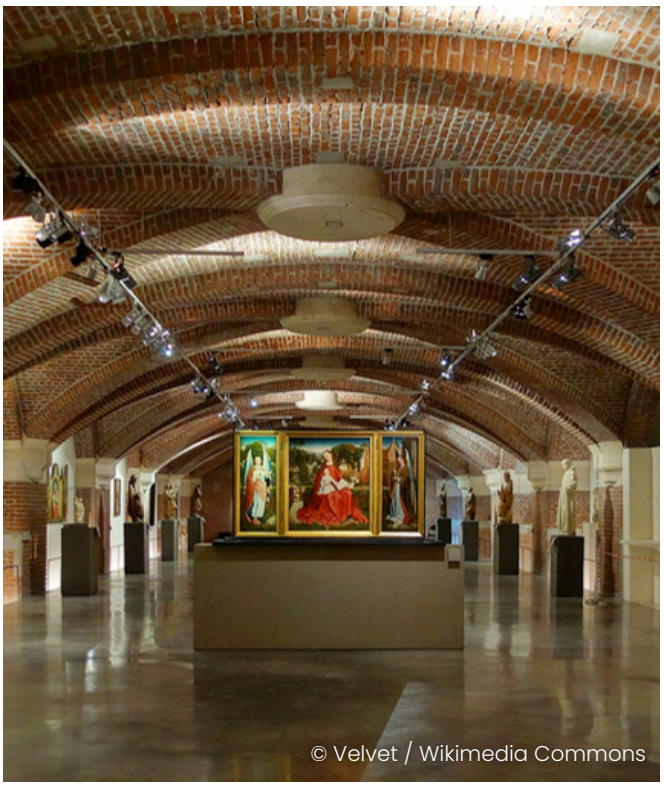
Art therapy sessions at the Museum of Fine Arts

Lille - France

The city of Lille recognises the important role of culture in supporting well-being, health, and social inclusion. In response, it is developing a targeted cultural offer that connects cultural, health, and social policies across municipal services and local organisations.

For more than ten years, the Museum for Fine Arts (Palais des Beaux-Arts) has been making progress both regarding museum-therapy, which consists of using the museum environment for wellness purposes, and art therapy, allowing visitors to discover the artworks of the museum and invest in the field of creation through artistic expression.


© Breizh Atao


© Velvet / Wikimedia Commons

Several years of experimentation led the museum to sign a 3-year contract with the public hospital of Lille based on “museum prescriptions”. This type of prescription allows a patient to benefit from an art-therapy session combining a visit to the museum and artistic practice.

The session is prescribed by the caregiver and is integrated into a schedule programmed and framed by the museum. The city offers 140 art therapy workshops to patients across several departments: medically assisted procreation, breast cancer, endometriosis, loss of memory, chronic pain and child psychiatry.

This form of art therapy unique in the sense that it is integrated in the patient’s care journey and takes place entirely at the museum.

Linking culture, health and inclusion

Bologna - Italy



Bologna, a city renowned for its rich cultural heritage, has developed an integrated strategic plan for its civic museums (2025–2029) to respond to emerging challenges in cultural tourism, public health, sustainable finance, and civic engagement. As visitor numbers continue to grow, the city aims to strengthen the role of its museums not only as cultural institutions but also as spaces that contribute to social inclusion and individual well-being.

One of the plan's most innovative elements is the introduction of cultural prescriptions, a new initiative that recognises the role of cultural participation in promoting psycho-physical health. Through close collaboration with the regional health service and the Emilia-Romagna Region, the city's civic museums will host tailored activities and programmes designed for diverse audiences, including vulnerable groups. The goal is to improve quality of life through meaningful cultural experiences that connect art, care, and community.

In parallel, the QueeringBo project reflects Bologna's commitment to diversity and social inclusion. Promoted by the municipality of Bologna, it encourages LGBTQIA+ narratives and perspectives within cultural institutions, challenging traditional art-historical canons and fostering a more plural and participatory heritage. By integrating queer voices into museum programming and public events, the project supports representation and dialogue across communities.

