

# FINAL REPORT IZMIR

SERHAN ADA  
MARCH 2019



**culture 21**  
UCLG Committee

## **ACTIVITY**

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Final Conference (Post-Pilot Self-Assessment and Participative Workshop)

## **DATE**

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22 February 2019

## **PLACE**

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Izmir (Gas Factory),  
Turkey

## **PEOPLE INVOLVED**

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### **IZMIR PILOT CITY TEAM**

**Funda Erkal Öztürk**, Head of Arts and Culture Department

**Ayşegül Sabuktay**, Director, Izmir Mediterranean Academy

**Gökçe Süvari**, programme Manager, Izmir Mediterranean Academy

**Aysel Özkan**, Assistant Secretary General, Izmir Mediterranean Academy

**Muzaffer Tunçağ**, Member of City Council, on behalf of the Mayor of Izmir

**Bülent Tanık**, Advisor to the Mayor

### **CULTURE ACTION EUROPE AND UCLG**

**Robert Manchin**, President, Culture Action Europe

**Jordi Pascual**, Coordinator, UCLG Committee on Culture

### **PILOT CITIES EXPERT**

**Serhan Ada**, Head, UNESCO Chair in Cultural policy and Cultural Diplomacy, Istanbul Bilgi University

FINAL  
REPORT





# CONTEXT

The **Pilot Cities Europe programme** is an initiative of the Committee on Culture of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Culture Action Europe, which aims to foster peer-learning and capacity-building on culture and local sustainable development among European cities. Alongside self-assessment, policy innovation and participatory governance activities implemented in each city, peer-learning activities enabling bilateral and multilateral exchanges are organised on a regular basis.

Throughout the Pilot City Programme self-assessment, policy innovation and participatory governance activities are planned and implemented in member cities, and peer-learning activities enabling bilateral and/or multilateral exchange of experiences among participating cities are also organised.

The City of Izmir joined the Pilot Cities Europe programme in 2015 and held its initial self-assessment workshop in March 2016. Based on that exercise, a work programme was designed thereafter, combining innovative pilot measures implemented at the local level and two peer-learning visits. In particular, a delegation from Izmir visited Lisbon in September 2017, and representatives from several cities conducted a peer-learning visit to Izmir in May 2018.

At the concluding phase of Izmir Pilot City Programme, a final conference of full working day was held on 22 February 2019. The programme of the conference consisted of two parts:

- **Pilot Cities Europe Programme and Izmir - An Evaluation:** a summary of the activities conducted was presented, followed by a general overview and discussion.
- **The Horizon Workshop:** a participative workshop involving all the participants with a “post Pilot” self-assessment and collective recommendations for further policy development on the themes explored during the Pilot Cities Programme.

In this final report, the two sections of the Conference will be summarized and the salient aspects and selected cases of Izmir Pilot City practice will be analysed in order to draw conclusions and put forward some recommendations with a view to lead the way for future policy. For further information, please visit [Izmir’s page as a pilot city](#), including the [work programme](#) elaborated in 2016 and the [Izmir Governance of Culture and Pilot Projects document](#), which provides further details on the measures implemented.

This report has been written by Dr. Serhan Ada (Bilgi University), the expert who has worked alongside the City of Izmir, the UCLG Committee on Culture, and Culture Action Europe throughout Izmir’s participation in the Pilot Cities Europe programme.



# SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF IZMIR PILOT CITY ACTIVITIES

In her introductory speech during the final conference, Gökçe Süvari, the Programme Manager at the Izmir Mediterranean Academy and Focal Point for Izmir as a Pilot City, outlined the specific projects developed during the three-year implementation of the work programme, notably:

- **kültürLab:** an initiative developed by a group of local interlocutors to foster synergies between culture and education and a model for local cultural governance in practice integrating educational activities in all culture and arts projects.
- **Good Design Izmir:** an integrated design event with graphic and industrial design components as well as city planning with the participation of professionals, students and scholars open also to the general public.
- **Basmane Design Project:** a pilot campaign to raise social awareness towards the migrant population in the Basmane District.

Ayşegül Sabuktay, the Director of the Izmir Mediterranean Academy, briefly emphasized the mission and the role of the Academy to coordinate the overall process of the programme as a semi-autonomous body founded by the municipality. Funda Erkal, Head of Arts and Culture Department in the City of Izmir, took on the dual function of the Academy as both a think-tank and a democratic platform for civic engagement. She also gave utterance to various activities of the Department such as giving incentives to archaeological excavations, subsidising festivals and international design conventions.

