



CULTURAL POLICIES IN NAMUR: MAIN RESULTS OF THE PILOT CITY PROGRAMME

DECEMBER 2018





The City of Namur has taken part in the **European Pilot Cities programme** “Culture in Sustainable Cities” between 2015 and 2018. The programme is based on the declaration **Agenda 21 for culture** (2004) and the toolkit **Culture 21 Actions** (2015). The “Pilot Cities” is a learning programme for local governments that is based on 9 Commitments and 100 Actions that form the framework document, Culture 21 Actions. The programme, which lasts approximately 30 months, provides local outreach, international peer-review, capacity building, local pilot projects, public seminars, and the development of good practices. Its European component, Pilot Cities Europe, is carried out in partnership with **Culture Action Europe**, the largest European network of cultural institutions and actors. In this context, culture is considered both a driver and an enabler of sustainable development.

On 29 October 2015, the Municipal Board of the City of Namur agreed on the designation of Namur as a Pilot City. The City developed its work in 2016, 2017 and completed its participation in late 2018. Catherine Cullen was the expert appointed to monitor the programme in Namur. Following the final stages of the programme, this document presents the context in which the programme has taken place, summarises the main activities implemented and analyses their relevance as regards local sustainable development. The document has been written by the City of Namur, with inputs from the Secretariat of the UCLG Committee on Culture. For further information about the programme, please visit **Namur’s page** on the Agenda 21 for culture website.

FINAL
REPORT





INTRODUCTION

On 29 October 2015, the Municipal Board of the City of Namur agreed on the designation of Namur as a Pilot City of [Agenda 21 for Culture](#) of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and Culture Action Europe (CAE). Catherine Cullen was the expert appointed to support developments in Namur. On March 15, 2016, she went to Namur for the first time for a coordination meeting to prepare Activity 1 of the programme and she has visited the city on several other occasions. This report is based on her observations, following the completion of the programme in late 2018.



ACTIVITY 1: SELF-ASSESSMENT

On 5-6 June 2016 self-assessment workshops were organised in Namur, focusing on the context of Culture 21: Actions, in addition to the plenary meeting of Cultural Operators within the framework of Namur confluent culture (NCC). The participants were divided into working groups and analysed the status of Namur with respect to the nine commitments. The results of the exercise showed a higher overall rating than the 2015 global panel. The 9 commitments scored above this world average, although, significant disparities have been observed within the commitments themselves. In her report, Catherine Cullen proposed a commitment to one of the following commitments: Culture and Education, particularly the general level of arts education; Governance of Culture through the creation of a Council of Culture; Culture and Social Inclusion, with a focus on citizen participation; or Culture and Economy by creating a platform for reflection.



ACTIVITY 2: GOOD PRACTICES AND PILOT MEASURES

On 15 September 2017, the first version of the “Namur Work Programmes” document was proposed. This version was somewhat reworked after meeting with Jordi Pascual, Coordinator of the Agenda 21 for culture on 13 December 2017. Since January 2018, the final version has been available, with the good practices and the following pilot measures, described briefly below (more information available online):

GOOD PRACTICES

The **NCC project**: “*Namur Confluent Culture*, an ambitious cultural initiative for our Meuse City” presented by Pierre Henry, cultural attaché – City Hall (Mayor). The NCC project is a ten-year plan for cultural policy in Namur. It is made up of several concrete projects and is the reference framework document transcending current political trends.

The **NA! Project - Accessing Classical Music**: A “group of professional organisers for classical music in Namur” presented by Patricia Wilenski, Deputy Director of the Centre for Vocal Art and Early Music (CAV & MA). Thanks to the *NA! Project*, more thought has been given to renewing public interest, and encouraging youth to come to classical music concerts. The *NA! Project* proposed a shared agenda, and a shared ticketing and communication tool between all the operators.

PILOT MEASURES

Cultural Rights

Establishment of a citizen platform for online participation - (a responsive, online web solution). This project was the subject of discussions with the consultant Sergio Salgado, advised by the coordinator for A21. Project implemented in June 2018.

Governance of culture

Creation of an online Forum of cultural operators. Implementation meeting to be held in the first quarter of 2019.

Culture and education

“*Le Grand Manège*”, the first Wallon acoustics centre. Design and production of a theatre, a conservatory, and a meeting place promoting and disseminating music and singing. Work and governance meetings started. To be completed in 2020.



PEER-LEARNING VISIT: NAMUR VISITS LYON

On January 22nd and 23rd, 2018, the City of Namur was invited to Lyon as part of shared activities, which included the attendance of Jordi Pascual, Catherine Cullen, and Corinne Szteinszneider. Namur proposed Lyon as it faces similar challenges. The City of Lyon has chosen to focus on culture as a factor of social integration and fulfilment, and is developing a policy of support for arts education establishments, cultural facilities, media libraries, and major events. Lyon also had a ceremonial reopening of the city's riverbanks following a revitalisation of the docks by the community. Lyon subsequently established important events around the waterways, with large projects related to water and the history of the rivers.