Together, these initiatives illustrate Bologna's broader vision of culture as a driver of care, equity, and social innovation.



Priority 14

Strengthening cultural and artistic diversity



© Lea Bjorn / Oulu City Hall

The protection and celebration of all cultures is essential to ensuring cultural diversity on urban territories, and all cultures deserve equal status. Cities commit to favouring the conditions of creation for all artistic expression, without discrimination, and to ensuring favourable conditions for the participation and enjoyment of everyone.

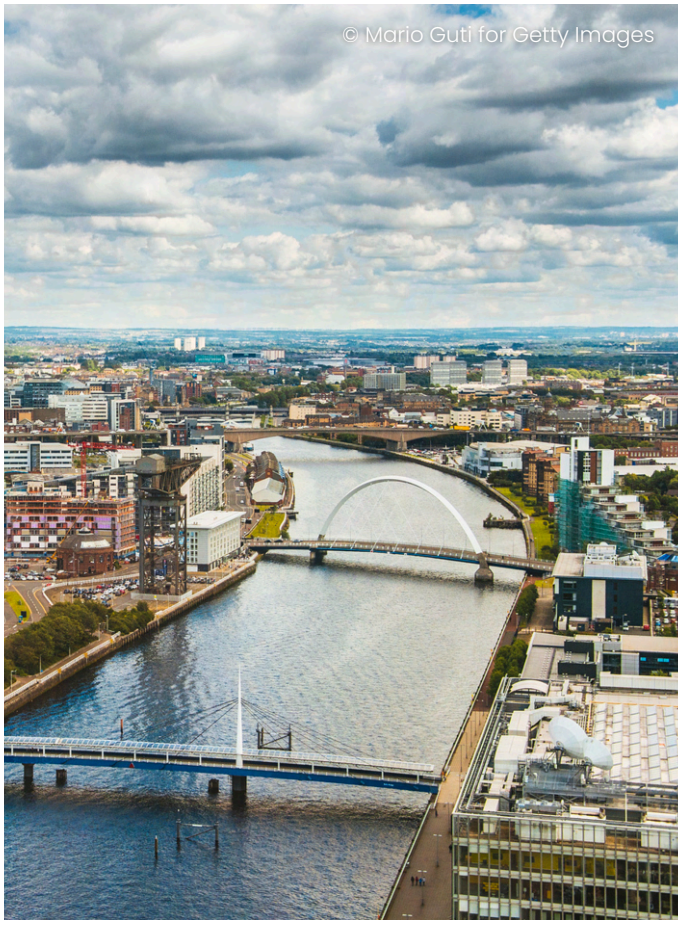
Cities also commit to cultural policies that support the creation of a modern urban cultural heritage whilst preserving and enhancing that of the past. This involves assigning value and space to contemporary and emerging artistic and cultural trends, without normative judgement.

Agent for Change: Maximizing diversity in Glasgow's cultural scene

Glasgow - United Kingdom

In 2017, Glasgow Life, an external body of Glasgow City Council, created a new role to tackle racism and inequality. The Agent for Change, also known as the Senior Arts and Music manager in charge of Diversity, aims at maximising ethnic diversity across Glasgow's cultural scene.

The Agent for Change role raises awareness among policymakers, public officials and private employers on racial equality to create an encouraging and welcoming environment for Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC) to participate in different sectors.





Having an Agent for Change has increased the number of BIPOC artists in the delivery cohort as part of Glasgow Life's wider anti-racism initiatives, embedding anti-racism in the daily practices of many local festivals and activities. It has also encouraged support for the creations of artists, practitioners and stakeholders of colour.

This pilot has received positive results and feedback in Scotland, and the role has subsequently been established in the city council of Edinburgh.