The Coordinator of the UCLG Committee on Culture, Jordi Pascual, recalled the founding mission and the current scope of UCLG and underlined the vital importance of integrating culture in the SDGs, as well as the works carried out within the Pilot Cities Programme and efforts deployed to prevent the instrumentalisation of culture for alternative purposes. He also added that good practices witnessed in Izmir in line with Culture 21 Actions could serve as a benchmark for other pilot cities. Pascual concluded his intervention offering Izmir the status of a Leading City due to the success achieved in the pilot phase.

Robert Manchin, the President of Culture Action Europe (CAE), epitomized the building role of culture in the making of the European Union from the Treaty of Rome (1957) to the latest “New European Agenda for Culture” (2018) half a century later, and stressed its place in the very heart of public decision making. He also explained the structure



# SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF IZMIR PILOT CITY ACTIVITIES

of CAE with its widespread membership and its goal to act as a catalyst for a better understanding between public authorities and cultural operators.

Serhan Ada, the expert of Agenda 21 for Culture, concentrated more on the last decade of cultural policy making in the city and illustrated the cornerstones of an outstanding transformation marked by a well-defined strategy based on the re-positioning of Izmir in the Mediterranean, the priority given to innovation and quality of life. He concluded that the contribution of civil society has sensibly increased throughout the said period and all efforts culminated with a “reverse brain drain” from Istanbul, a manifest sign of Izmir becoming a place of attraction for creative people.

The last speaker of the first session was Muzaffer Tunçağ, a member of the Izmir City Council, representing the Mayor of Izmir at the event, who addressed the international undertakings of Izmir in various fields including cultural heritage and gastronomy. Tunçağ also underscored the public – private joint venture TARKEM.

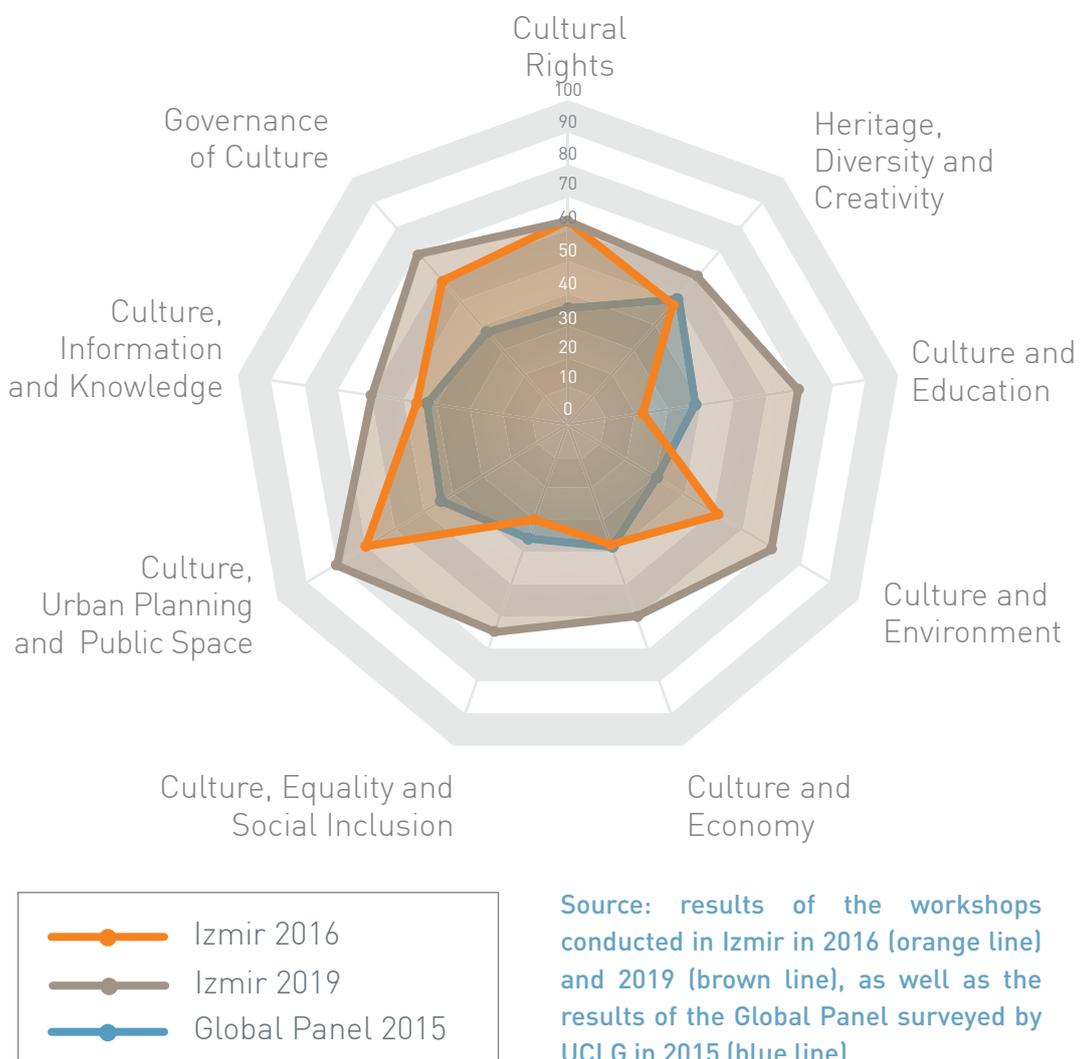
## **POST PILOT SELF - ASSESSMENT : NEW RADAR AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The self-assessment of a pilot city is aimed to determine the current position of the city with regard to different fields of culture in its relationship with development, based on the nine ‘Commitments’ or thematic areas identified in the UCLG toolkit Culture 21: Actions. A self-assessment exercise usually takes place in the launching phase of the pilot city process – in the case of Izmir, that exercise was first conducted in March 2016 and provided the basis for the design of Izmir’s work programme in the context of the Pilot Cities programme.