The two-day programme consisted of presentations of the Festival of Lights, the Biennale de la Danse, and the Maison de la Danse, and the Cultural Cooperation Charter, followed by a presentation and visit by the Lyon National Opera, a presentation and visit by the Confluence Museum, and finally a presentation and visit by the Museum of Textiles.

The delegation of Namur took away several good practices and ideas for the development of future projects from this programme. This visit was the subject of a report sent to the experts.



MEETING PEERS: NAMUR WELCOMES ESCH-SUR-ALZETTE, MALMÖ, AND BARCELONA

On November 16, 2018, the City of Namur had the pleasure of welcoming delegations from the towns of Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg, Malmö, Sweden, and Barcelona, Spain in the presence of Jordi Pascual, representative of UCLG and Kornelia Kiss from Culture Action Europe. The day began in the presence of the mayor of the City of Namur, Mr. Maxime Prévot, who presented the delegations from invited cities under the *NCC* project, and all ongoing projects and initiatives of the Department of Culture related to these programmes. The morning continued with a visit to the historic *Bomel Slaughterhouses*, now a cultural centre, which hosted the creative workshops, a HORECA space, artist residencies, a dissemination space, a meeting room, and a conference hall exhibition. Lunch was preceded and followed by a short course of urban art in the streets of Namur. The afternoon took place in the future Bateliers museum centre, also home to the Museum of Decorative Arts (under renovation) and intended to host the archaeological museum of Namur. This is a hub of several cultural institutions connected by shared gardens. After a presentation of the Bateliers by the curators of these museums and by the curators of the *Videomuz* project, Jean-Marie Marchal, Director of the CAV&MA, presented the good practice *Na!*, as well as the pilot measure "*Le Grand Manège*". The afternoon of conferences ended with a presentation of Smart City projects by Nicolas Himmer, Smart City Manager on monitoring the achievements of the pilot measures related to these concepts: the online citizen participatory platform and the Culture Forum.

To end the day, the invited cities were invited to present their own cultural strategies and to exchange their impressions on Namur.

The delegation from **Malmö** emphasised the ambition of cultural policies: "*The presentations of Namur Confluent Culture clearly showed the ambition to use culture as a lever for revitalising the city, particularly in the creation and renovation of public spaces and facilities designed to maximize mobility as well as tourism, while offering a range of destinations and cultural experiences (...).*" **Malmö** also noted the capacity of programmes that create relationships between culture and citizenship: "*We were impressed by how the city took over and reinvented the old Bomel Slaughterhouse as a cultural centre in the heart of neighbourhood housing, thereby enabling communities, schools, groups, and artists to have easier access to creative processes. We understood that active networks of cultural actors had benefited from cooperation and synergies, both in this institution and through the *Na!* classical music initiative*".

The delegation from **Esch-sur-Alzette** noticed how cultural action in Namur is "*the support for actions geared towards social inclusion - we are thinking in particular of the whole cultural programme of the Bomel Slaughterhouses, which houses populations supposedly removed from culture - and (...) supports education for the youngest and even the whole population (lifelong education), both the Slaughterhouse and the Bateliers hub alike*". The City of Esch-sur-Alzette, which will be the European Capital of Culture in 2022, also wished to add that with respect to "*complementarity of heritage and contemporary creation (...): culture is disruptive, within its simplest sense [and] thus, in*

the streets of Namur, as in the Museum of Decorative Arts, contemporary works (street furniture, interior works) value and create dialogue with heritage (...). Finally, the Na! programme shows all the creative, lively, and dynamic potential of classical musical traditions (notably thanks to particularly unique communication)".

The delegation from **Barcelona** pointed out the importance of the work in the *Bomel Slaughterhouses*: *"The concentration of artistic residencies, studios, and scenes in a single building contributes to artistic innovation because of interdisciplinary exchange; indeed, the combination of this cultural pool with a social centre deepens this process, as artists can draw inspiration unexpectedly and discover other human realities; In short, associating high culture with social work is a remarkably good policy."* The delegation also reported that *"Namur has done a remarkable job on the transformation of the industrial and military heritage and has implemented the creation of many new programmes likely to consolidate this city as a European cultural benchmark"* and suggested that *"to carry out this last step on the international scene, Namur could cooperate more actively with other cities - the Bomel Slaughterhouse project is identical to the programme of art factories in Barcelona"*. Finally, the Barcelona delegation urged Namur to maintain its policies in favour of cultural rights and to open up more to other cities in the world (...): *"We need more cities like Namur in cultural policy and cultural exchanges in Europe and in the world!"*.



FINAL CONFERENCE

In the absence of the expert Catherine Cullen, who was present in Namur on November 7th to monitor the progress of projects, Jordi Pascual spoke at the end of the day on November 16th. He presented the path taken by Namur in the Pilot Cities programme of Agenda 21 for culture and made some suggestions for ongoing work.



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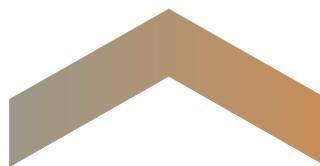


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