The Contra-Qiosque initiative: Amplifying underrepresented voices in disused public spaces

Braga - Portugal

In Braga, the Portuguese Capital of Culture 2025, five disused kiosks have been transformed into exhibition spaces, amplifying underrepresented voices from across the city. The site-specific installations are the culmination of five artist residencies by Emília Rigová, Hilda de Paulo, Maria Trabulo, Marta Machado, and Miguel Teodoro. Each artist conducted research from personal and institutional archives on diverse themes including migration, LGBTQIA+ and multicultural experiences, ecology and human-nonhuman relationships. Opened simultaneously, the kiosks form an artistic route through Braga and in 2025, they will function as a polycentric 'museum' holding an ongoing shared programme of exhibitions and events. The municipality is now exploring their permanent reuse for small businesses, a direct outcome of the project's success.

The project is curated by Space Transcribers, a critical interdisciplinary network of architects, urbanists and artists focused on representation and visibility in the built environment. Contra-Qiosque therefore reactivates disused public space through site-specific art. It also provides a platform for cultural narratives typically excluded from mainstream discourse to shape a more inclusive urban identity.

The project's co-creation model and flexible curatorial approach highlight alternative uses of public archives and inclusive cultural programming. Cities can replicate this model of cultural governance by identifying unused urban infrastructure and working with artists engaged in community-based research.





Funded by the Municipality of Braga through FAZ CULTURA – the Municipal Company for Culture, with support from European Regional Development Funds and Turismo de Portugal, Contra-Qiosque shows how inclusive and innovative cultural initiatives can catalyse both urban justice and the renewal of disused public spaces.

Café Romano project: Making Roma culture visible

Oulu - FInland



In Finland, Romani culture is often overlooked in cultural institutions. There is a growing need for inclusive cooperation between cultural institutions and Roma communities, enabling the Roma to contribute as both art producers and performers.

Ongoing discrimination has resulted in poor inclusion, particularly among young Roma people, with many experiencing unfair treatment in public spaces. This has led to low cultural participation, underscoring the need to encourage Roma youth to engage in cultural activities.

Strengthening networks and leadership within the Roma community is essential, as active participation enhances visibility and serves as a positive example for Roma youth.

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As part of the Equal Oulu2026 initiative, and throughout 2024, Café Romano hosted biweekly events at Oulu10, an accessible venue, where Roma women led presentations on topics such as Roma history, clothing, music, and traditions. The aim was to create a welcoming and educational space, to increase visibility, support cultural expression, and involve Roma in planning and implementing cultural activities for Oulu European Capital of Culture 2026.

The Café Romano had a total of about 700 visitors. In addition, hundreds of visitors visited the Roma café stands at public events.

In March 2025, Equal Oulu2026 released a guide to promote diversity in cultural services, providing practical information as well as examples of successful projects.



Budget
EUR 5,000.00

Funded by
European Social Fund and Oulu Culture Foundation

A shared vision for a climate-neutral Bonn

Bonn - Germany

Bonn's Sustainable Cultural Strategy 2035 recognises culture and sport as tools for climate action and social inclusion, directly supporting the city's goal to become climate-neutral by 2035.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) acted as a frame of reference for the city's sustainable cultural strategy, with five priority SDGs derived in the process: quality education, sustainable cities and communities, responsible consumption and production, climate action, and partnerships.

Developed over two years through a broad participatory process, the new cultural strategy engaged 550 people across 130 institutions, generating over 700 ideas.


© Mario Guti for Getty Images


© Climate Plan Exhibition / City of Bonn

The needs of the cultural and sporting sectors were collected and understood through an online survey and a joint event. These were condensed into nine policies and two guiding themes: "casual learning" (integrating education and culture in informal settings) and "communities of shared benefit/Beutegemeinschaft" (creating synergies through cooperation).

Though participants noted a need for more development time, the participatory and results-oriented components of the process have proven to be particularly effective in generating a large number of ideas.