The outcome of this exercise, called “Radar”, shows the way for actions and projects to be undertaken throughout the implementation process. For the Final Conference in Izmir, it was decided to remake the self-assessment in order to determine the performance of the city during the Pilot Cities programme and identify proposals to inform future policies. In this context, a workshop was also organized during which all participants came together to work and reflect in mixed groups made of cultural operators, artists, local administration bureaucrats and executives as well as public servants working in state cultural institutions with representatives of private cultural institutions. The aim of this new assessment was to compare the current situation with the similar diagnosis made three years earlier.

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Figure 1: Post Pilot Self- Assessment : Radar 2019



As can be seen from the above assessment, Izmir made an explicit progress in the overall criteria. Incidentally, the two criteria where considerable progress is achieved are those which were below the world average in 2016, namely, Culture and Education (addressed through the kùltürLab initiative) and Culture, Equality and Social Inclusion (improved thanks to the works of civil society initiatives, especially IKPG). All other criteria are at



# SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF IZMIR PILOT CITY ACTIVITIES

least even if not higher than the previous assessment. It could already be argued that Izmir took the opportunity of being a Pilot City to improve its cultural indicators during the last three years.

## **PARTICIPATIVE WORKSHOP AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The participants came together in 5 groups to discuss the current state of culture and the arts and reflect on prospective cultural policy trends. They were as follows:

- Heritage, Diversity and Creativity
- Culture and Education/ Governance of Culture
- Cultural Rights / Culture, Equality and Social Inclusion
- Culture and Environment / Culture, Urban Planning and Public Space
- Culture and Economy / Culture, Information and Knowledge

When resuming the work, each group made a presentation detailing its findings and proposals. They could be briefly listed as follows:

- The communication and dissemination of the works done in the field of cultural heritage, especially in the districts on the periphery, is crucial in motivating similar efforts.
- The synergy among stakeholders as well as regional and international networking as in previous projects (for instance, like in IzmirDeniz the collective Izmir Bay Area Design project) is a prerequisite.
- The concept of “living museum” should be promoted, for all the museums to engage with young audience.
- The Izmir Cultural Platform Initiative (IKPG), which came out of the work of the Mediterranean Academy, is considered as a benchmark for cultural governance. Its past practice is an asset for further work in Izmir. A “public forum” (i.e. a body entrusted with fostering consultation and discussion) could be constituted in this purpose.
- Culture and arts literacy might be a constant criterium of success for all the projects, initiatives and institutions, and collaboration with academic and educative actors needs to be enhanced in this respect. The pilot project kültürLab represents a start of joint work by various stakeholders. All museums are in the foreground for educational activities. A common online application for museums would be useful to reach out communities including immigrants and people deprived of decent access to culture.



# SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF IZMIR PILOT CITY ACTIVITIES

- A common platform of communication would help to share information and experiences for social inclusion and cultural rights. A multilingual online tool with extensions in languages like Arabic or Kurdish will help to reach all sectors of the city population.
- Open air spaces, natural parks and reserves, historical sites are suitable settings for all sorts of events in a Mediterranean city like Izmir to ease the participation of all citizens on an equal basis.
- Some projects developed by the municipality (like the Brother-Sister Project, with the involvement of university students as volunteers mentoring teenagers especially in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, or the Vocation Factory, a public centre organized as fablab with courses on design, crafts etc.) are efficient interfaces for addressing the issue of cultural inequality.
- Latest achievements realised through projects like “Reservoir Based Development Plans” (a case of local administration-academia collaboration assisted by the local development agency of the central administration) and the elaboration of a Bio-Atlas for Izmir, help to boost the quality of life in the city creating a well-balanced biological and cultural diversity.
- A viable and liveable environment should be a transversal issue for all cultural work just like education in Izmir.
- A “Culture Card for Youth and Children” could be a policy measure to foster the access to art and cultural goods and services and lead the way of younger generations for participation.
- Cultural tourism is a prerogative for Izmir, a multicultural city (with its rich Greco-Roman heritage, Jewish, Levantine and Muslim history) par excellence. Micro initiatives especially in the old city centre could be encouraged through tax incentives or direct subsidies.
- Local media outlets as well as social media specialized in culture might be considered as stakeholders for all artistic and cultural projects.
- The internationalisation of cultural practice is relatively a recent phenomenon in the city and needs to be consolidated. Experiences with international partners like the recent **Spaces of Culture** (with Goethe Institute, Swedish Institute, Dutch Culture etc.) helped independent culture professionals to develop an array of international partnerships.



# SUMMARY AND EVALUATION OF IZMIR PILOT CITY ACTIVITIES

- A sound urban cultural policy could be based on reliable and regularly reviewed and updated data. In this context the Izmir Cultural Inventory prepared in 2012 has to be updated including creative economy sectors like design, architecture, software, digital games, etc.

The workshop allowed all participants to re-formulate thoughts and suggestions through a collective elaboration of their individual experiences, day-to-day observations and practical impressions. Thus, the exercise itself is somehow an output of the Pilot City Programme. The guests from CAE and UCLG also praised the work done during the session as “creating a common space to evaluate what has been done so far” and revealing “the coherence of a city which started and successfully finished the pilot cycle”.



# TWO GOOD CASES FROM IZMIR

Based on the entire process of the Pilot City Programme of Izmir and the above detailed concluding conference, two good cases are worth being analysed here in order to offer them to the attention of the global culture community.

## **KÜLTÜRLAB**

This multi-stakeholder project has been created right in the continuation of Izmir's self-assessment exercise conducted in 2016. It was meant to address the lack of articulation between culture and education which was assessed to be well below the global average compared with other criteria. Thus, the project, a pilot practice introduced by the focal point of the Pilot Cities programme, has been defined as a platform formed by representatives of public, private and independent art and culture organisations in order to integrate informal public education as lifelong learning in all cultural projects in Izmir. kültürLab focused on museums, and art institutions of all sorts.

The platform served as a case of cultural governance, the first of its kind, where central and local public actors came together in periodic meetings with civil society and art community representatives and worked toward the same objective. The project now needs to build on its pilot phase and define its quantitative and qualitative output in order to assess the achieved level of performance.

## **IZMIR MEDITERRANEAN ACADEMY AND IZMIR CULTURAL PLATFORM INITIATIVE (IKPG)**

Izmir's cultural policy had a strategic and coherent turn since the participative Culture Workshop (sort of an 'Estates General of Culture') of 2009 organised by the Municipality. Culture was defined as an indispensable dimension of development in the city. *IzmirDeniz*, the Izmir Sea Project (a collective coastal zone design project) of 2011, the establishment of the Izmir Mediterranean Academy in 2012 and the decision to participate in the Pilot Cities Europe network in 2015 came in the continuity of an uninterrupted cultural policy orientation. The Mediterranean Academy acted as a virtually independent body liaising the efforts and aspirations of many different actors and created a model embodying the facilitating role of local governments for sustainable cultural policy.