Budget
EUR 40,000.00

Funded by
Municipal funds, partly from the Bonn 2035 Climate Plan

Building a vision for inclusive cultural participation and diversity

Cologne - Germany


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The city of Cologne established a dedicated department for cultural participation in 2018 to strengthen its long-term commitment to inter- and transcultural diversity, inclusion, gender equality, LGBTQI+ visibility, and other socially relevant issues.

The department serves as a central structure for developing and implementing policies that promote equal access to culture for all residents. Cultural funding in the field of diversity is designed with multiple objectives, supporting both artists and audiences, and encouraging projects that reflect the city's multicultural reality.

At its core, Cologne aims to highlight and celebrate the value that a diverse society and a vibrant, pluralistic cultural landscape bring to the city's identity and development.

Building on this foundation, in 2023 the city introduced a comprehensive concept for cultural participation in diversity, applicable across all municipal cultural organisations.

The concept was informed by a series of workshops where staff members discussed key themes such as accessibility, inclusive programming, organisational structures, and artistic creation.

These sessions provided valuable insights into how institutions can embed diversity and participation into their everyday work, ensuring that the cultural life of Cologne remains open, representative, and responsive to its diverse population.


© Iryna Khabliuk

Priority 15 ⚧

Integrating gender issues and ensuring gender parity in local cultural policies



Culture plays an essential role in raising awareness of gender discrimination and in renewing social relations. Cities commit to promoting cultural and artistic actions that reflect the voices of women and gender minorities.

To avoid gender discrimination, cities aim to implement preventative measures and make cultural events accessible and welcoming to all genders. Signatories also commit to achieving parity within their local authorities, including in leadership positions, and to ensuring full equality of access to jobs in the cultural sector.

Creating safe spaces in cultural venues

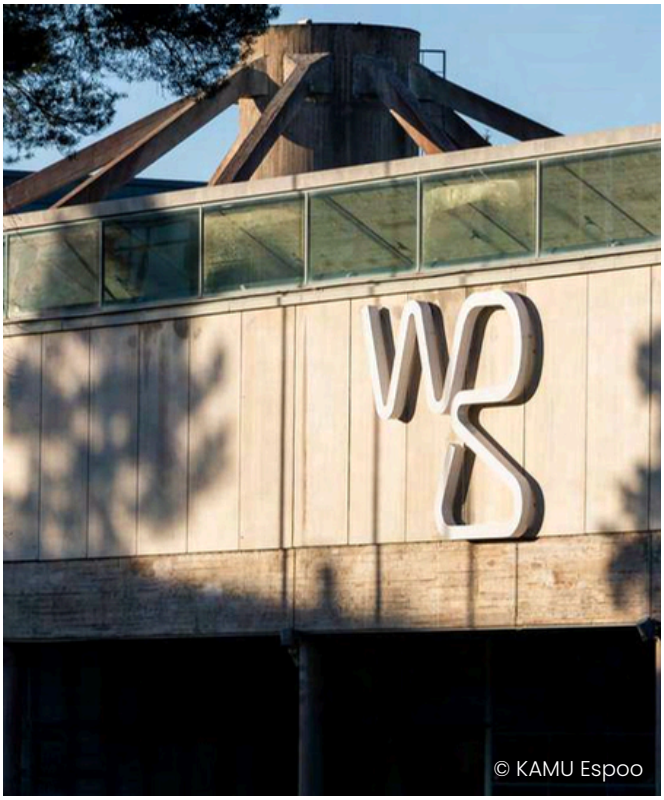
Espoo - Finland

How can cities, as service providers, create principles of safe spaces together? The city of Espoo has adopted principles for safer cultural spaces across all of its services, including libraries, cultural centres, the KAMU Espoo City Museum, 17 art schools and theatres, and concerts by the Tapiola Sinfonietta.

These principles for safer spaces, created through workshops with residents in 2022 and 2023, actively resist harm directed towards minorities and aim to make everyone feel welcome and safe in cultural spaces, with an active commitment to inclusion, accessibility and equality.

Examples of these principles include taking others into consideration by listening actively, offering help, and behaving in a way that does not cause harm, and showing equal respect to everyone, by embracing diversity and avoiding assumptions based on age, gender, disability or background. The principles apply to all visitors, customers, employees, and performers at Espoo's cultural premises and events.





The 130 local culture and art NGOs that receive city funding are required to apply these principles across their work. Espoo is exploring collaborative ways to develop frameworks with them and to offer guidance on how to apply safer space practices in various contexts.

Staff received training in preventing harassment, promoting respectful behaviour, and embedding the safer space principles in daily operation. Many organisations now begin meetings by presenting the principles as part of their safety and inclusion protocol.

The GAS Seal initiative: Genders, Accessibility and Sustainability

Terrassa - Spain

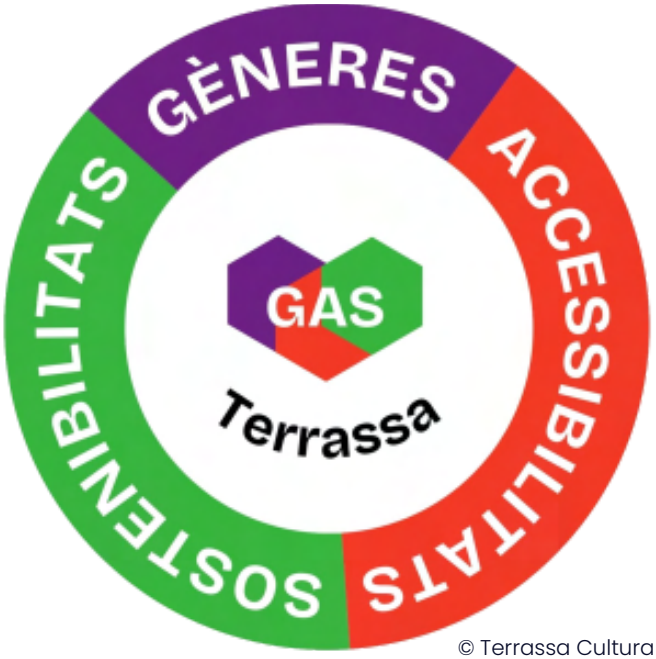
Culture in Terrassa is alive, diverse, safe, inclusive, and pluralistic, reflecting the city's long-standing commitment to equal access and participation in cultural life.

The municipality continues to make culture accessible to everyone by applying its distinctive seal of committed culture, known as GAS (which stands for Genders, Accessibility, and Sustainability), to cultural events and initiatives across the city.

Launched in 2019 through an initiative of the Department of Cultural Promotion, the GAS seal defines the principles guiding all cultural projects developed or supported in Terrassa. It ensures that these projects are free from gender discrimination and that they promote a non-sexist and non-androcentric vision of the cultural sphere.



© Xavier Altimiras for Pexels



© Terrassa Cultura

The seal also encourages the visibility and recognition of artistic creations by people of all genders, helping to shape a more equitable and representative cultural landscape.

In addition, the city's new regulation on social rights explicitly includes the right of citizens to access culture. This legal recognition reinforces Terrassa's goal of making cultural participation available to everyone, regardless of gender, age, background, or social status, and of providing equal opportunities for high-quality training in any of the arts.

The GAS seal further extends its reach to cover zero-waste cultural projects, linking cultural creation with environmental responsibility and ensuring that sustainability remains an integral part of Terrassa's cultural identity.

A charter on gender equality in culture and the arts

Rennes - France


© Breizh Atao

In 2022, the city of Rennes and Rennes Metropole signed a charter with the French Ministry of Culture (through the Regional Directorate for the arts and culture DRAC Bretagne) aimed at advancing gender equality in the cultural and artistic fields. This charter is the first of its kind in France.