In this context, IKPG came out as a solution to the need to develop grassroots cultural policy in Izmir during the works of the Culture and Arts Advisory Committee of the Academy. A small group of volunteers started to work and set the goal to act as a catalyser for the current actors and as an incubator for future initiatives. Through their



# TWO GOOD CASES FROM IZMIR

regular thematic meetings, periodic publications, and annual summer schools, the network launched by IKPG has finally reached nearly 200 members. One of the major achievements of IKPG is the “cultural mapping project” planned and realised through bottom-up data gathering and processing method in the aftermath of the collaborative environment following the pre-assessment, a preliminary step towards a cultural policy elaboration driven by the work of civil society which is unique in its kind in Turkey.



# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Here are some conclusions and recommendations which could be formulated at the end of the Pilot City exercise in Izmir.

The Izmir Metropolitan Municipality adopted a clear-cut cultural strategy during the last decade and the local government represented by the current mayor Aziz Kocaoğlu has played the leading role in the process of its elaboration and implementation involving other actors in the city and helping them to increase their capacity. The cultural community of Izmir is expecting now that the new mayor who will be elected in the next elections (to be held on 31 March 2019) will follow the same priorities and will further develop them.

The Mediterranean Academy's status has recently been revised (February 2019) to create a more efficient management structure to allow the participation of volunteer experts to its decision-making process. The new organisational structure will help thoroughly to fulfil its founding mission and enable the Academy to act not only as a local but also a Mediterranean and European hub creating innovative content and enacting as a facilitator for the role of culture in sustainable urban development.

Here are the fundamental conclusions and recommendations:

- The IKPG is a unique example of an open and participative platform founded under the auspices of a local authority and working thanks to its arm's length funding. The future of the initiative both as a legal entity (for instance as a cooperative) and with its role in the local cultural policy making will have a significant impact on a sustainable cultural policy based on civic participation and governance. Also, the cultural mapping (of venues) project initiated by IKPG should be further extended and updated to inform the design of the future cultural policy.
- In the same line of thinking, a sound cultural planning aligned on SDGs requires reliable data and an inventory of cultural and creative resources. For this purpose, a working alliance might be established between experts, independent cultural activists and the municipality.
- It would be suitable to open a cultural policy/cultural management programme in one of the universities in Izmir.
- A collaboration of civil society representatives with actors of the creative economy (for example TARKEM) is also of extreme priority in order to ensure larger ownership and visibility for the future cultural policy practice. The Good Design Izmir event (3rd edition took place in 2018) could be a suitable occasion to initiate partnerships of the kind.

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Izmir's cultural heritage, including post-industrial sites, constitutes another potential area of collaboration between different stakeholders working in the fields of heritage protection and management and contemporary art which do not usually build joint projects. Doing so could help trigger citizens' participation in culture and mainstreaming culture in the life of the city.
- The international dimension of the cultural projects in Izmir, especially in the sense of a closer co-operation with Mediterranean cities, will play a significant role for the exchange of experiences and sharing of mutual skills. An international artist residency programme to be launched by the municipality and hosted by IKPG will contribute to this aim.
- The grassroots arts projects like Daragac (the initiative of a group of artists who started to open studios in the derelict port area now occupied with car repair workshops and organize *in situ* exhibitions and happenings) but also like **Kendine Ait Bir Oda – A Room for Oneself** (a visual arts initiative in the old centre of the city now populated with Syrian immigrants) or 6x6x6 (a collective initiative launched with the support of European cultural institutes to disseminate culture and arts activities in 6 different neighbourhoods with 6 actors and devise cultural itineraries through synergies among various actors) have very recently started to come together in order to share a common space and co-produce. (A recent project –in-progress called *Dahili Bellek* – Internal Memory to further develop the cultural mapping is being drafted.) Initiatives of the like which act as active mediators in deprived areas might be followed up closely and supported through public incentives. In this respect, the municipality might launch a scheme to fund independent culture and arts projects on a transparent and open call basis. This last point, which will provide a model to be followed by other cities in Turkey, could be one of the specific areas to work on in case of an eventual application of Izmir to become a Leading City of Agenda 21 for Culture.

As an expert of the Agenda 21 for Culture who followed the cultural endeavours of Izmir during the last decade I can ascertain that the practice of the Pilot City programme has been influential to establish an atmosphere of dialogue and understanding not only between different stakeholders of the local culture and arts scene but assured also the integration of cross-sectorial (education, environment in particular) players. In this regard, I believe that the Pilot City process had a multiplier effect for the future cultural policy work. I would thoroughly suggest Izmir to apply for the title of Leading City and start to work in this direction right after the upcoming elections.

# CONTACT

For additional information about this exercise, please contact:

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