It is structured around four pillars:

- Promoting a culture of equality
- Achieving professional equality
- Addressing gender and sexual violence
- Implementing appropriate governance

The scope of the charter covers all the cultural actors and structures in the Rennes region, including higher education institutions, festivals and fairs.

While the charter does not constitute a legally binding obligation, cultural organisations and institutions that receive funding or support from the City of Rennes or Rennes Metropole are expected to adhere to its principles.

This vision is part of a broader policy framework promoting gender equality and social responsibility in public funding for culture.

By tying public support to these values, the city and its partners encourage a shared commitment among all cultural actors in the region, reinforcing accountability and the implementation of concrete measures aligned with the charter's goals.



© DRAC Bretagne

Redefining gender parity in collective memory

Munich - Germany

The City of Munich supports the #femaleheritage initiative to address significant gaps in cultural remembrance, particularly regarding the exclusion of women from collective memory.

The project, led by Monacensia (literature archive, Munich City Library), aims to challenge the historical absence of women in archives and cultural narratives. By focusing on curatorial research and interdisciplinary collaboration, the initiative invites citizens, artists, academics and cultural institutions to collectively uncover forgotten stories and ensure future omissions are avoided.

From 2020 to 2025, the project sought to integrate gender equality into cultural policies and explore new forms of remembrance culture through the extensive engagement of over 70 institutions across Germany.





Successful activities included: Monacensia Manifesto, a project on the new ways of remembrance, the founding of the FEMale*Society network, online blogs with 200+ specialist contributions, exhibitions, participatory literary workshops, events, school programmes and theatre festival, film portraits and videos published on platforms like YouTube and Literatur.tv.

Close collaboration with Wikipedia resulted in new wiki entries, links to valid archive sources and better resources in the public domain for #FemaleHeritage.

#FemaleHeritage's success highlights the value of interdisciplinary, collaborative approaches to remembrance culture, offering valuable insights for other municipal institutions seeking to implement similar projects.

It demonstrates the importance of structural changes for an inclusive society, emphasizing dialogue, trust, and the need for time to develop cultural mediation. Under the patronage of the second Deputy Mayor of the city of Munich, the project has been extended for at least another three years.

Priority 16

Increasing citizen's participation in developing and implementing cultural policies and projects


© Hôtel de ville de Lyon, NateBergin

Cities recognise that local governance is intimately linked with cultural policies.

Signatories commit to developing dialogue and creative means of deliberative democracy on cultural activities, whether through the participation of residents, civil society, educational institutions, and other groups or networks.


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Participatory budgeting to increase citizens' engagement

Turku - Finland


© TanyaSv for Getty Images

Turku aims to increase citizens' participation, so the city has been implementing participatory budgeting since 2020.

This approach gives residents a direct voice in shaping their city by allowing them to propose ideas, plan projects, and vote on which initiatives should be funded.

Through this process, citizens collectively decide how a €3 million budget is allocated each year, making local governance more transparent and inclusive.

The main goal is to gather ideas on how to create more user-oriented facilities and services that enhance the well-being of Turku's residents. Participatory budgeting also strengthens civic engagement by encouraging people to think about their shared environment and to take part in decisions that affect their everyday lives.

Residents have voted for a wide variety of projects, from pop-up art workshops and free theatre performances to street libraries and dance classes in suburban areas.

These initiatives not only enrich the city's cultural life but also provide access to creative experiences for children and communities who might otherwise not have such opportunities.

Through participatory budgeting, Turku continues to promote active citizenship and strengthen the social fabric of the city.


© City of Turku

Participatory budgeting to increase young people's engagement

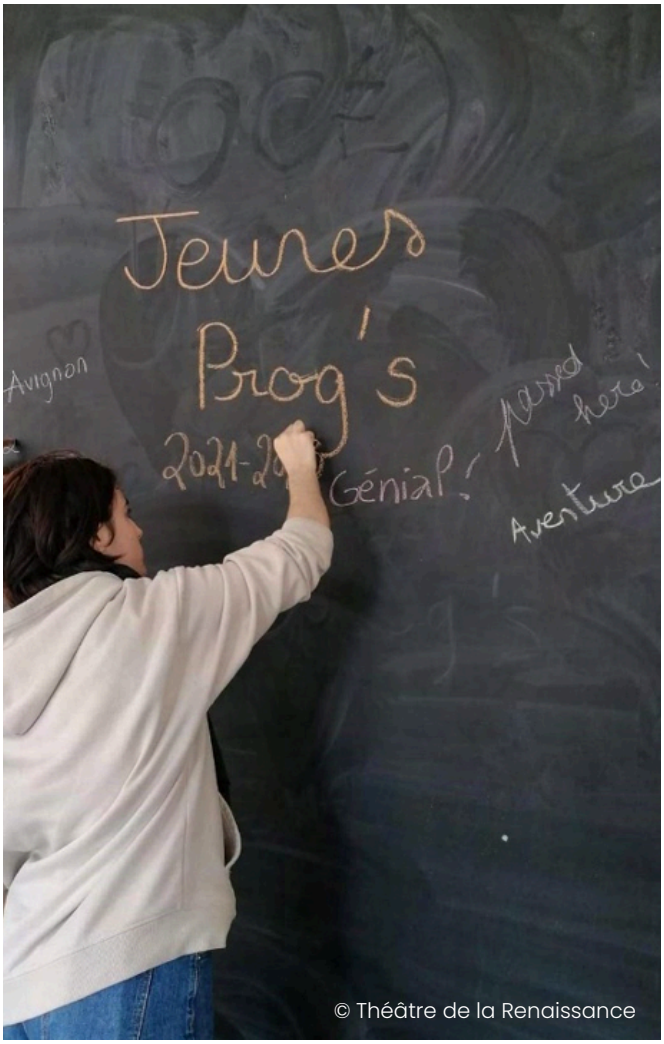
Lyon Metropole - France

In 2023 the Lyon Metropole conducted a study to better understand the links between culture and youth, and identified a strong desire among young people to engage in cultural actions and access cultural spaces.

This led to the development of two key initiatives that empower young people to influence local cultural events and deepen their connection with the arts:

- The Young Prog' Committee invites 12 teenagers to curate and organise cultural events in collaboration with the Théâtre de la Renaissance.
- The "À toi!" ('up to you') initiative is a participatory project within the Lyon Dance Biennale, involving 18 young participants in an immersive cultural journey from 2023 to 2025.





These resulted in increased youth engagement and visibility in local cultural scenes and strengthened partnerships between cultural institutions and young people.

This approach is replicable in other cities by focusing on inclusivity and collaboration with local cultural institutions, while ensuring cultural projects align with young people's interests and realities.

Work in Progress (WiP): A civic and cultural centre designed by the public

Malmo - Sweden

Work in Progress (WiP) is a meeting place for young people aged 16 - 25 who need support in taking the step from being 'hobby creatives' to becoming professional cultural practitioners. At WiP, participants gain access to local and international networks, can become part of a creative community, receive coaching in their artistic journey, and are offered opportunities to showcase their work.

WiP is a new project that has been developed by young people themselves, with process support from the city's Department of Culture following a two-year feasibility study. The target group has, through conversations, workshops, horizon scanning and youth surveys involving nearly 1,000 young people, been able to articulate their needs and wishes for what a cultural meeting place should look like. Now that WiP has opened, young people continue - together with staff - to shape and develop the venue, from the vibe and interior design to the creation of events and programme content.







While WiP is located in a cultural centre focusing on youth and young adults, it is also part of the Embassy of Sharing, a mixed-use development estate that emphasises environmental and sustainable practices. This is reflected, for example, in the interior design, which is 90% recycled, as well as in planned events that highlight sustainability within cultural life in Malmo.



A big thank you to all participating cities, partners, and collaborators for contributing examples of their initiatives as well as providing photographs and additional resources.

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